

NEWSLETTER

“Think while walking, walk while thinking, and let writing be but the light pause, as the body on a walk rests in contemplation of wide open spaces.”

— Frédéric Gros, *A Philosophy of Walking*

THE ART OF WALKING



A RESTORATIVE WELLBEING WALK

Mental Health Awareness Week takes place from Monday 15th of May to Sunday 21st of May 2023. The official theme for this year is 'anxiety'.

In preparation for Mental Health Awareness Week, all students went on a Wellbeing Walk in the surroundings of the College. The NHS lists the following five aspects to be important for wellbeing:

1. Connecting with other people
2. Being physically active
3. Learning new skills
4. Giving to others
5. Experiencing mindfulness, by paying attention to the moment

For students to be in the moment, to experience mindfulness, and for the walk to be restorative, it is important that the surroundings are actively being noticed. students were encouraged to focus on:

- 5 Things you can See
- 4 Things you can Touch
- 3 Things you can Hear
- 2 Things you can Smell
- 1 Person to whom you spoke

Saad Dansadau Saidu (Panther House) explains: "The walk on Tuesday morning was a refreshing one. I was able to enjoy the serenity of Cambridge's spring. It was amazing to see a wide array of beautiful and colourful flowers. We also got the opportunity of seeing a Grey Heron. I really enjoyed my House Director's company as she was interesting throughout the walk. Generally speaking, the 'Wellbeing Walk' is something I now consider doing more often. It helps reduce stress and cools my mind."

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK



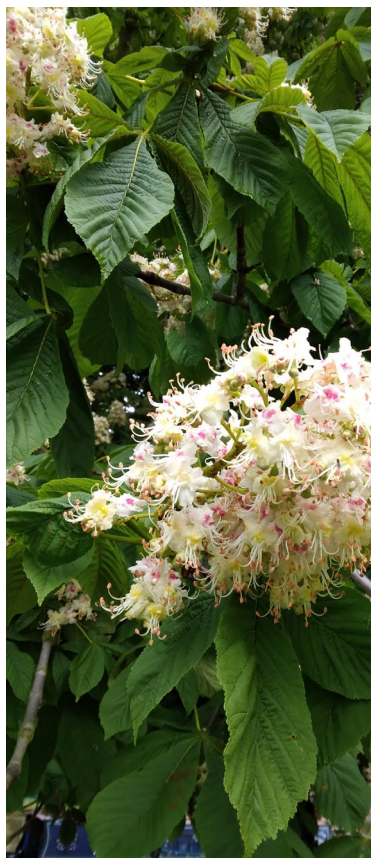
The theme for
**Mental Health
Awareness Week**
15 to 21 May 2023 is...

Anxiety

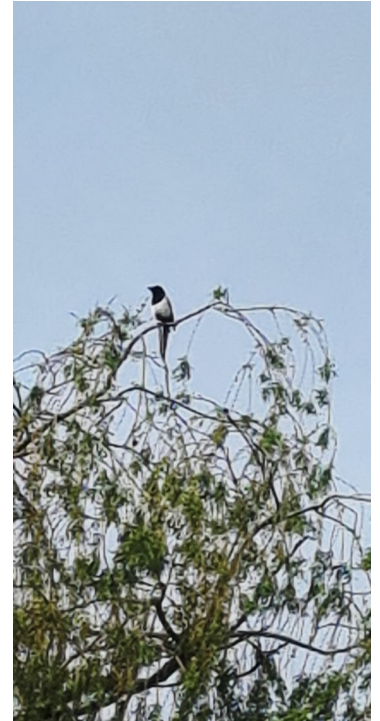
Mental Health Awareness Week is an annual event to raise awareness of the importance of mental health.

Hosted by Mental Health Foundation for over two decades, this special week is the perfect time to open up a conversation about mental health and inspire action to promote positive mental health. In the UK, Mental Health Awareness Week is one of the biggest awareness weeks across the country. It is an opportunity for people to talk about all aspects of mental health, with a focus on providing help and advice. Physical exercise is a great way to keep the mind feeling great, and talking about our feelings is the perfect way to understand what certain things mean in our mind.

Our students have taken photographs of things they noticed during the Well-being Walk:



ATTENTION RESTORATION THEORY



Spending time in nature, by watching a sunset, gazing at the ocean or mountains, sitting in a park, escaping to the countryside or just spending a few minutes staring out of a window. Spending time in nature provides us with the opportunity to rest, reflect, and restore ourselves: Natural environments have the capacity to restore our attention.

Nature exposure can provide benefits on stress, health and cognitive performance. Attention Restoration Theory, or ART, proposes that exposure to nature is not only enjoyable but can also help us improve our focus and ability to concentrate. This theory was developed by Stephen and Rachel Kaplan in the late 1980s. They propose that there are four cognitive states, or states of attention, along the way to restoration:

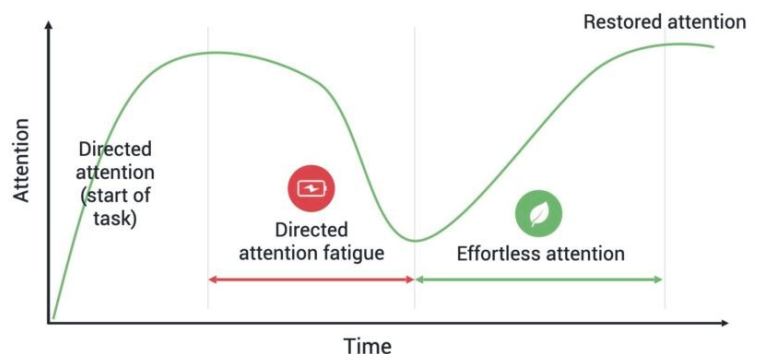
1. Clearer head, or concentration
2. Mental fatigue recovery
3. Soft fascination, or interest
4. Reflection and restoration

The restorative benefits of spending time in nature are plentiful. Viewing scenic beauty (whether in real life or through photographs) reduces pain and anxiety, improves our attention, calms us, and helps us focus and concentrate better.

Source:

<https://positivepsychology.com/attention-restoration-theory/>

ATTENTION RESTORATION THEORY (ART)



Further reading:

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/our-work/research/nature-how-connecting-nature-benefits-our-mental-health>

CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTRYSIDE

Correction: Last week's article on the Myanmar New Year celebration was written by Wai Yan Moe Naing (Alex).

Thank you Alex, for informing us about the traditions around celebrating New Year in Myanmar. Alex currently studies A-level Photography and enjoys capturing the beautiful countryside around Cambridge. See below for a selection of his recent photographs.



THE POWER OF CREATIVITY & FLOW

Creativity can positively influence mental health, from boosting confidence, to reducing feelings of stress and anxiety.


One important aspect of looking after our well-being and staying healthy mentally is learning new skills. Students have started work on a collaborative art installation inspired by the artist Claire Brewster.

The Building Learning Power theme of the week is 'Absorption'. Absorption means to be able to lose yourself in learning, becoming absorbed in what you are doing, rapt and attentive, in a state of 'flow'. Enabling students to recognise what it feels like to be 'lost in learning' and to appreciate how this state of being helps the learning process (and improves our mental health!) is important.

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, considered one of the co-founders of positive psychology, was the first to identify and research flow.

"The best moments in our lives are not the passive, receptive, relaxing times.. The best moments usually occur if a person's body or mind is stretched to its limits in a voluntary effort to accomplish something difficult and worthwhile" - Csikszentmihalyi, 1990.

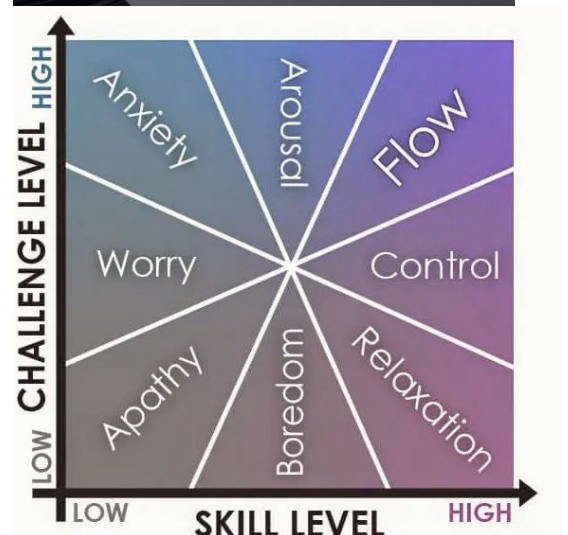
The experience of flow is universal and has been reported to occur across all classes, genders, ages, and cultures, and it can be experienced during many types of activities.



Creative expression yields powerful benefits for young minds.

The proof is in the percentages:

- 70%** report boosted confidence in their abilities
- 62%** report reduced feelings of stress or anxiety
- 56%** report a strengthened sense of identity or purpose



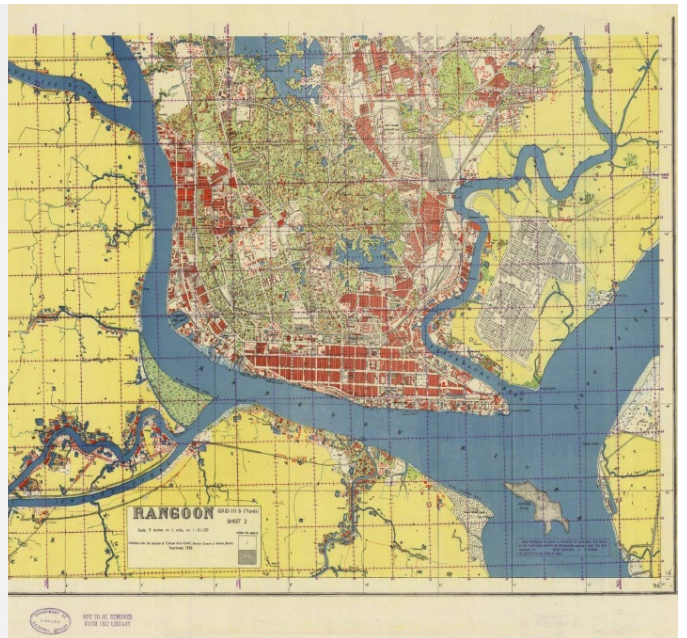
Impression of last year's collaborative bird installation inspired by Claire Brewster

INSPIRED BY CLAIRE BREWSTER

The British paper artist Claire Brewster uses old and out-of-date maps and atlases as her fabric to create intricate, delicate and detailed sculptures and collages that have been described as 'exquisitely ethereal' by the Financial Times.

Claire Brewster believes nature is ever present, even in the most urban environments, taking over wherever we neglect, living in a separate yet parallel universe. Her birds transcend borders and pass freely between countries with scant regard for rules of immigration or the effects of biodiversity. Her sculptures are pinned directly to the wall, into large scale installations. Shadows are created when light shines on them, creating a dynamic three-dimensional quality that evokes a feeling of movement.

Inspired by Brewster, students researched maps that have personal significance to them and birds 'in action' from their home countries. Next week, they will start cutting out delicate details. The two birds on the left are both Claire Brewster's works, the photograph of the bird and the map are found by students, to be turned into paper birds shortly!



HIGHER EDUCATION – ALUMNI NEWS



CONGRATULATIONS!

Digital Chemistry

Zhaoyan Zhang (Jimmy) – Class of 2017
has graduated from *Imperial College London*
MSc in Digital Chemistry, with distinction (photo 1)

Dental Medicine

Stewart Shabanaj - Class of 2014
has graduated from the *University of Buffalo – School of Dental Medicine* (photo 2)

Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Thanawit Tananuwat (Kuang) – Class of 2018
has graduated from the *University of Surrey*
MSc *Innovation and Entrepreneurship* (photo 3)

Psychology

Emily Van Loo – Class of 2017
has graduated from the *University of Northampton*
MSc in Psychology (photo 4)

Wedding Day

Sakyamphu Mau (Yamphu) - Class of 2018
got married! (photo 5)



UNIVERSITIES FAIR USA, CANADA, EUROPE

On Wednesday 3 May students had the opportunity to drop in and discuss University applications and specific courses with the following universities:



INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITIES FAIR

Bishop's University
Burgundy school of Business
EHL Hospitality Business School
Gilon & Les Roches
High Point University
Hult International Business School
IE University
Loyola Marymount University
McGill University
Rutgers University
Swiss Education Group
Temple University
University of Vermont

THE UNIVERSITY GUYS
WHERE
you
study
can
teach
you
as
much
as
WHAT
you
study



USA - Switzerland - UK - Canada - France - Spain

It was an extremely busy and lively event with lots of questions (and plenty of answers!) for our students as they explored the variety of options available to them. It was a great opportunity to explore university options outside of the UK, with institutions represented from Canada, USA, France, Switzerland, and Spain.



A RIGHT REAL ROYAL OPPORTUNITY

Have a go at the game of monarchs.

Real Tennis is the original form of tennis, CATS Cambridge is running a taster session at the Cambridge University courts on 7th June. We will depart at 13:30 and return at 17:30.

The taster session is open to all students and staff, but places are limited.

To enjoy the taster you should have played some racket sports in the past – table tennis, squash, lawn tennis, badminton.....



REAL TENNIS TASTER SESSION

7TH JUNE 2023

Real Tennis is a fascinating game open to all. A mix between lawn tennis and squash, but on a slightly quirky court which means the ball could come at any number of angles making it a great test of brain vs brawn.



If you are interested in joining the session of 7th June please contact the Principal, Dominic no later than 23rd May:

dtomalin@catscambridge.com

ART SHOWCASE



This photograph was taken in Cambridge by A-level year 1 student **Nina Martinakova**. Nina's work focuses on street photography, she is particularly fascinated by light and inspired by the photographers Boris Savelev, Saul Leither, & Craig Whitehead (sixstreetunder).



Walking out on the age of anxiety

Dominic Tomalin,
Principal



We live in an age of anxiety. The causes of what appears to be an endemic of anxiety are myriad and well documented elsewhere. It is safe to say that our relationship with social media and one another are key contributors. We are drowning in connections, interactions, and connectivity and yet we are the loneliest that we have ever been. We spend so much time keeping in touch, that we have lost touch with ourselves and with each other.

I am anxious all the time. This despite having little to do with social media. I am anxious that we get things right for each and every one of our students. I am also anxious that we do so in a way that assures our viability as a business. Such is the lot of a school principal; there is much that could go wrong, it is my job to make sure that it does not. Anxieties abound.

That said, I do not regard myself as an anxious person. The anxiety which I encounter is rarely overwhelming and serves more to focus and motivate than it does to distract and inhibit. I am fortunate. I have had the support, training and experiences that enable me to manage and direct my anxieties.

The ability to tame my anxieties is something for which I am very grateful. It allows me to enjoy what, by any measure, is a job full of stresses. Experience of disappointments, both personal and professional, have contributed greatly to the way I respond to anxiety. I recognise that I successfully navigated such challenges only with the support of friends, family, and colleagues. If I have learned anything, it is that the overcoming challenges is rarely best done in isolation. Others can help, others will willingly help. You just need to ask. I wish I had asked others for help sooner than I do now.

I also have become much better about offering up insights about how I actually feel, though, as my wife will certainly still tell you, it is something at which I am better, but still rubbish! Nevertheless, an important step forward. When I do, it has always helped to hear reflections on my predicament from a trusted other. Perhaps most importantly, I have recognised the need for activities that afford the opportunities, to just be, to be mindful, to reflect. Too often I have confused busyness and endeavour as offering such opportunities.

Among the seven steps in the Global Wellness Day manifesto, the advice to walk. I do not walk enough. On Saturday 10th June, I will be joining the school walk from the Elizabeth House to Ely Cathedral (c.15 miles). I did so last year. The walk then happened to fall at the end of a very bad week. It was a journey that really did salve my soul, it made me feel better, it clarified my thinking. All that, despite the physical exhaustion, mild sun, and wind burn, and saw feet and limbs. The route offered magnificent landscapes, the gentle regular pace acted as a cathartic background to gentle reflections and processing. The fresh air and sunshine a real sense of wellbeing. Come rain or shine, I am looking forward to it again.

There are six other steps offered by Global Wellness Day. I found them all useful defences that keep anxiety away. We would all do well to pay heed to them if we want to protect our own wellness, and to be frank, the wellness of others with whom we engage and interact.

Find out more about **Global Wellness Day and its seven step manifesto at:**
<https://www.globalwellnessday.org/>

Find out more about our **Global Wellness Day walk to Ely, by e-mailing Hayley:**
hpienaar@catscambridge.com