

# PICTURE OF THE WEEK

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I have had yet another strange week. We are now back within the school building on a more regular basis teaching our oldest Year 6 students; preparing them for the transition to secondary school in September. Because of the challenging logistics of working in safe, small, isolated groups, these children have been split up from most of their friends and many have had to make new relationships with other students, as well getting used to a teacher they previously hardly knew. As a bit of light relief, I have been in charge of heading up an afternoon science project. These small groups of children have been challenged to find and record as many different species as possible within the school grounds. (Needless to say I'm encouraging my group to find most and therefore win!) And the experience has been enchanting. Gone is the preteenager reluctance to looking enthusiastic, and in comes the total joy and awe of God's creation; invertebrates, birds, small mammals, amphibians, trees and flowers. All in all, coming back to school hasn't been the worrying and unpleasant experience that many predicted it would be. Instead it has been a joy; taking the first hesitant steps of getting back to normal.

So what of art? Well our sitting room has a collection of well-loved mementos from the city breaks that we've been able to take since moving to Amersham. I've chosen Sandro Botticelli's picture called *Primavera* which hangs on our wall and reminds us of the wonderful few days we spent in Florence in February 2016.



The highlight of that trip was going on a special tour of the Uffizi Gallery, seeing *Primavera* and then being taken through a secret door close to the painting and into the Vasari Corridor; that elevated enclosed passageway above the famous Ponte Vecchio and over the River Arno coming out from an equally obscure door in the Pitti Palace. *Primavera* meaning "Spring", depicts a group of figures from classical mythology; six female figures

and two male, along with a cupid, in an orange grove. The characters from right to left are "Zephyrus, the biting wind of March, kidnaping the nymph Chloris the second figure, whom he later marries and transforms into the goddess of Spring or Flora, who is the next figure in the painting. In the centre stands Venus, with the trees behind her forming a broken arch to draw the eye. On the left of the painting are the Three Graces, a group of three females, joining hands in a dance. At the extreme left Mercury, clothed in red with a sword and a helmet, raises his wooden rod towards some wispy grey clouds. Art experts have debated for years as to what this unusual grouping of people are representing. But it's not the people who have caught my attention during these unprecedented times.



What has impressed me this week hasn't been the main characters, but the 500 identified plant species depicted in the painting. There are apparently 190 different flowers, of which at least 130 can be specifically identified. I think Sandro Botticelli might have won our Year 6 challenge and, more importantly, I think he must have experienced the joy of God's creation too!

