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Chief Editor:  
Lucas Hoffmann

Assistant Editors:  
Svaraji Odedra  
Aditya Mathur

The Editing Team:  
William Wale  
Thomas Mann  
Tom Ellis  
Jennifer Ewington  
Dorothea Shipley  
Neal Kulkarni  
Nishchal Mistry

**With thanks to Mr Kidd,  
Mrs Kendall and all of our  
guest writers.**

# Mr Kidd Interview

What has been your favourite experience at LGS?

My favourite experience has been directing plays, and the one I remember most was called 'Amadeus'.

We put it on in the nineties and the cast was fantastic. But I am proud of all the plays we have produced as a department ('A Streetcar Named Desire', 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', 'The Merchant of Venice' and 'A Christmas Carol' were the ones where I was most involved).

If you could change one thing in your career, what would it be?

I wouldn't change anything, because whatever decisions

you make, lead you to where you are now, and I'm very happy with where I am.

What sport teams do you support?

I support Ulster and Ireland at rugby and, because my brother supported Leeds United in the 1970s, I chose the team they were against in the FA cup and that happened to be Arsenal so, although I don't really follow football, that would have to be the team I would go with.

Which university did you go to?

I studied English at the University of Ulster and started a PHD at the

University of Warwick. I got my Head of Department job halfway through my PHD, but I would quite like to go back and finish it in my retirement - or continue to write critically.

Tell me about your passion for Classic Cars.

The first classic car I had was an MGB which was a wreck. I then sold it on as an absolute wreck! When I started teaching, I bought myself a Lotus Elite. It had pop-up headlights; when you drove quickly the headlights stayed up, but when you braked, they went down, so it was interesting to drive at night....I had a Triumph GT6 but now, I drive a 1960 Triumph TR3A, which is in pretty good nick.

Why did you choose teaching?

I've always enjoyed exploring ideas (and talking about them), I have always enjoyed Literature, and so that's why I'm a teacher. I'm really going to miss the opportunity to talk about books and ideas to a captive audience!

How long have you been a teacher?

I started in 1987 and I haven't stopped since...

What was it like being Deputy Assistant Head?

I found it really interesting how much of an overview of everything I got; as an Head of Department you only see so much whereas, as an Assistant Head, so many

more things cross your desk each day - it is humbling to see the number of clubs, activities and opportunities offered and run by my colleagues.

If you could tell your 15-year-old self one thing, what would it be?

Plan more carefully, work “smarter” and try not get into situations you might regret!

If you could tell three things to your successor as your Head of English what would it be?

Trust your gut and your head, don't ask people to do things you wouldn't do yourself and, enjoy every challenge.

What three words sum up

your career?

Inquiry, engagement and enthusiasm.

What are you most proud of from your time at LGS?

Difficult to rank: the talented group of colleagues I've had the opportunity to appoint and work with and the range of students I've had the privilege to teach; the plays I've been part of because of how much they bring English to life; and, finally, resurrecting 'The Peacock' and coordinating Monday Enrichment Group.

Interview By William Wale



# Dr Duffield Interview

What has been your most memorable moment at Leicester Grammar School?

There have been many but perhaps watching LGS beat John Cleveland College in the Rugby County Cup final at Welford Road, the performances of the Choral Society or watching the school production of 'Amadeus'.

Do you have any plans for retirement?  
We are moving to Suffolk to be nearer my children and grandchildren. I also intend writing a book on the algae of lowland rivers, illustrated of course. This will be a surprise to my colleagues, especially the retired ones, who think I am only fixated on ferns.

What is your favourite topic in Biology?

All of it really, although I do have an affinity for the so-called lower plants; mosses and ferns not to mention algae and lichens. From the exam syllabus, something I try to avoid sticking to, probably the biology of bacteria and viruses.

Why is Biology an important subject to study and learn about and what are its benefits?

There is no doubt that Biology is the most important subject to study. Biologists have been going on about the

current hot topics of plastics pollution, global warming and over population since the 1950s but in particular after Paul Erhlich published his study "The Population Bomb" in 1968 and later "The Limits to Growth" in 1971. It is a shame no one listened, except scientists. The benefits of studying biology apart from the intrinsic interest are simply to ensure we have the knowledge to manage the planet properly for the benefit of both the natural world and ourselves. Of course, the next job is to convince politicians that it is important. Perhaps more scientists should become politicians.

What will you miss most about Leicester Grammar School?

Obviously, my colleagues but also all those keen Biology students past and present. I will also miss being greeted in the morning by fox cubs on the bank behind the café and the families of hares, and wood mice who regularly appear around the fields. I rather hope, however, Suffolk will provide me with appropriate wildlife.

By Svaraji Odedra and Nischal Mistry

# Dr Higginson Interview

Why did you decide to teach at Leicester Grammar School?

I taught at the old site from 1999 to 2002 and LGS has always been my favourite place to teach. Both the pupils and the staff are so easy to get along with. I was delighted to be given the chance to return in 2017.

Have you always been a teacher?

I have been a teacher for the last 25 years. Before that I was a research scientist for 15 years in the field of Corrosion Science, the highlight of which was working in Johannesburg in the gold mining industry for three years. I also spent four years working as a civil servant in the Inland Revenue, but I missed Physics and decided to become a teacher.

How do you plan to spend your days in retirement?

My plans are fairly fluid at the moment but I would like to do some volunteer work in the local community. Retirement will also free up more time for my current leisure pursuits of walking, and following football and horse racing. I have seen my team Shrewsbury Town play at sixty-six

different grounds so I will be pushing to make that a hundred.

Are there any aspects of LGS that you think you will miss?

The many fascinating conversations I have had with both staff and pupils.

What was your most memorable moment as a teacher here?

It is difficult to pick out one moment but it is always rewarding when pupils who have been working hard suddenly reach a new level in their understanding of Physics

Which topic within physics is your favourite?

A difficult question because all the topics are pretty good! If pressed, I would have to say Quantum and Particle Physics, because it is so mind-bending and also very important historically. It makes you realise that the very largest things that happen in the Universe are actually determined by the very smallest things in the Universe.

By Lucas Hoffmann and Neal Kulkarni

# Miss Proffitt Interview

What was your most memorable moment at LGS?

My most memorable moment was the recording my Year 8 English class did last year of the play 'Julius Caesar' (Act III Scene I – where Caesar is brutally murdered). They did so well to prepare the whole thing themselves (with me supervising of course!), tackle difficult Shakespearean language and get into character – with some fabulous costumes and props. I think it was a really entertaining experience for all involved. I also thought this year's production of 'West Side Story' was fantastic – I was blown away by how professional everything was.

Is it true that you are going on to further education? Where do you think it might take you?

Yes – I will be starting an MSc in Psychology in Education at the University of York in September. I am interested in mental health and wellbeing initiatives, and hope to have a role in a school or other organisation involving these areas. I may also decide to complete a doctorate in Educational Psychology which would qualify me to practise as a Psychologist and work with Learning Support.

Why did you choose to teach in the first place?

I decided to become a teacher because I enjoy each day being different, and am fascinated with all of the incredible things young people say and do. There's nothing I enjoy more in my day-to-day job than a student making a comment, or asking a question which I hadn't thought about before, which shows an original take on what we've discussed or read in class.

Are there any other subjects that you would like to teach?

I've really enjoyed the variety that teaching both English and Classics brings. If I taught anything else, it would probably be something like Philosophy as I enjoy posing topics of debate to students and seeing what they can come up with. I would also be interested in teaching History, as there are similarities with Classical Civilisation in that the events, literature and people of the past help us to understand the modern world – and sometimes we haven't changed all that much or learned lessons we perhaps should have!

Interview by Lucas Hoffmann

# Miss Hillier Interview

How will you describe your time at LGS in a few words?

I have thoroughly enjoyed teaching here. Having taught so many classes throughout the school, I feel that I have gotten to know the students very well and I love the different dynamics which go with each year group.

Why is Religious Studies an important subject to study and learn about and what are its benefits?

Religious Studies is an important subject because it enables people to understand the wider world in which they live. Leicester is such a culturally diverse city, with a rich religious heritage, and Religious Studies helps people to understand their own and other people's cultures and beliefs.

Furthermore, Religious Studies explores some of the "Big Questions" regarding the wellbeing of society, the ultimate meaning and purpose of life, and the truth or falsehood of conflicting religious and secular beliefs. No other subject addresses questions such

as these, consequently, I believe that Religious Studies is the most important subject on any school curriculum!

What has been your most memorable moment at Leicester Grammar School?

There have been so many memorable moments– from one of my year 11 students actually ripping her page in half when asked to split a page in two to plan an evaluation question, to my Form Group singing the Adele song "Hello" to me.

What do you wish to pursue after you leave Leicester Grammar School?

I am leaving to take on Head of Religious Studies at Dixie Grammar School, and so I will be carrying on with more of the same!

Interview by Svaraji Odedra and Aditya Mathur



# Detective Pikachu

Pokemon is a Japanese compound word that literally means “Pocket Monster”. The concept of Pokemon started out as a video game produced by Nintendo in 1996, in which players would go around with T.A.R.D.I.S-like balls, called ‘Poke-balls’, and collect mythical, very sociable animals and beasts with super-powers and become partners. For example, one may seek a blue three-foot turtle or a flaming lizard or a dragon that is the literal epitome of death that can cause earthquakes at will. However, it doesn’t matter because they are all very friendly, and the trainers who collect them like to fight one and another in tournaments.

This video game would later be adapted into an insanely popular anime which still holds a lot of fruit today. As a fan of the series, I really hoped Hollywood didn’t walk all over all that with grubby boots like they have with so many other video game movies, but to my delight, they managed to get this right... because of Ryan Reynolds.

The plot follows Tim (brilliantly played by Justice Smith), a down-on-his-luck accountant who unlike everybody else, isn’t particularly a big fan of the Pokemon living all around him. He then gets a call that his father has passed away in a car crash during some detective work. He then

gets teary eyed and heads off to the city to collect his father's things, but has a chance encounter with his father's Pokemon, a little yellow thunder mouse called 'Pikachu', whom Tim can mysteriously understand (people usually have no idea what Pokemon are saying). Together with Pikachu, Tim attempts to solve the case behind his father's death.

Ryan Reynolds voices Pikachu. The sheer joy that this brings to the audience and the entire feel of the film is enough reason to go and see this movie on its own. Reynolds brings the same sass and class to Pikachu (minus the sauce) that he does with Deadpool and every line delivered is a treat to behold, although the best surprise is that Bill Nighy is in it, of all people, and watching him on TV telling everyone to live as one with Pokemon is brilliant. In general, the action is fun and enjoyable and is easy to follow and watch, even if it does get a bit sparkly in parts, and the performances

are expressive as they are in the show, especially from Justice Smith. The only problem lies within the plot; although completely followable, each transition between scene and sequence is static and plays out like different levels in a video game. I suppose that may be the intended effect, but I don't think it works very well.

Overall, you certainly don't need to understand or even like Pokemon to enjoy this movie, although I think any millennial has a soft-spot for Pokemon. I honestly had fun watching this play out and there are some great laughs and character interactions along the way, which can only be put down to, what I call, the Reynolds effect.

By Thomas Mann



One of the very first movies I think I ever properly watched was 2008's Iron Man. I was only four or five at the time, but when I watched that, I remember a sense of awe and excitement that I hadn't felt before, and luckily, the spread of these new, strange and dynamic movies began to increase over the years, from a studio based of a comic company of all things when, at the time, comics were very much a teenage boy thing. Through the past decade, I have watched incredible characters define the new age of cinema, but nothing has ever made me get that sense Iron Man did. Then I watched this, and, for the first time in ten years, I felt excited again.

This movie takes place over three acts: the first act sees (what's left of) the Avengers

trying to come to terms that they lost the fight and attempting to move on... but then deciding that they didn't like that and trying to do something about it. The second act is them, using some questionable physics, attempting to do that, and act three is them feeling the repercussions. An interesting aspect of this movie is that it is only the first few scenes that happen in present day, with the rest of the movie happening five years later.

The plot is incredibly innovative and creative, if not a tad unoriginal, but that's it - a tad - and is easily follow able and well put through. The acting of the main cast is stupendous and above all incredibly believable, especially from Scarlett Johansson and Jeremy Renner 12

and, of course, Robert Downey Jr. The fight scenes are incredibly well rehearsed and a good balance is found between CGI slug-fests and actual, performed one-on-one brawls, which I was surprised to see such a large amount of. The CGI itself is superb, with Thanos looking like a real-life purple behemoth, and you can see why Infinity War was nominated for best special effects at the last Oscars. However, what this film most wins on is emotion.

There is a whole mix of emotions throughout this movie; in almost every scene in the first and second act there is something to make you laugh out loud, whether it be hilarious lines from Captain America, character interactions with Ant-Man and Hulk or just Thor in general, there is something for every character. However, the main emotion played on is sadness. The emotional punches knock through you like a freight-train whether it be something that happens to a character or just Tony Stark telling us how much he loves

us. To see characters that I, and most of our readers, have grown up with, fight in a battle that you know is do-or-die is heart-pounding, tear-jerking excitement. I won't tell you what happens at the end, but it is glorious in both execution and in-movie significance.

I could say a lot more about this movie, but we don't have the ink, so to sum up: it's incredible. You could say there is too much CGI, but I don't mind that and the overall production deserves to be ground-breaking. This proves that Marvel is still so far ahead of the curve, DC cannot even see the curve. By the time this publishes, Endgame will be in its last showings, so go and see it soon, and if you have seen it, go and see it again. Yes, the Marvel Universe is continuing, but this movie is the mother of all conclusions to the eleven year history of the greatest empire cinema has ever seen.

By Thomas Mann

# Medical Student Memoirs – One Year On

The Earth has decided to spin a little too fast, and the calendars tell us it's approaching the end of the academic year. I can't believe that just a few short, sweet months ago, I was pouring out all the excitement around Freshers' Week - and now we are here, destroying a small rainforest with the amount of paper we have sacrificed to revision.

The first year at medical school has been a prologue for the years to come. One year in, I have concluded that the more you learn, the more you realise there is left to learn. Bristol has done a fantastic job of uniting the classic "studying at university" with time on the wards, so neither is unfamiliar to us. The older medical students make it look so easy, swishing around the ward effortlessly with their crisp shirts and stethoscopes. Then there's us - stuttering novices whose talents include making a cracking cuppa, drawing the curtains around a patient's bay and getting in the way of everything. We have learnt that it is an art to come across as calm, knowledgeable and professional, when in your mind it's raining bees and everything is on fire. Taking a

history? How do you even begin? (A history is where you gather information from a patient for the first time.) How do you talk to someone AND work out what's wrong with them AND make it run smoothly at the same time? Luckily, you are not expected to know everything straight away, and it is no longer terrifying to admit that you don't know something. Oddly enough, that freedom sparks curiosity to explore more, to ask those questions, and to get it right. There is always something to work towards, and a little humility never hurt anyone. We will change over our time at medical school, but this is the time to start choosing what sort of person we will become.

Unexpectedly, a real highlight of this year has been our time on the wards, shadowing the Healthcare Assistants. For three 12-hour shifts, we worked alongside them, seeing how the ward works from the eyes of the rest of the hospital team. At a very early stage of our training, we've experienced the importance of teamwork in a practical way, and I left this knowing that a doctor is only one part of a much

greater whole. I was particularly grateful to spend time with patients without jumping to a diagnosis or medicalising them - a rare privilege in a busy ward. It's been a humbling experience, wiping out any traces of arrogance before they have time to develop. Know your place, know your team, remember that you all depend on each other. It's vital knowledge that no textbook can teach us.

Every student will probably tell you that their university is the best, so I'm going to dive straight into that stereotype and sing my praises of Bristol. We're starting to see just what an honour it is to pursue Medicine in one of the most creative, fearlessly independent and free-thinking places in the country. From the very first lecture, we learnt that Medicine is an art just as much as a detective's science; it is much greater than the sum of its parts, and it calls us to ask questions, to think creatively and from multiple points of view, and to question the norm appropriately. It's not just about what is the matter with the patient, but also what matters to the patient. Bristol is revolutionising medical education through giving us so many flavours of our training - patient actors, hospital shifts, wellbeing checks, portfolios,

conferences, from hardcore labs and simulations to creative assignments, every aspect of our curiosity is nurtured. Bristol is known for its edge for a reason, and it's only when I have to leave do I realise it has felt like home.

After a day in the hospital, evening entertainment includes listening to your friends' hearts and chests, and... Absolutely not. For some, the mission is to leave Medicine behind (despite how much you love it), and spend time with people who have made the sensible decision not to do Medicine. It's a paradox sometimes - we love what we do, knowing that there are plenty of other routes that would lead to fame and wealth and glory and wearing designer shades much, much quicker. There is also another wonderful paradox: before applying, the general advice that doctors gave me was "never be a doctor", and yet, there was nothing else in the world those people would rather do.

The timetable has been gloriously generous, allowing us to live some life. I ran a 10km race in May (something I'd never have dreamed of doing just a year ago!), joined a rather eclectic and ambitious choir, performed in the medics' annual comedy show, and am in the process of plotting the

plot for next year! I've also realised I was probably born in the wrong decade, and my love for swing dancing has drawn me to a dance festival over the summer. This brings me to fully recommend exploring new opportunities beyond the books. Yes, they are important. In fact, the skills you learn from a sport or an instrument can enhance your academic work. In the right balance, learning perseverance, creativity, teamwork and how to prioritise will come in useful at the most unexpected moments. Who knows, maybe you may even enjoy your academic work more, knowing that there is something beyond it to look forward to. It may take a few tries to find your groove, but you'd be surprised what you can discover!

Above all, university has been a time to learn about yourself. I've learnt to say no, respectfully, when my health depends on it. I've learnt that first impressions of people can be very different to the real person inside (for better or for worse). I've accepted that mistakes are okay, as long as you learn from them, and not to be too harsh on yourself when your expectations don't match reality. The hard times that follow only lead to better things, and during that time you see just how far your real friends will go to

support you. But above all, I am so incredibly grateful for everything I have learnt, whether the experience was good or not. Seeing everything as a learning opportunity has helped me stay resilient and love everything I do.

Challenges this term will include taking exams, moving into a proper flat (we're scarily close to growing up), finalising our placements for next year, and cracking on with choir performances. Until then, I shall bury myself in the rainforest of revision notes that engulfs me, wish you all courage and rest throughout this exam period, and as always, offer a listening ear or point of contact if I can be helpful. Summer is nearly here, and some day, everything that happens now will have been a year ago. Work hard, power through, do not give up, but do not ignore your rest. (One of our lecturers is adamant that sleep is more important than the number of hours you spend working. With a good night's sleep, you'll do more work in less time.) Walking that fine border between order and chaos, the happy medium between too much and not enough, is where true contentment lies.

By Maria Hancock

# Lower School Concert

On Tuesday 11th June a group of pupils came together to perform in the Lower School Soloists Concert.

Many pupils took this concert as an opportunity to perform their pieces in preparation for the music exams taking place the following week.

There were many students, ranging from Year 7 to Year 9, playing a wide variety of instruments at many different levels. Some pupils had recently started their instruments and were preparing for their first grade whilst others were working towards their Grade Eight. This fantastic array of different instruments and levels of experience meant that the Music Department was able to show parents and pupils how inclusive

the Music Department is, encouraging all to get involved and develop their skills.

Mr Barker and Mrs Else were kind enough to accompany the pupils with their pieces on the piano, which was useful for the performers and also made the concert even more enjoyable.

Well done to all the performers and thank you to the Music Department for organising the event.

By Jennifer Ewington



# French Trip

On Monday the 24th of June some of Year 9 went on the annual French Trip to Île-de-France for a couple of days. After a 13-hour bus journey we had arrived at our accommodation, about one and a half hours away from Paris. We met our enthusiastic animateur, who would be our guide for the trip.

Unfortunately, Paris was experiencing record breaking temperatures during our stay in France; temperatures of up to 45 degrees made sleeping and walking around difficult. Nevertheless, we carried on and our first challenge would be buying our own food at a market in Brie-Comte-Robert. We were each given 5 euros as we headed out to buy a French picnic in a typical French market. Our guide then led us to the serene grounds of Vaux-Le-Vicomte for our picnic.

Later that day, we visited the chateau de Vaux Le-Vicomte. It was just after midday and the heat had reached its peak; we had a welcome tour through the cool cellars under the chateau, ending with a walk through the breathtaking gardens. The day ended with some time in the hotel swimming pool.

On Wednesday we visited Paris. Paris is littered with monuments: the first we saw was the Arc de Triomphe; our bus trundled through the 10-lane roundabout as cameras flashed and phones clicked. Our bus driver then dropped us off, and we made our way up to the Sacre-Coeur, a church built in 1914 which stood over the north of Paris. We got an hour for souvenir and ice-cream shopping, then we returned to our bus and headed towards the River

Seine for a river cruise at the foot of the Eiffel Tower. Due to the heat, the teachers made the wonderful decision to change the visit to a modern art gallery to a trip to an air-conditioned shopping centre with over 120 stores. Having spent a good portion of our money we hopped onto our bus and made our way back to the Arc de Triomphe, where we would be having dinner in a restaurant.

On the next day we set our sights on Disneyland. The ultimate theme park and childhood fantasy experience – or so we thought. The famous Disney castle loomed over the masses as the sun slowly roasted the hordes of people that moved around the pristine grounds and shops. The queue times were horrendous, and I never felt more British as I slowly shuffled along the wooden handrails. But, as I sat down on the three-minute ride I had been waiting two hours for, I realized that this was

all part of the experience: the queues, the people, the crazy price tags - this is Disneyland. Looking back, it was all worth it. Now I understand why people come again and again each year to wait in long lines just to be thrown about at high speeds. It's addictive.

The trip was extremely well-planned and managed by the staff, the animateur and the driver. Each day was fun, eventful and full of action. In the short space of five days (two being taken by the journey) we saw a huge amount of historical, fun and amazing sites. Thank you to everyone who organized and staffed such a memorable trip!

By Lucas Hoffmann



# German Trip

The trip started at five o'clock in the morning with most of the Year 9 German students boarding the bus while half-asleep. Immediately, the search for plugs started. When all the students arrived, the bus set off on a 14-hour journey across four countries and a body of water. The driver made various stops in every different country as we counted the hours down using the clock in the coach. Eventually, we arrived at the Hotel Adler in Bad Salzbig. That would be our non-airconditioned shelter for the next four days. We ate dinner and went to bed in the sweltering heat. For every night, it was almost impossible to sleep in the heat of the hotel room.

The next day arrived as we woke with no difference in the heat. We ate a continental breakfast before leaving the hotel to visit a very large castle. It had three sections where the Eltz family, a German noble family, has lived since 1157. It was a castle/museum and it was very large with low ceilings and many spiral staircases. After that, we visited a vineyard in Cochem called J. Koll & Cie. We learnt how grapes fermented in oak barrels to create wine. We were then allowed to taste non-alcoholic grape juice made by their very

own grapes. After that, we were allowed to wander around the town of Cochem, where there was lots of ice-cream. The students and teachers regrouped as we set back off to the hotel for dinner.

After dinner, we went bowling where your experience in bowling could be judged by how hard the bowling ball hit the alley. To top the evening off, we went to the German Corner in Koblenz where we saw a green monument symbolising the first reunification of Germany, a piece of the Berlin Wall and the confluence of the Mosel and Rhine rivers. The view from the corner was beautiful. We left and went back to the hotel to wait for the next day to arrive. Wednesday came as we rushed to get ready and eat breakfast before setting off to Rüdesheim, another winemaking town in Germany. There, we witnessed many musical instruments playing themselves, with many also playing very well-known tunes. The oldest of these self-playing instruments were made in the 1800's, so it is fair to say they have held up very well. After, we went up a cable car to see another green monument signifying the first German reunification. It was much grander and bigger than the one near the confluence. We ate our lunch there before we

headed back down in the cramped cable cars to wander around Rüdesheim.

There were many souvenir shops, but all my friends and I were looking for was some air-conditioned shops. After this, we convened back together and walked along the bank of the River Rhine to go on a cruise along it. It was magical, and not just because it had AC. The views were simply amazing with the water as clear as the sky. Surrounding the cruise were large green valleys jam-packed with trees. The cruise ended as we headed to the less magical hotel to eat dinner. After dinner, we were guided by a hotel worker's son to a local football ground where we all played football with him in a dusty, gravel-filled ground. It was fantastic! We laughed our heads off as each one of us got shoved into by another. This unfortunately was stopped by the teachers and we all walked back to the hotel coughing as the dust from the ground entered our lungs. We went to bed still coughing our lungs out as we fantasized about arguably the best day in the trip that was coming up on Thursday.

The coughing had thankfully stopped as we woke up in pools of sweat. We ate breakfast and hurried into the coach as we eagerly awaited the theme park that we would spend all day in. It was Phantasialand. In Phantasialand we could go on any

rides we liked, including the fastest and longest multi-launching rollercoaster in the world, Taron. The rides that were known as the scariest were the Black Mamba and Taron, both extremely fast and therefore both serving a massive dose of adrenaline to the rider. It was both scary and amazingly fun. However, we arrived there about two hours late as the equivalent of the MI in Germany was shut. We were very late, but we were allowed to stay there until 18:00, so we had more time to go on rides. We left promptly and ate dinner and went to bed to get ready for the 14 hour journey back to Leicester.

We woke up at 6:15 to have breakfast at 6:45 and to leave at 7:45. The bus was too hot to sleep and we all tried to waste our time by listening to music or watching films or talking until we reached Leicester. We arrived at the Calais port and gave our passports to the UK Border Control. Thankfully, none of us were detained and we went back onto the bus to go on a ferry, but this ferry would be in about one and a half hours. The wait was extremely boring. We finally entered the ferry and wandered around it for one and a half hours until we entered Dover. We left on the final stretch of the journey to Leicester. We finally arrived and met our parents to leave the bus and sleep in our own, colder homes.

By Neal Kulkarni

# Spanish Trip

On Monday the 24th of June, those of Year 9 going on the MFL trip to Spain had to get up at some ungodly hour, around 2 or 3 am, to be at East Midlands airport by 5:00 am for our three-hour flight, where we would then catch a three-hour couch ride. In the end, however, it was all worth it for the incredible time we had in Spain.

On the first day, after the flight, we traveled to Malaga and we were able to walk down a very long street filled with shops, and I had some of the best ice-cream I've ever tasted, although I don't think I need to tell you the victor in a match between ice-cream and 30 degree heat. Spain was anticipated to be the warmest of the MFL trips this year, however, we were lucky, and it ended up being the coolest on whole. After that, we visited a Picasso museum which was very interesting as I've never actually seen a Picasso before. Then we took the long coach trip to our hostel, where we had a barbeque for dinner.

On the second day, we visited more places around the area we were staying in, called Costa Del Sol, including the biggest and most intricately designed church I have ever seen, as well as a fortified mosque and a market, where we were able to buy food for paella the next day, as well as order our own lunches. The whole experience was great for speaking and learning new words in Spanish. After that day out, we went to the Costa Del Sol beach, and I'm honestly surprised that more people aren't talking about it, because it's beautiful, although I did get in a fight with a small kid (I'm not sure what he said but, from one of the words, it sounded racist). Then after a few hours swimming, relaxing and getting burnt, we went out for Tapas.

On the third day, we spent the day inside learning the language and cultures of Spain. We had two Spanish lessons, and then some Paella-making and Flamenco dancing of all

things, which was good, but I don't think we had enough time to iron out a full routine. Then for lunch we had the Paella that we made in the morning which was absolutely delicious and well worth the time we put into it. Then in the afternoon we went to the port of Cadiz where we would visit the Torre Tavira, which is a tall tower with a great pin-hole camera, which is a large mirror that that allows you to see the whole of the city. We got some free time and then caught the ferry back to Costa Del Sol. Then we enjoyed Tapas out again, but this time there was a Flamenco performance alongside, where people were invited up to dance alongside the performers. I've never laughed so hard at what I saw that night.

On the fourth day, Thursday, we went to the beautiful Seville, with speckless streets and amazing architecture and traditional Spanish feel. We visited the Royal residence, Castle Alcazar, and saw a lot of very large peacocks in the vast garden at the back. Then we visited the Plaza De Espana, which is

breath-taking just to look at, for photos before spending the rest of the day at a theme park called Isla Magica, which is worth a visit, especially during the summer. Then we returned to our Hostel for dinner and a photo montage of the entire trip (which was more embarrassing than everything else).

On the final day, we had to get up at around five am for our flight back to England, and I did most of my sleeping on the coach trip back to the airport. Overall, the trip was an incredible experience in a different country, where I learnt so much of culture in just five days. I would say that the best part was the visit to Seville on Thursday, just because of how amazing the landscape was.

By Thomas Mann



# Best Books

I'm Shruti Chakraborty and I'm here to tell you why I couldn't live without reading. Here are all of my favourite books, the reasons why I love to read so much and my journey to becoming the avid reader I am today.

Relaxation has got to be the most important reason why I spend all the free-time I get reading. I read every single night in bed before I go to sleep because it really helps me to fall asleep easily without the tossing and turning of someone who has just been scrolling through Instagram before switching off their light. Even in the holidays, I like to take a picnic mat and a book outside when it's warm; it's the perfect way to get that summer tan you're all dreaming of while getting lost in a story too! If you have a stressful day at school or work or are worried about anything in your life (or even if you're a bit bored and want some excitement in your life!) then the perfect way to relax and take your mind off it is to read a book that has nothing to do with anything that might be on your mind.

As I said, if you're bored –

like I often am – of your same, repetitive, mundane routine, reading a new chapter of a book will give your life an extra element of fantasy, romance, sci-fi or whatever it is you're interested in. That will be enough to brighten your day and add some flavour to your life. I become so totally immersed in the world of my book and I get extremely connected to the characters and interested in their lives and stories. I really feel like I know the people and the places, because my imagination allows me to picture them so vividly. I love to be engulfed in a world I know nothing, yet somehow everything, about.

Personally, my favourite genre has got to be fantasy. I must have mentioned this a hundred times, but I often become very bored of my life. I just adore the excitement that adventure brings me, and I find the way that a seemingly ordinary world can expand with fantastical creatures and magic to be so interesting. However, my stubborn love for fantasy novels does limit the length of my "To Read" list unfortunately. For some reason, realistic novels

feel too heavy in my hand for me to ever pick them up, because I just don't find the world that I already know interesting enough to want to know more about it. In my opinion, this world and the stories from it just can't compare to stories from mythical worlds that I have so much to learn about.

A downside of my catastrophic love for books is the fact that I undoubtedly can become overly obsessed with the story's characters and places. A recent example of this is the Mortal Instruments series by Cassandra Clare. I read this six-book series last April to May (just before my end of year school exams, might I add). I was obsessed. It took over my life: I got no sleep, barely did any work, got distracted by the thought of a chapter I had read the night before every day. I was blinded by the pages before my eyes as my school exams ominously approached. By the end of it, my Mum had to physically take the books out of my room and hide them in my Dad's sock drawer (even my love for those books and a laundry peg couldn't bring me to scavenge through there). Finally, after my exams were done, I finished the series and there was only one word to describe me then: heart-broken. I

was absolutely devastated when the series ended because I had become so whole-heartedly invested in those stories. But don't worry; I found out there was a spin-off series with the characters' children in it, so I was back to my good old obsessive reading habits in no time.

However much I could go on about why I love to read, I think that a really vital reason why everyone should read is the fact that it undeniably does broaden a person's knowledge and vocabulary, and sparks ideas, imagination and unlocks a part of your brain you never knew you had before from first-hand experience. I can tell you that reading made me a much better writer and I learn so much about myself and our world that I could not have known without seeing myself mirrored in the books I read.

I will continue to love reading until I am grey and old because I could never get tired of the excitement and comfort and joy that the feeling of a book in my hand brings me. I hope from reading this article I have also inspired you to pick up and read something too (other than this magazine of course!).

By Shruti Chakraborty

# Summer Reading List

The Book of Dust  
by Philip Pullman

The Book Thief  
by Marcus Zusak

Oprphan Monster Spy  
by Matt Killeen

The Diabolic  
by S.J. Kincaid

The hate u give  
by Angie Thomas

Cell 7  
by Kerry Drewery

Lies We Tell Ourselves  
by Robin Talley

We were Liars  
by E. Lockahrt

The Weight of a Thousand  
Feathers  
by Brian Conaghan

The Call  
by Peadar O'Guilin

Notes on my Family  
by Emily Critchely

Saint Death  
by Marcus Sedgwick

One  
by Sarah Crossan





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William Wale