



PEACOCK

By the pupils, for the pupils
Christmas 2019

CENTRE



CareerMat

UNIVERSITY
OUTSIDE THE UK

"When you
absolutely
positively
have to know,
ask a
librarian."

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

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In the News

It's been several weeks on the campaign trail now, and everything is starting to come together. Zuffar Haq and Neil O'Brien, the Liberal Democrat and Conservative candidate respectively, are out around the constituency, campaigning like wildfire. In terms of actual polls, YouGov last week suggested that the race would be an immensely tight one, with the difference between the Liberal Democrat and Conservative candidate likely to be as little as 2% of the vote share. This statistic bucks the national trend, in which the Liberal Democrats, who were challenging Labour in the battle for second place at around 25 points, dropped as low as 14 in recent days. This is partly due to massive Conservative gains after the Brexit Party pulled their challenge in all seats they currently held.

In terms of candidate activity, Neil O'Brien and Zuffar Haq are both incredibly proactive: Haq has visited every local state primary school, while O'Brien has been out on the streets of Harborough talking to voters and door knocking - I had a very interesting conversation with him last Saturday.

However, the Labour candidate Celia Hibbert is nowhere to be seen - this may be due to Labour being over 20% behind the Conservatives and Lib Dems in the polls.

By the time you read this the results of the election will have been announced, and I predict there will be a hung parliament. If this is the case, then get ready for both a potential second referendum on Britain's membership of the European Union as well as another election.

Party Manifestos:

Conservatives

The Conservatives want to “Get Brexit Done” by the end of January, invest a little bit more in the NHS, and reinstate police officers to put the number back to what it was five years ago.

Labour

Labour want to renationalize everything- Railways, Broadband, Telecoms and Energy. They also want to table the abolition of private education and hold a second referendum on Britain’s membership of the EU.

Liberal Democrats

The Lib Dems want to completely stop Brexit by revoking Article 50. They also want to plant 60 million trees a year until 2050, and increase

Income Tax slightly to make sweeping improvements to the NHS and Social Care system. They also want to recruit 20,000 more teachers and halt Climate

Change by banning the sale of new non-electric cars by 2030.

Green Party

The Green`s policy is somewhat similar to that of the Liberal Democrats - they want another referendum on Brexit, however. They also want to plant vast numbers of trees. A policy of particular interest is their plan to introduce a Universal Basic Income, which means giving everyone of working age a lump sum of money every year whether they worked or not, which would eliminate the need for the benefit system.

By William Wale

William Wale is a member of the Liberal Democrat Party, and the views in this article represent that of the writer, and not of the Peacock or Leicester Grammar School

Mrs Johnston Interview

What is your favourite topic in Physics, and why?

I have got two favourite topics in Physics: Particle Physics and Astronomy. The thing that they both have in common is scale:

Astronomy is about finding out things on an incredibly large scale; Particle Physics is finding out about things on an incomprehensibly small scale. I think it's amazing that we as humans, who are somewhere in the middle of that scale, have the ability to find out so much about what happens

over this whole spectrum of scale. In addition, there is still a lot to discover in both of these topics - a lot of what we think may be correct, could be wrong, which is always interesting to keep in mind.

Who are your favourite and least favourite physicists, and why?

This is a hard question (I don't really have a least favourite physicist). However, my favourite physicist is definitely Marie Curie; she fought hard to achieve

recognition for what she did in Physics, because she was female and living in a time when females weren't really allowed to study science, let alone receive recognition for it. Curie went to great lengths to receive awards which she deserved but wasn't allowed to collect, as she was a female. I haven't really got a least favourite Physicist, but I decided that Mr. Huygens was quite irritating because he has these little wavelets which are quite difficult to explain when we are discussing wave interference.

Other than Physics, what other subjects do you enjoy, and why?

All the other sciences, obviously, because they're all sort of interlinked in one way or another. Also, I quite like Maths, although I am not an exceptional mathematician. I like it because it's very logical and also very satisfying when you work your way through a problem, and then you finally get to that QED at the end- it's all very neat and tidy. Outside of school I like things that are a little bit more creative, like knitting.

By Aditya Mathur and Neal Kulkarni



There are very few films these days that stick with you. I'm not talking about when you come out of the cinema and talk about the plot and your favourite moment in the car during the ride home. I mean really stick with you, like thinking about it before you go to sleep stick with you. The reason why films can do this is because they resonate with you, either subtly or brutally clear, and the way that is done is by taking you on a journey, either into a character's mind or following them on an actual journey (one of the reasons "The Lord of The Rings" is so popular). They must show you things that you have never seen or heard before, and really glue your eyes to the screen for a full hour and thirty minutes to achieve this

connection. Films usually don't do this anymore, but this prime piece of beef turned that on its head.

Anyone who is anyone will have at least heard of the Joker. Batman's arch enemy, he is one of the most infamous villains ever to bless screen or page. However, his story is not so well known, which is fine because the movie fills us in. It follows the story of Arthur, living in the fictional city of Gotham, a down-on-his-luck comedian/clown with a mental illness that makes him laugh at inappropriate moments, living in a cupboard-size apartment with his dotting mother. His one and only dream is to get on a comedian's stand up show. He is the epitome of 'down-on-your-luck', with people scamming him at work,

getting beaten up and having uncomfortable moments on the bus, and his days are showing no signs of getting better; one day he snaps, launching him and his already fractured mental health into a plummeting spiral, which eventually churns him out as the green-haired psychopath.

Joaquin Phoenix' portrayal of Arthur can only be summed up as formidable. The way he moves, speaks and laughs is just amazing, and the fantastic ability he brings to the film is gritty, sympathetic and brutally realistic. One could even say Oscar worthy. As I mentioned, Arthur has this cackling and uncontrollable laugh, and that laugh is behind every scene throughout the film, making it seem like this inescapable thing Arthur can't get away from, and it eventually drives him to become the Joker. A brilliant thing this film and the director, Todd Phillips, achieves is making us sympathetic towards Arthur as he begins to slip between sanity, but we never forgive him for his actions of killing and manslaughter. The plot is interesting and complex, forcing

the audience to listen to every word and watch every second, and the score by Hildur Guðnadóttir is one of the most effective soundtracks I have experienced in modern cinema.

To summarise, "Joker" is not your average movie experience. It is bold, engaging and sadistically funny, making it the most captivating watch that I predict you'll see for a very long time. Many people have walked out of this film because it is nasty and narcissistic, but you can't say it is bad for that, because it is supposed to be nasty and narcissistic. It's a masterclass in cinematography and camerawork, and I might go as far as saying Joaquin Phoenix' career-defining role.

By Tom Mann

Disclaimer: "Joker" is a 15 rated movie and this should be considered if you are going to see it. There will be many people reading this who may look 15 and have gone into 15's before even if that isn't your age. This is because many 15's could get away with only being 12's, and are only given a 15 certificate because of a few scenes. "Joker" is not one of these, and it does contain strong violence, gore and disturbing images throughout, and you should only go and watch this if you are over the age of 15.



Disney
MALEFICENT

I haven't given a bad review in a while, so this should be fun. Carrying on with their totally original and definitely-not-old-yet tradition of remakes and sequels, Disney has come up with the sequel to 2014's dark fantasy "Maleficent", which I still thoroughly enjoy whenever I re-watch it; it was a creative, dark and unique twist of the run-of-the-mill Disney princess film, stacked full of action, plot and humour, while still being a child's fantasy about love and fairies. This one is about... well I'm not sure, but what I thought it was basically the first one, just without all the good bits.

If you haven't seen the first one, then this one won't make very much sense. The basics of the first one was about a demon/witch woman called Maleficent (Angelina Jolie with cheekbones) who controls trees living in a mystical forest, who adopts a 'generic, blonde Disney princess' called Aurora. This second one follows on from that, which is actually a good point of this movie, in that it doesn't just copy the last one. Aurora wants to get married to the prince, but the problem is Maleficent and the queen have a falling out and from there it all just goes to pot, really. An important sub-

plot is how Maleficent finds a lost community of beings that are like her (with horns and wings) living underground. I know this sounds too important to be a sub-plot since it concerns the title character, but so little time is spent on it, it can barely even be called a sub-plot in the first place.

The CGI is up to standard as to what it should be in a Disney live action, which is good because it makes up for all the things that are really aren't up to standard. The plot is incredibly predictable even for a child's film, and it ends in the most generic Disney way ever, and I was struggling to both watch and stay awake by the time it got to the credits. The dialogue is basically plastered into their mouths and most of it is just unimportant/unfunny nonsense. However, the main problem is Maleficent herself. As I said about the

sub-plot, she has not nearly enough screen time and development as she should as the title character. She is just there in most scenes and would have served better as a side character. I'm not even joking when I say that in one of the scenes, her only lines were "What?", "No" and "Yes".

In conclusion, if you want to see a unique, bold and entertaining Disney movie, go and watch "Maleficent". If you want to see just a Disney movie, watch "Maleficent 2", because it's as generic as they come with this one. Hopefully, if Disney are going to keep fuelling this non-ecological spew of remakes of sequels, they will put effort in to make them distinct and entertaining, not just a boring fairy tale we've all heard before.

By Thomas Mann

iPad Pro Review

The iPad Pro. Everything Apple has spent years developing and refining, thrown into a sleek, aluminium, glass and silicone slab. The ultimate iPad; or so one would assume, considering the £1659 price tag.

For this review, I have set myself a challenge: on the Apple website they make some subtle pokes at other laptops, inadvertently claiming that the iPad Pro can replace your day-to-day laptop. So, I have exclusively used the iPad Pro for schoolwork, shopping and Netflix for a week; and to be honest, I think Apple might be right (finally).

The iPad Pro comes in two sizes: an 11 inch version, and a rather large 12.9 inch version (the one which I used). The first thing you notice about the design is the removal of the all-familiar home button. The bezels

are now smaller and uniform; increasing screen real estate and, more importantly, making it look sleek. The whole iPad has become somewhat more square-ish with slightly sharper edges on the aluminium frame, a change which one can quickly get used to. The adequate 7 megapixel camera, sensors and microphones are blended in with the shiny black frame. The new design, like the iPhone 10 (iPhone X, if you must) design, is a hit: it maximises screen space and it keeps the iPad Pro smooth and elegant.

The screen has also received a major upgrade. As one would expect with any 'pro' device, the refresh rate for the display has been bumped up to 90Hz. In true Apple fashion they have labelled their new display technology "Liquid Retina Display" - which basically

means absolutely nothing; in fact Apple's OLED screens are all supplied by their direct competitor, Samsung. Surprisingly, the iPad Pro boasts an unusual - but stunning - 2K resolution display (2732x2048 for the 12.9" version) which raises it above many conventional laptops - a theme which you notice when using the iPad Pro. Vibrant colours and a massive screen make the iPad Pro ideal for Netflix or YouTube, but the strange 3:4 aspect ratio can mean that some videos don't make use of the whole screen.

I might regret saying this, but it actually feels like Apple (could) have actually listened to their customers; they finally added a USB-C port, the Apple Pencil doesn't have that really stupid sticky-outy charging thing and battery life has been improved significantly compared to the old iPad Pro. Face ID works like a charm: it can be used as a password or for internet banking and it works in the dark, with glasses on or even after a shower.

The iPad Pro boasts a powerful A12X bionic chip (One of Apple's latest), allowing any app to run smoothly. In addition to 4GB of RAM, the iPad Pro comes with various storage sizes - up to 1TB. The hardware, as expected, is top of the line but Apple has always been about the user experience and particularly the software. Yes, other laptops may have more RAM or can run more graphic intensive games, but the iPad Pro wasn't designed to be the best in frames per second, resolution or processing power: it was designed to be the best overall. What really allows the iPad Pro to compete with laptops are the accessories. The Apple Pencil (£129) magnetically clicks and charges onto the iPad Pro. The Apple Pencil is pressure sensitive and can be used at an angle to create wider and more detailed brush strokes on the screen and a quick double tap with the index finger switches brushes on your drawing app. The Smart Keyboard folio isn't particularly special; it is clicky but offers little in terms of

protection for your iPad and the £200 price tag is not justified - you're probably better off with something like the Logitech Slim Folio Pro at half the price.

Apple has always been a market leader with their iOS software and the iPad Pro is no exception. The home button has disappeared and has now been replaced by swiping up at different speeds to access the apps or go to the home screen - it can be quite frustrating sometimes but it's just something you need to get used to. Quick settings can be accessed via a swipe down from the top right corner. Now, one thing holding some people back (if they got over the price) is the - rather strange - notion that iOS doesn't support working apps or that it doesn't properly integrate with Windows or Android devices; an essential feature for any working laptop. But, Apple has actually addressed this by creating an entirely new operating system: iPad OS. And it is, simply put, awesome. It

includes (to name a few): side-by-side multitasking; seamless Office 365 integration, which makes sending and converting files a breeze (as I discovered when trying to send this article over the school email); larger home screen icons and a much needed folder management upgrade, you can now drag and drop files like a laptop. All these features and design choices combined really do make the iPad Pro feel special and worthy of the 'pro' title - unlike some other products *AirPods Pro*.

The iPad Pro is not entirely without problems though: the designers seem to have forgotten the term 'structural integrity' as the microphones have been poorly placed along the frame meaning that the iPad Pro will snap like a biscuit in your hands (JerryRigEverything on YouTube does a complete tear down of this amazing device). Additionally, the screen picks up fingerprints and grease like a magnet and, even with a micro fibre cloth, is harder to clean

than your blazer after dropping the school curry on it.

So, in conclusion: is the iPad Pro really worth the hefty price tag? Can it replace a laptop?

The answer is maybe and absolutely. The iPad Pro can tackle any laptop head on and I found it super easy to use - there were no compatibility issues and it was comfortable to write and send emails with. The screen is excellent for Netflix and/or YouTube - the 12.9 inch version is surprisingly portable for its size. The features are all well and nifty but there is always the issue of price looming over the iPad Pro. I would say this: if you buy the iPad Pro, be prepared (and it will happen) to spend on accessories such as the Apple Pencil, smart folio keyboard and AirPods because it enhances the experience of the iPad. The iPad Pro is ideal for work, school or business and I believe, for that, the price is wholly justified. The competition just doesn't really scratch up to the standard of the

iPad Pro; the Tab S4 feels clunky and a bit small, while my laptop is too big and sounds like a jet engine sometimes. It really boils down to what you will use it for. The iPad Pro is undoubtedly the king of tablets and is putting up a good fight in the laptop kingdom.

By Lucas Hoffmann
Written on iPad Pro.



Mr Whitton Interview

Why did you decide to study and teach Religious Studies?

At my previous school, I used to teach Integrated Studies, and it had strong links with Religious Studies. From then on, I decided to specialize in Religious Studies because I found it very interesting.

Are there any other subjects that you enjoy?

I used to play Rugby and I am very keen on it. I miss playing it now, but I still follow up on it, and a few years back I helped coach students who were part of

the rugby team at my old school. So really, rugby is my favorite subject/hobby that I enjoy, both in the perspective of playing it and also as a teacher. Also, I taught a range of other subjects; for example, for one year, I taught Food-Technology. I really enjoy cooking now, as a result of that.

What future events/trips are you looking forward to at Leicester Grammar School?

I recently visited the National Holocaust Centre and Museum with

Year Nine and I found it very interesting, as I had never been there before. The Holocaust trip was certainly the best trip I have been on, as it was amazing to be able to meet some of the survivors on the camps. I am looking forward to going back there next year. Also, there is an A-level Religious Studies conference coming up, which is exciting; there are a lot of schools that come to it and I am really looking forward to being a part of it.

In Religious Studies, you tackle many controversial issues. What, for example, are your views on Euthanasia?

I think Euthanasia is a

contentious subject; it personally affects a lot more people nowadays than it did in the past, as people are living longer - even though the quality of life doesn't necessarily follow. However, there are many weaknesses which arise from making Euthanasia legal in some countries. There are laws worldwide to protect people, but there's obviously lots of suffering that goes on, so there are many cases in the press going on about it. I sympathize with lots of people who are living particularly painful lives, due to these laws, which probably need to change.

By Svaraji Odedra, Aditya Mathur, Neal Kulkarni

Music Review

I am sick of Christmas songs. I walked into Sainsbury's today (it is currently the 1st of December), and I was – very unwantedly – being brainwashed by the speakers to want to listen to Mariah Carey. Her whiny, overplayed tune of 'All I Want for Christmas is You' was playing mercilessly while I contemplated how over 16 million people decided this song was good enough to spend money on. Her success let her write a children's book about it, which swindles a whopping £13.99 away from parents' pockets. Every time her song is played at a Christmas Market, shopping centre, supermarket or Christmas party, I want to destroy the device streaming it.

So, if you still want to stay in the Christmas mood, but don't want to scorch your eardrums, here are two songs (of many) that may keep you in the Christmas mood, but beware: they may not be as 'Christmassy' as you might like.

First up is 'Thank God It's Not Christmas' by Sparks. This 1974 song can be linked to Sparks' big break. Their album 'Kimono My House', featuring this song, is what caused their break into the glam rock scene. Recorded in London, this song becomes surprisingly catchy after only a couple of listens. It opens with a simple, scalic guitar solo, while the drums slowly creep into earshot.

The verse lyrics are just about understandable, as the bass takes the job of the guitar. Russell Mael's vocals taper off at the end of each line until guitar chords re-energise the song to lead into a classic chorus of powerful electric guitar chords and equally-as-powerful vocals. After another pairing of verse and chorus comes a slightly out of place guitar solo, which suits a harder rock song rather than an art/pop rock style. The repetitive nature of the song makes it both memorable and dull. Thankfully, the consistently robust vocals keep the song alive, as well as the constantly changing mood of the song. The chorus is as festive as it should be, but this theme is not continued throughout. Overall, a good Christmas tune if you're leaning towards less merry songs.

Next is the almost completely unknown acoustic band called Cinders. Their eponymous debut album features the song 'Last Year's Winter', a melancholic accidental attempt at a Christmas song. When first hearing this song at the age of 11, I somehow correlated it to Christmas. It sounds nothing like Mariah Carey, at all. Even Sparks' song has small hints of Mariah Carey sprinkled into it. Yet, I found it resonated with me. The peaceful acoustic guitar introduction sets the scene for the entire song. The mellow vocals introduce themselves in-between the chords, leaving a slightly depressive but surprisingly cosy taste. The consistent tone makes the song slightly limiting, but the sketchy acoustic pop/rock band made a fantastic shot at a festive song, even without meaning

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to make one. I would say, however, that this is more a wintery song than a festive song, but that isn't to say it shouldn't be played at Christmas. If you do, don't be concerned if you are a bit sad after – it leaves that sort of bitter aftertaste.



These are only two of many alternative Christmas songs around, and I plead to everyone reading this: do not play Mariah Carey in school.

By Neal Kulkarni



