

The Leicestrian

2024



LEICESTER
GRAMMAR
SCHOOL

Contents

INTRODUCTORY	04
SCHOOL-WIDE EVENTS	08
FOUNDATION DAY ESSAYS	28
ART	38
CLASSICS	48
DESIGN, ENGINEERING & TECHNOLOGY	52
ENGLISH & DRAMA	59
GEOGRAPHY & HISTORY	70
MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES	76
MUSIC	85
SCIENCE & MATHEMATICS	90
SPORT	99

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A Word from the Headmaster

Mr Watson

Every year seems to get more exciting, and every week brings yet further examples of our pupils' talents and abundant personal qualities. Riana and Ali's reflections focus on the shared opportunities, the friendships and the enjoyment of such a positive learning environment which has moulded our leavers as generous young adults who will each take their own bit of LGS with them as they embark on a lifetime of adventure.

As I write, we have been shortlisted as one of the finalists for the Times Educational Supplement's Independent Senior School of the Year, and our entry focuses on 'Academic enrichment combined with increased support for wellbeing: a winning formula'. You will see that amply reflected in these pages and in our 2023 A level results which (based on % A*/A) placed us as second top-performing independent school in the whole of the Midlands, and led us to win two Sunday Times accolades: for the East Midlands

2024 Independent Secondary School of the Year and for Academic Performance. An unprecedented six prestigious Arkwright Engineering scholarships were won for the Sixth Form, and 89% of our 2023 leavers embarked on a variety of courses at their top choice of university.

Together, staff and pupils have created a culture where increased provision and greater emphasis on wellbeing have made our community even more successful. We have opened a new and significantly extended medical suite, complemented by wellbeing and counselling rooms, but it is the people who really make the difference. I have been hugely impressed by our pupils' desire to 'get involved', joining and leading groups such as Embrace (EDI), Change (wellbeing), Fem Soc, Spectrum (LGBT+), Student Support, Charity, Diana Anti-bullying; all of these have had a very positive impact, and our senior pupils have been brilliant role-models.

Our successful inspection report in January 2024 noted that "relationships between teachers and pupils are founded on respect and a shared love of learning", and I count myself very fortunate to work with a staff team who encourage, support and guide our pupils. We are keen that they should develop the ambition and human creativity which will take them far in life, and it is that energy and happy engagement which shine through so many of the activities filling the pages of this year's Leicestrian. We have had lots of fun!

This is Mrs Higginson's final creation as Staff Editor, and I hope she will be enjoying her retirement by the time you read this. I am immensely grateful to her for the determination to ensure a faithful and colourful record of our school community's marvellous endeavours over so many years, and for motivating her team of pupil editors, photographers and journalists to provide the rest of us with so much inspiration.

The Heads of School

2023 - 24



A Word from Riana Pathmanathan



I would like to say that it feels like only yesterday I was starting school, but my first day at LGJS was so long ago that I cannot remember it at all. 14 years on, time has flown by, and I cannot quite believe that in a few weeks we will be leaving, soon

to become OLs! I will always be appreciative of the opportunities LGS has provided me – from ziplining across the Costa Rican rainforest to losing battles for a top locker every year without fail, I can safely say I have made lifelong memories here. Reminiscing on my favourites, the school productions stand out. I have somehow made quite the leap, from playing Roger the Hedgehog in ‘Alice’, to, more recently, Nancy in ‘Oliver!’ and Daisy Buchanan in ‘The Great Gatsby’ (a true tale of rags to riches), with the help of Miss Adams. Being part of those shows is so special – the hours of tireless efforts by the entire cast and crew always paid off when we were on stage, especially when we received our standing ovations. Music has been a highlight too – whether it be playing in the orchestra for ‘West Side Story’, or annual Big Band concerts at The Little Theatre. I would like to thank Mr Jeans, Mr Ashwin, and Mrs Gates for being such inspirations, and Mr Barker for his reminder to ‘play the wrong notes but please just play them in the right places!’ Hockey has also made for some of my best memories at school. 1st XI pre-season weekends

away fuelled by Lucozade, alongside Mrs Laybourne and Miss Jeffries’ ever-inspiring mottos will be greatly missed, as will fixtures under the floodlights. Music, drama, and sport have all gifted me valuable skills and friends for life across year groups, which I will always be grateful for.

My time here definitely would not have been the same without the wonderful people. Ms Hulme, particularly, has provided me with constant guidance, and Dr Fulton has been a source of unwavering kindness and support too. I will miss debates with Ms Ford and Mrs Brookes in RS, neither of whom we could ever seem to win against! Nonetheless, I have never felt prouder than when I discovered that Dr Ainge loves my Welsh accent, or making Mr King laugh when, with the help of ChatGPT, I took his punishment of writing an 8-page essay on the importance of homework seriously. Being in this role has been busy, but a privilege. I had never realised what goes into getting the whole school in and out of St Nic’s, and I’d like to thank the organisational genius that is Mrs Village for all her help. Thank you also to our prefect dream team, who have been the most brilliant group to work with, and my fabulous friends, for the most amazing memories. A special thank you goes to Ali for being so fantastic this year – I can always rely on him to calm down any situation and there is no one I would rather have chased duty-skiving friends with! It feels surreal to be leaving after all this time, but I truly feel so proud to be a part of LGS’ Class of 2024 and I wish everyone all the best for the future.



A Word from Ali Khan

The feeling of walking through the LGS doors for the first time, mid-way through Year 9, is one I will never forget. After being warmly welcomed by my form tutor and classmates, I remember being told that the Street is the longest indoor corridor in Europe; while that is a fact I have not yet able to verify, it certainly feels true to anyone embarking on the arduous trek from an A-wing locker to a D-wing lesson. Being swept into lockdown within a matter of months marked a very eventful beginning to life at LGS, and time has flown by in the four years since -- I can't believe we're here already. It feels incredible to reflect on the amazing opportunities that LGS has provided, and how it has moulded me into the person I am today. I have had a great time working with the Change Group and Charity Committee, and loved being involved in organising Culture Day: the vibrancy and excitement in the foyer during the lunchtime fair was a truly special memory. A huge thank you to Miss Young for her cheerful discussions, and for the free coffees, during our weekly EMBRACE meetings at the café. Completing my Gold Duke of Edinburgh expedition (falling knee-deep into a river in the process) was a trying yet unforgettable experience, sweetened by a chance encounter with Richard Hammond amongst the Cumbrian peaks. Representing the school in debating competitions was always memorable, and House Events have also been a highlight -- I will forever bleed green as a proud member of VCs -- particularly House General Knowledge and Sports Day at Saffron Lane, pushing generations of pupils

out of their comfort zone and encouraging me to keep an open mind and to try new things. With that came, by far, my most important contribution to LGS: discovering my Eminem alter-ego in this year's House Singing performance.

I am so thankful to all the teachers that have helped me throughout my time at LGS. Dr Fulton and Dr Kendall's university advice has been particularly invaluable, and I must also thank Mr King for managing to put up with me for two years, with each Chemistry group practical in our lessons teetering on the edge of disaster. Being Head of School has been an opportunity that I am immensely grateful for and have thoroughly enjoyed; the feeling of gliding around St Nic's in our robes is one that I will miss. I would like to thank Mr Watson, Mrs Village and Mr Hunt for their expert guidance and support throughout the year. Mrs Village deserves a special mention for helping us through the trials and tribulations that come with getting everyone seated in St Nic's during assemblies (and her knack for keeping the chaos distinctly organised). I would also like to thank our prefect team for their continual commitment, and my friends, with whom I have made countless memories that I will always cherish. I would also like to give a huge thank you to Riana for being such an incredible Head of School; her enthusiasm is infectious, and I feel so fortunate to have had her alongside me this year. Finally, I wish the best of luck to everyone in the Class of 2024, and will be proud to call myself an Old Leicestrian. To all students, I encourage you to make the most of any opportunity that is available to you - seize the day!

Prefect Team



2023-24



Prep (Year 6) 2023-2024





Our Award-Winning Library

by Mrs Midgley, LGS Librarian

Back in February 2020, just before the dreaded Covid struck, I acquired the paperwork to work towards a school library quality mark, that I believed our library deserved. The award is administered by the Warwickshire School Library Service, but available nationally, and also endorsed by the School Library Association, of which we are a member. There are twenty areas of our work assessed, and I needed to gather and present evidence for as many of these areas as possible. The areas included library stock (including diversity), the space

we occupy, the staff, the reading culture and the information skills teaching. It took till last summer to start putting together the evidence, and then we had the big flood, which caused further delay. I finally submitted our evidence in February 2024, and in May 2024 I heard that we had not only been given the award, but a GOLD award!

As I write this, we are waiting for a certificate, which we will be able to display in the library, to show our achievement. Many schools no longer have a library, as there

is no legal requirement to provide one, and space, staffing and resources can be scarce. However, at Leicester Grammar School, the library is a valued resource, available for everyone to visit and use, whether your resources are printed or digital, or you just want a welcoming space to be yourself. The award is not just for Mrs Champion and myself, (pictured below), though we are very excited about it, but for the whole school. It reflects how our library is funded, supported, managed, and of course, used. So well done, everyone!





Year 8's Ski Trip to Italy

by Ophelia Balakrishnan, Year 8





On the 18th of February, 2024 we arrived at school for 9:00am, all kitted up in our LGS hoodies and excited; our much-anticipated ski trip was finally here! We set off to Luton Airport where we were given the bad news that our plane was delayed, but we made the most of the extra time by shopping and spending time with our friends. It was 2:00 am when we eventually stepped through the door of our hotel in the resort of Prato Nervosa in Italy, so it was a case of quickly finding our rooms and getting some much-needed sleep.

The next morning, we came down to breakfast to find the most amazing display of food – a huge buffet with options ranging from crepes to bacon, and all sorts of bread. Our tiredness replaced by excitement, we set off to be skied and booted before heading for the slopes. We were divided into six groups, from total beginner to expert, then taken to different areas on the beautiful mountain. I am sure that, like me, a lot of us spent less time on our feet and more time on the floor on the first day. But as the week progressed we all improved, and by the end of the trip most of us had tackled black runs and even tried skiing backwards. The evening après ski sessions were good

fun. We experienced tubing down the mountain in giant rubber rings, put our heads together in a quiz night, ate pizza in a traditional village restaurant and even showed off our best moves at a disco.

No-one was particularly thrilled to be woken at 1:00 am to return to the airport, especially as it signalled the end of our week. The ski trip was brilliant fun. Thank you to Dr Fulton for organising all the activities and Miss Kaur, Mr Grimadell, Mr Moore and Mr Parkins for looking after us so well.





Senior Head of House Report

by Miss Allcoat

The school year started with the excitement and intense focus of the House Music competition, with five weeks of concentrated preparation. On the day, Judges wowed the assembled audience with their almost-full orchestra and the stunning vocal talent of Nandini Waghela (L6). They narrowly beat a well themed and rehearsed Masters organised by Rishan Raja (L6). In December Mrs King returned from maternity leave to run the General Knowledge competition with me, firmly getting us into the festive spirit with specialist rounds ranging from the Olympics to Doctor Who, from Disney to Christmas itself. Masters won the Juniors section, largely thanks to Thomas Steggles (Y8), whilst VCs won overall with victory for Inters and Seniors thanks to the likes of Alice Hawkins (Y9) and Flo Warren (U6). The Swim Gala took place across the year and the competitive atmosphere was inspiring as always. Whilst Masters won the Inters section, Judges won both Juniors and Seniors, securing the cup and the win overall. Chess and Darts ran simultaneously during lunchtime, bringing some energy and cheer to the cold start of Lent Term. We had so many new players to darts, with new friendships formed between sixth formers and juniors as they worked together to successfully go “around the world” and hit all the numbers on the dart board.

In Games throughout the year, girls competed in Netball (won by Dukes), boys in Rugby (Judges won), and both played Hockey (double VCs victory), Cricket (victory for Masters boys and Dukes girls) and Cross Country. The Tom Ellis Cross Country event is inclusive and challenging, as well as a moment to remember Tom. Dukes did

very well, winning both Junior and Inter Sections, whilst VCs won the Seniors. Special mention must go to the winners of the Tom Ellis Trophy, Lucy Free (Y11 Judges) and Isaac Mohan (Y11 VCs), the Cup, Isabel Priestman (Y10 Masters) and Benji Dubois (Y9 Dukes) and the Shield, Freya Ives (Y7 Masters) and David Ellis (Y8 Judges).

Friday lunchtimes saw lots of House Sport, with Boys’ Football being particularly popular. My favourite moment came when the Senior House Captains acted as incredibly enthusiastic and committed managers to the Junior boys’ teams. The leadership of George Garner (U6) secured the win for Masters, with incredible play from both Juniors and Seniors. We also had Badminton (won by Judges), Table Tennis (Masters), Mixed Basketball (Dukes) and the return of Tennis (Masters). The Junior Girls have been enjoying football club with Miss Regan with obvious improvement on play since last year and a win for VCs. And it was so wonderful to see the return of House Tennis, largely in lovely summer weather, run by Mr Godsmark, newly inducted into Masters in honour of them winning House Tennis this year. Meanwhile, in the Lifting Lounge, Mr Ebbesen introduced the Fitness Games, which saw pupils competing in varied challenges testing their strength, endurance and determination with Olympic lifts, repetitive wall balls and furious rowing. Judges won overall, a result Mr Ebbesen was pleased with as a Judge himself.

In House Meetings, House Singing gave us the memorable performance by the Head Boy, Ali Khan (U6), as he joined Diya Premkumar (U6)

in a duet, proving himself as adept at rapping as Eminem. We also witnessed the return of Riyaan Parmar (Y7), famous for his self-penned “Coconut” song last year. This time he sang about the properties of the exotic pineapple and threatened us with grave consequences should we consider putting it on a pizza! Mr Radford ran Mental Maths with impressively fast calculations carried out by our students and Dukes proving themselves to be the best with numbers. Miss Hill ran Spelling Bee, with her House, VCs, securing the win with calm and competent spelling skills. I ran a special teachers round of Just a Minute as a demonstration prior to pupils playing and was impressed by the thoughtful eloquence of Ms Hulme, Mrs Kendall and Mr Anderson, as well as last minute sign-up Dr Ainge. Masters students proved themselves to have the gift of the gab with the most points scored in form competitions.

The Houses chose to support LOROS this year, a local charity many of us have a personal connection with. We fundraised at the school disco, sold Valentine’s Day hearts and Easter eggs and applied temporary tattoos for a fee, to name just a few initiatives. Each House aimed to bank

the most, totalling £854 overall, with Masters raising more than a third of the total amount.

We had a great range of Creative Competitions including designing a Christmas card and a Remembrance Day poster, trying to capture “What the House System Means to Me” in a poem or poster, and a photography competition on the theme of “Nurture”. Shown below are a few of my favourite entries.

With a tweak to Sports Day this year, we saw all competitors complete their events on the day at Saffron Lane Athletics Stadium. Dukes won the day with some impressive athletic prowess and team spirit. The points had been close in the last term, but this victory pushed Dukes to their win of the Midland Bank Cup, with Judges, Masters and VCs placing not that far behind them.

A big thank you is owed to Mr Radford, Miss Hill and Mrs King, my fellow Heads of House, and a special one for Miss Rothwell who looked after Dukes in Mrs King’s absence. Well done to Dukes – proof that you can go from last place to first with the hard work and determination.



“What the House System means to me”

by Poppy Self-Pierson (Y8 VCs)



“Nurture”

by Charles Lawrence (Y10 Masters)



2023-24

Chapel Report

by Mr Millward
(Photo from Remembrance Service, November 2023)

The Church is irrelevant in society today; numbers are dwindling, and it has been beset by one scandal or controversy after another!’ In spite of huge amounts of good performed by the church historically, and the fact that, on a global scale, Christianity is growing, this is the understandable perspective that many have in the UK today. Accordingly, I aim to point people’s eyes, not in the direction of flawed human beings who can give a distorted impression of what Christianity is about through careless words and deeds, but in the direction of God Himself -- holy, loving, and forgiving, who made Himself known to us in the person of His Son, Jesus.

As a school community we celebrate the key Christian festivals where these things were taught. We were privileged to welcome the Archdeacon of Leicester as preacher for our Foundation Day Service. At Remembrance this year, for the first time, representatives from all three schools in the Trust attended our service at the Great Glen cenotaph. Other weekly chapel events have continued this year, including Chapel Chocolate on a Monday, Christian Union on a Wednesday, and a short service every Friday. These have been useful informal times for teaching the Christian message, which has been appreciated by those who have attended. Furthermore, I have been encouraged to two Confirmation services this year, witnessing four LGS pupils making a public profession of faith in their local churches. I am grateful, as always, to Dr Ainge (organist), Mr Stagg and his

tech team, and Mr Barker and musicians (especially Mr Ashwin) for their vital roles in these services. The Chapel Team are very committed, helping both up front and behind the scenes to ensure services take place smoothly. My thanks especially to Claudia Carnduff and Charles Lawrence for heading up the team. The Lord Himself goes before you and will be with you. He will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid, do not be discouraged (Deuteronomy 31:8.)

It is important to recognise that LGS is a multi-cultural community, with many faiths represented, and where over 100 pupils observed Ramadan. I do all I can to support these different expressions of faith, but am always keen to do more. I am grateful to Yahya Musa (Yr 11), for the following contribution: “The Muslim school community would like to express our thanks to Mr Millward and the SLT for facilitating the ease of our obligatory Salah (prayers). We use the H2 classroom which accommodates up to 60 pupils who can congregate for the daily Dhuhr and Friday Jumu’ah prayers. Recently, cupboards for our prayer mats have been installed. A state-of-the-art Wudumate, a purpose-built sink used for ablution, has been installed in the accessible toilet, adjacent to the prayer room. The Prayer Passes issued during the Winter months for the Asr prayers have worked well, and we perform our prayers during the changeover between afternoon lessons; we are grateful to all the staff for accommodating this. In future, we hope to have dedicated prayer rooms, for both boys and girls to use.”

The Duke of Edinburgh

Award Scheme



by Avi Kotecha, L6th

The Duke of Edinburgh Award is a huge test of resilience, a test requiring thinking objectively and making hard decisions for the right reasons, sacrificing one thing for something less rewarding but more valuable for the group. On the hills, thinking becomes a mere semantic exercise, as all you are aware of is completing the walk and how muddy the field is. This was my first experience of the Gold Award, a miserable one. However, I soon learned that the Duke of Edinburgh Award is a teambuilding exercise, bringing people that may have never before spoken into close proximity and compelling them to become friends in a sort of primal survival way. We joke that all manners are forgotten by the end of the first walk, and all you care about is that your group is well fed and rested. DoFE makes you learn compassion for your group members, as these people are going to look after you the same way as you will them. A comfortable group where we all look out for each other is not without some household spat, and a foolproof and meticulous

route plan is never without a field covered in about a foot of water, but we all understand each other and we all push through together. The sheer magnitude of the walks seems insignificant: Duke of Edinburgh is a fantastic opportunity for being outside, in the hammering rain, bog-like fields and in freezing wind, but also an opportunity to be out in the sun, with your friends and in beautiful areas in the world such as the Lake District and the Derbyshire Dales.

I have learned to become more appreciative of people around me as we all have our own part to play in the wellbeing of the group. A substantial feeling of satisfaction for completing the planning and the walk has been the reward. The walk itself is just a small fraction of all the work behind it. I am now much more relaxed and comfortable with the tasks and have learned to manage the routines of camp life. Best of all, Duke of Edinburgh has brought me some friends for life.





Activities Week

June 2024







Young Enterprise Company

Catalyst Creates 'Regulyst'

by Diya Bhatt, Managing Director

In 2023-24, Leicester Grammar School's Young Enterprise company, Catalyst, developed their product Regulyst, a wrist-worn device utilising haptics to coordinate breathing exercises to reduce stress.

We started in September 2023, with a group of 32 LGS students selected to create a company under the YE programme. The experience provides a platform for development of business acumen, teamwork and networking skills, allowing company members to develop, produce and sell a product independently and later enter the product into various competitions. Our company operated in three parts, Strategic Management, Fundraising, and Competitions/Product Development. Every week, the managing director delegated tasks to each team. We generated ideas at weekly meetings. The MD first took suggestions from all members, voting to pinpoint sectors to target. We chose to focus on mental health, and helping people with conditions like autism, exploring ideas like educational books. However, with only a select few suffering with such conditions, we found the market to be too niche, both for the impact we wish to make and profit maximization. We then broadened

our primary market to those with stress-related issues, aiming to address a gap in the market of young people similar to ourselves, with a secondary market of those with neurodivergence, allowing us to reach more people both to make a difference and to increase profit. We conducted research on symptoms to target, such as increased stress and elevated heart rate levels, and tailored our product around these. With vibrations and breathing exercises proven to reduce noradrenergic signaling, we chose to develop a device using haptics to coordinate breathing exercises, calling it Regulyst.

Once we had decided on our product, the design process was creative and technical: first outlining a product specification document to decide what the device should do, then using CAD/CAM software to design mockups of the PCB (printed circuit board) to exact metrics, and prototyping electronic components. For this, we produced a lash-up prototype and circuit designs for the watch. Casing for the watch was developed by creating a space prototype followed by production of casing using Fusion 360, and coding of the PIC microchips, with the generous assistance of three companies: Peak Electronics Ltd, SubTec Ltd, and Smart Engineering

Ltd. Technology played a huge part in product development, with coordination of the electronic components relying on coding of the PIC microchip, including 500+ lines of assembly code using MPLAB X software. Prototyping of software was also conducted by Digital Directors using Python and C#.

Simultaneously, the Fundraising team hosted various events to support the development and manufacturing of the product, with events such as the Christmas Raffle, ICC Cricket and Mario Kart tournaments proving particularly successful. While developing the product, we entered the Pitch-to-Panel Dragon's Den event to pitch our product to judges, where our product cited as 'innovative' and 'useful'. In February 2024, we began production and distribution of the product, with a sale price of £20, and entered the Beaumont Leys Trade Fair; where we won first place, gained valuable feedback from the public and made a profit of £80 from the event alone.

Over February and March we began selling our product. The Marketing and Sales Directors contacted various organisations including charities with causes aligning with mental health to gauge interest in the product. This proved successful strategy as we worked with three charities: Anxiety

UK, Scottish Autism and National Autistic Society to gain feedback and secure a sizeable profit. We also employed digital methods such as retailing through online marketplaces such as Ebay, and making our product available in pharmacies for in-person sales on a sale-return model. To advertise, we primarily used social media such as Instagram and Tiktok. Our TikTok account boasted an average of 8,000+ views per video, and 193 followers, thanks to our Sales and Social Responsibility directors. Directing our videos towards a younger demographic as per our mission statement proved to be extremely successful in building our online presence. In May 2023, we entered the Leicestershire County Finals, and came away as Leicestershire Company of the Year, as well as winning both Technology and Best Presentation awards. We later entered the East Midlands regional final, winning the regional Technology award.

Leading the company has been beneficial in developing my leadership skills, business acumen and resilience. Working collectively to maximise the team's profit and create a positive impact with our product, Regulyst have been most enjoyable. Thanks to the expert guidance of Mr Moore-Friis and our business advisors Bal Kelai and Micheal Davies, as well help from Peak Electronics' MD, Mr Jeremy Slddons, we were able to create an innovative, exciting product through Young Enterprise this year.





Culture Day

by Mehgna Rao

This year, the EMBRACE group were looking to completely reinvent Culture Day at LGS - and what a success it was! Working tirelessly behind the scenes, we put together the largest and most spectacular Culture Day in Leicester Grammar School's history, bringing together the whole school community from Years 7 to 13.

Firstly, an introduction: what is cultural heritage? Cultural heritage is defined as the tangible and intangible assets of a group of society that are passed down through generations. This is not just where you are from ethnically, but also your family traditions and values. Being able to embrace your culture freely is incredibly important to feel comfortable in your own skin and to provide insight for others into differing customs and beliefs. Giving each other a sense of belonging and

pride, preserving the culture of our ancestors, and challenging harmful stereotypes, these cultural days are vital to our school community. Overseeing these initiatives, as you must know, is the EMBRACE group. This group is led by Miss Young with a Sixth Form committee, who work together to organise events and information surrounding culture, diversity, and inclusion at LGS.

For Culture Day on the 17th of November, 2023, EMBRACE met weekly to prepare. As you must know, closer to the day, we worked with keen members of the lower and middle school to set up their own stalls. These stalls ranged from Portugal to South Asia, the Middle East, Ireland, and many more, with incredibly popular food tasters such as pani puri at the South Asia stall. Some stalls even had activities to take part in, such as face painting, henna,

or the opportunity to have your name written in Arabic. Additionally, we organised an area to take Polaroids and a world map to pinpoint where your culture comes from to visually demonstrate the diverse range of backgrounds present at LGS.



During these activities in the foyer at lunchtime, EMBRACE also had a selection of music from various cultures playing, tying together the vibrant and busy atmosphere.

It was evident to all that the afternoon was a huge success: uniting people from all year groups in the school community, welcoming stunning cultural outfits and providing an opportunity for people to talk about and share their cultures with others, all the goals and expectations EMBRACE set out to achieve.



World Book Day

by Lottie Bowyer and Aryan Ghosh, Year 7

World Book Day was a very enjoyable day for the school. The librarians did an amazing job at hosting many fun activities, included bingo, pin-the-mask-on-Gangsta-Granny, matching photographs of teachers to photos of their bookshelves, puzzles, dressing up (using newspaper) as a book character and so much more. My (Lottie's) favourite activity was matching the teacher to the bookshelf. I really enjoyed this one as you could guess by knowing what subject they teach and what books were in the bookshelf photo. Another activity was a treasure hunt. Everyone had to search the school for teachers wearing a badge to say their favourite book character. Some of the staff have had remarkably interesting career paths and these were displayed on a board for students to try and guess which teacher had done what. Curious pupils were trying to match their current teacher to his or her previous jobs.

A fantastic array of books was on display outside the library and throughout the day there was a winding queue of students who could not wait to get their hands on some new reading. Each student was also given a book token that allowed them to buy a book from any store at a cheaper price. Reading was greatly promoted, lots of fun was had, and we also raised £60 for charity through our second-hand book sale.





International Women's Day

Empowerment, Inspiration, and Inclusion

by Meghna Rao

On March 8th, 2024, LGS was abuzz with the spirit of unity and excitement as the festivities to celebrate International Women's Day commenced. IWD celebrates the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of all women globally, and calls for action on women's equality through education and raising awareness, and through fundraising for female-focused charities. The IWD theme for 2024 of "Inspire Inclusion" was to inspire others to value the inclusion of women in both male-dominated spaces and more generally in society to create a harmonious world where everyone feels valued and respected. Expertly organised by Miss Young and the Sixth Form EMBRACE committee, the event provided an exciting lunchtime of activities for the whole school community. Without the invaluable support from pupils and staff, IWD would simply not have been the same. Just one example was the "Women in Science" stall led by Dr Ainge, exploring the contributions of great female scientists throughout history.

We were spoiled for choice with activities to participate in and stalls to visit in and around the foyer. To name just a few, there were the "Women in Drama" stall; the "Great Women Wall", with a special ode to LGS's own Miss Campbell amongst other staff members; "Just Dance"; a treasure hunt; a merch stall and a screening of the film "Suffragette", reminding us of the struggles faced

by activists for women's voting rights. A favourite from Culture Day earlier this year, the henna/mehndi stall returned, historically a symbol of good health, wisdom, prosperity and femininity for South Asian women. Meerub Iqbal, Hannah Bukhari, Nandini Waghela and Veera Vaitha ran this much-loved stall for the afternoon, leaving many members of the school community adorned with intricate designs that lasted well after the celebrations concluded. One particularly significant initiative for female-focused charities was the "Tampons and Toys" stall, organised by FemSoc. This raised awareness about period poverty and violence against women, two pertinent issues faced daily by women across the world. Students donated feminine hygiene products for local women's shelters and food banks to show their support.

As the afternoon drew to a close, the message and energy of IWD lingered, as did the much-appreciated music sung by notable female performers. This celebration served as a reminder of the progress that has already been made towards gender equality, and of progress still to be made. International Women's Day may be just one day every year, but its impact lasts beyond those 24 hours, a reminder of the collective strength and resilience of women everywhere. Let us continue to challenge stereotypes, push boundaries for women, and create a more inclusive world for all.

Year 11 Prom

2024



"The Year 11 Prom was certainly a night to remember. Each and every one of our Year 11s raised the roof; not only with their extravagant attire, but with their raucous dancing. It was a night when Mrs Hird was honoured with a solo with Gary Barlow, and Miss Chell was drinking tea whilst the pupils were whirling around on the selfie podium! All in all, a great event organised by Friends of LGS. An absolute pleasure to see them let their hair down and have a good old boogie (showing my age here)."

Miss Hadfield







How LGS Raised Money for the Royal British Legion by Selling our own Acrylic Poppies

by Claudia Carnduff, L6th form

On the School's Open Morning, October 7, 2023, the DT department allowed prospective students and parents to create acrylic poppies using the thermo-forming oven. Following this it was decided that it would be a great thing to sell them, and donate the profits to the Poppy Appeal, which is a charity event that is organised by the Royal British Legion.

Therefore, over the space of a few weeks, I created more poppies by cutting the shape out of a variety of shades of red acrylic, using the laser cutter and then drawing on the black circles. Once the poppies were all ready, I placed them in the thermoforming oven for two minutes, where the material was softened

allowing the edges to be curved to give the poppies a more realistic feel and make them three-dimensional. After they had cooled in the desired shape, copper wire was twisted through the poppies to create a stem which allowed them to be stood up if desired.

The poppies were then sold to students and parents, with over 100 poppies sold at £2 each. This charitable project brought in just over £200 for the Poppy Appeal, an amazing cause. The money that was raised will help soldiers in all aspects of their lives. A huge thank you to all of the DT department who helped in the creation of the poppies and also to the lovely receptionists who were very helpful with the collection of the money for the sold poppies.



Rafi Star Charity Fundraiser

by Rafi Sirur, Year 9

My brother and I wanted to make a difference by helping children and families and vulnerable adults. We found the best way to make a difference was fundraising with Comic Relief. Comic Relief helps so many communities in the UK and abroad.

In 2021, I ran 20 miles with my little brother over 20 consecutive days. Also in the same challenge, I walked just over 20 miles in one day: from Market Harborough to Northampton. In this challenge we raised £1158 for Comic Relief.

In 2022 I completed a 50 mile triathlon of cycling, swimming and running with my younger brother. We raised £910 for Comic Relief.

In 2023 I completed a 200-mile cycling challenge where I was cycling on average 20 miles daily after school. My younger brother completed 100 miles of cycling. We raised £860 for Comic Relief.

This year, 2024, my brother and I put on a comedy and musical act to spread a smile across Leicester through different communities.

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My Idea of a Masterpiece

Introduction: My Idea of a Masterpiece by Dr Griffin



Strangely enough, my idea of a masterpiece is a book, specifically this book – a 1600 edition of the Geneva Bible, first published in 1560 by protestant exiles who had fled persecution in the Catholic England of Mary I (remembered by some as ‘Bloody Mary’), but returned when the protestant Elizabeth I came to the throne. This one dates from the end of Elizabeth’s reign when Protestantism was effectively established as the official state religion.

Now, depending on your personal belief system you might think it is THE book, The Bible – but what I want to talk about is this particular bible and what it represents to me. The first thing I have to say, as anyone who knows me well would tell you is that I am not a religious type. I will not be quoting chapter and verse at you (in a literal way) of this book as ‘the revealed word of God’ – so you can relax.

This is what is known as a ‘Breeches Bible’.

This very specific Bible is one which appeals to my sense of history, appreciation of my cultural heritage (even the bit that reaches back to my now very distant catholic

ancestry), and my love of the power of words – which can be used for good or for ill. Nothing to me exemplifies these things as well as this book. This is the first reason I think it is a masterpiece – it is in my personal cultural DNA, whether I like it or not.

To look at it you might think that there isn’t much art in this book at all – it is a lot of browning pages loosely held together with what looks like string, with a dull and broken cover. You might even think it is a bit ugly and unimpressive. ‘Sir’, you might be thinking, ‘why don’t you just get a kindle version? It would be smaller, lighter – you can highlight it and copy and paste the best bits. How can that be a work of art? It is so battered, so broken, so irrelevant.’ In some ways you would probably be right...but also so very wrong. To be fair, I wonder what you would look like if you were over 400 years old – and it doesn’t need recharging. Will your iPhone SuperDuperEx42 (offering the true meaning of ‘modern life’ and making you both significant and desirable to everyone you meet; available from all good Apple stores, and a few of the bad ones, with a loan agreement from Bank of Apple PLC, and signed off with a contract via Apple Law Ltd., payable by you

and all of your descendants unto the fifth generation), will it still be working perfectly well even next year, let alone in 400? Will your latest Samsung block of electronic impulses (for product placement balance) still be fashionable next week? In this work of art is something less ephemeral and subject to journalistic hacking. And I don’t need to worry about the warranty running out. It is a masterpiece because it has lasted when so many others have crumbled into dust. This masterful work of art (I’m going to keep going on that one) is at the heart of what frequently happens in this room, which makes it important to many people. But to me it is also a book that carries a health warning about how it can be used and abused – because that has happened too.

This is a work of art which people were prepared to die for. But also kill for.

This particular book, printed in 1600, was a book for the people, not the elite. In a world of growing literacy this book was a version of religious authority that everyone could own (and was effectively required to own). No priesthood was necessary to interpret it for the ‘common folk’, as ordinary people

could read it and think about it for themselves -- which the Roman Catholic church of the 16th century particularly feared. It was cheaper and more accessible than any other book in the English language up to that point IN HISTORY. It provided reading aids like prefaces and marginal notes (Elizabethan equivalents of Schmoop...) so ordinary people could read it, think about it, and act on it.

It was the product of exiles hiding from persecution for their belief that the Christian message should be in a language that didn't need to be in Latin -- a belief that could get you burnt alive at the stake by the authorities of Mary I's England just fifty years before this one was published, and as I would have been for merely possessing it. It was a book of revolt and intellectual rebellion which used the language of ordinary people -- 'repent' rather than 'penance', 'congregations' rather than 'church'.

This masterpiece IS history in so many ways: a very real symbol of challenge to orthodoxy, and disobedience to our supposed betters who are always certain that they are right -- even when their certainty that they are on 'the right side of history' is actually very uncertain. In my experience, those who argue they are doing something to be 'on the right side of history' do not really know how history works. It reminds me that a good book can be used for a bad end, and that we are never so vulnerable as when we think we know better than the other fellow. Like I said, this is a book that people were prepared to die for, and to kill for.

Masterpieces are not necessarily nice.

This is the Bible of Shakespeare -- but not literally, unfortunately,

as if it were I would be having a conversation with Mr Watson about my retirement with immediate effect. Rather, it is the translation that he would have had on his bookshelf -- a masterpiece used by a producer of masterpieces. Whilst some of its passages are a reflection of some unusual or 'interesting' choices (such as Adam and Eve stitching together fig leaves to make 'breeches' or trousers to cover their nakedness in the Garden of Eden), it mostly uses the most rhythmical and poetic choices to bring ideas of faith and experience to life, following on from the early translators such as William Tyndale (burnt at the stake in the reign of Henry VIII -- his last words allegedly 'Lord, open the King of England's eyes') and Miles Coverdale (who had to flee to Geneva to avoid the same fate under Mary I).

When King James I authorised a new version to replace this one a decade after this was published it wasn't really to change the beauty of the expression, but to get rid of the notes, especially the ones that were critical of kings -- which King James described as 'partial, untrue, seditious [...] dangerous and trayterous conceites'. A fifth of the King James Version which many would consider the 'standard' text of the Anglican Church (me included) comes from this version -- more than any other source. So, this book reminds me of the very great power of words and my hatred of those who would censor them. It is a masterpiece because of how it challenged the cultural ideas of its time, and its legacy had an impact not just on English history, but also on world history.

However, this is why any similar book mass-published in 1600 is important, not why my idea of a masterpiece is this particular book. In its pages are the annotations of people who died hundreds of years ago, and for each handwritten note, piece of graffiti, and name recorded, this book takes on a character which makes it truly unique. With each note I am reminded that I don't own this book, I am just keeping it safe for the next reader, that I am a minor link in a chain of people who have held, read, thought, and responded to this specific book -- something which has happened since it came off of the printing press in 1600. It reminds me that books are meant to be handled rather than displayed, and every crack in the leather, every repaired or replaced page, every outer fragility of the object it is confirms this. It was never intended to be a museum piece under a piece of glass -- 'look but don't touch'. It reminds me that I am part of a true community of readers and that we join hands across the ages when I hold this book.

It reminds me that I am an insignificant speck in history, and a link in the chain of DNA and ideas. It reminds me that a masterpiece, as well as being an object of appreciation, a work of creative imagination, provokes thought (not necessarily agreement) and stands the test of time. That is why this is my idea of a masterpiece.



Prep Winner: Symphony No 5 by Beethoven by Emily Gough

I think that a masterpiece is an exceptional piece of creative work that requires extraordinary skill. A masterpiece also will usually receive considerable amounts of praise. It remains relevant, remembered and important for a long period of time, influencing and inspiring many people.

This summer I went to the Proms at Royal Albert Hall, where the final piece of the performance was “Symphony No. 5” by Ludwig van Beethoven. The audience’s sense of anticipation when the piece was announced showed their keen interest. The symphony is lively and full of emotion. It sparked my imagination. Although I had not heard the whole piece before, it was vaguely familiar. The first few notes of “Symphony No 5” are probably the most famous notes in music. It has a tremendous appeal and has been used in disco music, television adverts and films. It was also used by the Allied forces to signal victory, because the rhythm of ‘short, short, short, long’ matched the letter V in Morse code.

This piece is ground-breaking because at the time there were rules of composition, regarding certain keys and tempos, but Beethoven broke the rules, pushing the boundaries. He did not make his music to please listeners, but to express himself and his



ideas. Beethoven decided to increase the number of musicians in the orchestra, adding in trombones. This symphony is also considered to be one of the first pieces to show emotion: when I listened to it, I experienced different types of emotion. Although the famous first four notes were a theme throughout the piece, they were sometimes daunting and moving, yet magical, and other times joyful, depending on the tempo, dynamic, pitch and instruments. The change between C minor and C major is like a journey between hope and despair. Possibly this emotion suggests Beethoven coming to terms with his deafness: first tempted to give up, then expressing resilience, and finally triumph. He wrote, “The major has a glorious effect. Joy follows sorrow, sunshine follows rain.” When we listen to the music, we think about the deeper meaning and it feels relevant to our own challenges.



Beethoven’s symphony fits all the criteria of a masterpiece. It is complex and deep, a fantastic piece written with great skill. Even now, over 100 years after the first performance, it is still relevant and loved. After Beethoven, people changed the way that they felt and wrote about music. More people started writing classical music. Despite the many adaptations of the famous four notes that open the symphony, it is still the original composition that we hear regularly today. It truly is a masterpiece.

Year 7 Winner: Rainbow Mountain in Peru by Zoha Tariq

My idea of a masterpiece is Vinicunca Mountain, also known as Rainbow Mountain, in the Andes Mountain range in Peru. There are very few mountains of this kind found in nature, making it an incredibly rare type of beauty.

I have always wished to set foot on the eye-catching multi-coloured surface of these slopes. The different colours are caused by the different materials, such as iron, quartz and clay, and the exposure of these minerals to the weather is what causes the mountain to look so unique.

The Rainbow Mountain isn't all fun and joy – it is known to have harsh and cold weather – and this is why the mountain has just started to be recognised for its colours in the past decade. For a long time, the mountain was covered in ice and snow, but due to climate change and global warming, its beauty has now been revealed to the world.

The walking trail for the mountain is about 2.5 miles long and it would take you about two hours to walk it on foot. If I were hiking on the mountain, I would stop every ten minutes just to take in the breath-taking sights. And even though people have just begun to explore the mountain, there are roughly over 1,000 tourists visiting Vinicunca every day. That isn't surprising. Who wouldn't take the opportunity to explore a one-of-a-kind mountain? Some people complain about the harsh weather conditions, but with the right equipment you would be protected. To me, this mountain is an absolute masterpiece.

Year 8 Winner: Modern Abstract Art is not Always a Masterpiece by Sophie Arif

Modern art has long been a subject of controversy, with enthusiastic defenders and passionate critics. While many consider it a testament to creativity and innovation, there are many others who disagree and some pieces of modern art are devoid of talent, substance and the qualities that define a true masterpiece.

When I say modern art, I am not describing the works of abstract artists such as Mondrian, Kandinsky and Picasso, I am referring to extreme abstract art that takes the spotlight from genuine complex pieces. True abstract art can be refreshing and beautiful, but, unfortunately, many people with no artistic skill try and hide their lack of talent with the label of 'abstract'.

Modern art is an umbrella term for a vast array of artistic styles, from abstract expressionism to minimalist art. It is a realm where the boundaries are often pushed and experimentation is encouraged. This limitless freedom, while appealing to some, has led to a belief that anyone can produce high-value art, sometimes with little or no apparent talent. A

prominent criticism of modern art is that it often appears as though the creator lacked both the time and the effort that typically goes into creating traditional masterpieces.

An example of questionable talent is Cy Twombly's "Untitled", a random assembly of scribbles on a canvas. Critics argue that this piece might very well have been replicated by a four-year-old with crayons, yet it sold for a staggering seventy million dollars in 2015! Yves Klein's "Blue Monochrome" is a strong example of modern art that pushes the boundaries perhaps a little too much. A single shade of blue painted on a blank canvas, praised for its apparent 'simplicity', it sold for a startling 44 million dollars in 2012. Damien Hirst, known for his love for the unconventional, created a fully diamond-encrusted skull. While it is undeniably an impressive feat of craftsmanship, critics argue that it emphasises extravagance over artistic substance. We wonder, is this an art masterpiece, or merely a symbol of luxury? "Voice of Fire" by Barnett Newman is an abstract painting consisting of three vertical stripes of red and navy on a white canvas. The work stirred



Damien Hirst diamond-encrusted skull

much controversy when it was purchased by the National Gallery of Canada for \$1.76 million in 1989, sparking arguments about the perceived simplicity and cost. Robert Rauschenberg's artwork involved completely rubbing out a drawing by the famous abstract expressionist, Willem de Kooning. The work definitely raises many questions about the limits of art and whether the act of erasure, in this context, qualifies as a masterpiece.

In a world where traditional masterpieces require immense dedication and skill, these extreme modern art pieces appear to be a mockery of artistry. The high prices they command are nothing short of a charade arranged by a select group of individuals who have their own self-serving interests at heart, often leaving the public disillusioned. The insanely high prices that certain modern art pieces obtain, despite potential lack of talent, can be attributed to a multitude of factors, such as scarcity, as the rarity of an artist's work can vastly increase its value. Many individuals also invest in this type of artwork because they believe it will appreciate in price over time and they can then sell it for profit. Art world elitism can also play a bit part in the reasoning behind these

questionable purchases. The exclusive nature of the art industry, influenced by the viewpoints of a small number of collectors, dealers and critics, frequently results in the promotion of particular artists and styles, regardless of their artistic merit.

The commercialism of modern art has encouraged a huge shift in focus, from genuine artistic flair to mere marketability. Galleries and collectors are more likely to promote and invest in works that are suspected to fetch high prices, often at the expense of underrepresented styles that require more time, patience and craftsmanship to create. Traditional art forms, which often demand extensive practice, suffer from a lack of recognition and exposure. The art world has a tendency to glamorise avant-garde or ground-breaking movements, often overshadowing the continued significance of more traditional styles. This bias results in a lack of recognition of art forms that have stood the test of time and continue to captivate with their enduring beauty and complexity, such as tonalism, regionalism, photorealism and outsider art.

In conclusion, the undervaluing of art styles that require tremendous talent is a multi-faceted issue influenced by commercial interests, societal preferences and institutional biases. Celebrating the value of all art forms is vital to preserving the depth and diversity of expression, and ensuring that the craftsmanship and mastery involved in traditional art are not forgotten in the face of more contemporary trends that often do not entail such skill. While modern and extreme abstract art is unusual and exciting, other art genres should not be forgotten.



Cy Twombly's "Untitled"

Year 9 Winner: The Pantheon

by Alice Hawkins

Imagine a building built 2,000 years ago.

Images of ruined pillars, derelict walls and worn-out marble probably spring to mind. These buildings you are thinking of are broken; the only evidence of their once magnificent existence is now rubble. Maybe you thought of a particular structure, perhaps Stonehenge, for example. To the uneducated eye, Stonehenge is an underwhelming collection of stones. Only when information is provided can one appreciate these ruins. Many other ruins follow this example. Yet, there is one that is still breath-taking to behold, still mind-boggling in its construction, still beautiful and magnificent.

That building I talk about is the Pantheon. It was a masterpiece when it was built, 1,898 years ago, and it still is all these years later.

Last year, when on holiday in Rome, my family and I, after eating our dinner, came across the Pantheon by accident. I had already heard of this building, yet I think the unexpected nature of my seeing the Pantheon for the first time increased the impact it had on me. I wasn't expecting a giant architectural masterpiece from millennia ago to be there as I turned the corner. Yet, there it was, looming over me like a mountain. My family stayed at the Pantheon for about half an hour, then pulled me away as it was late. I was not happy because I wanted to study every detail of the building. My fascination had begun.

I like history. In fact, I would even say that I love it. This is evident from the badges that adorn my blazer and the books I keep in my room. The Pantheon is remarkable for the amount of history it has witnessed in the almost two millennia it has been around. It has gone from being a temple for the Roman gods, to

being a church, and now a tourist attraction. A building as ancient as this can be appreciated not only for its value to the civilisation that built it, but also for its contribution to the civilisations in the millennia since its creation.

Another passion for me is Classics, the study of the Roman and Greek civilisations. The Pantheon is living evidence of this once great civilisation, as it was the centre of a city of one million – no other city would reach this population until the 19th century. As I may study the Roman Empire in future, the Pantheon represents a crucial part of my identity.

From the ages of eight to eleven, I wanted to be an architect. The Pantheon's construction is a topic that still puzzles people to this day. In 2023, the Pantheon has the largest unsupported dome in the world. The Romans were not the first to use concrete, yet they were certainly the first to utilise concrete in the way they did. Roman concrete – opus caementicum – was used in the dome's construction. This concrete is a chemical masterpiece in itself. It contains lime, which

means that when cracks appear, the concrete can repair itself. Furthermore, when Roman concrete is exposed to salt water, it produces minerals that strengthen the concrete. I find this fascinating.

The Pantheon was the centre of the Roman Empire. The empire stretched from Scotland to the Middle East at its

peak. My country, England, under the name Britannica, was once part of this great empire. The impact that the Romans had on Britain is still noticeable 2,000 years later. The language itself comes from Latin (indirectly, via French). The famous classical orator, Cicero, put forth the idea of Natural Laws – the idea that humans have intrinsic values – and this is the foundation for modern ethics.



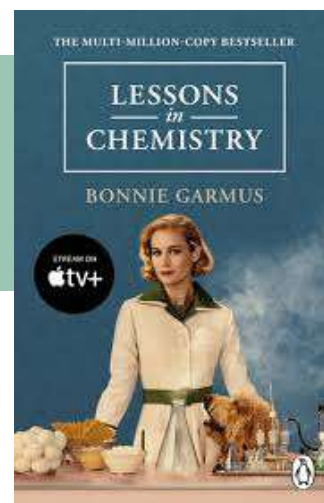
GCSE Winner: "Lessons in Chemistry" by Bonnie Garmus by Zahra Hardman

Why is it that the term 'literary masterpiece' has become almost exclusively synonymous with the term 'classic'? The Cambridge Dictionary clearly defines 'masterpiece' as 'a work of art such as a painting, film, or book that is made with great skill', and yet we often confine the title to novels that are defined by the same source as 'well known and of a high standard and lasting value'. I believe that there is a misconception in modern fiction that the achievement of a 'literary masterpiece' in the 21st century is impossible, the label only awarded to a select group of novels published myriad years ago that have already been defined and cemented in history as the great few. While I don't disagree that the classics do qualify, I find that my concept of a masterpiece is far more forgiving.

I believe that a masterpiece in literature is a work that entertains the reader through a unique and satisfying plot that remains unpredictable by challenging the norm, contributes new and thoughtful ideas to the reader through positive role models, and uses its innate relatability to appeal to the masses. These books are the ones you stay up late reflecting on; the books your mind wanders to for comfort in times of hardship; the books you devour in one sitting, dreading the moment when you will reach the last page, knowing you will be disorientated and disappointed in reality after full immersion in this fictional world. It is not often I find a book that so thoroughly meets my idea of a masterpiece, but I was lucky enough to stumble upon one such book early last year, 'Lessons in Chemistry'. If you haven't yet read

this novel', I urge you to stop reading my essay this instant to go pick it up from your nearest library -- not only because it's a beautiful piece of work everyone deserves to read at least once in their lifetime, but also because throughout the rest of my essay I will detail the events of the novel in order to demonstrate why I believe it deserves the title of masterpiece and will therefore unavoidably spoil the plot.

The novel opens in 1961 by introducing the reader to the thirty-year-old, "permanently depressed", single mother, Elizabeth Zott, who is the reluctant yet "indisputable star" of an afternoon cooking show for '60s housewives titled 'Supper at Six'. Elizabeth is by training a research chemist, whose academic career appears to have failed, despite her talent and passion for her subject. It is only once the narrative jumps back ten years that the reader begins to understand why. The environment of academia for women in the early 1950s was not a positive one. Elizabeth finds herself confronted with misogyny on a casual scale, from her peers, who verbally abuse and purposefully alienate her for being a woman who refuses to conform to the acceptable mid-20th century standard of 'seen and not heard', and on a massive scale, through the plagiarism of her research. It is during this period of her life that Elizabeth meets and falls in love with Calvin Evans, fellow chemist, Nobel nominee and Elizabeth's soulmate, in a whirlwind romance frowned upon by jealous colleagues and destined by fate not to last. Devastated in the aftermath of Calvin's death and her ensuing dismissal from her job at Hastings



Research Institute, Elizabeth soon realises that she is pregnant with Calvin's child. Garmus then takes the reader on Elizabeth's journey through grief, single motherhood and friendship.

'Lessons in Chemistry' is a masterpiece because it entertains the reader through a unique plot that remains unpredictable. While the first third of the book reads like a typical romance, with one chapter from the perspective of Calvin stating that "making [Elizabeth] happy made him happy. Which, he thought, [...] had to be the very definition of love", Garmus surprises the reader by throwing the spanner of Calvin's death into his and Elizabeth's perfectly laid plans. It is through this subversion of the trope that she is able to address and correct a major criticism of the romance genre and keep the reader interested by manipulating what would have otherwise been a predictable, fairly unremarkable storyline of 'boy meets girl'. By presenting Elizabeth as strong and determined throughout her pregnancy with Madeline despite her extenuating circumstances, Garmus corrects the common mistake made by writers in the romance genre of creating a co-dependent couple, in which the unrealistic standard of two people who would literally rather die than be without one another is idealised. I, admittedly, spent the last two thirds of the novel waiting expectantly for Elizabeth's second

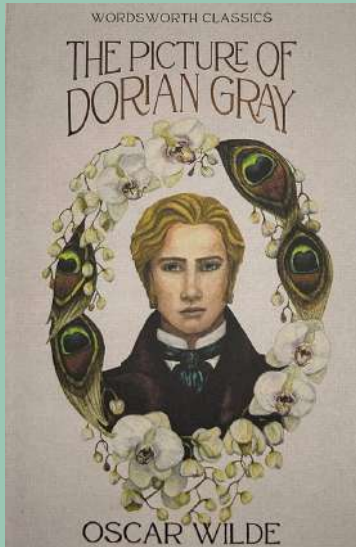
love interest to show up; when they didn't, I was filled with a sense of relief and, to my surprise, shock. Garmus keeps the plot fresh and unpredictable by not falling into the pitfall of forcing her protagonist into a relationship in order to give her the typical romantic 'happily-ever-after'. The author tries to convey to her readers that a woman doesn't need to be with a man to be happy, instead choosing to depict Elizabeth's happily-ever-after through the final scene in which she plans a dinner with her 'found family': the friends she has made on her journey through motherhood and chosen to keep in her life.

Furthermore, 'Lessons in Chemistry' is a masterpiece because it contributes new and thoughtful ideas to the reader through positive role models, the most obvious example being the protagonist, Elizabeth Zott. Garmus uses Zott and the relationships she forms with those around her to convey to the reader the importance of standing up for what you believe in, even in the face of adversity, and the significance of having a stable network of support. In the heart-warming speech Elizabeth gives to the live studio audience of her cooking show during one of the final chapters of the book, she claims that "Courage is the root of change—and change is what we're chemically designed to do." Through this suggestion, Elizabeth not only encourages the people standing in front of her, but also the readers following her words to have the boldness and grit to truly stand up for what they believe in. Garmus uses language to emphasise this point through anadiplosis in the repetition of "change". Elizabeth's passion for Chemistry seeps into her every word and expression, underlining her point that women are capable of studying science and creating a standard of enthusiasm for women today to

aspire to. Elizabeth's unapologetic and bold nature motivates her to meet Calvin when she invades his lab in order to request some of his beakers, despite his infamy throughout the Hastings Research Institute for his ability to hold a grudge. When Calvin responds to her polite request by telling her that the chemists "shouldn't send a secretary to do their dirty work.", she swiftly and unrepentantly takes one box from his stack of dozens of unused beakers. In addition, her confrontation with Walter Pine over his daughter stealing Madeline's lunch is what lands her the job on 'Supper at Six'. Furthermore, throughout the second half of the novel, Elizabeth learns the importance of allowing yourself to be looked after by others when she and a newborn Madeline are visited by their fifty-something neighbour, Harriet Sloane. Further into their friendship, Elizabeth discovers that Harriet is in an abusive relationship with her husband when Harriet comes to her one morning after Mr Sloane threw an empty bottle of beer at Harriet when his favourite baseball team lost the night before. Elizabeth is described to have "bent down and put her arms around Harriet. "There's nothing I wouldn't do for you," Elizabeth said, pulling her close. "You know that, don't you?" This heartfelt moment between the two women is particularly raw for the reader because, before Harriet's introduction to the novel, the only other women Elizabeth had interacted with had been her colleagues who passed unfair judgement on Elizabeth just as much as the men because they were jealous of her blissful workplace romance with Calvin and felt threatened by her single-mindedness. Through Elizabeth and Harriet's relationship, Garmus communicates the importance of women supporting each other in spite of the way the patriarchy often pits women against one

another other as competition. Finally, 'Lessons in Chemistry' is, in my opinion, a masterpiece because it uses its innate relatability to appeal to the masses. Elizabeth's deadpan tone of narration and unruffled yet dogged refusal to be anything less than herself is inspiring. Motherhood is described with candour through the extended simile, "Every day she found parenthood like taking a test for which she had not studied. The questions were daunting and there wasn't nearly enough multiple choice." Elizabeth's loss of a partner in Calvin offers insight into the complexity of grieving for a loved one: she had "reached a new stage in her grief: from mourning the man she fell in love with to mourning the father she knew he would have been." Further proof of the appeal of 'Lessons in Chemistry' can be found in the multitude of awards the novel has won, most notably the 'Goodreads Best Debut Novel Award' (2022). A Sunday Times, New York Times and international bestseller, the novel has sold over 2.5 million copies.

While it is worlds apart from Orwell's '1984' and Dickens' 'Great Expectations', I believe the fact that 'Lessons in Chemistry' isn't considered a classic and was published long after these novels (April 2022) doesn't serve as a convincing argument against its merit as a masterpiece. It is only through the lens of the 21st century, which provides the reader knowledge of the second-wave feminist movement that looms on the horizon of Elizabeth's America, that we are to genuinely appreciate her story. I would say that the most lasting effect this novel has had on me, a teenage girl in 2023, is in helping me to appreciate the luxury of education. Whenever I feel like moaning about my homework or complaining about the difficulty of a test, I remember this book and that learning is a privilege, not a chore.



A-level Winner: “The Picture of Dorian Gray” by Oscar Wilde by Veera Vaitha

I would define a masterpiece as something unforgettable or unequalled. Although as I am an English student, it may seem predictable that I have chosen a novel for this essay, “The Picture of Dorian Gray” is a masterpiece to me. The novel is hugely tragic and explores death and destruction, but that is what makes Wilde’s writing so captivating.

The novel centres around the exploration of human nature, particularly how it leads to total destruction. You might imagine that a novel written in 1891 is an inaccurate representation of today’s men and women. But in truth, the parallels between the characters in the novel and society today are what utterly shocked me and drew me further into the story. For example, Dorian himself is a naïve young man who steps into the home of Basil Howard, a lovely respectable man, and we would assume that Dorian would be influenced in a likeable way. However, the shadow of Lord Henry is a constant threat to Dorian’s innocence, which is tainted permanently by the end of the novel. I would compare this to society today in that the media greatly impresses young people, impacting negatively on their future. Whilst I cannot compare the consequences of the media to the abhorrent activities Dorian partakes in in chapter 14, the influence of others is an extremely dangerous weapon.

Dorian has the positive influence of Basil, who is a complete gentleman, full of life and charm, yet when up against the cynicism of Henry, Dorian is quickly swayed to abandon Basil, causing his downfall. He is hypnotised by the meaningless words of Henry and is manipulated into transforming into his puppet. The downfall of Dorian is what makes the novel a masterpiece, since a reader disputes his actions, frustrated that Dorian does not follow the moral code of Basil, but rather falls into the snares of Henry.

The theme of art that is carved through the novel is the masterstroke. From the moment you lay eyes on the title, Wilde is painting an image of self-reflection through Dorian’s portrait. I could easily argue that art is the most beautiful theme, so much so that I decided to explore it in detail in my GCSE coursework, where I revealed the masterpiece behind Wilde’s use of art in the novel. The main message is that art is a reflection of the artist, not the object or model, and each painting contains a fragment of the artist’s inner self. In the words of the artist, Basil, himself, “I have shown within it the secret of my own soul.” Due to my own passion for art, I can relate to this interpretation, that every brushstroke is purposeful and carries the weight of the artist behind it, not just the colour laid across the canvas. The object being painted can be anything,

it is the individual that wields the brush at a very specific moment in time, his or her exact emotion and precision, that determines the entire outcome of the painting.

As most English enthusiasts would highlight their favourite pages and scribble in the margins, I am no exception. A particular phrase that jumped out to me is when Basil says, "I find him in the curves of certain lines, in the loveliness and subtleties of certain colours." To me this is the most intimate line in the entire novel. It perfectly depicts how art is interpreted so differently by each person. When Basil speaks about Dorian, he is so delicate and gentle, finding reminders of Dorian in each gesture of the paintbrush and along the blending of the paint. Lines like this exhibit Wilde's beautiful writing through his ability to capture such a particular and personal feeling in a single phrase.

Wilde hugely values the talent yielded by Basil and uses his sorcery to create the most captivating portrait of Dorian. After focusing on the beauty of the portrait for so long, Wilde has almost created another character based around the magic and virtue associated with the portrait. Inevitably, this piece of perfection is also shattered, alongside Dorian's morality. I interpret this demolition as a reflection of the merciless world that we live in. Dorian is self-obsessed, wanting

to remain young and pristine, yet the portrait reflects all the moral decay that is a direct consequence of his actions. The separation of the portrait and the man keeps the ugly immoral aspects away from the beauty of being human. By having this division, Wilde emphasises that within all of us both exist. The destruction co-exists with the pure in our souls. In a way, this balance of good and bad is important because by the end of the novel both Dorian and his painting receive a tragic fate.

Ultimately, in a world where people are afraid to grow smile lines and sprout silver hairs, Dorian Gray is a reminder of the dangers of living in the past. Wilde gives us an insight into what it would be like to stay young and be in control of your mortality. But inescapably, the novel results in chaos and Dorian reaches his demise by ripping apart the painting which holds his immortality, when he realises he can no longer run from his mistakes. Clearly, Wilde is stressing the preciousness of death, that it is a gift that we can age physically, and also age psychologically, allowing us to develop and grow, instead of being stuck in valuing the shallow concepts of beauty and living in the past as Dorian does.

It would be unjust to fail to mention Oscar Wilde as an extraordinary man, because no average mind could begin to

muster the transformative lines that are present in his pages. To create such a masterpiece, Wilde was clearly nothing less. He was part of the Aestheticism movement which involves appreciating art and literature for its beauty alone. Clearly his depiction of art in the novel mirrors this idea. Wilde was a late Victorian and was an inspiration due to his immense courage and fearless individuality. He received a brutal backlash for his open homosexuality, yet he was not daunted by the criticism he faced. Tragically, Wilde was imprisoned, but his resilience and strength pushed him to write throughout his prison sentence, and he left an astounding legacy behind him.

Therefore, despite the novel involving tragedies and murders, the principal messages stressed by Wilde warn us against the self-sabotaging traits that humans carry. The fact that this book was written over 130 years ago yet still retains its relevance is proof that while society and daily life can change, humans are inherently fixed and our basic characteristics are unchanged. Because of Wilde's deep appreciation and exploration of art, alongside his detailed psychoanalysis of the character's faults, paired with his eloquent language, this book undoubtedly remains as the best example of a masterpiece that I know. I would highly recommend that you read it.



Berlin Art and German

Trip 2024

by Alana Eason, Year 10

On February 24, 2024, 40 students -- a mixture of Year 10s, Year 11s and 6th Formers studying either German, Art or Ceramics -- plus four teachers went to Berlin, the capital of Germany. We could all agree that we had a great time, mixing with other year groups whilst exploring our common interest in the culture, language and history of Berlin.

The trip began with an early start: travelling to Gatwick Airport in the early hours of the morning, we arrived at Berlin Brandenburg Airport at noon local time. After a quick stop at the hostel, we headed out for our first look at the city and to grab a quick lunch. Whilst half of the group went to the memorial to the murdered Jews of Europe (Stiftung Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas), a modern, moving

installation in the centre of the city, the other half went to a chocolate-making workshop at Ritter Sport. Ritter Sport is a family-run German chocolate company, where visitors each got to make two chocolate bars with flavourings of our choice. I chose a mixture of dried raspberry, strawberry and popping candy to bring home for my sister. At the end of the first, long day, we met up with the others and had a delicious dinner at a beautiful Indian restaurant

On the second day, we walked to Museum Island. Here we visited the vast Alte Nationalgalerie, full of various styles of artwork, e.g classical statues and intricate oil paintings that the Art students were tasked with sketching. We then headed over to the Reichstag, the German government building, with its

distinct glass dome, to learn more about the history of the city. After taking lots of pictures and climbing to the top of the glass dome, we walked to the neighbouring landmark; the Brandenburg Gate, the most famous landmark in Germany. There we grabbed a quick lunch, took some more photos and walked back to the Altes Museum, a beautiful building. We finished the day with a dinner in Charlottenburg.

We began the last full day at one of the three sites where the original



time studying the contemporary sculptures and paintings. It was interesting to study how the artists had depicted the facial expressions of the people in Berlin throughout the last century. We then went up the TV tower (Berliner Fernsehturm), a 368m-tall tower, opened in 1969, with a viewing gallery at 203m, where we got a beautiful view of the city and the various landmarks we had visited. Later we went to the other two sites of the Berlin Wall, including the DDR interactive museum. Nearby was a huge flea market where we bought some lunch and souvenirs.

Berlin Wall still stands. It was an opportunity to reflect on the struggle of people in the 1960s-80s. We then went to the Berlinische Galerie, where we spent

The last day was spent returning to the Jewish memorial and the Ritter Sport chocolate workshop in our groups again, and then going on a street art tour.





Introducing Mr Sekhon, Art Teacher

Why choose LGS?

I used to be a student here, graduating in 2012. I really loved the school as a student, and so when I got the opportunity to come back, I jumped at the idea, especially having the opportunity to work with some of my old teachers who taught me at A Level, like Mrs Davies. I have been teaching for four years, really enjoyed it, and I knew that I had the ability to thrive here at LGS, as I had done as a student.

If you could meet one artist in history, who would it be and why?

I would probably say Pablo Picasso, because I think the way his work changed throughout his life is so intriguing, from the way he started with portraits, to then creating abstract pieces and changing them. His work is very different to my work – I am a portrait artist -- but I think his style and the way it changed over his life was really interesting.

Tell me more about your portrait painting.

I work in oil paint. Predominately, I like to paint sportspeople, and my clients tend to be international footballers and premier league players, from clubs such as Manchester United, Manchester City, and Leeds.

How do you go about engaging students who have little interest in Art?

I think Art is a funny subject as, no matter how talented you are, you can still do it. Like singing: you can still sing in the shower, even if you are not that good. With Art, you don't have to be good at it to enjoy it, and so I like to make my lessons fun, engaging, and varied. I try to make each lesson a little different; there are always little techniques that you can learn to give you a different way of approaching something.



Ceramics Trip to Stoke on Trent

by Scarlett Clarke, Year 10

On the 13th of October, 2023 students who take Ceramics in Years 10 and above were invited on a trip to Stoke on Trent to visit the British Ceramics Biennial and The Potteries Museum and Art Gallery. We completed tasks contributing to our coursework, learned about different techniques, and created wildflower tiles which will be displayed at the university.

We first headed to the British Ceramics Biennial (BCB) for a tour, and looked at the ten submissions that were entered for this year's ceramics festival, AWARD, competing for a £10,000 prize. All of them were very interesting, but my favourite was 85-year-old, Elspeth Owen's work. She had made a long line of little bowls that were intentionally just bisque fired so you could see where the rain was starting to make them disintegrate. They were all placed on a long wavy line of broken ceramics that



had come from the public. However, the winner was Mella Shaw, who had made white sculptures inspired by the tiny, inner ear bones in whales. There was powdered whale bone within the clay and, because she had used part of an endangered animal, these sculptures must be tracked and cannot be sold for her benefit. They were placed around and tied up in red ropes that vibrated to reflect the sonar that whales use. (See photo above)

Then we looked at the FRESH exhibition, which includes work from 25 early career artists, including a Leicester Grammar School alumnus, Martha Wiles. There was a wide range of work which included both thrown and hand-modelled pieces. One thing I really liked was that, if there was a lot of detail all around the piece, it was placed in front of a mirror so that it was all visible and could be appreciated fully. All the pieces were on an enormous, white table so that the colours popped, while the big windows behind created shadows that showed the texture. After the tour of both exhibitions, we had time to take photos of what we found interesting for our coursework and to inspire us. We put them into categories of form and surface.

We then went across the road to a separate area to look at some more artwork and to make some of our own. The artwork there consisted of pieces made by previous winners of AWARD and FRESH, and it was all beautifully detailed and well thought out. We made tiles from a mixture of clay and mud which we put wildflower seeds into, and we made indents which we filled with coloured slip to decorate. (Slip is a mixture of clay and water used to decorate and hold pieces together and can also be used in moulds.) These tiles will be put into a garden at Stoke University and, as the clay disintegrates into the ground,

the seeds will grow into a beautiful collection of flowers.

After our workshop, we left the BCB and went to the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery and we had lunch before taking pictures for our coursework. We could choose the theme, which could vary from people to nature, symmetry to geometry, or blue to monochrome. We took lots of pictures, so we have all the tools we need to write about it and take inspiration. Lastly, we made a detailed drawing focused on either shape and form or surface decoration.



Featured GCSE Artist

Isla Morris

Interview by Amruta Pabbaraju



When did you first become interested in Art?

My mum was very artistic and from the time I was a very little kid, I have always had many paints and pencils -- I also used to draw in Sharpies a lot when I was younger.

What do you plan to do with Art in the future?

I would really love to pursue Architecture as a career, and I am particularly interested in modern architecture. Thus, when I take Art at A-level I hope to do lots of architecture-based projects, and I am also really interested in doing an architecture-based EPQ.

Could you tell me about your GCSE Art piece?

The theme for my project was narrative and I focused on Thailand. Due to the theme being narrative, I was immediately drawn to books as a motif, as reading is a favourite pastime. I chose Thailand as it is a beautiful and fascinating country, and when I visited Thailand, I took many, many photos that I thought would be good for the piece. For my final piece, I used lots of books stacked on top of each other, and I combined these together with drawings of the Buddha and flowers, and I also



wrote down facts about Thailand on the piece. The religion of Buddhism interests me: I want to do RS at A-level.

Who is your favourite artist?

I like people like Jenny Saville and Paul Wright, as I have always loved messy, vibrant and loose paintings, so these two are sources of inspiration for me. I also really love Haley Newsome (known online as LavenderTowne) who is a cartoon artist. Even though cartoon art is very different from GCSE Art, I have always admired her work and cartoon art is where I started myself.

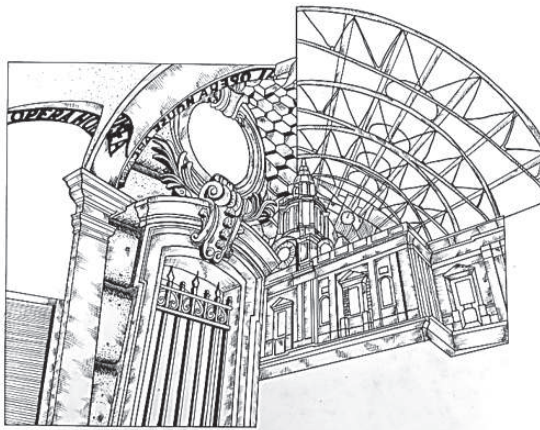
What is your favourite art memory?

In Thailand, I particularly loved visiting the King's Temples, as we had a tour guide who was a Buddhist and he was able to tell us so much about the sculptures and paintings, and also the religious side. It was so interesting to see how the teachings of Buddhism were intertwined with each piece of artwork there. The artwork was extremely beautiful, and it made me feel even more in love with the subject.



Featured GCSE Artist Jasper Mayer

Interview by Ivie Iyasere



What inspired you to take Art for GCSE?

I have always loved Art since I was young. In Year 9, we did a project on different types of infrastructure, and I remember drawing a stairwell. I want to pursue Architecture as a career.

What is your favourite medium to work with?

I would say pen drawing. You can be really specific with your mark-making and create different tones. Pen drawing is just precise and sharp, which allows you to make your drawings more realistic. You can also create screen prints to layer over them.

Tell me about some of your main GCSE projects.

My Trial piece was larger than anything I had done before. I used lots of different media to help create the different buildings, for example, old bridges and churches mixed with modern infrastructure. I focused mainly on screen-printing and pen drawing so that I was able to incorporate lots of bright colours.

Which artists have influenced your work and why?

There are quite a few. Megan McGlynn (an interior designer) uses geometric lines and shapes to create shadow, which is something I want to do with my pieces. Obviously, I am also inspired by Van Gogh and his use of vibrant colours, as well as his ability, to blend them together. I would also say my dad is a big influence, as he introduced Art to me when I was younger.



Featured A-level Artist

Avneet Flora

Interview by Ivie Iyasere

Which artists have inspired you?

I am fascinated by the work of Adam Lupton, a figurative painter whose focus is on portraying the emotions of the subject. I am also passionate about Jenny Saville and her work with women and motherhood. She creates large-scale projects, which have layers of drawings with areas of focus.

Tell me about your GCSE project.

My final project was about my culture and from this I created my outcome, for which I painted representative objects using silkscreens. This fueled my interest in Art and made me want to take it for A-level.

Tell me about your A-level project.

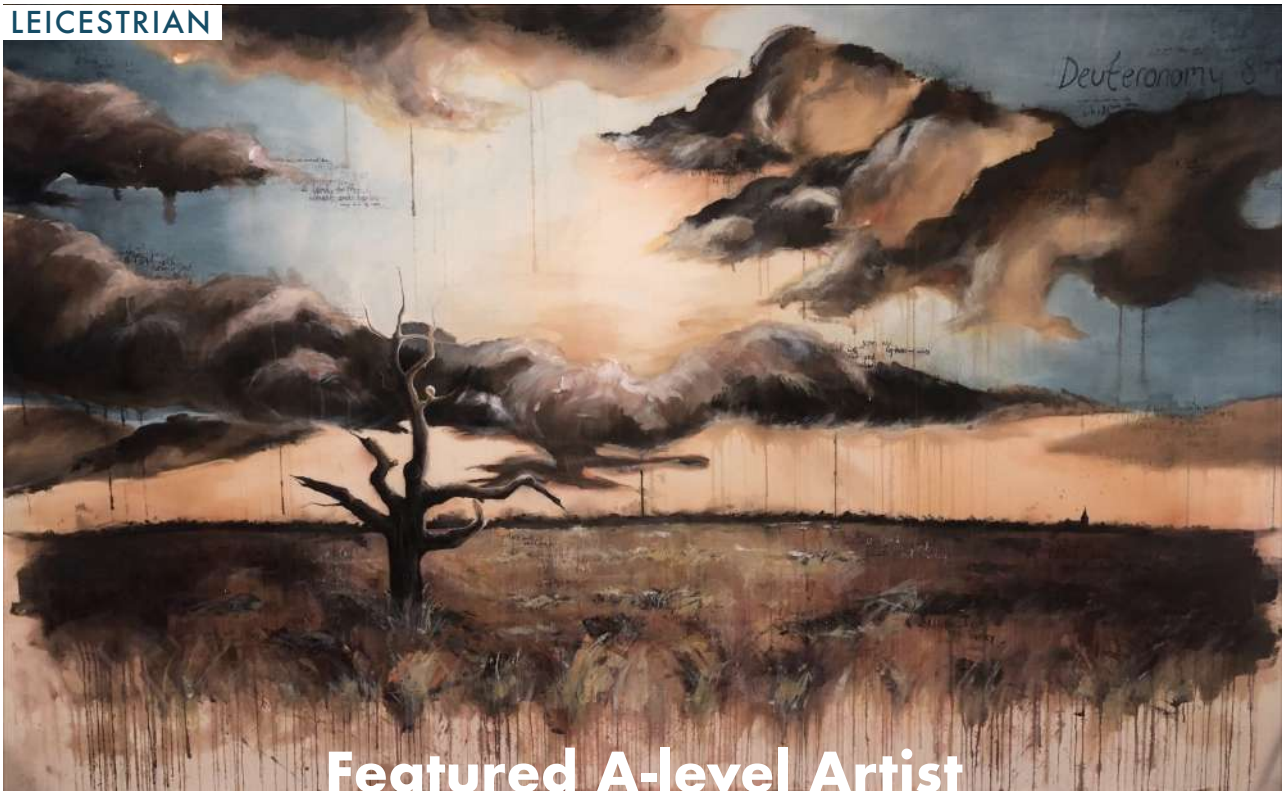
I have been enjoying Art at A-level, although it is quite a jump from GCSE. I have had more experience with a



range of different media, so I have been exploring and experimenting. For the main project, I am looking forward to exploring how movement is conveyed in art.

What are your career aspirations?

I would like to go into a science-related career such as dentistry as I am also studying Biology and Chemistry. Dentistry encompasses all my subjects and skills; skills I have honed during GCSE Art – the main one being manual dexterity, which is particularly important within dentistry. Art will remain a hobby throughout my life as I enjoy it and find it a wonderful way to unwind. One of my many favourite things about art is its constructive nature. Sometimes all I do is draw a squiggle, and then whatever I see within it I draw on a larger scale, adding more tone and detail.



Featured A-level Artist

Evie Williams

Interview by Amanda Orlovka

What artists inspire you?

External to my A-Level, I admire Charlie Mackesey, who wrote and illustrated "The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse". I really like his drawings; they are very emotive, very expressive. Within my A-Level, I am probably most inspired by Caravaggio. He was a Baroque artist and was well known for using a technique called chiaroscuro (his use of light and dark), which I am trying to replicate with my pear drawings.

Can you tell me about your A-level Art project?

In my coursework project I was looking at Christianity: the relationship that the Church has with history and the negative impacts that it has had, and then at the positive impact of faith and the beneficial impacts that the Church could have. My exam piece is following on from religious tradition, but focused more on the teachings of Saint Augustine, who writes in his "Confessions" about how he was incredibly sinful and cites the example of stealing a pear. I am trying to use the pear as a symbol for being able to go from a sinner to a saint, creating a positive message.

What are you planning to do after A-levels?

I am planning to go on to university, hopefully the University of Oxford, to study Theology. Following that, I am not too sure what career I am going to be pursuing.



How do you as an artist make use of connections from various sources?

You start off with an idea and then you explore the different ways that you can render that idea, for example if I am thinking about religion, I look at religious symbols, religious texts. Then you are going to try and relate that to artists doing similar things so then you can borrow techniques from different artists -- you can use the same colours that an artist may use, for instance. You draw from all those sources to create something new.



Featured
Ceramics
Student

Jack
Strong

Interview by Isobel Westerman

Why did you choose to take Ceramics instead of Art?

In Ceramics, I have the ability to visualise a piece as a 3D model rather than have it just be something on a page.

What are you doing for your major Year 11 project?

My project is inspired by industrial power and I also explore power and nature as opposing forces. At the top of my sculpture is an iceberg, representing nature, but underneath I incorporated industrial features. I am exploring what is underneath the iceberg.

What has been the most challenging part of Ceramics?

The clay going through the kiln is typically the most challenging, and sometimes frightening, part. When you take it out, it can be warped, cracked, or even completely destroyed. We also put glazing on our models before they go into the kiln, and this can occasionally change the colour of the model. This can change the piece for the worse, and so we have to learn to adapt in the event of these possibilities.

Do you plan to continue with Ceramics after Year 11?

I plan to continue Ceramics at A-level and then I would like to train as an automotive engineer and to look at aerodynamic bodies, so I think the skills that I have learnt during Ceramics GCSE will be applicable to my career as well.





Last Summer's Hadrian's Wall Trip

by Alisha, Khushi and Safaa, Year 9

On 28th June, 2023, many Year 8 students embarked on the Hadrian's Wall trip, accompanied by Mr Pratt, Dr Donnelly, Miss Jeffries, Mr Gilham and Mrs Martin. We toured Alnwick Castle in Northumberland with castle specialists, and we all became increasingly enthusiastic when we recognised buildings from various films, such as "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone" and "Robin Hood, Prince of Thieves". This castle has been in the Percy family for over 700 years, and it's still the family home for the 12th Duke and Duchess of Northumberland. We learnt about various types of castles, and how they aided war strategies. We explored Alnwick Garden, a place with vibrant greenery, grand fountains and a Poison Garden. Here, we learnt about numerous serial killers who used drugs found in plants and the symptoms of this type of poisoning. At the end of this long day, we finally arrived at our accommodation, The Sill.

We woke up on the second day ready to have fun. We had a delicious English breakfast, and then walked to the Housesteads Roman Fort (not far from the hostel) where we sat down to listen to a talk about the life of a Roman soldier and their armour. We all then got up and went to see the beautiful ruins of the Housesteads Roman fort. Our tour guide walked us through the

significance of every room and we learnt about how the soldiers slept in tight spaces and how they lived together like a family. Afterwards, we walked downhill and ate lunch, while admiring the beautiful view of Vindolanda. We had a tour of Vindolanda, which was a lot larger than the Roman fort. Then we visited the Vindolanda Museum, where we walked around in groups of two or three and explored the museum and shop. We then all went to the Roman Army Museum where we watched a half hour film about the site and its history. The film was a nice experience and allowed us to relax after a very active day.

When we all returned to The Sill, we had dinner and sat outside on the grass or stayed in our room and relaxed.

On the last day of the trip, we packed our bags and set off for Richmond Castle, where we learnt about the history of the ruins and climbed the steps to the top of the tower. On our way up, we saw some of the remaining rooms, including a hall with two thrones. This bit was quite funny, because everyone was pretending to be a king or queen and were fighting over the throne. When we got to the top, the views were amazing. There was a little staircase that went up to a higher level, but we could only go



up two at a time, because it was quite steep; from there, the view was even better, and you could see for miles around. After we descended the steps, we went to the gardens and played hide and seek in the maze-like bushes, and ran around a lot. We went to the gift shop to buy souvenirs (some bought wooden swords or kazoos) and then we got back on the coach. Some pupils played kazoo songs on the bus, which was quite entertaining. We soon arrived at Fountains Abbey, where we had a picnic. It started to rain, but we made the most of it, and Mr Pratt generously bought everyone an ice cream. After that we had a tour of Fountains Abbey. I thought the monastery was impressive, because although it is old and was opened in the 12th-century, it still stands tall and magnificent. It was interesting learning about the use of each room, and how that changed over time. We went for a walk around the gardens and stopped to play Pooh sticks in the river. We then departed for Leicester, playing board games and chatting through the journey. The trip was an amazing experience, where we learnt a lot, but most importantly had fun and created memories with our friends that will last a lifetime.



“

We all became increasingly enthusiastic when we recognised buildings from various films, such as “Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone” and “Robin Hood, Prince of Thieves”.

Prize-Winning Story

by Vidhi Thakor, 6th Form

The Oxford Classics Creative Writing competition, requiring a creative response to images from the Manar al-Athar Photo Archive, aims to encourage curiosity in the ancient world. In 2023, over 325 young people took part, with judging by a panel from the photo archive, OCBR and Oxford University. Vidhi's entry, 'The Eroding Self', a response to a photo of the Temple of Hatshepsut in Egypt (pictured at the end of Vidhi's story), placed second in the Years 12 and 13 category.

The Eroding Self

by Vidhi Thakor

Once there was a girl who ran into the golden rays of the Sun, relishing the blazing heat on her young skin. She shut her eyes against its blinding light and giggled as she stumbled, a staggering dance to the clinking melody of her anklets. Her braid flew behind her, wild and carefree, her bare feet thumped the sandy ground, prepared to carry her wherever she pleased.

She called out for her brother with a voice that felt familiar to me, then she seemed to realise something. The melody faltered, her foot tangled in her clothing, her braid whacked her back as it caught up with her and she tumbled headfirst to the ground. She shook the dust out of her hair and squinted into the bright day. Her lips curved into a smile as she saw me before her.

Now that she was closer, realisation and curiosity filled me. Of course, she had every right to come here, to me, yet I could not help but wonder why she had left the palace.

The girl was transfixed by the splendour of my walls in front of her, looking as if they would stand for a hundred years, and then a thousand, and then a million after that. My columns stood high and strong as they

still do, holding the roof up far above the heads of the crowd below; yet the girl reached out to the ceiling, longing to feel my warm stone beneath her fingers.

She picked her scraped knees off the ground and disappeared into the shadows I provided, where the cool air raised the hairs on her arms and soothed her lungs. She stayed there for a while, smiling to herself, before she moved on into the first courtyard.

She lay down on the soft grass and let herself cool in the shade that my trees provided, picking a fallen fruit off the ground and taking a hesitant bite. The flavour burst in her mouth, fresh and sweet, and as she giggled and looked for more, I was filled with a sudden fondness for this girl. Birds chirped their playful melody above her and spring flowers of all colours and shapes filled the air with their honeyed smell. But the Sun had already begun to grow stifling, and she ran towards the next floor. She cast a longing look at the fruit on the trees, too high for her to reach, and decided to leave the courtyard.

She focused on the grass beneath her feet, running and running and running, until she felt something softer and stopped. She took a few steps back and saw a small patch of daisies, most of them crumpled by her frantic rush. One daisy stood proud on its frail stem, uncrushed, its yellow centre looking up at the girl like a tiny sun. She seemed fascinated by the small flower, despite the many more colourful flowers my courtyard provided. She plucked

the daisy from the ground and placed it in her braid, smiling at how the bright flower contrasted her dark locks. I marvelled at this girl, who looked so similar to the statues and portraits I serve to protect, and yet was so different. For a moment, I wished that she would stay like this forever.

She finally reached the top of the temple, and she was back in my shadows. Panic seized me as she walked to the chapel on my right – I knew what was in there, and I knew how she would react. But my blessing and my curse is that I will never change, never move, never speak. Hers was that she would.

She walked in, and was immediately met with the face of her brother in a carving on the wall. His expression was as cold and serious as the stone it was made from, and the girl was eerily reminded of her father, profound and kingly even on his deathbed. She turned away, not

wanting to look at this version of her brother. Then she saw her own face.

The statue of Princess Neferure stared back at her like a twisted mirror from behind the statue of her mother, King Hatshepsut. It was small, much like the girl, but the Princess' expression was solemn and mature, and the girl's head tilted in confusion. She felt no connection to the statue, though she knew she should – she even remembered when it was made. If that was supposed to be her, why did it look like someone else? The caption under the statue read 'His Beloved Royal Daughter, God's Wife, Neferure' – the role she must take over now that her mother was ruling.

The girl fell back from the version of her that did not exist, shut her eyes tight, clutched her daisy in her hand and curled into a ball, as though willing herself to stay a child forever. She heard

shouts from the courtyard below and knew that they were still looking for her, but she clamped her hands over her ears and refused to listen. Inevitably, Princess Neferure returned to the palace. By sunfall, she was side by side with the King. This was the last time she ran from the palace.

A new image of her is added to her mother's palace, taller this time. It shows her carrying out her duties, next to her mother, her brother. The two of them rule together, while the Princess fades into the background, the images of her eventually wear, and they are captioned with the same title, over and over and over. Her braid is no longer visible and is tucked away under a blue-green wig, the colour of a resplendent lotus.

The daisy is left crumpled on my floor. It rots, and so does she.

I never will.



Deir el-Bahri - Temple of Hatshepsut - facing northwest. Photo Credit: Ross Burns/Manar al-Athar



This year the Year 12 Aspire Greenpower F24+ team made many improvements to the car, with this being the first year where members from the first ever LGS Greenpower F24 team returned. Having started in Year 7 back in 2018 (Hamad and Joey) we were well prepared when we started in October 2023. Upon arrival we were greeted with the knowledge that our car was slower than the Year 9 car, so we set out to improve it and fine-tune it for our category. Over the year, we changed the motor, gearing, electrics, steering, seating, aerodynamics, and battery management, as well as using added automated telemetry. We initially had audacious plans for a full manual gearing system and had a focus on reducing the weight of the car. In the end, however, we decided multiple gears were unnecessary, and that small weight reductions make little to no difference, so we ended up changing our drivetrain entirely, with a new and more efficient motor, new motor sprockets, and a renovated axle set-up. This was alongside many other small changes and improvements such as a new and innovative seat. We had a focus on designing parts in

CAD software and implemented a lot of 3D printed parts to the car where possible, which worked to our advantage, with the rapid prototyping and testing that we could then do. This work eventually culminated in our first race.

Going into our first race with our Mario Kart-inspired outfits, our car, while not pretty, was working. It was the fastest kit car on the day, lapping seven seconds faster than the next, finishing second only due to a battery issue towards the end of the race. On top of that, we also won the Portfolio Award for the first time. Coming up in September 2024, we have a race at Dunsfold Park (the Top Gear test track) and then we have been invited to the international final at Goodwood in October 2024. With some minor modifications, we hope to finish top of our division, a realistic and exciting prospect for the team.

Over the year we implemented many engineering methods, as the team got a better understanding of racing, engineering, and teamwork, even going as far as doing a Saturday workshop session to get the car running. It was the determination of the team which got us so far. Overall,

the Greenpower team had a very enjoyable year and had a successful result. Mallory Park was a great result, entirely thanks to all the team members' hard work.

Team Members

Joey England

Team manager, drivetrain

Hamad Anwar

Team manager, electronics

Will Dalby

Aero, gears, batteries

Bayden Navallo

Aero, gears

Mylo Cockle

Batteries

Prithika Anbezhil

Portfolio, headrest

Uvika Sharma

Portfolio, headrest

Taran Jaswal

Seat, electronics, fundraising

Henry Wright

Driver, seat, aero

Henry Heaton

Seat, fundraising

Luke Jeffries

Fundraising, costumes

Anish Das

Fundraising, seat

Filip Cupac

Seat, costumes

Keshav Sthanakiya

Cockpit, fundraising, costumes



Introducing DT Teacher, Mr Parkin

Interview by Amanda Orlovski

Could you tell a bit about yourself?

I'm old, and I have been teaching quite a few years. I have a very unusual background in that I used to be a coal miner when I first left school. I have blown up jet engines working for Rolls Royce. Then I have designed bits for the next generation of jet engines and I am now working at a wonderful school with wonderful students.

Why do you think students should learn DT?

It is the best subject in the school: it gives pupils opportunities to experiment and to see things going wrong, to learn from mistakes, and sets them up for a lot of things in future – as not everything does work first time. It is really, really good experience and they enjoy it as well.

If your class had a talk show, who would be your dream guest to interview?

James Dyson – or Eddison, who is famously quoted or misquoted saying that he failed to make a lightbulb 10,000 times. He only succeeded once.

What's the latest trend in DT that you're excited about?

We are looking at some training in the near future in designing using virtual reality, with headsets on. We have actually got it booked for this spring: 10 of us in the room with headsets, designing in sort of Space, which none of us could have dreamed of a few years ago. Computer software has improved, and will help students who claim that they can't draw (me neither). They may not need to draw soon, so that (not drawing) is not going to stop them in design. Virtual reality is going to be a big thing, and the way industry uses computer-aided design and modelling techniques is coming to schools now. It is going to give students so much more power. A few years ago, things like 3D printers were not existent in schools, but nowadays we have three in here; we just bought a new one

Why do you enjoy DT?

I like making things. I really don't like having to pay other people to repair things, so I'm very practical. I replumbed and rewired my own house. I don't do plastering, but I have vintage cars I keep running.



Arkwright Scholarships

by Isaac Chi, L6th form

Established in 1991, the Arkwright Scholarship programme nurtures future engineers, designers and computer scientists. This year LGS was fortunate to be awarded six scholarships, for Joseph England (Florence Turner Trust), William Dalby (Warwick University), Kee Kiam Soh (Imperial College London), Prithika Anbezhil (Haribo), Taran Jaswal (RAF) and me. My sponsor, the Kirby Laing Foundation, was established in 1972 by Sir Kirby Laing for charitable purposes including the fostering of STEM education and overseas development projects (for example benefiting young women in Nepal and Bangladesh).

I always intended on studying Computer Science or Software Engineering at university, and I saw the Arkwright Scholarship as a gateway into learning more about the subject. For me, the most attractive aspect of the Arkwright programme was the experiences that you could get out of it. Arkwright provides each scholar with their own mentor – my mentor is a university student studying Physics and is currently taking a placement year at BAE Systems as a systems engineer. So far, he has already provided invaluable advice in furthering my studies around

Engineering. Another major factor that persuaded me to apply was the actual scholarship money. This money can be used on bettering your STEM education. This could be through transport to events, paying for textbooks and equipment or even courses. So far, I have spent mine on school equipment, and I am intending on pursuing a small project partially funded by my Arkwright funding.

The application process consisted of an aptitude test, where we were tested on our design skills, being tasked to design solutions to two different problems within a two-hour time frame. After the aptitude test, successful candidates were invited to an interview. During my interview, I had to talk about a project related to engineering that I did – I talked about my DT GCSE NEA. In addition, I talked about some side projects and engineering-related competitions that I was involved in. During half-term, I had to make my way down to the IET building in London, where I got to meet a representative of my sponsor (the Kirby Laing foundation) as well as other recipients of the scholarship for this year. Representatives from each sponsoring organisation also attended.

FutureChef

Competition

by Amara Omri



Taking part in the FutureChef competition this year was something very new to me and I was quite nervous about cooking in this new environment. However, after arriving, meeting the other competitors and seeing how friendly all the judges and staff were, I felt very comfortable and in my element. It was fun to do something I love and get professional feedback in each of the rounds and from my mentor chef, learning new skills and easier ways to do things in the kitchen. FutureChef was a great opportunity to be surrounded by fellow cooking enthusiasts and work in a professional environment.

In the local final, I cooked mushroom orzo pasta with ciabatta garlic bread. After preparing for the next stage a few months later with the guidance of my mentor, I went on to the regional final, where there was a time limit of 90 minutes. I made Asian fried chicken and stir-fry noodles, and an apple rose tart with Chantilly cream and caramel sauce for dessert. It was a great opportunity and has allowed me to have more knowledge of what career paths I might take in the food industry.

Eleanor Williams

featured A-Level DT Student

Interview by Amanda Orlovska

Describe your A-level DT project.

My Major Project is a space-saving desk: it's for students and those who are working from home in small houses. I was thinking about COVID when we all obviously had to work from home, and I wanted something that could collapse and still be usable but open into a bigger desk area. I was inspired by Luigi Massoni's vanity unit where the chair becomes the leg to hold it up when you extend it.

What would you say was your biggest accomplishment in DT?

I would say it was my major project because it took me ages to find out what I wanted to do. I knew I wanted to do something space-saving but finding out what it would look like and how to make it more exciting took time, since a space-saving desk is quite well known. I needed to work out how all the pieces would fit together, and how it would look overall.

What was the most challenging?

Especially from the start, learning CAD, 3D printing and how to use the apps themselves. It took me a long time to figure out, but once I got the hang of it, it clicked, and I use the CAD in a lot of ways now.

Are you planning to use DT in your future plans?

I am planning to do a design course at Loughborough University and to go into furniture design.

What has DT meant to you over the years?

It has been a good creative outlet, since I don't do art or anything else that's similar. I feel like I do very staple subjects, like Maths and Geography, and DT lets me explore what I want to do in the future.

What inspires you in your projects?

There are a few books I have read on Scandinavian Design and Contemporary Design: I love anything modern, funky, weird-looking, brightly-coloured.



Ivie Iyasere

featured GCSE DT Student

Interview by Amruta Pabbaraju, Year 11

Why did you choose DT as a subject?

I made the decision around Year 8, after doing the balancing toy project and having a lot of fun thinking of lots of different designs, DT allows me endless possibilities for creative expression with my work, which I love. DT also lets me modify my designs to create the best one. I also already knew that I wanted to become an engineer, so I figured taking DT would put me on the track for that career path.

Where do you plan to go with DT in the future?

I am taking DT for A level, along with Physics, Maths and Further Maths, as I really love these subjects. I would like to go into aeronautical or aerospace engineering, and I found my passion for that through joining the Royal Aeronautical Society, where I get to participate in lots of competitions and events. In the distant future, I hope to be recruited for Rolls Royce.

Who is your biggest inspiration in DT and why?

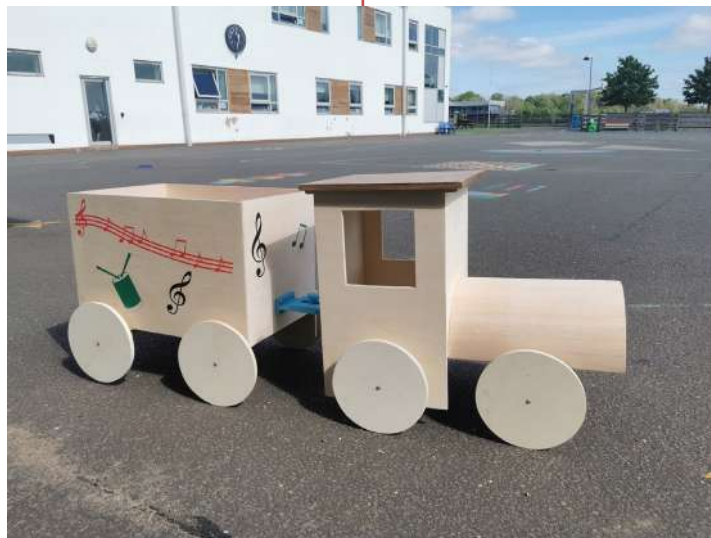
My uncle is the only engineer in my family, so I always love hearing his stories about his job. In particular, there was one time at his job when there was a problem with a joystick, a whole team of mechanics had to be called to figure out what the problem was, but he figured out the solution

(which was shockingly simple). I relate to him a lot, in the sense that we both love to solve problems and design.

What has been your favourite project?

My favourite would probably be the project that we did in Year Nine. We had to make houses for bees and bugs using bamboo and lots of different scrap pieces of wood. I enjoyed this particularly because I like thinking about geometric designs, mine had an octagonal shape and a square shape. I really loved this because I felt like I could be really creative and independent with the designs. I also like the

idea of recycling the wood and turning in something new – a home for bugs and bees!



Tell me about your final project.

My final project is a storage unit for children that is interactive and that they'll actually want to use (considering, as we all know, that children find it hard to put their things away). To capture

children's attention, I created a wooden train where they can store toys and also normal everyday items, like shoes. You can move it yourself without picking it up, so it's easy to use and more interactive. I also made it very colourful, and added decorations like musical notes, to help it appeal to children more. I tested it on my cousin, and he loved it.

Mohit Mistry

featured GCSE-level Design Tech Student

Interview by Charlotte Sadler

When and why did you first take an interest in the subject?

From an early age, I have been curious about how things work. I needed a shelf that would allow me to store items in a car during camping and this sparked me to design an outdoor camping shelf using Fusion 360 and industrial machinery. I successfully created a problem-solving product, turning a flat piece of metal into a 3D storage unit.

Please tell me about your final DT project.

I am going to design and make a product that combines a coffee table and a work desk to store and secure personal possessions. This product will enable my client to reduce clutter in the room as well as having a place where they can work on a laptop for extended periods of time. The table should be able to adjust its height according to their preference.

Why did you decide to do this?

I want to aid families to be more productive and organised. Some families have limited space in their living rooms, so objects like computers, glasses, phones, and remote controls clutter the space. According to accessboxstorage.com, over 90% of people in the UK have clutter in their homes. Users will be more productive overall because they won't have to search the house for common items because they are all neatly stored in one area that they can also use for work. The product can work with a range of people of varying heights as it is height adjustable, and it will also provide a visually appealing space.



What has been the most challenging part of creating the project?

I think the most challenging part was constructing the sliding doors. I had to use a hand router which took time and, if I messed it up, the door would not slide properly. Sanding and finishing the project was also time-consuming, and parts were not always sanded down properly, but this mistake was only noticeable after waxing the unit. To rectify the mistake, I had to sand down the entire panel and redo the entire process, which was frustrating.

Do you plan to continue with DT after you leave school?

My aspiration is to become an Energy Engineer, to research and explore sustainable methods of generating electricity. One idea, for instance, would be to use seismic waves to turn a hazard into a potential way to generate clean energy. After school, I want to pursue a Master's degree in Energy or Automotive Engineering. Initially, I envisage myself working within an engineering company, taking on the role of a trainee engineer to gain experience in various facets of the industry. Gradually, I would like to move up into research and development to design products to help people and the environment.



Drama Overview of the Year

by A L Hulme (photo is from 'Peter Pan and Wendy')

The Drama department has again been abuzz with creativity and talent throughout the year. In December, our main school production was the brilliant play 'Education, Education, Education', skilfully directed by OL Miss Emma Rowbotham, in her final term with us. Together with Mr Stagg, her vision brought the stage to life, leaving a lasting impact on both cast and audience. Who knew at the time that, as if Miss Rowbotham had a crystal ball, a general election would be just around the corner?! In the Lent term, the lower school production of 'Wendy and Peter Pan' was a delightful adventure. Miss Adams, fresh from maternity leave, co-directed this enchanting tale alongside Mrs Garner. Their collaboration resulted in an uplifting performance that transported us all to Neverland.

Over the last year we have enjoyed a fabulous range of theatre trips to Curve, Leicester. Frantic Assembly's 'Metamorphosis' challenged our perceptions through physical theatre; the supernatural thriller '2:22 - A Ghost

Story' kept us on the edge of our seats; we greatly enjoyed 'Come from Away', the heart-warming musical celebrating human kindness; saw a visually stunning adaptation of 'Life of Pi'; and the Year 7s enjoyed an unforgettable trip to see 'Harry Potter and the Cursed Child'.

Throughout the year, our GCSE and A Level students impressed audiences with a rich variety of performances. In the Lent term, Year 11 showcased a breadth of scripted pieces, from the intense classic 'American Buffalo' to the contemporary 'Once upon a Bridge,' recounting the true story of a near-miss triggered by a jogger's rage. Year 13 presented two original, verbatim works - 'Brothers in Harm' and 'Tea & Sympathy' - which centred on divorce and its aftermath, drawing inspiration from The Paper Birds. Following Easter, Year 10 took to the stage with their imaginative physical theatre creations. The evening was a tapestry of contrasts, from 'The Waiting Room' and 'Between Heaven and Hell,' both set in

purgatory to the hilarious hen-do-themed 'Last Night in Vegas.' Recently, our Year 12 student offered a thought-provoking re-interpretation of 'A Doll's House,' with Brecht as her chosen influential practitioner. A special mention goes to Gabriel Smith, who generously gave up his time to rehearse and perform as a non-examined candidate alongside Izzy, showing remarkable skill and energy. As the academic year drew to a close, our Drama Department remained in full swing. Prep's annual Play-in-a-Day unfolded once again with its characteristic creativity and excitement, showing just how much can be achieved in only 24 hours! GCSE and A-level students diligently submitted coursework and, amidst this flurry of activity, auditions and casting took place for the next school musical. Anticipation builds for our upcoming production of the magical 'Beauty and the Beast', which will grace the LGS stage in December 2024. Get ready for captivating music, timeless characters, and a journey that transcends reality.



Mrs Higginson

Says Farewell

(Interview by Mrs Higginson – Why not?!)

How did you know you wanted to be an English teacher?

I started teaching as a volunteer in Nigeria through CUSO, the Canadian version of VSO. I spent two years in Northern Nigeria, living with another CUSO from a different part of Canada. This was decades ago and in a remote area, so we had no running water or electricity. We both had malaria, but luckily at different times. We washed our clothes by hand with Elephant Power brand detergent and hung them out to dry in our courtyard, where we also made yogurt from scratch in a lidded tin bowl.

There were many memorable moments, including soon after our arrival, playing loud Beatles music – “Here Comes the Sun”, how fitting! -- with my housemate, Stella, while some of our future students cut down the long grass outside our bungalow (so no snakes could hide there) and gradually crept closer and closer to the windows to view the strange newcomers. The first poem I ever taught was very short, perhaps 10 lines long, and about the Nigerian Civil War. (English was the students’ second or third language.) After some explanation and some questions and answers, I moved to my final question: What is the mood

of this poem? How does it make you feel? And Danladi, wearing a daffodil yellow and white striped caftan, beamed and said, “It makes me feel happy!!” I was worried, and asked how that could be, when it was a war poem, depicting needless death. And he explained, “This is the first poem I have ever read, and you explained it very well, and I understand it, so I feel happy.” That was the moment when I knew that I definitely wanted to be a teacher. (Corny, as we say in America, but true.)

Everyone always asks me, how did you come to live in England (with a thick North American accent like that)?

To make a long story short, after teaching for some years at a small private school in suburban Toronto, I met Dr Higginson (OL Physics teacher) on a walking holiday in Tuscany. We bonded over our love of walking and Italian food and Woody Allen films, among other things. I fell for certain very British qualities in him: consideration and gentle humour. Both our children, OLs Eleanor and Andrew Higginson, went to Leicester Grammar School – and both loved Mr Allen’s debating society.

What will you miss most about Leicester Grammar School?

Teaching “Pride and Prejudice” and dystopian fiction, Philip Pullman novels and Shakespeare; the wonderful librarians and my friends among the staff; marking in sunshine alongside a cup of coffee in the school coffeeshop; getting exercise in all weather for both mind and body via taking the stairs between the English office and my classroom at a clip multiple times a day, while dodging students hopping backwards through the hallways and (sorry to say it) barging through doorways. And most of all, reading students’ creative writing and putting together “The Leicestrian”.

What should I read? What is really really good?

Ah, there’s a question every English teacher is happy to answer at length. (These are suitable for age 15 and up, unless otherwise noted.)

1. Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche’s first novel “Purple Hibiscus” is a poignant bildungsroman set in Nigeria. If you are looking for a female version of the quintessential novel of adolescence, “The Catcher in the Rye”, look no further – so much wiser and healthier than “The Bell Jar”. And the narrative method is cleverly layered and full of sly irony, because an 18-year-old is telling how she experienced life at 15, but this is also filtered through the author’s eyes.
2. “Mrs Dalloway” by Virginia Woolf is my favourite modern classic. Stream-of-consciousness narration at its best, Woolf expresses many reasons why life is both wonderful and painful. The eponymous Clarissa Dalloway was modelled on a society woman who Woolf considered “tinselly” and shallow, but she has Woolf’s imagination.
3. “Hot Milk” by Deborah Levy is a favourite recently published novel. It is about a young woman’s relationship with her mother. Something Levy is really adept at is using misunderstandings or miscommunication as poetic and ironic tropes.
4. “The Remains of the Day” by Kazuo Ishiguro is a contemporary classic, the viewpoint of a traditional English butler who witnesses 20th century history unfolding. As the title suggests,

it is about regrets that accumulate with age – read it as an incentive not to leave dissent unexpressed, or dreams unattempted.

5. “Metamorphosis” by Franz Kafka is a modern classic with a surreal storyline: a young man awakes one morning to find himself in the body of a large cockroach. A fantasy scenario of this sort allows the author to express their secret fears and wishes, as well as the frustration of some of the real situations we find ourselves in.
6. “A Time for Everything” by Karl Ove Knausgaard retells several well-known Old Testament stories, weaving them together with a history of man’s changing conceptions of angels, and then segues into a contemporary narration featuring a young Norwegian with severe depression. This is a unique, passionate, extraordinary novel.
7. My daughter and I have celebrated Hallowe’en for the past few years by reading a novel or two about witches together. “Hare House” by Sally Hinchcliffe is my favourite of these so far.
8. I have a great interest in Japanese culture, especially since having visited Kyoto (twice so far). “Beautiful Star” by Yukio Mishima is the Japanese novel I would most eagerly recommend. Mishima authored a number of masterpieces, such as “The Temple of the Golden Pavilion” (inspired by a true story about one of Kyoto’s landmark temples), which is a gorgeously written tragic story. In contrast, “Beautiful Star” is a satirical comedy, written in the 1960s when many people were credulously obsessed with aliens – it is imaginative, original and hilarious.

What are your plans for your retirement?

My husband and I will be able to go for long walks whenever we please – woodland walks, fell walks, waterside walks! I want to travel, to see Finland and Iceland for the first time, and to revisit Japan, Italy, Scandinavia and Switzerland especially. Last summer I had a carpenter build in bookshelves (70 shelves in all) over two walls of my dining room, so I am embarking on an extended reading journey also.



“Education, Education, Education”

LGS Production 2023

by Isobel Westerman, 6th Form

This play takes us back to 1997, the day after Tony Blair’s Labour government won the election, when Britain was cool and the Spice Girls were charting. It explores the excitement and optimism of the era and accurately recreates what school would have been like, and so for many teachers and parents it created an intense feeling of nostalgia. The play was performed from December 7, 2023, under Ms Rowbotham’s excellent direction. Ms Rowbotham was covering Ms Adams’ maternity leave, and brought new and ingenious ideas and exercises to the production. She managed over 30 cast members, giving time and attention to each individual. Her care and dedication to the play created a warm and enjoyable atmosphere for everyone involved. The performance created an

accurate picture of what an under-funded school of the time would be like – the students rowdy and uninterested, the teachers with a range of eccentric characteristics, some with infectious positivity and others with dry sarcasm. The costumes, hair, set, music and props all represented Britain in the late 90s.

“Education, Education, Education” opens with a German teacher new to the school, played by Gabriel Smith, who enters the stage from the audience, dancing along to Take That’s “Back for Good”, before the stage quickly transitions into a hectic scene of school in the early morning rush. The fast pace of the play was a major contributor to how much fun it was, as in scene after scene, we saw the teachers and students in new environments.

This was, however, one of the factors that made the show so tricky to perfect, as the cast and crew had to know the script and their movements inside and out,

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One of the greatest aspects of the script is the way that it balances out dark themes with comedic moments.

as not a beat could be missed or the whole production would be slowed down. In a tight one hour and 40 minutes, with no interval, the play portrays a full school day of staffroom meetings and fights, chaotic classrooms, and rebellious students dancing to the Macarena under the not-so-watchful eye of Ms Belltop-Doyle, played by Sohnum Banning, following the perspective of the teachers, as they move through the school. The animated performances of the teachers made the show captivating, as each character was vastly different from the next. Daniel Weston's performance as the overly enthusiastic headmaster contrasted with Charles Looker's dry performance of Paul McIntyre. I had the privilege of performing in this show as the strict, no-nonsense, Ms Louise Turner, which gave me the incredible opportunity to shout, whilst in character, at my own Headmaster, Mr Watson, during the pre-show. The play's climax centres on an angsty and rebellious student, played by Ella Kitchen, about to jump off the roof of the school, after fighting with her teachers and accidentally injuring Ms Belltop-Doyle.

One of the greatest aspects of the script is the way that it balances out dark themes with comedic moments. Ms Rowbotham's direction allowed



for an exploration of complex emotions and heavy topics, such as suicide, which were all handled with sensitivity and careful insight, as well as hilarious dance routines, impressive pyrotechnics and silly scenes revolving around a Tamagotchi, performed by Jai Acquilla. The show perfectly explored the heights of being a teacher in the 90s, the hope raised by Blair's election campaign, and wacky classroom endeavours, whilst also showing the lows, such as the stress. "Education, Education, Education" could have you laughing in your seat one second, and then suddenly watching a student struggle with emotional turmoil the next, without a single moment feeling out of place. The cast's ability to take on such roles with heavy character arcs is truly

a tribute to the talent of our school and the insight of our Drama department.

The music chosen by Ms Rowbotham was lively and reflected what was popular at the time, from "Back for Good" and "Parklife" at the opening to the closing tribute to Blair's campaign song, "Things Can Only Get Better". It brought the show to life and transported the audience back to 1997. A featured dance routine to Robby Williams' "Let Me Entertain You" was a highlight. Mr Stagg, our technician, was able to elevate each scene with lighting. Thank you to our Drama department, especially Ms Rowbotham, to the cast and behind-stage crew, and to everyone who came to watch the show.



Our Experience Acting in “Education, Education, Education”

Interviews by Florence Warren, U6th



Sohnum Banning, U6th, as “Sue” Or “Miss Belltop-Doyle”

What was your favourite part of playing Sue?

I loved the fact that Sue always remained positive, no matter what hurdles faced her. She never let pessimists such as, Paul put her down or take away from her crazy plans. But at the same time, she was open to learn from characters like Louise who had a different outlook on teaching. I think she represented hope for the education system and acted as a role model for students.

What do you think is so important about school productions and why do you think students should get involved with them?

Meeting new people in different years, either in the cast or crew is one of my favourite things about school productions. You also get to ‘be’ a character, which can be a nice escape from the stress of A Levels! Working collaboratively with students and teachers is so much fun. School productions require commitment and hard work which can seem difficult at times, but the result is always worth it.



Ella Kitchen, Year 11, as “Emily Greenslade”

What was the most challenging part of playing Emily?

The most challenging part of playing Emily was getting to understand her as a character properly and her motivation in each scene. She was very complex because she was struggling with family, school, and all parts of life, so it was important that I represented her struggles as well as I could. I had to understand her breaking points and why she wanted to die; she felt like she had nothing left in life. This meant that when performing the scene where Emily was on the roof of the school, considering jumping off, I had to forget about everything going on around me, focus on how Emily would have felt defeated and use my own emotions to show this.

What are your highlights from the production?

Everyone in the cast and crew was a joy to be around and made rehearsing my favourite time of the week. I also loved watching the staffroom and younger students’ scenes because they were so funny, and the actors were all really talented. My favourite scene to perform was the first scene between Emily and Mr McIntyre because I was able to build up Emily’s anger and irritation, and it helped me and the audience to understand that, even when she is passionate about something and tries, the people around her only see the bad in her. It allowed me to show her sarcastic and argumentative nature, which was super fun to perform.

Gabriel Smith, L6th, as “Tobias”

What was your favourite part of playing “Tobias”?

There were lots of great things about playing Tobias! My favourite was probably the comedy he brought to the play; it was great fun to try and extract as much humour as possible from the script. I also enjoyed (attempting!) the German accent.

What was the process of perfecting the accent and what challenges did you face?

I think the accent really improved as time went on. It really helped to isolate the difficult words (‘heritage’, for example) and then to practice them until I got them right. One of the final lines in the play, “And grass crept through the bricks once more” was especially tricky. I’ve come out of the experience with several German tongue twisters.



**Jai Acquilla, Year 11, as
“Tim” or “Mr Pashley”**

**What was your favourite part of playing
“Timothy Pashley”?**

Timothy Pashley was such a fun character to play. I'd obviously played more serious characters in the past, such as Tom Buchanan in “The Great Gatsby” (last year’s production), so approaching such a contradictory character who was so lovably dynamic, entertaining, and yet so emotional was certainly a change. I knew I’d have my work cut out for me: planning the accent, the overall “vibe”, and the character’s motivations and connections with both people and Japanese virtual pets!

**What are your highlights from this year’s
school production?**

There are the glimmering moments, of course, that go without saying: the first ever read through and look at all the characters and scenes, the prize-giving just before our matinee show, and that rush from the pure joy of finally getting on stage and performing. Then, there are the moments during rehearsals that never failed to lift all our spirits. Miss Rowbotham truly went above and beyond; with “ugly shirt competitions” to boost confidence, “rhyme and reason” mini games to strengthen creativity and teamwork, and the support she gave unconditionally to the entire cast and crew to ensure that the play turned out to be as amazing as we all hoped.





The Strangeworlds Creator LD Lapinski Comes to LGS

by Joseph Upton, Year 7
(photo features Emily and LD)

On the 8th of February 2024, Year 6 and 7 received a long-anticipated visit from the author LD Lapinski. LD is the writer of the well-known series, *The Strangeworlds Travel Agency*, which comprises three books so far. Lapinski went to university three times, once to Derby and twice to Nottingham Trent. They have degrees in English and Creative Writing. At only seven years old, LD wrote their first book. And in 2015, their dream came true – well, LD got an agent and eventually, after a lengthy process of drafting and editing, they published a book. They now write full time, with plenty of time to enjoy reading and playing favourite video games.

There are 743 suitcases in the *Strangeworlds Travel Agency* and each one can take you to a different world. Lapinski admits that the idea of a suitcase portal was taken from “*Doctor Who*”,

where the TARDIS is a police box. They advised us to steal ideas, but change them, and then call the place that you took ideas from an influence. The first book starts off by describing the travel agency: “The leaded windows were dirty and cracked. There was peeling paint on the front door and it hardly seemed to be open. However, there was one element of the shop that refused to fade into the background: the sign over the window. It was always clearly painted, in silky gold letters embellished with black against a ruby-red background. There was one globe at the beginning of the sign and another at the end. The shop was out of its time, for certain, and yet the name was blazoned for all to see.” A young man named Jonathan Mercator owns this magical shop. He is quite strict, especially with two of his employees, Mr. and Mrs. Hudspeth. One day a twelve-year-old girl

named Flick (the main character) walks in. She is intrigued by the many suitcases, and then quite shocked to find that they transport you to other worlds. Eventually, she goes into another world, and the rest of the book continues there.

LD talked to us about being an author: for instance, if a book sells for £7.99, the author will get 35 pence. And you need to finish a book before you get an agent, but the first 300 words is the part that must sell your book. LD then let us play some games. They gave us paper, and we divided it into four, before drawing Batman in sixty seconds, then thirty, then fifteen and then six. We went on to describing our senses in relation to a certain topic. For example, if the topic was scary, you could put ‘slimy’ for touch, and so on for all the other senses. Overall, it was an excellent visit, and LD Lapinski is an inspirational author.



Junior School Production 2024

Peter Pan and Wendy

by Emily Bunce, Year 9

Acting in “Peter Pan and Wendy” (as Tiger Lily) was an amazing experience and one I could never forget. I am sure that the cast and crew would agree that they have made stronger bonds and many new friends. Throughout rehearsals we learnt new techniques to improve our acting. We had to learn how to project our voices, becoming our own character and really exaggerating our facial expressions. One of my favourite parts was waiting to see the amazing set we got to work with, which put the whole play together.

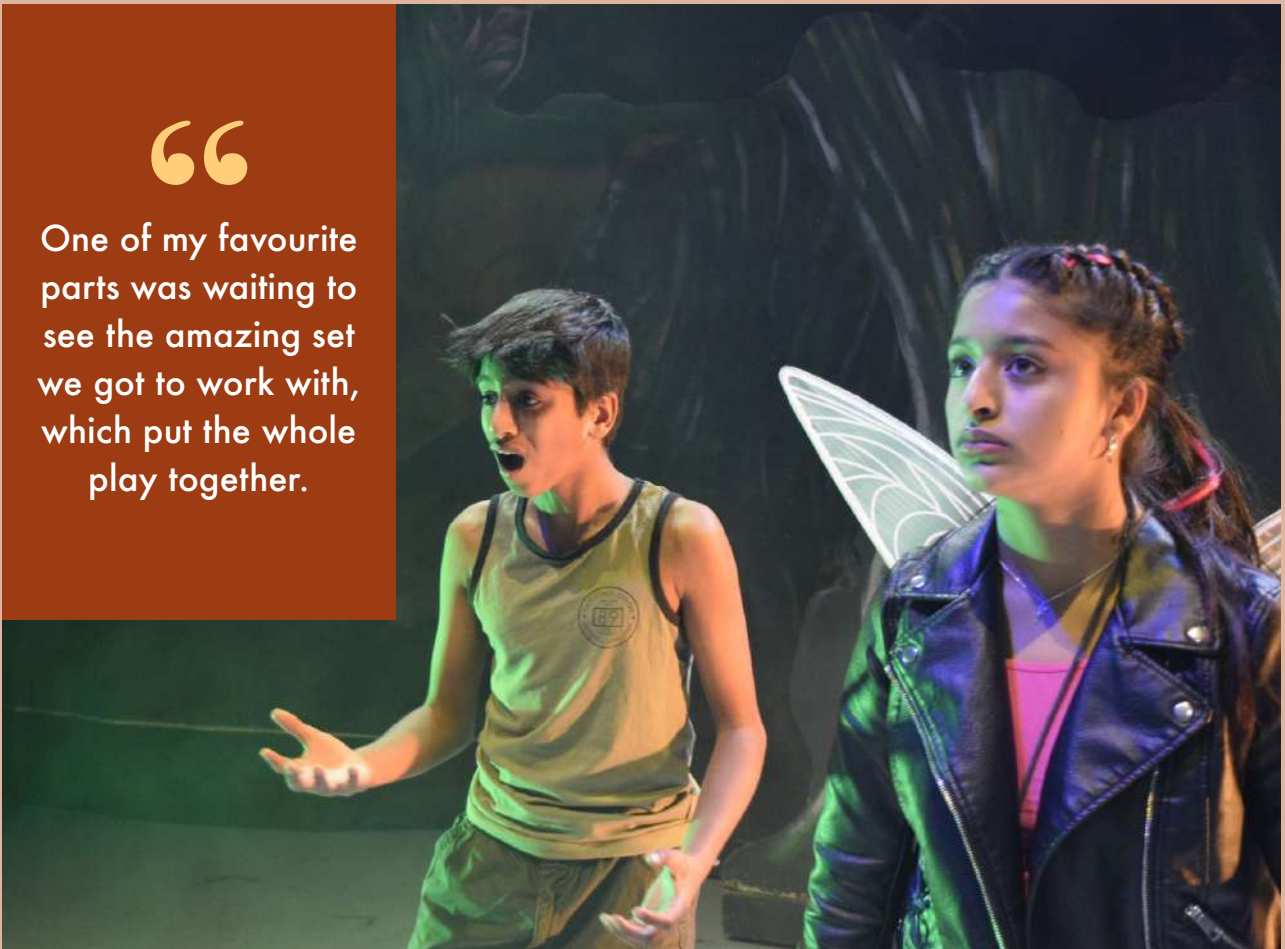
It very quickly came round to the show night, Miss Adams and Mrs. Garner preparing everyone and making sure everyone’s costume was perfect. Mr. Stagg and his tech team were a great help, making the cues and aligning the spotlights so that everyone was shining. When we got backstage,

everyone was feeling very nervous, but soon that feeling turned into excitement. Backstage the crew was so helpful in ensuring that everyone had all the right props and that the scene changes were very slick.

Hetty Phillips portrayed Wendy very well as a determined and brave character. Trishant Pathmanathan was the adventurous Peter Pan, Oscar Fraser the dastardly Captain Hook and Ananya Bishnoi the truculent Tink. A massive thank you to Mrs. Garner, Miss Adams, Mr. Stagg and all the crew for putting a tremendous amount of effort and time into making this show the best it could be. Leela Merricks as Assistant to the Director and Mylo Cockle, acting Technical Stage Manager, both took a professional approach to the work and were both mentioned for their superb commitment and diplomacy on set.

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One of my favourite parts was waiting to see the amazing set we got to work with, which put the whole play together.





Battlefields Trip to France & Belgium

by Grace Dhesi and Jai Acquilla

The October 2023 GSCE History trip, focused on various World War One battlefield sites in France and Belgium, provokes reflection for those fortunate enough to participate in it. With the entrenched systems of the entirety of the Western Front spanning over 475 miles (roughly the distance between London and Dundee, Scotland), there is a lot for this trip to cover. Luckily, five days gave us an amazing perspective into what life was like in the midst of The Great War.

After arriving to our school dark and early (the sun still hadn't risen) and spending the morning on the coach and Eurotunnel travelling to Calais, we arrived in Arras, a northern French region full of Great War memorials and museums for us to explore. We firstly stopped off at the Ring of Remembrance in Notre-de-Dame Lorette, near Arras, where names filled the walls around a fully circular ring, giving a sense of unity in the sacrifices made during the First World War. We then visited the Tank Museum, recently established in Flesquieres, commemorating

the soldiers who fought and were killed during the course of the fighting with armoured tanks. Visiting these memorials strengthened our knowledge of what occurred in the war, with a sense of its magnitude, as displayed by the Ring of Remembrance, showcasing over 500,000 different names. The first day was concluded with our arrival at the Poppies Albert Hotel, unpacking and eating dinner in a nearby pub, before playing pool, table tennis or testing the punch machine -- high score 823! -- in the hotel games room.

The second day we visited the small town of Peronne, in a very rural part of northern France, which was occupied by the German forces up until 1917, when it was left in flames, only to be reclaimed in a dramatic offensive. Then onto the Carnoy Cemetery, home to 837 graves and the gravestone of Captain W.P. Nevill, the first allied soldier to kick a football into a German trench while simultaneously attacking it! A short bus ride slowed the tempo as we stopped and took a forest trail up toward a more serene sight, the Devonshire Cemetery. All of the burials within this extremely small cemetery except three are of 'Devons' killed on the 1st July, 1916, including W.N. Hodgson. His well-known poem "Help Me to Die, Oh Lord" was read by one of the students. We then arrived at the Beaumont Hamel Memorial Park, the site part of the large-scale battle of the Somme coordinated by the British and French troops, spanning nearly 20 kilometres from the site itself down to the southerly town of Fricourt. There were craters in the ground, left by the artillery that had rained down during the brutal fighting. The park was more tranquil than we had anticipated, with all of the craters grassed over. The centrepiece of the park was the Newfoundland memorial, displaying proudly a statue of the Canadian national animal, the caribou. The majestic winter animal stands on the tip of the rock calling for its young. Next was the Thiepval War Memorial for the French and British. The designer, Sir Edward Lutyens, made the site to represent



alliance and loyalty. As I walked through intricately interlaced arches and columns and passed the pillared walls with the names of over 73,000 men, the site suddenly opened toward a scenic and calmer cemetery with around 300 names, representing the war-time cooperation of Anglo-Franco soldiers, fighting as one to defeat the enemy. Out of the ten million military personnel lost in the four years of fighting, Thiepval represents merely 0.8% of them, about 70,000 people. Yet, should such a massive loss of life be commemorated with a colossal structure with waving flags and towering walkways of polished

stone? It is controversial to many. To finish the day, in what felt like Arctic temperatures, we visited the Le Hamel Australian Memorial. It commemorates the battle of Le Hamel itself, lasting 90 minutes (the length of a premiership football match), and was a triumphant, strategic victory for the Australian forces.

The third day, we travelled from Arras to beautiful Ypres in Belgium, visiting a myriad of memorials along the way, beginning with a guided tour of the Vimy Ridge tunnels and trenches. This memorial commemorated the Canadian

contribution towards the Great War and also gave great insight to the battlefields' closeness, when often opposing troops would be fighting with only a few hundred metres' distance between them. Walking between the trenches and from one to the other enemy line, it was quite a surreal feeling to know that just over a hundred years ago in 1916, Canadian and British troops fought for Vimy Ridge. A short bus ride later, we arrived at the Indian memorial, Neuve Chapelle, which honours the Indian Army men who served on the Western Front in the First World War. The memorial is erected in memory of those who

perished in the March 1915 Battle of Neuve-Chapelle and bears the names of over 4,700 Indian soldiers who died in this sector and have no known grave. There is a calm atmosphere for contemplation, facilitated by the memorial's simple architecture and well-kept surroundings; the Indian-inspired architecture designed by Sir Herbert Baker reflects a profoundly

respectful honouring of these soldiers. Having eaten lunch in the bus, we crossed the border from France to Belgium and entered the grand city of Ypres, taking in the picturesque, cobblestone plaza in the heart of the town square, before entering the In Flanders Fields Museum, situated within the Cloth Hall of Ypres.

On the fourth day, we began with the Sanctuary Wood and Hill 62 battlefield and museum where our wellies made their first appearance. The Sanctuary Woods battlefield looked far less tame than the other battlefields that had been previously visited;

THE LEICESTRIAN

the grounds were muddy and had been so affected by the war that no grass inhabited the dirt, and instead the ground was carpeted by a smattering of conkers and longer, winding trenches. The Sanctuary Woods gave an authentic indication of life within the trenches, and the Hill 62 museum had a range of exhibitions, including a table of stereo-viewers which displayed some gruesome and macabre views of the war, bringing to life the horrors experienced and allowing us to further understand and empathise. Following this, we travelled to the Zonnebeke Passchendaele Museum, dedicated to preserving and recounting the history of the Battle of Passchendaele and the broader Western Front. The artillery exhibition was particularly touching to some, as it put into perspective the devastation which the weaponry and fighting caused, whilst the recreated trenches allowed us to physically experience the challenging conditions faced by soldiers on the front lines. Following that, we visited the Langemark German

Cemetery, located in Langemark-Poelkapelle, Belgium: a military cemetery dedicated to German soldiers who lost their lives during World War I, particularly in the Battle of Langemarck. This was the first cemetery we visited which commemorated German soldiers from the First World War. Whilst there are over a thousand bodies buried at this site, the cemetery features mass graves due to a lack of space. The setting of the cemetery provoked reflection from everyone, as we walked through and paid our respects to those soldiers. The next cemetery visited was one that had a profound impact on everyone. Stepping off the bus and into the Tyne Cot Allied Cemetery, there was a certain other-worldly atmosphere as we saw the number of casualties commemorated. Often when told that a large number of people died within a war, our brains find it difficult to compute just how many it is; however, seeing the acres of field stretch into the horizon, each square metre holding a blank white grave commemorating a different soldier who fought and

died -- over 35,000 men remembered here -- there was a heartfelt sense of empathy that extended from person to person as we slowly walked among the rows, connecting with the profound stories etched in the silence. Then we returned to the Ypres town square to explore the area and observe the culture before dinner. Branching off in little groups, we toured the town's waffle houses and



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Recreating trenches allowed us to physically experience the challenging conditions faced by soldiers on the front lines

chocolate shops, skincare stores and supermarkets, picking up souvenirs and sweet treats. We watched the Last Post ceremony at eight o'clock, after leaving the town square and making our way to the Menin Gate. The Last Post Association's buglers played the customary last salute to the fallen, and a speaker from New Zealand gave a powerful speech.

Waking up on day five, realising this was the last day of the trip was greatly sentimental to some and a tremendous relief to others. We first visited Lijssesthoek Cemetery, a Commonwealth War Graves Commission burial ground for the dead of the First World War in the Ypres Salient. There was also a study centre for visitors which featured artefacts and interactive displays about the medical facilities. This was followed by a visit to Talbot House, also known as "Every Man's Club," a historic site in Poperinge, Belgium, Talbot House was a club for men of all nationalities and races to socialise and find solace away from the War. We exited the museum and returned to the bus, passing through border security and laughing at one another's awful passport photos, then later arriving back in bleak, rainy England. Thank you to Mrs Ford, Ms Butt and Dr Griffin for accompanying us on the trip, and to Mr Picknell for organising it.

Our Icelandic Adventure

by Robert Wardlaw & Luke Jeffries, L6th form



The Leicester Grammar School Years 10 and 12 Icelandic adventure began with our arrival in Reykjavik, a city teeming with charm and natural beauty. I especially admired the views overlooking the port. After checking into our hotel, located conveniently close to the heart of the city, we wasted no time in immersing ourselves in the local culture. A mere five-minute walk from our accommodation led us to a heated pool, an iconic feature of Icelandic life. The juxtaposition of the chilly air against the warm, mineral-rich waters was exhilarating. This immersion left us relaxed and ready for bed. As we were settling into the accommodation, the Northern Lights appeared, painting vivid streaks of green across the dark sky and setting the perfect tone for our journey. (The photo above was taken by Mrs Sharp.)

The following day, we embarked on a journey to Kerri's Crater Lake. At this time of year, the lake was frozen over, presenting magnificent views. Additionally, the area was very windy, and it was a relief to find shelter in the crater. After this excursion, we travelled to the Secret Lagoon, a hidden oasis renowned for its natural hot springs. Nestled amidst Iceland's rugged terrain, the lagoon offers a serene escape from the hustle and bustle

of city life. Upon arrival, we were greeted by the sight of open geysers and before entering the pool we were given an informative tour. The steam rising into the crisp Icelandic air and the geothermal heat directly heating the pool, created an otherworldly atmosphere that beckoned us to unwind and relax. We spent the first half of the day indulging in the therapeutic waters, surrounded by the majestic beauty of the Icelandic landscape. This left us rejuvenated and refreshed, ready for a visit to some of the country's most iconic natural attractions. We embarked on a scenic drive to visit two breathtaking waterfalls: Seljalandsfoss and Skógafoss. Despite the gusty winds that swept through the area, we marvelled at the sheer power and beauty of these natural wonders. We then stopped off at Thinvellir National Park, where we saw the two diverging plate boundaries of the North Atlantic and the Eurasian plates. We also saw the Icelandic President's country house.

Next on the itinerary was a visit to the Myrdalsjokull Glacier, a stunning expanse of ice and snow that once stretched as far as the eye could see, but is now shrunken dramatically due to the affects of global warming. We got as close as the glacial snout, Solheimajokull, where we stood in awe of

THE LEICESTRIAN

the ancient ice formations and pristine beauty that surrounded us. It was a humbling experience, reminding us of the beauty of nature and the often-negative effect we have on it. (Photo by Charlie Longhill) Our final stop of the day was Reynisfjara's black sand beach, famous for its striking volcanic rock formations and dramatic sea stacks. As we wandered along the shoreline, we were captivated by the contrast of the jet-black sand against the frothy waves and jagged cliffs.

On the third day, we ventured deeper into Reykjavik, visiting the Hallsgrímkirkja - a dramatic church at the centre of Iceland. We also visited the Perlan Observatory, situated on the hill overlooking the city. Both of these architectural wonders were interesting and beautiful. Lastly, we were left to roam the city alone for an hour before heading to the airport for our flight back.

Although we thought we had seen all the incredible views that Iceland had to offer us, we were treated to one last wonder as the plane flew over the currently erupting volcano to the west of Reykjavik. High above, from the safety of our Iceland Air plane, we could see the lava and the plumes of ash emitted by the active volcano. What a way to end our trip!





Introducing History Teacher, Miss Butt

Interview by Amanda Orlovski

What is your favourite time in history?

I think it's probably the 20th century. International relations and topics like WWI and II and the Cold War tell us a lot about how the current world was shaped. I really like American history of that period and a bit of Russian history as well.

What did you do in your degree?

I studied Politics and International Relations, but with a historical focus: international theory and why countries go to war with each other and how wars shape the world, so the Cold War, the World Wars, how America grew and became a superpower, and the importance of that today. I also looked at American foreign policy in the Middle East and the Arab/Israeli conflict. I teach the Tudors at A-level, and really love that topic as well.

What is one significant point in history that you think all students should study?

There are many, but the only compulsory topic in the curriculum is, of course, the Holocaust. It is so important that students learn what happened and make sure it isn't repeated. I have worked in schools where they study the history of medicine; within that they learn about how the NHS was created and I think topics like that one help students appreciate what we have in the UK.

What is your own family background?

I am mixed race: my mum is white, my dad Asian. My dad's family before they immigrated to Britain were split by the partition of India and Pakistan; they came from Kashmir, literally split by the border. When my grandad came here there was family that

they had left behind and to this day we don't really know what happened to them in the partition. So, I have Asian roots on that side and then my mum is white and my maternal grandmother's parents were Holocaust survivors who met each other on the train to Auschwitz. It is two really opposing stories; I have a bit of a Jewish background there and then a bit of a Muslim background on the other side. I think that's partly why I'm so interested in history.

What are your hobbies and other interests?

I love to go on holiday to lots of different places. I went backpacking in Thailand and also interrailing around Europe. I also enjoy going to see new places within the UK.

What during your lifetime do you think has made history?

Definitely the pandemic will be a major topic and Brexit will be studied in the future. 9/11 also happened within my lifetime, going back quite a bit. That has had a massive impact and is already being studied.

Why is studying History important?

It equips you to be an active citizen, who votes, understands politics, can read about current affairs in the paper and understand. You learn about the rights and wrongs of history, mistakes that have been made that we want to avoid in the future; you gain the ability to read arguments and come to your own conclusions. If we want a society full of young people who engage in current affairs and politics, who try to make changes for the better, having a good historical knowledge is the best way to start.

Farewell to Madame Paton

Interview by Charles Looker, 6th form (Madame Paton is farthest right)



What are your plans for the future?

I am going to be living in France with my husband. We have a bought a big farmhouse in the South West, and we are planning to live a simple rural life, growing our own vegetables and keeping bees for honey. However, we are not quite ready to retire yet. We are both very sociable people, and we have plans to develop a gite business over there. My husband is a musician and is already enrolled in local orchestras. I want to integrate in the community and find a way of using my teaching experience

to benefit others. It will be a complete life change, but we are very excited by this new adventure.

What will you miss about Leicester Grammar School?

I will miss the social interactions of everyday life, both with colleagues and pupils. No two days are ever the same. Connections between staff and pupils are strong. I will miss that immensely.

What advice do you want your students to remember?

The best part of my job has been

to see students, like yourself, thrive in the LGS community. Grab every opportunity and enjoy your lessons more by taking an active role in them. The teacher is on your side, they too want you to be the best you can be. I often hear that French is a difficult subject. Pupils tell me that they “can’t do it” or “don’t get it”. You will only get past that feeling when you make the conscious decision to have a go and not worry about getting it wrong. Making mistakes is an integral part of learning a language. It does not matter if your pronunciation is not quite right, or if you have used the wrong tense. Someone will correct you and, eventually, you will not make those mistakes again. Resilience is key. Ultimately, if you are serious about learning a language, you are going to need to get out of the classroom, and immerse yourself in the culture: watch films in the target language; read articles on any topic in which you are interested; listen to music; or best of all, actually spend time in that country. You are extremely lucky, here at LGS, to have many opportunities to go on trips abroad and MFL exchanges. Make sure that you travel.



Introducing Spanish Teacher

Mrs Purdon

Interview by Eesha Samani

What made you decide to go into Teaching?

A variety of reasons. First of all, I taught a refugee from Somalia when I was at university, and I really enjoyed helping her with her foreign language skills -- since English was a foreign language for her at that point. After university, I went to Spain, and I taught English for a while to a variety of pupils of different ages. I loved the experience and decided to come back to England to teach Spanish.

What do you like about teaching Spanish?

I take great pleasure in seeing pupils start off wanting to learn a language so they can go on holiday, for example, and then leave learning so much more, having a greater awareness of Hispanic culture.

Do you think everyone should learn a language?

I do think everyone should at least attempt to learn a language. It gives amazing life skills and speaking Spanish has allowed me to travel to numerous countries. For example, when I was in Bolivia, I was travelling with a group of people who couldn't speak any Spanish, and I felt much closer to my host family because we could properly communicate. Even now, my family rely on me on holidays, so much so that they will deliberately choose a Spanish-speaking country to travel to.

What other languages would you like to learn in the future?

I would quite like to learn Russian. I did Japanese at university, so I'd also quite like to go back to that once I have the time. Russian seems to be a politically important language right now, so that's why I'd like to learn it. I've dipped in and out of Italian, so that seems like a good language to revisit too.

Do you think you have a different personality when speaking a different language?

Definitely. Differently when I was less fluent in Spanish than now, as I think fluency affects your confidence. Now though, my tone of voice as well as the type of language I use is different in Spanish to English. In some languages there are also common phrases that just don't translate well into English. There's a great phrase in Brazilian Portuguese that doesn't even have a direct translation in European Portuguese, meaning 'I miss something deeply.' In Spanish, I regularly use the phrase 'tengo que cambiar el chip' (I have to change my mindset). Again, there's not such a great idiom in English. Also, different places have completely different cultures. For example, in this country, one person speaks and the other listens, whereas I've found that in Spain, many people talk at once.



My Experience of the German Exchange

by Amber Roberts, Year 10

When I first heard about the exchange back in March 2023, I signed up for it immediately and was really looking forward to it. The idea of having someone from another country stay with me was so exciting. On September 28th, 2023, our exchange partners arrived. I remember sitting in the foyer with everyone else awaiting their arrival. Unlike anyone else participating in the exchange, my exchange partner and I had trouble getting in contact with each other, which worried me. However, after some help from the teachers, I was able to get her phone number only a few weeks before she arrived, so we could get to know each other. The week prior to Cilia's arrival, we face-timed, and I was able to show her the family farm and where she would be staying. I found out she also had a horse, so we already had something in common.

Once our exchange partners arrived, they were given some food and drink, then they came and joined us for Period 9, which happened to be English. She was amazed by the amount of work we do and the level of detail we need in our analysis in our anthologies.

After we both arrived back at my house, I took her around the farm to meet all the horses and dogs. One of the dogs, Oscar, absolutely loved Cilia and wouldn't leave her alone. Once we were back in the house, she unpacked her things while I rode my pony. Then we all had dinner together, hot dogs and fries.

On Friday, everyone taking part in the exchange went to Beaumanor Hall to do some team-building activities. We went on two minibuses and listened to German music on the way there and back. In the morning, we did bridge-building, using four long posts, that, inconveniently, weren't long enough to reach from one side of the brook to the other; so, as a group, we had to tie the long posts together, then put diagonal shorter posts across to make the bridge safe. Our bridge was very sturdy. Some of the bridges were a bit questionable but luckily, no one fell into the water. After lunch, we did a selection of activities that mostly were mini competitions. They were 'toxic waste', 'stompers', a problem-solving game, and a tyre challenge. Our team did quite well overall. The day was great fun.

On Saturday, Cilia and I went to Twycross Zoo and saw all the animals. My favourites were the different monkeys and apes. They were so sweet and we both took loads of photos. On the way back we had a McDonalds and in the evening we all went to Zizzi for dinner, taking Nan with us too. On Sunday, I took her for a ride on the quadbike around the farm in the morning, with Oscar running alongside us the whole way. Then we went out for Sunday lunch with some friends, and in the evening, all the girls doing the exchange met up at Hollywood Bowl. After the bowling, everyone went into the arcade area. We were the last ones there and stayed until quite late. Then when we got back, we played a few rounds of Frustration.

On Monday, the German students went to Stamford and looked around some of the buildings, including Burghley House, and did some shopping. On Tuesday, they spent the day down in London, which I was very jealous about. They met up with their

whole year group who had come over for various exchanges – some were with us, some were at Solihull, while others were staying in Oxford. They went on the London Eye as well as sight-seeing and shopping. On the Wednesday, they went to Birmingham to look around and they went to the Bullring Shopping Centre; this was Cilia's favourite excursion. For Cilia's last night with us, she decided she was going to cook us a traditional German supper – which was delicious! To make sure she did it correctly, she Facetimed her Mum to help her, which was lovely as we got the opportunity to meet her family, including her dogs.

I really miss Cilia as she was incredibly nice and fun. I was amazed by how good her English was. She was so easy to have a conversation with too! Overall, she was lovely and great to have around. I can't wait to go over to Germany and stay with her family in March 2024. In the meantime, we remain in touch, sending each other photos and messages.



During the October half term of 2023, the Spanish students of Year 11 went on a trip to Spain for their half of the Spanish exchange, planned wonderfully by Mrs Lopez-Correia. Truthfully, I couldn't have asked for a better experience or a better group of people to spend the time with. Everyone was so kind and her parents cared for me like their own, making me feel right at home.

The plane landed at Murcia and as soon as I stepped outside, a long-lost gust of warm wind hit my face, and I knew that it was going to be easy to get used to this weather. We walked outside to have a group photo in the sun, amidst the palm trees that stood tall, decorating the small airport. At Moixent, our bus parked outside the school. We had a tour of the whole school grounds, feeling like celebrities, as all eyes turned to us when we walked down the



corridors. We visited a music class who were learning a piece by Queen on the recorder, and I wound up playing the song in front of them all. In the sports hall we played a basketball game; standing in a vertical line facing the hoop, a noise came from behind us. It was the exchange students we had met last year running into the hall, and heading straight towards their exchange partners, scooping them up into a hug that said, "I haven't seen you in forever". Later, playing outside on the pitches, I saw my exchange partner, Elsa run towards me, just as I ran to her. Smacking into each other, we jumped into an embrace. It was so wonderful to see everyone again. After doing a treasure hunt around the school, we lunched on paella together. When I asked Elsa what the meat in it was, she assured me, "It's a big rabbit", but I enjoyed it all the same, especially with the company keeping us entertained. After the meal, the parents took us home. I walked out hand in hand with Elsa. We started to chat away in a part-Spanish, part-English dialect of our own.

We were given a lengthy, informative tour around the town of La Font by the girls. Tuesday was a day following their school schedule. Sitting in on the equivalent of our A-level English class, playing a word association game with them in English, was a top highlight for me. My favourite discussion was about the difference between a couch and sofa. After their regular school day, we went home to

eat lunch and then take a siesta, a nap time before your afternoon or evening activities. It was after one of those that we drove down to a nearby town, Almansa. We had a lovely walk around a beautiful castle. Elsa's sister, Mar, led the way to their favourite sweet shop where I got some sweets I hadn't tried before. I sat on a bench with Elsa in front of the castle, taste-testing as Mar filmed my reactions to Elsa's favourites. After a lovely stroll, I was reminded of the real reason we'd come to Almansa, their athletics training. I had been dreading this, as running was not my forte, however, I was feeling confident after one lap of 800 metres. Unfortunately, after 10 minutes I had to have a sit down, and this is when I was told that that had been their warm up! I completed a couple of drills with Elsa and then just watched and offered encouragement, befriending all of Elsa's athletic friends, who found my likeliness to her uncanny and asked if we were related.

On Wednesday we had a day trip to Xàtiva, starting with a trip to an artist's workshop to tell us about his sculptures for the "Las Fallas" celebrations, which happen yearly in Valencia. Impressive sculptures made with a wooden frame, and sculpted with polystyrene towered over the room, some of them painted and others remaining grey, waiting for life. We all walked around, taking them in before they were to be burned in the festival. Afterwards we had a guided tour that started at a beautiful fountain. We

went down idyllic thin roads where the houses were at least four stories high and painted all in different colours. We then got on minibuses to drive up a huge mountain fortress, where we learnt about the Iberian history of Spain that spans more than 2000 years.

Thursday was half a day in school, followed by a tour of Moixent. I remember their Catalan lesson where we played a circle game, aiming to remember words around the circle -- all the exchange partners would secretly whisper the answers to help us. It was so interesting, learning about the history and legends of the area. Friday was our last group trip to Valencia. Walking through the centre, we encountered many mascots in different costumes, and we took pictures with every single one! We split into groups and had some time to take in all the sights and smells, buying souvenirs and trying lots of delicious food. Nearly getting lost (once again), we regrouped at the front of the market to share everything we'd bought and seen. This included things like pistachios, parmesan, types of meat and jewellery too. We then walked back to the bus to go to the local beach, and ate our packed lunch at the nearby park. The next day was Saturday, and we returned to Valencia to go to Oceanografic. We took our time walking around the flamingos and the crocodiles before it was time for our 4D experience. Walking into an auditorium, we got given some special glasses for the short film. Every once in a while, the chairs would shake and water would splash our faces. Understanding the Spanish quite well, I found the film very interesting as a message about water pollution and littering was made into a cartoon. Hair wet, we walked out to the shark sanctuary, Elsa's favourite. We went under a tunnel and the animals flew through the water just over our heads. We also saw the whales' and penguins' sanctuary with rare and beautiful creatures. At the dolphin show we watched as they did tricks and flips over the water in time with the music.

On Sunday, our final day, we drove to Altea, walked down to the seafront and strolled along the rocky beach. We then walked up to the peak of Altea, a "Mamma Mia" looking town, that had beautiful blue and white stacked houses. We had our photo taken by an old-fashioned looking camera that printed our photo in what looked like an old newspaper. After eating at a gorgeous restaurant, we drove for roughly an hour to Benidorm, where we walked near the sea and up lots of stairs to a balcony of sorts for an awesome view of the sunset. The sea shimmered where the sun reflected on the waves.

"You will always have a home here in Spain", Elsa's mother told me, as we said goodbye. I ran to Elsa to give her one final hug before solemnly getting on the bus. We made love heart gestures through the window and they chased the bus as it left La Font. I sent them all Christmas cards with Spanish greetings to let them know that I will be back soon.





The French Exchange 2024

by Ethan Turner-Peters, Year 10

After an early start and a two-hour plane flight from Birmingham, we finally arrived at Geneva Airport to go to Lycée Lalande – the French High School we were partnered with. When we arrived at the school, we were greeted by the Headmistress and invited for some snacks and refreshments where we would await our designated French partners. I remember everyone being quite nervous with high anticipation, since this would be the first time talking to our pen pals in person. When our friends arrived, we played a game to strengthen our newly acquired friendship, and after some questionable pronunciations of both French and English, we were permitted

to leave to go to our new home for the next week. My partner (Jules) led me to his mother and, after a short car journey, I experienced my first dose of French culture. We went to a cheese shop (a ‘fromagerie’) and a lovely French bakery, where I was given the opportunity to choose what I would have for breakfast the next morning.

For the second day in France, we were given a tour of the school by some French pupils, learning about the wide choice of subjects and admirable facilities they had, including a beautiful old library in which students would film scenes for their media studies. The second day also gave us an opportunity to talk

to the students at the school, mostly exchanging thoughts and struggling with each other’s language. As foreigners, it is safe to say we got our fair share of attention for our second day.

For the third and fourth days away, we were with our exchange’s families, since it was the weekend. Intriguingly, in France, there are many regions which have certain specialties – in this case, Annecy is known for its cheese ‘Le pays de fromage’ quite literally meaning cheese-land. On the first day of the weekend, I went to Annecy – a beautiful city, feeding into the Thiou river. (See photo above.) Whilst there, I marvelled at the incredible architecture of the

old buildings overlooking Lake Annecy, as well as visiting a museum highlighting the history of the city. On Sunday, Jules and I indulged in a friendly competition of go-karting, a highlight of the trip for me (as I won). After my victory, we went to the cinema to watch “Dune, Part Two”. For some odd reason I had presumed it would be in English or at least with subtitles, but I was totally wrong. Despite the confusion at times, I still found the film enjoyable, and had a bucket-load of questions for Jules afterwards.

On day five of the trip the English students, accompanied by our teachers, spent the day at Lyon – a city known for being the birthplace of cinema. To start the visit, we had a guided tour of the city, learning about its unique history and well-known rich families. We trekked around multiple spaces, previously occupied by very important people, now used as community housing estates. We were also told about the significance of Lyon’s architecture, and how the size of a courtyard can speak volumes about the status of the estate. Finally, our leashes were cut and in groups of three we were able to explore the wonders of the area. After some expert tracking using Snapchat, we finally reached our destination: the top of Lyon, an area known as Fourvière. The journey up the never-ending steep roads was nothing less than exasperating, but the sights above were worth the pain. (Ironically, we were later told by a teacher that we could have taken a bus up there for a mere three euros each.) Above the city was an incredible church, which we were

able to enter. The interior was simply breath-taking. On day six, we visited a monastery, where we were able to view beautiful artworks and stone carvings, which were very well preserved.

On the last day of the trip, we were unable to properly visit Lausanne due to unfortunate weather. Instead, we visited the Olympic Museum (in Lausanne). This was a chance to learn more about the fascinating history of the Olympic Games, with plenty of hands-on experiences which built our enthusiasm. Informational videos and historical artefacts –

such as the shoes of famous Olympians known for track and field. This led some of the French students to even take down notes.

Towards the end of the day, we returned to Bourg-en-Bresse, the home of our exchange partners, and went bowling. We enjoyed our last evening with our host families quietly. That evening, I was served the speciality of the region, poulet de Bourg-en-Bresse, which was incredible, a perfect way to end a great trip. (Below is a photo of Jules and me.)





GCSE Italian Lessons

by Zahra Hardman, (class photo by Mrs Hunt)

Studying Italian GCSE (offered at Leicester Grammar School as a supplementary MFL subject) has been an enriching experience that has broadened both my cultural horizons and linguistic skills. I think the most unique aspect has been the intimate class size, which has fostered a close-knit learning environment and a real sense of community. I feel it has given me the opportunity to talk to peers I otherwise wouldn't, as well as allowed for Mrs Douglas to give more personalised lessons tailored to individual needs and interests.

Beyond the course, one particularly memorable experience was our screening of "La vita è bella" ("Life is Beautiful"); this poignant film not only enhanced our understanding of Italian cinema, but also provided a profound message of resilience, love, and comedy. However, I think the highlight of our extracurricular learning has been the chance to indulge in the authentic Italian cuisine that Mrs Douglas has brought in throughout the course, from panettone to pandoro.

Overall, Italian GCSE lessons have provided a really great opportunity to learn a new language and explore a new culture.

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The most unique aspect has been the intimate class size, which has fostered a close-knit learning environment and a real sense of community





Introducing Ms. Carpenter

Music Teacher

by Rishan Raja

What inspired you to become a Music teacher?

I never planned to do it at all. In fact, when I was at school, I hoped to do speech and language therapy. I started a degree in French and Linguistics and then about three months in, I suddenly switched to doing a Music degree instead. I didn't really have any plan to teach until I got to the end of my degree and took a job as a teaching assistant at a primary school. I realised how much I was missing music and applied to do a teaching qualification in Music. I had had such a great time in my Music education at school, and I thought that perhaps I could give some of that back to students. Also, my parents had both been Music teachers, so I am following in their footsteps.

Which instruments do you play?

I play the flute -- my main instrument at school -- but then I have always sung. Singing is what I've done for quite some time and this took over more at university. It is what I do most of now.

Which extracurricular music activities do you look forward to organising or taking part in?

You're so lucky here to have so much going on. I think the 'Space to Inspire' concert in November with the Bardi Orchestra is going to be amazing; I'm conducting two of the pieces which is a little bit terrifying. I really enjoy singing with Chamber Choir and Gospel Choir. I'm loving the sense of community here and all the music-making that's going on.

Who is your favourite musician?

I could go on for hours about my favourite musicians: from people like Nina Simone, to Bach, to Bernstein, to Freddie Mercury, to Kate Bush, there are some amazing musicians out there. If I had to narrow it down to two that I've been thinking about lately, one would be Chi Chi Nwanoku. She's an amazing double bassist -- the double bass is twice her height pretty much -- who set up Britain's first and only orchestra for ethnic minority musicians (Chineke! Orchestra). They are an amazing orchestra and she's an incredible woman. I have seen her perform live in a chamber setting as well -- a real force of nature, a true inspiration. The second name is Nicola Benedetti, a Scottish violinist and a brilliant player. She set up a charitable foundation to promote musical education for children.

Outside of teaching, what are some of your hobbies?

I try to get outside as much as possible, I love being active: I go running and I love nature, mountain biking, hiking, swimming, sailing, and a bit of climbing. I've got a nine-year-old boy and I often go camping and so on with him. I sing in a chamber choir as well outside of school, The Kingfisher Chorale. They do all sorts of music. And I like crosswords, food and books.

House Music

2023 - 2024

by Rishan Raja



Masters House

Nobody awaits the biennial House Music competition more than I and this year it certainly did not disappoint.

Masters (my house) kicked off the competition with the dynamic energy of “Pompeii” by Bastille, featuring outstanding solos by Jai Acquilla and Fabian Smith. Their thematic exploration of “Movies, Musicals and More” was aptly followed by Gabriel Smith’s breath-taking piano solo of “Mia & Sebastian’s Theme”. Jai, LGS’s very own Frank Sinatra, left the audience in awe with a mesmerising vocal solo of “Summer Wind”, another of my favourite pieces. Masters’ recital included notable performances such as “Married Life” from Up, “Golden Hour” by JVKE, and “Skyfall” by Adele, featuring talents such as Jack Strong, Prakash Easwar, and Pol Macip, with all arrangements having been written by Gabriel, Prakash, or Rishan. As a delightful penultimate piece, Gabriel and Jai presented a comedically romantic duet of “City of Stars” from “La La Land”, accompanied by Rishan on the piano. Wrapping up their performance, Masters showcased the widest age range with a final group act of “Money, Money, Money” by ABBA, featuring soloists from Year 7 to Year 12, including Lucy Gates on the violin

Judges House immersed the audience in the magical world of Disney, appropriately starting with the enchanting “Disney Intro” performed by their very own string ensemble. This string ensemble went on to perform “Beauty and the Beast” transporting the audience into the heart of the classic fairy tale. A highlight of Judges’ repertoire was the spirited large group performance of “We’re All in This Together” which got the tech dancing along with the dancers. The talented flute-playing sisters, Vidi and Arya,



Judges House

graced the audience with a delightful duet. One of the standout moments of the evening came with Nandini Waghela and Anay Gosai's rendition of "Part of Your World" from the Disney musical "The Little Mermaid". "Fantasie Impromptu" played by Jacob Inchley, although straying from the Disney theme, added a unique touch to the overall performance.

Next was Duke's House who began their performance with a majestic duet of "Howl's Moving Castle" by Joe Hisaishi. Duke's incorporated a variety of styles, including pieces played on non-Western instruments, followed by Sam Li's piano solo of "Pathetique Sonata" by Beethoven. Dukes finished their act with the audience singing along to a dynamic rendition of the much loved "Believer" by Imagine Dragons, a great way to end a great performance.

And finally, to draw the evening to a close, Vice Chancellors was led by William Dalby. Despite a rocky start with an unplugged amp, VCs definitely 'shook it off' with a lively performance of "Shake it Off" by Taylor Swift. They featured an immense variety of styles and genres from The Beatles to The Spice Girls and even a take-back to the future with "Johnny be



Good". To end the evening with energy, they gave a whole group performance of "I'm Still Standing" by Elton John, featuring Adam Hyatt and Billy Wright-Evans, which put a smile on the audience's faces before a judgment had to be made by the director of Leicestershire Schools Symphony Orchestra, Rachel Thomas.

As the curtains closed on another House Music competition, the echoes of the melodies and the laughter lingered. As all competitions must, a winner had to be decided and Judges house took the award with pride. Masters came a fighting second place, with Dukes coming third, and Vice Chancellors in fourth place.





Nandini

Defies Gravity

by Eemaan Saeed, L6th Form

“Defying Gravity”, “The Wizard of Oz and I”, “No Good Deed”, “No One Else”, “Let It Go” and “Into the Unknown” are the six songs through which Nandini moved her lunchtime audience, displaying her deep passion for singing, whilst also providing an excellent performance that was entertaining to hear and watch.

The recital was a rehearsal before Nandini’s Singing diploma exam. She had chosen songs from various musicals, all individual and unique. The teachers, students and guests who attended the recital all thoroughly enjoyed Nandini’s melodious voice, which was able to reach varying pitches, displaying her experience and technique. Mr Ashwin, the excellent pianist who accompanied her gave it the authority of a professional concert. Nandini was exceptional, not only singing but performing. Maximising the use of hand gestures, the space around her, eyeline and eye contact, and her facial expressions, Nandini successfully created a brilliantly exciting atmosphere. She used her whole presence to really attach the audience to the songs that she was singing which was why her performance was so captivating.

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Nandini was exceptional, not only singing but performing. Maximising the use of hand gestures, the space around her, eyeline and eye contact, and her facial expressions

Big Band & Strings Concert

by Rishan Raja, L6th



On March 21st, 2024, the Music department hosted a concert like no other. The annual Big Band concert was accompanied by our school's own Senior Strings group, with some special additions, Agnieszka Cygan on the oboe and Mrs. Carpenter on the flute. The contrast between the lush strings and the potent brass performance of the Big Band provided the audience with a much fuller sound than in previous Big Band concerts, reminiscent of the style heard during the tenure of Dr Whittle, the former Director of Music. Dr Whittle, in fact, had arranged the majority of the string parts performed in the concert during his time at the school, and it was wonderful to have these played once more.

The performance included standards from a number of the world's finest Big Band composers, like Count Basie, Glenn Miller and Vernon Duke. There were classics like "Skyliner", "Truly",

"Splanky" and "String of Pearls", as well as some newer additions such as "Miss You Like Crazy", "Don't Like Goodbyes" and "The Very Thought of You". It starred some incredibly talented and skilful soloists, like Prakash Easwar on the saxophone; Jennifer Ewington on the trombone; Jack Strong, Daniel Kolka and Charlotte Kelman on the trumpet; and Adam Hyatt on keys.

To conclude the evening on a lively note, the Big Band favourite, "Sunshine Heart" was played at such an exhilarating tempo that it caught the whole band by surprise! Despite the breakneck speed, the band members rose to the challenge, their collective determination evident through the theatrics and enjoyment on the faces of performers. It was an electric evening and definitely one of my personal favourites from the wide array of musical events that we have had this year so far.

Costa Rica

Rainforests, Volcanos and Caves

by Riana Pathmanathan, 6th form and Head of School



After a very busy Trinity term, in July 2024 we flew to Newark, New York, before a second flight to San Jose, Costa Rica. Once we had arrived, we took a bus to Paos National Park, where we saw the first of the exotic wildlife in store for us during the trip. From butterflies to leopards, we were able to see all sorts of creatures up close and personal. Through some clouds, we also saw Poas Volcano's crater, and could experience what breathing felt like at higher altitudes, which was definitely interesting! Continuing our trail, we finished at La Paz Waterfall, a beautiful waterfall which cascaded into misty swirls which looked like optical illusions. Later that night, we arrived at our first hotel, Sarapiquis Lodge, where we had a delicious dinner of local Costa Rican cuisine, beans and rice, before a late-night swim in our hotel's very own infinity pool. This hotel was really unique – we were in big huts with individual rooms within them, which backed

straight onto the rainforest, making our morning view one we looked forward to waking up to. The next day, we packed our bags ready for a boat trip along the Sarapiqui River. From the boat, with the help of our guide Carlos, we saw caimans, howler monkeys and so much more. After, we visited a chocolate producer within the rainforest on our hotel's site, where we learnt how chocolate is made, and were given the chance to make and taste our own chocolate. That evening, torches in hand, we went on a night hike into the rainforest, in search of nocturnal animals, during which we saw a poisonous red dart frog, as well as spiders and insects of all kinds!

The following day, we headed back into the rainforest to participate in our educational project, which taught us about the steps being taken to improve conservation, and the challenges the centre is facing. We placed

quadrats (metal grids) down and counted the different types of plants in each quadrat, something we A-Level Biologists were quite familiar with! We then took a bus journey to a local Sloth Sanctuary, walking through the rainforest and spotting the sloths with the help of our guide, who taught us about these animals and how they live. We used our guide's telescope to see the sloths in detail, and even saw some lying with their babies. We spent the next few nights at our second hotel, where each pair was in a lodge, and we could see the Arenal Volcano from our verandas. After checking in, we swam in the hotel's pool and hot springs, which were heated by the volcano itself.

The next day was my personal favourite. We started off sporting helmets and head torches, caving in the Venado Caves. We waded through the water, and some of us chose

to crawl through the smaller gaps to see all the creatures and experience caving in all its glory. After a shower and some lunch, we completed the Arenal Hanging Bridges Tour – a series of suspended bridges which allowed us to see animals such as monkeys, birds and frogs from a higher viewpoint, something we will always remember. We then went back towards La Fortuna to visit the Eco Termales Hot Springs. These thermal springs were heated by the Arenal Volcano, and varied in heat depending on which you went in. We sipped tropical drinks and chatted in the springs, after a very fun, busy day.



The day after, we woke up excited, knowing that we were going ziplining! We spent the morning doing a zipline tour over the rainforest – a true once-in-a-lifetime experience. I am sure we will never forget the feeling of looking down and seeing such beautiful views beneath us. We then travelled to La Fortuna to hike up the Mirador Trail to the viewpoint towards the Arenal volcano, where we could see the

lava flows from the last eruption in 1968. The climb was tiring, but the view was certainly worth it. We spent the next morning in the Manuel Antonio National Park, where we saw even more of the biodiversity Costa Rica had to offer. This national park adjoined the ocean, so we could dip our feet into the sea and walk along the gorgeous sandy beaches. After an ice cream, we

were lucky enough to spend the rest of the day on a catamaran, a definite highlight of the trip. We danced and savoured the picturesque scenery, drinking our mocktails and fresh juices. Once far enough into the sea, the catamaran was docked so that we could go snorkelling. We saw schools of all kinds of fish and enjoyed swimming in the warm afternoon sun. After drying off, we had dinner on the

marina, a perfect ending to a lovely day. The morning after, we went on a kayak tour through the mangrove swamps of Manuel Antonio. Despite our evident lack of kayaking expertise, we had a great time exploring all the wildlife of the forests and the water close up and having some water fights along the way. The rest of the day was much more relaxed than the previous

ones – it was spent by the beach, swimming in the sea, and walking along the shops and market stalls, stocking up on souvenirs. On our final day, we stopped at the Doka Coffee Estate on our way to the airport. Here, we learnt about the history of coffee production there, and

how it is made now, and were given fresh coffee to sample too, which was delicious. After buying some coffee to bring home, we made our way to the airport, sad to be leaving such an incredible country. Thank you to all the teachers, especially Dr Fulton, who organised the most unforgettable trip. We made life-long friends and memories, and I know any of us would go again in a heartbeat!





Introducing Dr Singh Chemistry Teacher

Interview by Eemaan Saeed, L6th form

What sparked your interest in Chemistry teaching?

Being a kinesthetic learner, I enjoyed practicals in school and, therefore, chose a career in research and development. As a synthetic organometallic chemist, I synthesised novel metal complexes. During my time at the University of Leicester, I participated in outreach activities at secondary schools delivering sessions on spectroscopy to encourage young people to consider Chemistry careers.

Can you share a memorable experiment?

One of the best experiments involves making aspirin. This allows students to develop their expertise in synthesis, purification and analysis of an organic compound. They come to appreciate how medicines are synthesised and why it is important to have a quality assurance on drugs before they are prescribed.

What is the most exciting or groundbreaking development in the field of Chemistry right now?

The Nobel prize for Chemistry (2023) has been awarded jointly to three nanotechnology pioneers, for the discovery and synthesis of quantum dots. Quantum dots are semiconducting crystals just a few nanometres wide, typically made from combinations of transition metals and metalloids. Changing the size of a quantum dot changes its properties, in particular its fluorescence. The smaller the nanoparticle, the narrower the wavelength it emits – smaller dots emit blue light, while larger ones emit red light. I appreciate their contribution as my own research was in the area of luminescent metal complexes.



Introducing Ms Kaur Mathematics Teacher

Interview by Hasan Khwaja, L6th Form

If you could spend one hour with anyone, living or dead, who would it be and why?

I would love to spend an hour with Katherine Johnson, an American mathematician and NASA employee who helped calculate flight paths of spacecrafts. She is an inspiration to me, not only because of her mathematical talents, but for making a successful career for herself in the STEM industry whilst breaking down racial and gender barriers of her time. I hope to encourage more females to pursue a STEM career.

What are your passions and hobbies outside of work?

I enjoy exploring new places in the UK and abroad and learning about different cultures and their history. I also enjoy walking -- recently I climbed Snowdon -- and going to the theatre, where most recently I have seen "Evita" at the Curve.



Introducing Dr Dunham

Biology Teacher

Interview by Svaraji Odedra and Aditya Mathur

Why did you decide to become a Biology teacher?

When I was at school, I had a brilliant Biology teacher and I always aspired to be just like her. Her methods of teaching really sparked my interest in the subject. When I finished my degree, I was doing well, and was, in fact, one of the top students in my class and it was sort of expected that I would carry on and do my PhD. Therefore I did, but I reached a point where I realised that research wasn't for me and so I kept pondering what else I might do. At the time, I was tutoring Veterinary Medicine students and that's when I realised teaching was the path for me. So I decided to follow my passion and retrained as a Biology teacher.

What is your favourite topic to teach in Biology?

I would say that I particularly enjoy the DNA technology topic in A-level Biology because it is something that students find very difficult. It is very different to all of the other topics that you do in Biology as it's not simply a case of learning the material, remembering it and then writing it out in exams. It is all about experimental techniques and what situations to use them in. When I was doing my PhD and my post-doctoral work as well, I found myself using a lot of those techniques every day in the lab. Also, DNA technology is the most interesting topic, because that's what you have to be able to do for the jobs in Biology and research and, as I've done it, I feel like I can explain it better, which makes me enjoy it even more. It is nice bringing my past life as a scientist into the teaching.

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It is nice bringing my past life as a scientist into the teaching.

What are your hobbies outside of school?

I actually have a strong passion for dancing and, when I have the time, I go to an adult tap-dancing class, which is simply wonderful. When I was a kid I did a lot of dancing, but at that time I found it very stressful, as I had to do exams for it, and as I moved through school, I found it hard to balance the two and therefore ended up leaving dancing. However, now as an adult whenever I go to a class, I am able to just enjoy it without any pressure and it is also good exercise.

Who is your favourite scientist and why?

My favourite scientist is Rosalind Franklin, the female scientist who contributed to Watson and Crick's discovery of the DNA double helix structure. However, she wasn't credited with that work at all, when Watson and Crick won the Nobel prize. Rosalind Franklin had been carrying

out some experiments on X-ray crystallography of DNA and she had got these lovely patterns that showed the structure of it, but she wasn't able to get any further with that. She was more of a chemist, I believe, and her boss took her results and gave them to Watson and Crick, who from that then worked out the structure of

DNA, and she was not credited with that doing that work at all. Not long after Watson and Crick won that prize, she died, but recently she has been awarded the Nobel prize, and I think that is pretty amazing.

Bright Sparks

Science Fair

by Hasan Khwaja



Leicester Grammar School's eagerly awaited annual science and technology exhibition, the Bright Sparks STEM Fair, made a triumphant return this year after last year's huge success. Held on a wet summer day, Saturday June 15th 2024, the event drew a lively crowd and transformed the school grounds into a bustling hub of scientific exploration and technological wonder. The fair, open to the public and free of charge, captivated visitors of all ages with an array of interactive activities and exhibits that brought science and engineering to life. Highlights included hands-on medical experiences such as practicing blood draws, attempting keyhole surgery, and having an ECG with

the Medical Mavericks. The University of Birmingham showcased the fascinating world of chemical engineering, while the University of Derby delved into psychology, and the University of Leicester explored the cutting-edge realm of computer science and AI. Beautiful Smiles introduced the world of dentistry to the public with engaging activities regarding dental anatomy. The British Transport Police enthralled attendees with drone flights and insightful talks on their use in railway operations, while the Leicestershire Fire & Rescue

Service wowed the crowd with a dramatic car deconstruction demonstration. The innovative Earthshot-nominated White Motorcycle Concepts also made a striking appearance. Adding to the excitement, Betty the hot-air balloon, operated by the Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust, offered flights to raise awareness for organ donation. The National Space Centre, Pets as Therapy UK, Emerson Electric, D-Cypher and Ignite provided additional engaging displays, ensuring there was something for everyone.





Stem Club

by Hasan Khwaja

STEM Club is a weekly lesson for our Prep Class in which they learn about the sciences through a wide range of fun and exciting activities. This session is run by the Lower Sixth STEM ambassadors alongside the Science department. The Prep students have enjoyed making Ice cream using liquid nitrogen, making elephant toothpaste and experimenting with the Van der Graff generator!

Making elephant toothpaste was a first for all the pupils, even the STEM ambassadors, but has been such a popular trend on the internet for the past couple of years, primarily through Mark Rober's YouTube videos, that the lab was flooding with excitement. The reaction to make the elephant toothpaste was a relatively simple one. In a measuring cylinder, you must add hydrogen peroxide, washing-up liquid, food colouring and potassium iodide. In this reaction, there are many successful collisions between the hydrogen peroxide and potassium iodide, which is a catalyst and increases the reaction rate. A bi-product is

hydrogen gas, which produces lots of bubbles along with the washing-up liquid, causing the toothpaste to rise and flood into a tray. The Prep pupils enjoyed this session, especially towards the end, when the L6th ambassadors performed a larger-scale version of the experiment at the front of the class.

With the Van der Graff generator, pupils learnt about the basics of static electricity. Firstly, they rubbed a piece of polythene with a duster; the polythene became negatively charged. The duster becomes positively charged. From prior knowledge, many students knew about the rules of conservation of charge. This rule states that like charges repel and opposite charges attract. The students were then all allowed to touch the Van der Graff generator. As the generator will apply a charge to its dome, it will also apply a charge to anything else that comes into contact with it. It is especially noticeable with hair, as each strand is repelled from all others and the scalp. The pupils made a long line at the end, allowing the charge to pass through the whole chain.



Farewell to Mrs Clare

Biology Teacher

Interview by Zahra Hardman

What sparked your interest in Biology, and becoming a Biology teacher?

I honestly can't remember as it happened so early. My Mum remembers me collecting flowers, worms, snails and beetles from the time that I could walk, and always wanting to be outside. I spend hours of my childhood up trees! I can't remember a time that I wasn't fascinated by trees and insects in particular. As for teaching, again, I always wanted to do it. I used to go to work with my Mum. She was an EAL teacher in the 1960s for Ugandan Asians who had just arrived in England as refugees. I learned to read alongside them, and was amazed to watch people with a different language learn so quickly.

Reflecting on your career, what are some of the most significant changes you've witnessed?

How I teach now bears no resemblance to how I taught in 1983, mainly because of digitalisation. I appreciate the ease of access to beautiful and motivating images, animations and video clips. I used to have to draw these on the blackboard and pass around library books. The curriculum has also changed enormously. Gone is all of the whole-organism Biology and most of the biodiversity and classification, to be replaced largely by genetics, an area which has been revolutionised since I started teaching. The curriculum is far more packed since about 2016 which, sadly, leaves less time for practicals.

Can you share a memorable teaching moment?

In the second week of my first training placement, my mentor suffered a serious accident. Nobody

else was available to teach her timetable, so I was plunged into the deep end. I spent hours planning my first day of unsupervised lessons, petrified, but absolutely loved it. Many funny things have happened over the years. One memory that is pre-LGS: it was the first lesson of a new academic year, and something kept drawing my eye to a particular Year 10 pupil. I moved a little closer and noticed that his jumper seemed to be moving. A second later, the head of a rat popped out of his collar to a chorus of screams. Apparently, the pupil was worried that his pet would feel lonely on the first day back after the holidays! I kept Roland in my teacher-desk cupboard for the rest of the day.

What are your plans for retirement?

The thing that I am most looking forward to is spending more time with my granddaughter, particularly outdoor activities. There are hundreds of books I want to read, hundreds of recipes to cook and hundreds of places to visit. I will carry on secretly planting native trees and transplanting other species that I grow from seed into suitable habitats and probably I will do some supply teaching and tutoring.

What message would you like to leave your students as you retire?

Students: make the most of all of the fabulous opportunities available to you at LGS. Try out as many sports as you can, get involved in music, drama, debating, even if your first love is science. Learn as much as you can, talk to lots of different people and find out what you love.

An Extract from Lily Dimitrov's EPQ Project:

An Investigation into the Theoretical Validity and Applications of Acoustic Levitation Devices

Acoustic levitation uses standing pressure waves from sound. Standing waves are formed by the superposition of two travelling waves of the same frequency and similar amplitude travelling in opposite directions. This produces a fixed oscillating wave with anti-nodes (areas of maximum pressure) and nodes (areas of minimum pressure, where the particles are levitated). Acoustic levitation is more efficient than other levitation methods I might have used. Additionally, the levitated particles do not need to be transparent, charged or magnetic, allowing for a broader range of potential levitated materials, including solids and liquids. This makes acoustic levitation a popular tool in many areas of research such as micro-gravity, pharmacy and analytic chemistry. NASA has also used acoustic levitation to provide experimental validation of planet and star formation theories and to study the fundamental physics of droplet motion under zero gravity.

Typically, for single-axis acoustic levitation, Langevin transducers (speakers) are used, as their output power can be focused

on a smaller area, due to the shape of the horn. However, these transducers are much more expensive at about £100 each. With the entire TinyLev kit costing about £100, it proves itself a more budget-friendly option. It is also widely agreed that Langevin transducers are dependant on their temperature with their resonant frequency decreasing with increasing temperature. Due to their sensitivity to temperature and their costs, the TinyLev seemed like a more suitable option for this project. In order to increase the acoustic radiation force provided by the transducers, the TinyLev has 72 piezotransducers (speakers) arranged in two parabolic arrays to increase the radiation force and wired in-phase on the 3D printed stand. The piezotransducers require high voltage electrical oscillations, which are provided by the L298N Dual Motor Drive Board – a H-bridge driver and voltage regulator. It also contains the Arduino Nano, a low voltage (5V) microcontroller. The TinyLev was developed by researchers and engineers at the University of Bristol to be commercially available, which is ideal for this project.

The required acoustic force needed from the transducers depends on the density and size of the object and this acoustic pressure depends on amplitude and frequency. To increase the pressure, the amplitude or frequency can be increased as pressure is proportional to amplitude. In order to create a large enough force to levitate an object, audible sound at high amplitudes can, theoretically, be used. However, this amplitude would exceed the human pain threshold at over 140dB. Instead, the frequency of the sound is increased to the ultrasound frequency range, above 20kHz, as pressure is a function of both amplitude and frequency.

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Acoustic levitation a popular tool in many areas of research such as micro-gravity, pharmacy and analytic chemistry.

My Findings

After building the device, researching the theory of acoustic levitation and looking into Gorkov's equations, I identified the factors that affect the stability of levitation: density and diameter of the levitated object, voltage applied (this changes the amplitude of the waves), frequency of the standing wave and needle size for liquids. I found that low-density smaller objects tend to exhibit more stable levitation, where the diameter of the levitated object is smaller than half the wavelength. This was shown by expanded polystyrene balls having the most stable levitation because of its low density (avg. 0.021 g/cm^3), small diameter (avg. 1.86mm) and relatively spherical shape. This was also shown when denser 4.00mm nylon balls (avg. 1.14 g/cm^3) were levitated at 20kHz but not at 40kHz. This decrease in frequency decreased the sound pressure/force, so I increased the voltage to counteract this. In doing so, a clear relationship between density/size and voltage arised, so I decided to investigate this further.

I designed an experiment where my control variables were: constant density, shape of the object (in order to simplify things, I kept everything as a sphere), frequency and position of the object in the field. In order to change the mass and the diameter of the material, I decided to use modelling clay.

Ideally, the objects' dimensions would be manufactured to more precise specifications. I calculated the density to be

approximately 1.67 g/cm^3 and I made clay spheres of varying diameters. Then, I used a calliper to measure the diameters and took an average of three readings. I placed these clay balls in the device, varied the voltage and recorded the minimum voltage before the objects fell. Initially, I set the microcontroller to 40kHz, before the clay balls were bigger than the node itself and would not be in a stable levitation, so I changed the frequency to 20kHz to accommodate for this. By the last levitated sphere (4.44mm diameter), the H-bridge device was overheating and I was increasing the voltage past 24.0V. By this point, I had enough data to make two graphs, which show the linear relationship between the diameter of an object of a fixed material and the minimum voltage.

Challenges

Aside from the inevitable periodic lack of motivation regarding any long-term project, the challenges I faced involved levitating liquids and spinning, with unexpected larger oscillations of objects. Forming full droplets that weren't too dense or large proved to be a difficult task. This was due to the liquids' surface tensions (especially with water). Using a smaller needle proved to be the most effective in forming smaller droplets (0.52mm outside diameter). I also tried emulating an inner hydrophobic coated needle by dipping a needle in oil but this was not particularly effective. Although full droplets were not suspended for long, smaller 'micro-droplets' were. The drops

on the end of the needle would burst from the pressure before leaving the needle, forming micro-droplets that would find themselves in the nodes of the standing wave. Ethanol did this the most, evaporating after a minute or so and water also did this. Engine oil, on the other hand, was the hardest to levitate, as it would not form as many of these micro-droplets. This was quite surprising as others have documented being able to levitate full droplets but levitating liquids has been shown to be more complex in Gorkov's equations.

Larger oscillations of objects would be observed if the voltage is too high or low for said object, running the risk of the object being ejected from the device. This phenomenon is still being investigated by those such as Dr Marco Andrade, where they propose this is due to small perturbations increasing the oscillation amplitude exponentially over time, leading to instability. This was also observed during Mission STS-41B aboard the Challenger space shuttle in 1984, where the contactless acoustic positioning of molten glass oscillated with increasing amplitude until it hit the chamber wall. In the case of spherical objects, spinning isn't too much of a problem but when levitating irregular objects, the potential risk of spinning must be taken into consideration – this could be dealt with by having standing waves from various angles to create a more accurate trapping point.

Overall, I enjoyed seeing how Physics can be applied outside the classroom by building the TinyLev and learning about the theory, electronics and research methods.



Sport at Leicester Grammar School

by J R McCann, Director of Sport

It never ceases to amaze me what our student body is capable of. Despite our near-washed-out summer, it has been a golden summer for us on the sports pitches. It has been a year of many firsts. We have made 16 County Finals, 9 Regional Finals, and 3 National Finals (two of which are still to be played at the time of writing) in a variety of sports across the school, and it has been great to be involved in so many of these. We have had 663 fixtures, put out 145 teams across 15 different sports, and had 635 students represent the school in one form or another. We had more teams, sports, and students representing the school this year than last. Enhancing sporting and physical ambitions is what we in the Sport department strive to do, and I firmly believe these achievements highlight this, while bringing to life the whole school values of ambition, community, and opportunity.

Our first Senior Sports Awards evening was held back in 2023, with another successful evening post-Sports Day. In the summer of 2025, we embark on our first international, multi-sports tour to South Africa for a fortnight, taking over 50 students. Our tennis programme continues to perform exceptionally well, remaining in the top 20 nationally. In particular, the Senior Boys' tennis team has made the national finals for the first time in 5 years. Along with them, our athletics teams have had a fantastic season, with all four teams (Y7&8 & Y9&10, boys' and girls') making regional finals for the first time in the school's history. Our Y7 athletics team also won the Borough Championships for the first time since its inception in 1966, and we had 24 athletes represent South Leicestershire at the County Championships at Loughborough University, our highest to date.

Seven of those became County Champions in their respective disciplines. All of our students' achievements could not have been accomplished without the hard work of our department. We have had new Heads of Sports in all our major sports this year, along with our first full-time strength and conditioning coach.

While results have not always gone our way, sport and physical activity are more than the binary result of winning and losing. I have seen a number of students continue to thrive in sport and physical activity, come together during the week or weekends for fixtures, and perform with pride and passion every time they pull on an LGS top. This passion and pride has also transferred into our first National Sports Week which includes, the annual Tom Ellis Cross Country event, a cherished tradition in our school calendar, bringing our community together for a day of camaraderie, athletic endeavor, and more importantly, raising money for a charity close to our school community and various other house events. If you would like to watch the video highlights of the Senior Tom Ellis Cross Country Race 2024 (put together by Alfie Cohen in Y10), visit our YouTube channel at Leicester Grammar School Sport & PE to keep updated on all things Sport & PE.

Our OLs continue to thrive in sport after LGS, and we have seen both Lucy Higham and Finn Carnduff rewarded for their continued hard work in their sports with renewed contracts last year. Another two OLs represented their countries at the last RWC in France, Ben White (Scotland) and Paolo Odogwu (Italy) who was making his international debut late in 2023. From present to past, I am incredibly proud of all the achievements, however big or small. That being said, I must express my utmost gratitude to the dedicated and tireless efforts of our staff, coaches, medical team, support staff, catering team, ground staff, and wider community. Their unwavering support and commitment have played an integral role in making our sporting achievements possible. As I reflect on the achievements of this year, I am incredibly proud to be part of our fantastic school community. It is clear that the success of our sporting programme goes beyond the talents of our students alone. It is a collective effort, driven by the passion and dedication of our entire school community. Together, we have created an environment where our students can thrive and excel in a range of sports while also grasping the many opportunities here at LGS. We look forward to building on this success together as we continue to nurture and celebrate sporting ambitions at Leicester Grammar School.

2023 - 2024

Sporting Colours

Sport	Half Colours	Full Colours
Cricket	Anish Das Keshav Sthanakiya Ronak Rajashekar Vishigan Sankar Amrin Kaur Dehal Arnav Rai	Kavir Mackan Siddhartha Das Aidan Major Otto Josza
Hockey	Grace Patterson Kirsten Teo Fleur Kellie Poppy Mayer Oscar Collinge Taran Jaswal Jason Lv Shayan Gadhia Henry Powell	Evie Clothier Olivia Glover Emily Pollard Charlotte Dixon Riana Pathmanathan Zachary Laurenti
Netball	Maddie Moran	Olivia Glover Grace Patterson
Rugby Football	Zachary Connelly Arlo Gilligan Joey England Jodvir Singh Charles Murphy	George Garner Reetbir Rana Ollie Mason Tom Lord
Distinction		Emily Pollard Olivia Glover Oliver Mason
Athletics and Cross Country	Isaac Mohan Leo Hastings Lucy Free	
Tennis	George Stimpson Filip Cupac	Toby Christison Theo Coats

2023 - 2024

Representative Honours and Sporting Achievements

Athletics

Team Honours

English Schools Athletics Association

Junior Girls Regional 'A' Finalists – 6th Overall

Junior Boys Regional 'B' Finalists – 8th Overall

Inter Girls Regional 'B' Final – Gold Medallists

Inter Boys Regional 'B' Final – Bronze Medallists

South Leicestershire Area Athletics

U13 Boys and Girls - Gold Medallists

U15 Boys and Girls - Silver Medallists

U17 Boys and Girls – Silver Medallists

Individual Honours

South Leicestershire Area Athletics Championships (24 athletes selected to represent the Borough)

Samuel Sanusi – U13 100m & High Jump Gold Medallist

Robin Panne – U13 Long Jump Gold Medallist & 100m Silver Medallist

Run-Ze Zhou – U13 200m Gold Medallist

Alex Jones – U13 Hurdles Gold Medallist & High Jump Silver Medallist

Dilraj Sahdev – Discus Gold Medallist

Thom Baines – Discus Silver Medallist

U13 Boys Relay Team Gold Medallists - Samuel Sanusi, Robin Panne, Alex Jones, Noah Stewart

Sophia Kenningham – U13 200m & High Jump Gold Medallist

Freya Ives – U13 1200m Gold Medallist

Philippa Linter – U13 Hurdles Gold Medallist

Imogen Major – U13 Javelin Gold Medallist & Discus Silver Medallist

Yasmin Ezzat – U3 High Jump Silver Medallist

Taiga Dixon – U15 100m Gold Medallist

Adam Kolka – U15 200m Bronze Medallist

Max Greaves – U15 300m Silver Medallist

Benji Dubois – U15 800m Silver Medallist

Lorenzo Corbo – U15 Triple Jump Gold Medallist & Hurdles Silver Medallist

Rory Stimpson – U15 Shot Putt Gold Medallist

Eduards Orlovskis – U15 Discus Silver Medallist & Javelin Bronze Medallist

U15 Boys Relay Team Gold Medallists – Taiga Dixon, Lorenzo Corbo, Daniel Mephram & Eduards Orlovskis

Lydia Haycock-Huss – U15 100m Gold Medallist

Amelie Herring – U15 200m Silver Medallist

Daya Kaur – U15 Hurdles Bronze Medallist

Terisola Sunmboye – U15 Discus Silver Medallist

U15 Girls Relay Team Silver Medallists - Clarissa Powell, Athena Ashworth Jones, Amelie Herring, Lydia Haycock-Huss

Phillip Uhegwu – U17 100m & High Jump Bronze Medallist

Josh Clarke – U17 200m Bronze Medallist

Vishaghan Sankar – U17 400m Silver Medallist

Joseph Addis – U17 400m Bronze Medallist

Tomas Zurdo Romao – U17 Javelin Bronze Medallist

Isaac Mohan - U17 800m Gold Medallist

Georgia Stewart - 100m Silver Medallist

Tallulah Dring - U17 High Jump Gold Medallists & 200m Silver Medallist

Phoebe Ives - U17 800m Silver Medallist

Isabel Priestman - U17 High Jump Silver Medallist & 1500m Bronze Medallist

Lucia Powell - U17 Javelin Silver Medallist

Flori Switzer - U17 Triple Jump Gold Medallist

Eleanor Nelson - U17 Discus Gold Medallist

U17 Girls Relay Team Gold Medallists - Tallulah Dring, Georgia Stewart, Isabel Gratton, Isabel Priestman

Leicestershire & Rutland Schools Athletics Association County Championships

Alex Jones - U13 75m Hurdles Bronze Medallist

Freya Ives - U13 1200m County Runner up

Samuel Sanusi - U13 100m County Champion & High Jump County Runner up

Robin Panne - U13 Long Jump County Champion

Sophia Kenningham - U13 200m & High Jump County Champion

Lorenzo Corbo - U15 80m Hurdles County Champion & Triple Jump County Runner up

Lydia Haycock-Huss - U15 100m County Bronze Medallist

Flori Switzer - U17 Triple Jump County Champion

Tallulah Dring - U17 High Jump, County Champion & U17 Pentathlon County Runner up

Leo Hastings - U17 Pentathlon County Champion

U13 Boys Relay Bronze Medallist - (Run Ze Zhou, Samuel Sanusi, Alex Jones, Robin Panne)

U15 Boys Relay Bronze Medallist - (Taiga Dixon, Max Greaves, Lorenzo Corbo, Rory Stimpson)

Badminton

Leicestershire and Rutland County Bronze Medallists U18

Ballet

Grace Patterson - Grade Seven with Distinction

Cricket

Individual Honours

The Blaze & Northern Superchargers - Lucy Higham (OL)

Leicestershire CCC EPP - Anish Das, Ronak & Arnav Rai

U17 Leicestershire CCC - Eleanor Ashcroft, Anant Kapoor

U15 Leicestershire CCC - Mehk Malik, Vishaghan Sankar & Arav Sharma

U14 Leicestershire CCC - Rory Stimpson

U13 Leicestershire CCC - Aryan Singh

U12 Leicestershire CCC - Zander Thomason, Ibraheem Mohammed, Runit Joshi & Imogen Major

Team Honours

U18 Boys - LSCA County Outdoor Finalists

U15 Boys - LSCA County Indoor Winners & Outdoor County Runner up

U15 Girls - LSCA County Indoor Runner up

U14 Boys - LSCA County Outdoor Runner up

U13 Boys - LSCA County Indoor Winners

U13 Girls - LSCA County Indoor & Outdoor Runner ups

Cross Country

Team Honours

ESAA Inter Boys' Regional Finalists - 9th Overall: (G.Stimpson, O.Hills, I.Mohan, R.Subramanian)

Individual Honours

Isaac Mohan - LRSAA Squad member

Lucy Free - LRSAA Squad member

Freya Ives - LRSAA Squad member; Y7 National Schools - 3rd in Leicestershire & Rutland, 44th overall & Y7 and Y8 Cross Country UK & Ireland National Final - 3rd for Leicestershire & Rutland

Boys' Hockey

Team Honours

U18 Midland Finalists

U14 Midland Finalists

U12 In2 Hockey Midland Finalists

Girls' Hockey**Team Honours**

U12 In2 Hockey Regional Bronze Medallists

Individual Honours

U18 England Hockey Board Talent Academy – Zachary Laurenti

U15 Leicestershire & Rutland JAC – Isabel Gratton, Daisy Wesley, Hannah Mohan

U14 Leicestershire & Rutland JAC – Hannah Mohan

U13 Leicestershire & Rutland JAC – Hana Patel, Clarissa Powell, Leeyata Ruparelia, Mia Sohal & Arya Rayt

Golf

Champion of Champions Junior World Championship – Eesha Patel

National Schools Finals – Eesha Patel

Netball

Loughborough Lightning U15 Academy Pathway – Flori Switzer & Emily Bunce

Leicestershire County U15 Performance Netball – Flori Switzer, Eleanor Nelson, Emily Bunce

Leicestershire County U13 Performance Netball – Millie Edwards, Yazmin Ezzat, Mia Sohal, Freya Ives

Rugby Football

Scotland RFU – Ben White (OL); England U20 RFU & Leicester Tigers – Finn Carnduff (OL)

Swimming**Team Honours**

U11 ESSA National Finalists – 5th Overall (Connie Kyle, May Wright, Amelie Armitage and Harriet Jennings)

U11 Girls Leicestershire and Rutland County Finalists

Individual Honours

Zoë Ellis - English Nationals Championship Finalists (Backstroke) result TBD

Lucy Gates - England Midlands Regional Elite Squad for Artistic Swimming & Team Gold at the Swim England Championships for Artistic Swimming

Roberta Kyle - Midlands Regionals Swimming finalist: 200IM, Breaststroke: 200m, 100m,

50m/100m, 100m, 200m U13 Breaststroke County Champion

200m U13 IM County Bronze Medallist

English County Swimming Champs 2024: County Squad Member

Oliver Shan - Leicestershire County Swimming Championship

Willow Shan - Leicestershire County Swimming Championship

Table Tennis

U13 Girls' LSTTA Singles Winner – Catherine Lv

U16 Boys' LSTTA Singles Winner – Aiden Cheng

TaeKwondo

Black Belt – Lucy Gates

Tennis**Team Honours**

U18 Boys LTA Regional Finalists, top 16 in the Country (Theo Coats, Toby Christison, George Stimpson, Dhiren Cumper, Ollie Gascoigne)

U18 Girls LTA Regional Winners

U18 Boys National Championships Regional Runner up

U15 Boys Division 1 Group B Winners and LYA Youth Schools Winners

U13B Boys Division 2 LTA Youth Schools Group Winners

U13B Girls Division 1 LTA Youth Schools Winners

Individual Honours

Theo Coats: Leicestershire men's County Championship Winner, University of Denver Scholar, ITF Ranking 1441

Toby Christison: Jack Britton Trophy Winner

Charlotte Pollard: Leicestershire County Squad Member, Under 16 County Singles Champion, Under 16 Ranking for Great Britain - 35

Emily Pollard – Leicestershire County Squad Member

Weightlifting

Joshua Loke - 2nd at 2024 British Nationals Sub-juniors, <18yrs & Great Britain Squad



Introducing Mr Blackhall

Assistant Director of Sport and Head of Rugby

by Florence Warren

What inspired you to go into teaching?

That's a good question. I think on reflection it was a member of the PE department from the school I attended. I had a really good relationship with him and liked the way he interacted with pupils and staff and his general manner. The other reason is that when I got to 18 and had to apply to university, I had been working as a prefect in the junior school, coaching at sports camps during the holidays, and my love of sport was such that I thought teaching Sport would be a good option.

When and why did you first start playing rugby?

I first started playing at the age of eight, when a friend and I went down to mini rugby at my local club. I loved football at that point, but after a few training sessions I enjoyed the rugby environment more. I found it really competitive and enjoyed the contact element. Even after a tough session or match, we all mixed and got on well.

What are some of the highlights in your sporting career so far?

A favourite moment was scoring a drop goal in the opening minutes of Scottish Schools Cup Final at Murrayfield. Leaving school and progressing onto play for the Senior 1st XV of the club I had joined at 8yrs old. From a coaching point of view, I have gained a huge amount from my various roles at Scottish Rugby, including assistant coach of the Scotland

Women's 7s national team and head coach of Scotland Women's XV A squad. Those environments are intense, as winning is everything, but I have worked with some incredibly talented athletes and visited some great places in the world.

Would you ever consider starting a Women's rugby team at Leicester Grammar School?

Yes, definitely, in the future. The funding and exposure that women's sport is getting grows every year.

What other sports do you play/enjoy apart from rugby?

I play golf and could be labelled as a full-time amateur. I enjoy it a lot as it's given me a sport to focus on since retiring from playing rugby, providing an avenue for my competitive fix. I regularly visit the gym as well, for mental and physical health benefits. As a PE teacher, I always have contact with a variety of sports, which is a nice bonus of the job.

What other interests and hobbies do you have?

Travelling. I definitely make the most of teachers' holidays to go and visit different cities in the world. I have been on a lot of city breaks: Chicago, Madrid, Rome, Sydney, Amsterdam, New York, Los Angeles and Stockholm, to name a few. When not working or filling up my time coaching, I like to switch off by socialising with family and friends

Rugby

by Mr G W Blackhall

I am delighted with the positive strides made in the rugby programme this season. The foundations were laid in late August with pre-season training and the positive energy continued into numerous strong performances from each year group. After a few games into the season, it was clear the new priorities and terminology was starting to make an impact. I even heard the boys reminding each other during a fixture of one of our key terms around the breakdown: 'bullet'. Amusingly, I heard them putting on my Scottish accent when doing so.

To add an element of competition between the LGS squads, I started a couple of leader boards for the season and published them on our noticeboard for the pupils to keep track. Congratulations go to the U12 squad who were the 'best attacking' team, scoring a total of 51 tries for the season. There was a draw for the 'best defensive' teams as the

U14 squad and 1st XV squad both conceded the least tries with a total of 33 for the season. A personal highlight from the XV's season was the 1st XV's away victory against Bablake. There had been some tough results in the opening games; however, the boys stuck together and continued to apply themselves in training. It appeared to 'click' in this match. Their desire in defence to win the ball back was impressive and in attack they showed excellent creativity, scoring some fantastic tries. The collective sense of pride from the boys and parents on the side lines was evident when the final whistle blew. Those are the moments you reflect on in years to come.

The rugby 7s season was thoroughly enjoyable for staff and pupils alike. It's a different style of game and the boys respond really well. The opportunity to travel to tournaments and play many schools from across the country acts as a great development tool. Our annual LGS 7s tournaments continue to grow from strength to strength, and we are now hosting tournaments at every age group from U12 all the way through to U18. Word is spreading and we grew the size of our tournaments this year, with schools such as Stockport

Grammar and Northampton School for Boys joining us. A special mention goes to the U14 squad who travelled on a Sunday to represent the school at the Barnet 7s (North London) in some very challenging weather conditions. I was lucky enough to witness first hand their performances get stronger and stronger as the day progressed, with some excellent handling skills and dynamic running. The squad eventually lost in the semi-final to the eventual winners, Harrow School.

I am very much looking forward to next season. Each year group has made big strides in developing their decision-making and key skills this season. A change in training habits was evident, the pupils having realised how hard they needed to work to replicate the necessary levels of performance in fixtures. I wish to thank staff for their work in driving this during squad training sessions and also thank them for their continued energy and enthusiasm, making the environment so positive for the boys. Lastly, thank you to Ollie Mason for always leading by example on the pitch as 1st XV rugby captain this season, and congratulations to Arlo Gilligan who will take on the role next season.

U12A by Emerson Hanley, Captain

The Year 7 rugby team played extremely well this year, even in the cold and rainy weather. One of our best matches was played against Lutterworth High, winning 55-5. We won a hard-fought match against Welland Park by one point, which gave us confidence going forwards. Another memorable fixture was the triangular in Coventry, where we beat King Henry VIII and Nottingham High. Sadly, we lost one or two of our matches, but for every loss we suffered, we became more determined to win our next match. When we won, our confidence grew. We all trained very hard in our sessions with our awesome coaches, Mr Wildsmith and Mr Blackhall, and continued to develop in our rugby skills and tactics. Every session and fixture we played, we grew as a team and developed our strategy and game plan. All the Year 7 boys can't wait for next year!



U13A by Elliot Hurd & Charlie Jones, Captains

Although this season had its ups and downs, we remained strong as a team, always supporting each other and relying on each other for help when we needed it. Our season was impacted by injuries to some key players, but we united and pushed on. We got stronger as the season progressed, and after suffering a couple of losses by conceding a last minute try in games against Lutterworth and Stamford, we finished the XV's season off with a win against Oundle. No matter if we won or lost, we united with some singing in the changing room. When we were on the pitch, we all tried our hardest whether that was with running, tackling or rucking. Next season, we know there is work ahead with our organisation around set piece and tackle technique, but we are looking forward to the challenge. A big thank you to Mr Ebbesen for coaching us this year and taking us to all the matches on a Saturday morning.

Leicester Grammar School



U13 Rugby 2023/24



U14A by Rory Stimpson, Captain

This season of rugby has been very successful, and we have progressed massively as players and as a team. We played 10 games, winning 5, losing 4 and drawing 1. Our progression was evident in some great wins against top rugby schools like King Henry VIII, but also in less successful games against schools like Solihull, where some great rugby was played nonetheless, for example, Trishant's clever pick and go down the blind side to put Lorenzo through to score, and some dominant rucking from Preston and Joel to secure the ball beforehand. Another highlight of this season for me was Eddie's try saving tackle against Robert Smyth Academy. Eddie did a hard job very well and put himself on the line, which is what you look for in a good teammate. Daniel's big run off the scrum to eventually score our first try against Welland Park was another key moment this season. Also memorable were Taiga's consistently good goalkicking and Max's swan-diving. Thank you very much to Mr McCann, Mr Blackhall and Miss Fray. We look forward to a positive season of sevens and the next season of fifteens next year.

Leicester Grammar School



U14 Rugby 2023/24



Leicester Grammar School



U15A Rugby 2023/24



U15A by Max Teasdale, Captain

We started the rugby season against tough opposition, Wellingborough School, and in hot conditions. As the team was warming up together, we realised that the weather meant that we would be facing a challenge. Despite this, we all still believed that, with the help of our strength and conditioning training that the team had been completing, that victory was possible. The first half of the game was evenly matched, with both teams defending outstandingly and attacking with speed. Unfortunately, Wellingborough managed to put some points past us in the first half, due to their precise handling of the ball. At half time morale was still high, despite the weather and the score, and we talked about what was going well and tried to do more of it. Unfortunately, we were defeated by a well-practised Wellingborough side, 0-34, but there was a lot learned by the team. We continued to improve despite our loss to Princethorpe College. After a difficult first half against Solihull School, we managed to implement what we had learnt in training and score 31 points, due to excellent teamwork and precise communication, ending the match 31-65. With growing confidence, we headed into our 4th game of the season, but were fairly defeated by a confident Bablake School. Welland Park Academy was a game the team thoroughly enjoyed, where everything that the team had practiced in training was well executed and went along seamlessly. The game was evenly matched, but in the last few minutes Welland Park scored by utilising their pace through the backline. Despite the loss of 31-44, it was a game we were very proud of. Unfortunately, although the team emulated the performance from the week before, we were defeated by King Henry VIII School. Finally, to end the season, we competed with Lutterworth HS, and we knew it was going to be a competitive match. Leicester Grammar, at half time, were leading by a few points. Spirits were running high, and the team's effort could not have been greater; however, Lutterworth managed to use their skill to create gaps that we were unable to defend, causing a 26-46 defeat. Overall, despite the outcomes of the games, the players should be proud of the performances they provided for the team. A big thank you to Mr Stubbs and Mr Geier for coaching us this season.



Senior Rugby by Ollie Mason, Captain

The 2023 season was one of many achievements and pride for all members of the 1st XV. The first pre-season training session and first couple of matches we learnt a lot from and took away many things we needed to work on, with tough matches against the likes of Wellingborough School, Princethorpe College and Solihull School. Our squad this year was made up of members from years 11-13, meaning many of us hadn't played together before; however, after constant commitment to training sessions on Tuesday afternoons and Thursdays after school, we soon created a strong bond, and were seeing good improvements. We trained hard before school as well in the gym on Mondays and Thursdays, which made us stronger as a team and really helped us to develop our skills on the rugby pitch. We came up against Bablake, which we knew would be a tough game, but with lots of hard work and incorporation of skills from previous training sessions we were able to secure a strong victory of 19-14. With great leadership from Reetbir (vice-captain) to the forwards, we were able to use our scrum to create opportunities which led to our first try. Arlo Gillian made a huge impact in this game with a try saving tackle on the 5m line, stopping Bablake from taking the lead and helping to claim our win. With lots of bad weather a few of our games were cancelled; however, we persistently trained in the lead-up to our final game against Australian touring side, St Aloysius. The boys were all very excited for such a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and wanted to put on a show. We dominated for the first 20 minutes, however, were unable to convert. Tom and George played important roles, making tackles and keeping the team spirit high when we conceded. In the end we did unfortunately lose; however, we can only be proud of our performance with many positives to take away. Impressive performances came throughout the season from Jack, Ruben and Jasper, always playing with intent to win. None of our achievements would have been in reach without the amazing coaching received from Mr Blackhall in particular, but also Mr Ellis and Mr Thacker, to whom all members of the squad owe many thanks.



Introducing Mrs Beaumont

Head of Netball

by Florence Warren

What inspired you to go into teaching?

My inspiration for teaching stemmed from a positive experience I had with my PE teacher, a woman who remains my role model to this day. I was a successful athlete at my local athletics club, enjoying the 100m and 200m sprints, as well as middle-distance 800m races. I had even started long jump. My teacher identified my talent, provided me with the right level of support, and encouraged me to enter an event I had never attempted before: the track pentathlon. My initial reaction was that I couldn't hurdle, and I'd never thrown a shot put. So, my teacher taught me how to throw my first shot put, how to hurdle, and how to high jump over the bar, during school sessions before the competition. One of my proudest moments was returning to school and seeing my teacher's face full of pride when I showed her the first-place trophy I had won at my debut event. This inspired me to teach, particularly PE, to enrich other children by supporting them to develop and challenge themselves to work outside their comfort zone, push themselves to achieve their full potential, and aspire to be the best they can be.

When did you find your love for netball?

The first school team I coached was the U13 netball team. Initially, I was impressed by their fundamental skills and recognised their abundant potential. They exhibited enthusiasm and a keen desire to improve. Through enjoyable and engaging developmental sessions, the popularity of the practice soared, and the pupils' performances progressed significantly. The age group expanded to four teams and achieved success in various tournaments. Encouraged by this, I completed my netball coaching awards. Eventually, I progressed

to coaching for the county pathway and assumed the role of head coach for the U13 squad. My involvement in coaching reignited my passion for playing, prompting me to return to the court at club level. Much like the versatility required in heptathlon events on the track, I found myself playing in every position.

Other than netball what sports are you passionate about?

I am extremely passionate about netball and athletics. I also love rugby and a regular spectator at the Northampton Saints matches. At my previous school I was fortunate to take a girls' team to the RFU Schools' Cup Final at Twickenham Stadium. My team were amongst the first girls' teams in history to play at Twickenham in a showcase of girls' rugby alongside the best boys' teams that were playing for the silverware.

Outside of school, what do you enjoy?

I enjoy going on holidays, with my family (my husband and two boys). Recently visited are Lapland, Dubai and France – the last was for skiing. I also enjoy family bike rides, camping with our two dogs, and family movie night on a Friday when we aren't at the Cricket Club.

Who is your favourite sportsperson and why?

My favourite sports person of all time is Denise Lewis, my idol for heptathlon; I aspired to compete at her level from my early teens. Watching her win the gold at the Sydney Olympics in 2000 gave me the determination to follow my dreams. I was lucky enough to compete at National level, where I met Lewis at a number of athletic competitions.

Netball

2023 - 2024

by Mrs Beaumont, Head of Netball

Netball at Leicester Grammar School has been a delight and, in my first year of leading the programme, I have been overwhelmed by the effort players have put in. The netball coaches have dedicated many hours full of high quality, inspirational and fun netball drills, skills and matches, sharing their expertise with all the players from Prep through to the 1st VII teams, which has developed each player throughout the season. A total of 169 games have been played across all age groups in a condensed season.

I have had many moments of pride throughout the season, first when the U12s won all their matches in the LGS netball competition. All players adapted to new playing positions throughout the tournament, and their desire and teamwork grew each match, resulting in their becoming champions. Secondly, the

1st VII team played Oakham in one of their last games and lost by one goal; however, they performed so well, demonstrating impressive teamwork and match strategy in each quarter. Strategic team talks were had amongst all players, led by the captain and vice-captain, a skill they developed throughout the season along with their enhanced netball skillset, compassion, communication, and most of all confidence. All these are life skills which will be needed moving onto their next ventures, whether in sport or at university.

The U14s and U15s played some excellent netball and demonstrated the highest level of resilience, training in all weathers. The U14s played some fantastic netball early in the season; in the county netball tournament, team bonding came to fruition. The U15s have developed as a team this year in skillset and confidence; they have played some outstanding netball and started to use some amazing set plays on the court. I am looking forward to the squads progressing further next year. We finished the current season with our U16s A team successfully reaching the semi-final of the Sisters N Sport National plate competition. The U13s moving through three rounds of the School Sports Magazine National Cup brought terrific opportunity for all players to play against teams further afield, gaining a lot of experience and skill development. I look forward to a full exciting programme next season.

U12 by Milly Edwards, Captain

The U12 A girls have played excellently this season. We have had outstanding results, scoring lots of goals. There were some challenging matches, but we managed to keep persevering, and more importantly having a lot of fun, growing stronger together, and encouraging each other along the way. The South Leicestershire netball tournament was the highlight of our season, played against 5 other schools. We did very well, winning all of our matches, and claiming the trophy. Our best match was against Kibworth School, winning 10-0, but the match I am most proud of was versus Lutterworth. It was a challenging match which showed the co-ordination and determination within our team, gaining a last-minute goal and winning 4-3.

Everyone has been fantastic this season, playing to the best of their abilities, and working very well together. We are incredibly grateful to Mrs Beaumont for coaching us this season. I have been honoured to be the captain and play alongside such a wonderful team.

U13 by Etienne Hills, Captain

After a packed season, I would like to commend our talented, tenacious team of netballers and our hard-working coaches. One of my particular highlights from this season was our away game where we played the opposing team, Ruskin. During this game we put on a good fight and won 28-8, with a very well-deserved player award going to Iliana Tizirki. Our team has grown and improved so much as the season went on, learning different set-ups of play, including a personal favourite of mine, split, hit and connect. It has been an honour to captain this amazing team and I am very thankful for the incredible opportunity. I would like to say another big thank you to all the coaches who made these games possible and we all look forward to another superb season.



U14 by Emily Bunce, Captain

For the U14, the netball season has been amazing. We have had many opportunities in matches and everyone has come along massively. In the South Leicestershire tournament, despite losing some of our matches, we did not give up and played the best we could. One of our best matches was against Hinckley Academy, where we won 12-9. This was close but, in the end, we came out on top and played very well. This netball season has been a big learning curve as we have improved our skills in training and then applied them well in matches. Our team has been extremely fortunate to have played lots of matches. A massive thank you to Mrs Beaumont and Ms. Gilbert for putting in so much time with us.

U15 by Flori Switzer, Captain

It has been great this season to have our new head of netball, Mrs Beaumont, who brought innovative ideas to our training and matches. In our first match against Ratcliffe College, despite all our hard work and determination, they had some strong, tall players and unfortunately took the win. We improved throughout the match and won in the last quarter. We all played well with some great skills being shown. Well done to Lailaa for putting up some great shots and to Lottie for never giving up against a very tall shooter. The overall score was 10-14. Moving on, we played Hinkley Academy and had our first win of the season. It was a great game, and we had a big squad out, so we were able to try new positions and variations on court. The game went off to a great start. We carried momentum down court and there was great flow to goal. We used the pockets well as the game went on, thanks to learning drills in our training session. Well done to Flori and to Niamh for staying strong and making some great interceptions. We then travelled to Lutterworth High and unfortunately did not take the win. I think we were disadvantaged by not being on our home courts and not having a full squad. Despite this, everyone kept pushing until the final whistle and the score ended up at 18-26. Finally, we had our penultimate fixture as a team, which was the South Leicestershire Tournament hosted by LGS. It is great to see all the improvements everyone has made during training and it is good to play other schools and have some different outcomes. The season was topped off by House netball. Thanks to all the teachers for helping at training and encouraging us in matches

U16 Maya Topping, Captain

The U16 season this year has been remarkably busy with plenty of match play. To start the season in September, we entered the Sisters N Sport regional competition with our first match being against St George's Academy. Filled with excitement and enthusiasm for our first match, we put in a powerful performance and took the win 54 - 12, putting us firmly into the next round. Our next match was against Malvern College: again we played with determination and employed a successful tactical approach, leading to another victory at 32 - 6. Given that we had a bye for round three, we went into round 4 against King Edward VI School for Girls with confidence. Whilst the match was tough, the team worked well and put in a solid performance, which paid off with a score of 40-21. Coming into the semi-finals, we knew that our opponent would be extremely strong, and this proved to be the case. Nevertheless, we worked together as a team and gave it our best effort, but it unfortunately was not enough, resulting in a 31-67 loss to Bramhall High School, sadly knocking us out of the tournament. But we were still so proud of how far we had come. Over the course of the season, we played in two other tournaments. In the County tournament, we played with strength and perseverance, winning all but two matches against Oakham and St Martins, only narrowly missing out on progressing through to the next round. Next, was the U16 South Leicestershire tournament, which we played tremendously in, really showcasing some excellent netball and taking the win for the entire tournament. To end the season, we played against Oundle, which was a tough match, yet we pushed hard, and managed to take the win at 30-20. Thank you so much to Mrs McNally for being our coach, and to Mrs Beaumont for her unwavering support and encouragement. Thank you to all the U16A netball players who have pushed our team to victory over the last four years: your dedication has been immense, and it has been a pleasure to play with you all.





1st VII by Grace Patterson, Captain

I have had the privilege of captaining the 1st VII girls' netball team this year and it has been an exciting and successful season. We made a strong start by winning our first match against Robert Smyth Academy (21-9) in temperatures dropping to as low as 1°C, which made catching the ball even more challenging. We then played against Hinkley Academy and John Cleveland Sixth Form, continuing our winning streak with a 22-18 victory. A week later, we had the annual U18 South Leicestershire Netball Tournament, proudly hosted on our own courts. We played many teams that we knew well, so we were familiar with their tactics and could tailor our playing to the opposition. We won all our matches, placing 1st overall in the competition. After a restful half term, we returned with even more passion than before to some very tough matches against Oundle and Ratcliffe College. A standout moment was our penultimate match against Oakham, where we played with immense enthusiasm and zeal. Despite narrowly losing 24-25, I will never forget the last 5 minutes when everyone was giving it their all until the very last second. Many impressive performances came throughout the season, particularly from Lydia, Maddie, Lily and Poppy. For those of us in Year 13, netball has been a consistent aspect throughout our time at LGS and it will be missed. I am so proud of our team, especially how far everyone has come since the start of the season, and I wish them the best of luck for the future. None of the achievements this year would have been possible without our great 1st XI coach, Mrs Beaumont, to whom every member of the team owes great thanks.

2nd VII by Poppy Mayer, Captain

The senior's netball second team has had a competitive season with many matches. Despite the unfortunate losses against some schools, the team worked hard, and our spirits remained high throughout the season. Highlights include the South Leicestershire Tournament, where we had a variety of scores and improved so much in just one afternoon of netball. Our best match was a strong win against Hinckley School in the tournament. We all had a lot of laughs throughout the season, such as going the wrong way after a centre pass and the drills which always caused chaos during training sessions. Also, the support from the team while watching as a sub was always encouraging, despite what the score was. Well done to everyone in the team, especially those who tried new positions, as we were a new team at the start of the season. Congratulations to Florence for winning the most improved player and Sohnum for winning coaches' player, what a way to finish several years of playing netball at Leicester Grammar! Many thanks to Ms Ward for coaching us, and to Mrs Beaumont for organising the matches and tournaments throughout the season.

Hockey Report

by Miss Rothwell

This year has been a very successful season for both the boys' and girls' hockey programmes. There have been plenty of opportunities for pupils of all ages and abilities to take to the pitch and play in fixtures against other schools as well as in House Hockey and inter squad matches. In total, across the boys' and girls' programmes combined, we competed in 153 fixtures against other schools, enabling a total of 417 pupils to represent the school in Hockey this year. A number of pupils gained individual honours for Hockey this year as a result of their hard work at school, club and talent academy level. In terms of school team honours, my congratulations go to the U12 girls' and boys' squads for qualifying for the In 2 Hockey Midlands Finals competitions. The U12 boys qualified after winning their tournament in a

group where they were unbeaten against Oakham, Ratcliffe and Loughborough Grammar. The girls also qualified for the Midlands Finals after coming runners-up in their qualification tournament and enjoyed great success at their Midlands Final. They came 3rd overall in the Midlands, after defeating Prestfeld and Trent College in the group stages. With fixtures for U12 and U13 being played for A through to D teams and fixtures already planned for next year A through to F, the future of Hockey at LGS looks very exciting.

Our older pupils have enjoyed playing 11 a-side hockey, and have had competitive fixtures at A and B level for U14 and U15 level, with both the girls' and boys' U15 teams qualifying for Midlands finals. Our boys' 1st XI also qualified for Midlands finals and enjoyed their day competing

against other schools at Rugby School. A real highlight was the culmination of the hockey season with House Hockey where all girls and boys were able to compete to win points for their houses. The Senior Girls' competition involved all girls in 1XI, 2XI and 3XI and was filled with bright colours, tutus and plenty of competitive spirit.

The success of these programmes would not be possible without the support of our dedicated teachers and coaches who deliver brilliant sessions to support our players in hail, rain or shine. I would also like to extend my thanks to Miss Jeffries and Mrs Laybourne for supporting me through my first few terms as Head of Hockey. Looking ahead to next season, we look forward to the introduction of our U16 XIs, as well as other exciting prospects such as the senior girls' preseason trip to Nottingham.

Boys' Teams

U12 A by Aryan Ghosh, Captain

This year the U12 boys had a fantastic season. It was action-packed with many high-level games of hockey being played across all the teams. A highlight of the hockey season was the IN 2 qualifiers. The A team travelled to Oakham to play three intense matches that would decide whether or not Leicester Grammar got through to the IN2 finals. The first game was against Oakham and a hard-fought 1-1 draw was earned. The next two games were won fairly comfortably and the U12s qualified for IN 2 finals in first place. These finals were tough, but the boys showed great mental strength to get through each game. Many players have improved lots over the course of the season. Some standout players would be Joseph, who was exemplary in goal, and Dilraj and Noah, both of whom led the attack brilliantly. The whole year group improved a huge amount this season and I am incredibly proud of each and every one of them. Our coaches all deserve a huge thank you.



U13 A by Laurence Dunford, Captain

In the first weeks of training of the hockey term we worked on our chemistry and match play, as most of us had never played together before. This helped us get to know everyone's skills and weaknesses, which we could then work on. In our first few games as a team in some of our matches we played brilliantly: for example, in our first game against Loughborough Grammar School we lost 3-0 and then we played them again at In 2 Hockey and lost only 3-2, an incredible improvement. In these games which we lost we kept our heads high and people in the A team such as Elliot and Zaviyar made sure that losing never got to our heads. Our first win came against Robert Smyth, a home match. We won 1-0, controlling the whole match, having shot after shot and short corner after short corner. Although we should have won by more, it was great to finally win a match. Thank you to Miss Rothwell and other staff for an amazing season.

U14 A by Taiga Dixon, Captain

This year was our first year playing 11 a-side hockey and the boys did well to adapt to the difference from last year. We started with the county tournament against Loughborough Grammar and Ratcliffe College, where we drew both matches 0-0. For our first time playing 11 a-side we played well and got some good experience for the season ahead. Ayaan and Trishant contributed greatly to these games, as they kept us organised. Later in the season we suffered some narrow losses to Bishop Stopford and Ratcliffe College where the margin between the 2 teams was very small and the match could have gone either way. Later we lost 4-1 to Loughborough; however, this was one of the best games in our season as we kept fighting and playing well until the end of the game. In this match, Ayaan scored our first goal of the season from a well-earned short corner. I hope we can have more success in the next season. Thank you to Miss Rothwell and Miss Jeffries for helping us improve in training.

Leicester Grammar School  U14A Boys Hockey 2023/24



U15 A by Vishy Sankar, Captain

We had a rough start to our season with a 4-1 loss to Ratcliffe in the cup. Many of us had not played hockey since last year and there was a lot to improve on. In our next game we showed real class, grit and determination against Uppingham, who are always a strong opponent. We showed how we could play as a team on and off the ball by dominating them the first half of the game, but we didn't have any score to show for it. Uppingham had used their sharp finishing to get a 2-0 win, but this was a major improvement for us, having let 9 past the same opposition last year. I believe that our best game of hockey came at the regional finals in our final contest of the tournament, when we drew 0-0 to Ratcliffe who had beaten us on early in the season. I think that game alone showed how far we had come and how much we had improved thanks to Mrs Laybourne, Miss Rothwell and Binder, who had always taught us to fight till the end. I truly believe we did that through the season, making our school and ourselves proud. I would like to thank all our coaches for their continued support and passion this year.

1XI by Zachary Laurenti, Captain

It has been a competitive year for the boys' 1st XI. We have had some great wins over rivals like Loughborough Grammar and some very tight games against schools like Nottingham High and Uppingham. The team has really grown, pushing to compete at the Midlands finals and unfortunately coming away not qualifying for the Nationals. Each member of the team has applied themselves, attending regular afterschool sessions on a Thursday and giving it 100 percent every time they stepped foot on the pitch. A player of note is Evin, who has regularly drawn the short straw to play in goal, which he has done with great skill. Thanks to our coaching team of Miss Rothwell, Binder, and Jamie.

Girls' Teams

U12A by Mia Sohal

What a fantastic first season for the U12 A girls' hockey team, with the team playing fantastically well and remaining unbeaten. We played well together in all games, always supporting and encouraging each other to do our best, as reflected in our results. Our first fixture provided a highlight to the season, as we had an amazing 12-0 win over the King Henry VIII school. We have also had to dig deep for some tougher fixtures, with a couple of hard-fought draws. Each member of the team has played exceptionally well and contributed to a great team spirit, and all deserve a mention – Milly, Yasmin, Freya, Philippa, Isla, Devangi, Amalia and our awesome goalkeeper, Freya P who made some superb saves. I have been proud to be able to captain such a great team.



U13A by Hana Patel

This year the U13 girls had a great hockey season with many wins but also some losses. We have learnt many skills, also how to work as a team. We played 6 matches in total. We won 2, drew 1 and lost 3. Even though we played against some challenging teams we still tried our hardest. When we were playing against Welland Park we won by 5 goals and against Bablake by 3. These were outstanding results, and we were very proud of ourselves. The players of the match across the season were Clarissa, Iliana and Lexi. I really enjoyed this season and look forward to playing more matches with my teammates.

U14A by Jasmine Faust

This hockey season has been challenging due to the transition from 7 a-side to 11 a-side. Our first match was against Welland Park and we won 3-0. Next match was against Princethorpe College and even though we had a strong defence, we conceded two goals in the end. Next, we had the County Tournament and the team worked extremely hard in preparation but despite this we drew in all 3 games, placing us 3rd. Well done to Terisola for her outstanding performance in this tournament. Our penultimate match was against Ratcliffe College. Despite the harsh weather, we scored 1 goal in the first half. However, Ratcliffe fought back and scored 2 goals in the rest of the match. Our last match was against Wellingborough School, and we fought hard, but in the end the score was 2-4 to Wellingborough. Special mentions to Lydia and Daya for both getting players' player in multiple fixtures this season. Thank you to Miss Mould and Dr Kendall for motivating and guiding us.

U15A by Lulu Tunstall

This hockey season has been our best yet. I think the team would agree that all of us have worked together and provided the best outcome that we could ever hope for. Although only a few matches were played, we had many victories. We won 2-0 at Welland Park Academy and had a 6-0 win over Bablake. Both matches were won by firstly a strong defence (L.Burton, J.Snow and N.Collinge), but our structure was held together with a strong midfield that consisted of D.Wesley and L.Powell. The persistent and aggressive forward pack of L.Cayless and I.Gratton, were strong throughout both these games too. As well as matches, our team took part in an U16 Midlands Final, where we managed to make it to the top 3.

This tournament pushed us hard, and we felt successful at the end of the day. Overall, I think the team can be extremely proud of what we achieved. I want to thank our coaches, Miss Jeffries and Mrs Laybourne, for pushing us to do our best and showing us how to be the best we can be.



1st XI by Olivia Glover

The hockey season started well with our first challenge being the Nottingham Tournament. We faced teams from Norwich (1-4) and Eastbourne (0-7) which were tough matches. Considering we were in the wrong division, we stood well against the competitors, and we began the season with an overall high. Some challenging matches followed, including Princethorpe (0-4), Bedford (0-10) and Stamford (0-3). Nevertheless, we came away with a win against Bablake (4-2) which gave us an incredible sense of achievement. During training sessions, we focused on areas of weakness including man marking and team support, which allowed us to develop further. After the half term we faced a run of cancelled matches due to the weather or opposition withdrawals, which was a shame for the team as we were ready to showcase our skills. The opposition we faced were tough including Oakham, Wellingborough and Ratcliffe, but we put up a strong fight. It has been a pleasure to captain the 1st XI team this year. It has been a memorable season to finish hockey at LGS. Thank you to the coaches, Miss Jeffries and Mrs Laybourne, who have guided us through this season and over the years.

Leicester Grammar School



Senior Girls Hockey 2023/24



2nd XI by Poppy Mayer

This year I was fortunate enough to be the 2nd XI hockey captain. Despite a rather rocky season, our team has improved greatly in all elements of teamwork, skills and passage of play. Our biggest achievement this year was during the Leicestershire County Tournament where the skills we had learnt in training were put to the test. Although the score line did not go our way, the girls all played so well, especially with Maia and Gracie in defence, with the support of mid-fielders Georgia and Lucy. In addition, our final match against Wellingborough School saw us draw 1-1 with an incredible goal from Grace. This match demonstrated to us all the improvements we had made, as the confidence the girls had when moving the ball up the pitch was so great to see. The enthusiasm and commitment we all held throughout this year's hockey has made for a very fun season. A massive thank you to Miss Rothwell for her unwavering support during every match, regardless of the score: she has been a major contributor to my love for hockey. This season every player gave it her all, and we couldn't have asked for a better team.



Athletics Report

2023 - 2024

by Mr McCann

What an incredible journey it has been for the Athletics programme at LGS over the past three years. Since our re-entry into the English Schools Athletics Association competition in 2022, the programme has not only grown significantly in numbers but has also achieved remarkable success. Fast forward to 2024, and we are celebrating numerous milestones and achievements that reflect the dedication and talent within our athletics community.

This season has been historic for our school. For the first time ever, all four of our teams have advanced to the Regional Finals, marking a new high in our Athletics history. Moreover, our Track and Field success has been outstanding. The U13 boys' and girls' athletics teams secured victory at the South Leicestershire Area Athletics Competition, a first for our school. Additionally, our U15 and U17 teams delivered our best-ever finish in the Borough, both securing second place overall. The achievements extend beyond team successes. We are

proud of the over 90 pupils from Year 7 to 11 who have represented our school across multiple events this year. Among them, 24 students were selected – the highest number from any school in the area – to compete at the prestigious County Athletics Championships at Loughborough University. This group went on to claim an impressive 7 County Championships amongst them, showcasing their individual talents and dedication.



Junior Boys' Athletics Team

Notable individual performances have also shone brightly this season. From Sam Sanusi's standout performances in the 100m to Sophia Kenningham's dual County Championship titles in the 200m and High Jump, and the commendable achievements of Tallulah Dring and Leo Hastings in the English Schools Athletics Association Combined Events Regional Finals. Each and every athlete has contributed to our collective success.

None of these achievements would have been possible without the unwavering support of our department, school community, and parents. Their encouragement and commitment have been instrumental in fostering a thriving athletics environment at LGS. As we reflect on this season, I am filled with immense pride in our students' accomplishments and the growth of our athletics programme. It has been truly inspiring to witness so many students actively engaged and excelling in athletics this year.



Inters Boys' Athletics Team



Notable individual performances from Sam Sanusi's standout performances in the 100m to Sophia Kenningham's dual County Championship titles in the 200m and High Jump.



Juniors Girls' Athletics Team

Cross Country Report

by Mr McCann



The cross country season has been marked by impressive achievements and spirited performances across various age groups and competitions. Our senior boys' team, composed predominantly of Year 11 students, showcased remarkable resilience and talent as they qualified for the Regional Finals held at Leeds Grammar School. Competing against seasoned and older opponents, the team delivered a commendable performance, finishing in 11th place. This result is especially noteworthy considering the relative youth and inexperience of our team compared to many others in the competition. In the English Schools County Round, our inter boys' and girls' teams also demonstrated their competitive edge. The inter boys' team secured 8th place, while the Inter Girls team achieved a 6th place finish. Both teams showed great potential and promise for future competitions, laying a solid foundation for the next season. Our junior teams equally held their own, with the junior boys' team finishing 7th and the junior girls' team achieving an impressive 4th place. The junior girls narrowly missed out on qualifying for the regional finals, a testament to their dedication and grit throughout the season.

A highlight of the season was the Leicestershire County Schools' Championships held in mid-February. This event saw a strong representation from our school, with the following students competing on a fresh Saturday morning in February:

Freya Ives, Idil Ozyigit, Jack Angell-Jones, David Ellis, Benji Dubois, Phoebe Ives, Lucy Free, Isabel Priestman, Charlie Longhill, Isaac Mohan, and Shayan Gadhia. There were numerous solid performances, with several athletes delivering standout performances. Notably, Isaac Mohan, Lucy Free and Freya Ives excelled, earning county selection through their impressive displays. Their achievements are a source of pride for the school and highlight the depth of talent within our cross country program. The season concluded with an Invitational cross country meet, organized by the LGJS PE department. This event brought together independent schools from around the Midlands, providing a competitive and exciting finale to the season.

Reflecting on the season, it is clear that we have a wealth of talent across all age groups. The commitment and enthusiasm shown by our runners has been inspiring, and the results achieved this year set out a strong foundation for future success, with a mix of experienced athletes and emerging talents. As we look forward to next year, the focus will be on building on this year's achievements, pushing our athletes to new heights and aiming for even greater success in regional and (fingers crossed) national competitions. The dedication of our students and the support from coaches and the school community will undoubtedly drive the program forward, ensuring continued growth and success in the seasons to come.

Badminton

2023 - 2024

by Mr J McCann

Badminton at LGS continues to thrive with healthy numbers attending practice nights and playing for the school teams. On a competitive front, boys' and girls' teams were entered into the County competitions at U14, U16 & U18 and competed admirably. Some strong performances throughout the season resulted in wins across a number of local schools and our U18 team they made the County Final, finishing third overall

U14 Badminton Report

The U14 boys' and U14 girls' badminton season was marked by spirited performances and close matches. The boys competed in a total of 5 games, securing victory in 3 matches. Despite their efforts, they narrowly missed advancing to the next stage of the County Cup finals. On the other hand, the girls participated in 4 intense games, winning 2 and losing 2, also falling just short of progressing further in the competition. Throughout the season, it was heartening to witness a diverse group of students step up and represent the teams with unwavering passion and determination. Their commitment to improving their skills and supporting each other was evident in every game they played. While the season may not have culminated in county success, the growth and sportsmanship displayed by both the boys' and girls' teams were commendable, so well done to all.

U16 Badminton Report

The U16 boys' and U16 girls' badminton season showcased the dedication, talent and enthusiasm of our players. The boys' team played 5 matches, winning 3 and narrowly missing out on advancing to the next stage of the County Cup finals. The girls' team had a challenging season, playing 4 matches, winning 1, and losing 3. Their performance included a particularly close defeat to Lutterworth High, decided on a countback. A notable aspect of the season was the participation of several GCSE PE students, who brought their skills to the teams, contributing significantly to the overall performance. The girls' team, although facing tough competition, demonstrated an unwavering determination for success. They consistently showed up to practice and matches with great passion and determination, embodying the spirit of the sport. While the season did not end with progression to the finals, the commitment and perseverance of both teams were evident. Well done to all those involved.

U18 Badminton Report

The boys' U18 Badminton season was marked by a series of thrilling matches and an intense County Cup competition. The team performed admirably, finishing in the top two of their group, which set the stage for a decisive final game against Loughborough Grammar. In this high-stakes match, the boys needed a victory to secure the silver medal. Despite their valiant efforts and competitive spirit, they lost to a well drilled and skilled side, resulting in a respectable third-place finish overall. Special recognition goes to Aryan Patel, Krish Kotecha, Hasan Khwaja, Harriesh Selvarajah, and Ved Patel, who each played exceptionally well throughout the tournament. Their skill and dedication were key components of the team's success and contributed significantly to the exciting and competitive nature of the matches. The overall season's success was also supported by the efforts of the PE department, in particular, Mr Green, whose consistent support and dedication have been invaluable. The combined efforts of the players and the staff have created a season with some lasting memories and friendships.



Swimming Report

by Mrs Cresswell

The swimming season this year was filled with remarkable performances, dedication, and some truly memorable moments across various age groups here at Leicester Grammar School.

The U16 team demonstrated admirable skill and teamwork throughout the season. Their hard work culminated in a commendable fourth-place finish at the Borough Championships. Each swimmer contributed significantly, showcasing their prowess in the pool.

A special mention goes to Zoë Ellis, who has qualified to compete at the English Nationals Swimming Championships in Sheffield for the 200m backstroke. This is a testament to her exceptional talent and dedication, and we wish her the best of luck at the nationals. The U14 team faced stiff competition in their Borough Heat and finished third overall, a significant achievement given the strength of the field. Their performance was a clear indicator of their potential and the hard work they have put in throughout the season.

The U11 teams had an outstanding season, achieving success across borough, county, regional, and national level. The U11 team clinched victory at the Borough Championship, showcasing their dominance and skill. Unfortunately, they could not score in the County Finals

as the finals date coincided with activities week for the Year 5s. The Year 6 went on to the regional level and although couldn't compete with full teams, they put on a great performance. The U11 Girls' team advanced through the regional rounds of the English Schools' Swimming Association Competition at Repton and earned a spot in the National Finals for the second consecutive year, held in Sheffield in mid-June. At the National Finals, the U11 Girls' team performed



exceptionally well, winning the 4x25m B Final. However, despite their victory, they were disqualified, which was a tough blow for the team. This setback did not deter them; they went on to compete in the 4x25m medley relay and finished fifth in the country. The resilience and spirit shown by these young swimmers was truly inspiring. The U11 teams consisted of Harriet Jennings, Oliver Shan, Sebastian Geraghty,

Lawrence Jiang, Teresa Jiang, Beau Cooper-Velthuisen, Siena Zarola, Israa Mullan and Ailidh Beveridge. The team that made it to the National Finals included Connie Kyle, May Wright, Amelie Armitage, and Harriet Jennings. Their achievements highlight the depth of talent and commitment present in our younger swimmers across the trust, promising a bright future for them.

Special recognition goes out to the following pupils that have secured House records for

outstanding performance in our school House galas; Vashin Kaushik, Boys' 25m Backstroke with a time of 0.15.56 record taken from S. Wallis (1989). Zoë Ellis, Girls' 50m Backstroke with a time of 0.33.70 record taken from C. Leaver (1991) and Willow Shan, Girls' 25m Breaststroke 0.18.92, record taken from Y.Siwiek (1999). A great achievement to capture some long-standing school records. None of these successes would

have been possible without the unwavering support of our dedicated staff. Special thanks go to Ms Bourton and Mrs Button, whose commitment to supporting swimming at LGS has been invaluable. Their encouragement and guidance have played a crucial role in the development and success of our swimmers. We are immensely proud of all our swimmers and look forward to even greater accomplishments in the future.



Introducing Mr Fletcher

Cricket Master

by Yahya Musa, Year 11

Why is cricket your chosen field, and how long have you been playing?

I was always sporty as a child and was lucky that my parents encouraged me to play as much as possible. I loved being active, and my friends moved between football and cricket depending on the time of year, and were always kicking or hitting some sort of ball. I grew up running around my local cricket club watching my dad play and eventually started playing at the club, too, taking my kit along just in case anyone dropped out or they were short of players. I was selected to represent Leicestershire in their Junior teams and have played for teams in Perth (Australia), Cardiff, The Wirral, Lancashire and Buckinghamshire. However, since my daughter was born two years ago, I've stepped away from playing to be able to spend more time at home during the weekends.

What are your biggest cricketing achievements?

As a player, I was selected for Leicestershire as an U15. As I was not at a traditional cricket school or club team, this was a very big achievement for me. I also remember scoring my first 100 in the County Cup Final for WQE1 College, being mentioned in Wisden, and playing within a team that went unbeaten for two years. As a coach, I have been named 'Lancashire Coach of The Year', completed an

MA in Sports Coaching, and was selected to complete my Level 3 Coaching Award, with memorable team achievements revolving around victories against 'the big boys' (most notably Shrewsbury, Sedbergh, Stowe) and winning the Royal Grammar School Cricket Festival against Worcester, Newcastle, Colchester, Lancaster, and Guildford.

Who is your most influential cricketer and why?

Michael Atherton wasn't the most flamboyant of players but he always seemed so focused and willing to put in the hard yards for the team. I remember the coaches I was lucky enough to spend time with. Each taught me different things and helped me understand myself and the game a little better.

What attracted you to LGS?

Shortly after my daughter was born in December 2021, my wife and I decided we would like to move closer to my family in Leicester, so we couldn't believe it when we saw the role advertised at LGS. After speaking with friends who attended the school and hearing how fondly they remembered their time, I knew I had to apply. During my interview, I was really impressed by the facilities, staff and students...it was one of the easiest decisions I have ever been asked to make.

Cricket 2024

by Mr A Fletcher

The 2024 school cricket season will certainly be remembered, thanks to the non-stop rain that greeted us in April and returned regularly enough to disrupt the entire season. Despite the numerous fixture cancellations, it was pleasing to see pupils' commitment to Monday or Thursday training sessions during which those involved embraced, adapted to, and overcame the challenges posed by the weather...skills utilised throughout the season.

The U12s showed remarkable maturity and team spirit, reaching the quarter-final of the County Cup before losing by a single run to Loughborough GS. However, in an LGS first, they were crowned Solihull Sixes Champions by beating King Edward's School (Birmingham) in the final, showing they are a group of players to keep our eyes on. Our U13s demonstrated their determination and competitive spirit throughout the season, with a 9-wicket victory against a strong King's School, Grantham, following an outstanding bowling and fielding performance. The Isle of Wight tour provides an excellent learning opportunity for the group, who will no doubt want to finish on a high. The U14s had a memorable season, winning games by significant margins, with different players taking responsibility with the bat, ball, or in the field when progressing to the County Cup Final against

Loughborough Grammar School. It will be exciting to see what this group of players can achieve as they continue at LGS. A narrow loss to Uppingham in the County Cup couldn't overshadow the improvement and growth in the U15s. Their commitment to training was unmatched, with results and performances a testament to this -- three of the team were selected to make their Senior 1XI debuts. Losing to Uppingham in the U18 National T20 was a tough start to a season where we had targeted a long cup run. Still, our senior players showed character and strength, and a host of players were utilised during the defence of their County Cup title, played against WQE (again).

A team's success is built on the unseen hours of various staff members, including external coaches, caterers, and officials. This year, more than any other, it is imperative to highlight the work of Mike Hood and his ground staff, who worked tirelessly on wickets and outfielders that are amongst the best school facilities in the County, often whilst looking at the forecast and knowing games were unlikely to go ahead. On top of this, LGS teachers demonstrated their understanding of sport's vital role in the student experience by adapting to almost daily fixture changes and their impact on lesson attendance. Next season can only be drier, can't it?

U12 by Ibraheem Mohammed, Captain

Having only joined LGS at the beginning of this academic year, I feel that being selected for captain is a privilege. The U12 team has had many victories, such as becoming champions of the Solihull Sixes competition and the Area Cup. These wins are a credit to the team, as we have been able to work as one unit and always looked to improve our game. I believe the team has some exciting years of cricket ahead of us. I would like to give a special thanks to Mr Fletcher and the rest of the sports staff, who have helped us have such a positive start to our cricket season.



U13 by Aryan Singh, Captain

This season the U13 have had some challenging fixtures and some tight losses, but despite this there have been many positives. Throughout the season, we have played our best. The only taste of success this year has come at the expense of Kings Grammar School, Grantham, by 9 wickets, our whole team playing with confidence and conviction. The season pinnacle was our tour to the Isle of Wight and, while we lost our games, all the games went down to the last overs and the elusive second win was so close. Despite the results, we had a brilliant time. The team are getting better day by day due to our brilliant coaches, Mr Fletcher and Mr Brignull. The boys always play with a smile on their faces, enjoying every moment of every game, and it has been a pleasure to captain them.

U14 by Trishant Pathmanathan, Captain

The U14A team have had a successful and enjoyable season. We are currently unbeaten in 11 aside cricket and have won the area cup to get into the County Cup Final. If we continue our good form, we can go all the way in the county cup and win. Our most notable performance of the season was in the Solihull 6s tournament, where we went unbeaten in the group stage and then beat a strong Loughborough Grammar team to go through to the final. Unfortunately, we were defeated in the final by KES, Stratford. Daniel was excellent and retired on 25 in all the games apart

from the final. Across the season we have had some great performances by many players including Adam, Joel and Rory, who have been very consistent as top-order batters. We would like to say a big thank you to all the staff who have helped us this year, but especially to Mr Fletcher, Mr Ellis, Mr Stubbs and Mr Green.

Leicester Grammar School  U14A Boys Cricket 2023/24



U15 by Vishigan Sankar, Captain

The cricket season this year was marked by persistent and heavy rain, resulting in the unfortunate cancellation of the majority of our friendly matches. A walkover in the first round of the county cup meant that our actual season opener was a high-stakes cup match against Ratcliffe. We approached this game with determination and focus, resulting in a positive result that set a promising tone for the rest of the season. Advancing to the Semi-Final, we faced Welland Park. Our bowling and fielding units performed exceptionally well, managing to restrict our opponents to a modest total of 61. This secured our place in the County Cup final and confirmed our status as one of the top two school teams in the county. Between

Leicester Grammar School  U15A Boys Cricket 2023/24



the Semi-Final and the final, we were scheduled to participate in the Solihull Sixes. Unfortunately, once again, the relentless rain led to a cancellation. In the final, we faced Uppingham, a formidable opponent. Our innings saw the loss of several key wickets early on, which hampered our ability to post a challenging total. We ultimately fell short by 20-30 runs, a margin that underscored the competitive nature of the match but also highlighted areas for improvement. Despite the loss, the experience was valuable, and we left the field with our heads held high. The expertise and guidance of Mr Fletcher and our supporting coaches have been instrumental. This has been reflected in the individual performances of several players who have stepped up admirably. Notably, Vishigan, Prakash, and Arav delivered standout performances, earning them opportunities to play for the 1st XI.

Leicester Grammar School



Senior Boys Cricket 2023/24



Senior Boys' Cricket by Mackan Kavir, Captain

The 2024 cricket season has been extremely short, however filled with success. After several matches being cancelled due to rain, we finally got our season underway away at Uppingham in the national T20 competition. Even though the game ended in defeat, it was great to see the talent on show in the team. Our next fixture was against the MCC. A standout bowling performance from Keshav (17 overs, 3 maidens, 2-32) helped us bowl our opponent out for 149 after just over 50 overs. The game ended with defeat; however, we could turn our focus to the County Cup. We won the first game comfortably by 7 wickets; once again Keshav shone, bowling 4 overs, 5-18. Ronak held our innings together as we were able to chase down the target within 8 overs. After a narrow defeat to WQE, we once again faced them in the County Cup final. An outstanding team bowling performance enabled us to bowl our opposition out for 78. Vishy and Prakash (both Year 10) were the standout bowlers and bowled economically. Our top order comfortably knocked off the runs and we were able to retain the County Cup. A special thanks to our new Head Coach, Mr Fletcher, along with Mr Green and Mr Brignaul for their incredible effort and support this year.

Girls Cricket

2024

by Mrs Laybourne

There has been much to celebrate this season for the girls' cricket squads, despite the many cancellations and postponements due to the weather. Not only have the teams had success, but there have been a lot of individual highlights as well. Imogen Major, Nidhi Kulkarni, Anwita Rai, Ishani Bhavsar, Mehk Malik and Eleanor Ashcroft are all involved in the Leicestershire County Pathway, and I look forward to hearing of more success for them over the summer months. Despite the short nature of the season due to exams, and the washout that was April and June, we did manage to fit in some games for the 1st XI. Abley captained by Amrin Kaur Dehal, the girls grew in confidence. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Amrin for her commitment to cricket at the school. She has been an excellent role model and leader to the younger pupils, and I wish her all the best for the future. The U15s were also hit hard by the weather, but showed excellent work in the field when we were able to get games played. They were also runners-up in the County Indoor Finals, narrowly missing out on the regional finals. The U14s had their first full season of hardball cricket and I cannot fault their efforts. They performed well against Lutterworth

College and Crown Hills, but what I love most about them as a squad is the camaraderie and attitude they have shown. The Isle of Wight tour was a highlight for the U13A and B teams: they played three strong teams whilst on tour. They have really grown in confidence over what was their first full season of hardball. In the County Cup they were unfortunately defeated in the final, but Leicestershire Runners-Up is still a fantastic achievement. The U12s have had a phenomenal season, with both the As and Bs undefeated. The last game of the season saw the A team play their first game of hardball, and I was really impressed with the team performance and the result.

Girls' Cricket continues to go from strength to strength, with nearly every girl in Prep, Year 7 and 8 playing in competitive fixtures this term. Furthermore, several of the girls' represented the boys' teams in matches and this is something we expect to see more of again next season. House cricket was also a real highlight, with all girls from Prep to Year 10 taking part. I am excited to see what the girls can produce in cricket next year; I can only hope we get some better weather!

U12A by Abeeha Tariq, Captain

This year's U12A cricket season has flown by, with the squad remaining undefeated throughout the season. A huge thanks to Mr Stubbs, our coach. We trained very hard, and we have achieved some outstanding results. We played very well in all four of our matches. Firstly, we played against Crownhills Community College, getting 302-3 against their score of 258-2. Secondly, against Loughborough High our score was 309-0 to their 204-0. Against Princethorpe, we scored 292-0 to their 266-0, and in our last fixture we scored 104-3 and they scored 92-4. Everyone enjoyed the season, and should be proud of how well they have performed.

Leicester Grammar School



U12A Girls Cricket 2023/24



U12B by Safa Rizvi, Captain

Our U12B team had an amazing season because we won all our matches. Everyone showed great skill, teamwork, and determination. Every game displayed how hard we worked and how much our coaches helped us. Our bowlers were awesome, always delivering accurate and powerful deliveries. Our batsmen were very consistent, hitting amazing shots and trying to secure a high score. Fielding was great too, with sharp reflexes and coordination, resulting in lots of amazing catches and run outs. Our success wasn't just because of one person but because everyone on the team contributed, whether it was scoring runs, taking wickets or making crucial stops in the field. We encouraged each other and had great sportsmanship, which created a positive environment that helped us grow and learn. Our coaches supplied guidance, strategy and motivation, making sure we were ready for every challenge. They taught us new techniques and tips that really made a difference. This unbeaten streak has boosted our morale and set a very high standard for future seasons. I am so proud of our team and we cannot wait to keep improving and winning more matches next season.

U13A by Anwita Rai, Captain

This year it was most of the girls' first time playing hardball and although we didn't win all our matches, we always made a good effort and made sure that the opposition had to fight hard. Everyone came to training on Tuesdays and we used this time to improve our skills and prepare for fixtures. We managed to get to the County Cup final, a great learning experience. Nidhi bowled accurately the whole season; our openers, Iliana and Etienne, always started our batting innings well, and Clarissa was brilliant behind the stumps. The Isle of Wight trip was a great chance to practise our skills and we managed to win a game against their U13s and narrowly lost against their U14s, by only 4 runs. We set our highest total this season, which highlights the progress made. We also saw some fantastic individual performances on the tour, with Nidhi scoring 43 runs, as well as getting a hat-trick. A big thank you to Miss Rothwell for coaching us.

Leicester Grammar School



U13A Girls Cricket 2023/24



U13B by Leeyata Ruparelia, Captain

The U13B team have played consistently well this season, winning a number of fixtures. We have a strong team ethic and our batters and bowlers show great potential. We also have some fantastic fielders. As the season progressed, we became much better and started to work as a team, understanding what our core strengths and areas of improvement were. Our coach, Miss Fray, has been extremely supportive, advising us on positioning on the field, bowling and batting techniques. We ended the season with a tour to the Isle of Wight, a great opportunity to build closer relationships, work on our strategies and socialise! The weather was perfect and the scenery amazing. Imagine playing in the hot sunshine, a perfectly lawned cricket field and the sea behind you.

U14 by Mehk Malik, Captain

All the girls in the team have improved massively from the beginning of the season. They've all worked very hard and tried their best. In our first net there was definite room for improvement as we were getting back into the groove of cricket and it was a little messy, especially because it was most people's first time playing hard ball. However, at the end of our season, I saw very consistent bowling, batting, fielding and keeping. But there's more to cricket than just skill: encouragement and support. Just to mention a few of our fantastic team players, Hannah consistently showed outstanding batting, great bowling and fielding; Amelie contributed amazing bowling (getting wickets in a match with the year above!) and her loud, supportive voice; Hetty didn't just perfect her keeping, but also became an outstanding bowler; Vesper improved greatly in her bowling and was always an encouraging loud voice in the field, keeping everyone energetic; and Millie demonstrated consistent bowling and fielding. We won our first match and kept all our matches very tight, never giving up. It has been an absolute delight to captain the U14 A team this year. Lastly, I would like to give a very special thanks to all the staff that helped us develop as cricketers this year.



U15 by Eleanor Nelson, Captain

Although unable to retain our undefeated status from last year, the U15A squad had a few close games. We started the season off with a T20 against Wellingborough; they won the toss and elected to field first. We had a few wickets, but then finished the 20 overs not all out with a total of 104 runs. Wellingborough chased down our total within 18 overs. The team has worked really hard on fielding and it is now our main strength, as we managed to get a lot of the opposition batters out through the season. Lailaa has been a fantastic wicketkeeper taking multiple catches. We won our friendly match against Princethorpe, but lost against Oakham and Ratcliffe. We also lost our final match against Solihull School, but Flori took a brilliant catch and Niamh batted very well, while as a team we supported each other in the field. We welcomed players in the years below to play with us and they played phenomenally and had a very positive impact. We thoroughly enjoyed this season and thank you to Miss Jeffries and Mrs Laybourne for coaching us

1st XI by Amrin Kaur Dehal, Captain

The 1st XI team has had an inspiring season. Although 3 matches were cancelled early on, the girls maintained a positive attitude and an admirable work ethic towards training. We started with a preseason match against the U15A team. Strong bowling from Nevaeh and a strong batting partnership between Jia and Jasmine saw us win the game. Our first three matches in the 100 Ball Cup were cancelled. This did not stand us in good stead to face Repton, a strong athletic school. Although we lost by 10 wickets, Eleanor bowled well, and Imaan and Zara built a strong partnership. Jasmine and Tilly fielded well. Our next match was against Oakham; we won the toss and elected to bowl, allowing Amrin to secure a wicket. Although we were a strong team, Oakham won by 92 runs. It is inspiring to see the incredible talent coming up through the school. I am proud of our attitude and team spirit. Thank you to Mrs Laybourne and Miss Jeffries.





Farewell to Mr Laurie Potter

by Miss J Mould

Laurie Potter started at Leicester Grammar School way back, as a part time Cricket coach in 1991. This was after a successful career as a professional cricketer for both Kent and Leicestershire. (He is the only person to have captained both England and Australia youth teams.) In 1993 he became a full-time teacher of PE and discovered his vocation. Hardworking, caring and knowledgeable, he was able to build an amazing rapport with the young people in his care.

He quickly found his feet teaching PE and Games alongside his role, which he loved, as Master I/C Cricket. Visiting numerous sites around the city to ply his trade, he would walk students through Castle Gardens to the De Montfort Sports Centre; or down Vaughan Way to St Margaret's Baths; or hop on a bus to Manor Road for Athletics; or Dorset Avenue for Rugby. Cricket continued to be his passion though – he managed to locate and acquire various facilities for the boys (girls came later) including the East Midlands' Cricket Ground and Grace Road, where he had a family connection. He was always able to inject such enthusiasm for his sport whilst ensuring the students received top quality, technical coaching. LGS was getting on the cricket map and this included securing an annual MCC game.

Laurie's ability to build positive relationships and his caring nature were two of the main reasons that he was soon also Head of Lower School. He cherished this role and was very good at it. He knew how to handle tricky situations and had a story for every occasion. Who hasn't heard the shark story? In this position he had an impact on the lives of hundreds, maybe thousands of young

people, as they knew that in Mr Potter they had someone who would 'go to bat for them' and would be there to listen, support and help them whether it be an academic issue, something at home, friendship or whatever. There have been so many new starters comforted and reassured by Laurie through their formative LGS journeys. There are times when he might have had to steer them a little more carefully or help them to navigate life, even when out of his care, but he has been a constant presence in the school lives of so many young people. I am sure that so many students, past and present, will have fond memories of him and a tale or two about how they were helped by him.

Also, he was a proud member of Masters House, indeed he was the Head of House for a spell. He used his personality to gently persuade pupils to get involved in all aspects of school life. He was competitive but in a gentle way, just wanting his charges to give a good account of themselves in all things and reminding them that, on occasion, fielding a full team was the most important part. (Inter girls doing House Swimming!)

After the move to the new school in Great Glen in 2008, he was able to finally teach and grow Cricket on his home turf and have pitches and squares to be proud of right here. Alongside the school's use, he encouraged and developed our partnership with the CCA, hosted indoor events and was instrumental in getting girls' cricket up and running. He was (and still is) a strong supporter of the women's game and was pretty innovative for a school like ours, in giving opportunities for elite girls to play in the boys' 1st XI, normalising their inclusion. For him, winters were about indoor

nights (and sometimes fun with the bowling machine) and summers were full on with fixtures for all age groups. Most nights in May or June he would be on the pitches – in the middle, at square leg or simply supporting the students and staff – often from LGS and the opposing schools. He just couldn't keep away. He organised and took the first overseas cricket tour, to Barbados, giving the summer sport a platform alongside some of the more established sports. He also accompanied a number of long-haul visits to Australia, South Africa and Sri Lanka. He set up the annual Year 8 tour to the Isle of Wight for boys and girls to play cricket fixtures, alongside having some fun at the seaside – he was bringing cricket to a wider audience. Cricket is now the major school summer sport for the girls, due in no small part to Laurie.

Being floored by Covid and then long Covid really hit Laurie for six, and meant that the busy hustle of the LGS PE Department was no longer an option for him. With a heavy heart we have had to say goodbye to him, but our days are brightened by seeing him on our site as a part of Stoneygate's staff – he is now competitive but against us which is quite funny! The LGS chapter of his life might be over but he has turned the page and opened up a new adventure which still allows him to pursue his passion.

All of here thank him for everything he contributed to LGS life in so many ways and across so many years and for all of the happy memories we shared. We wish him well for all that is still to come for him, Helen and his family and we look forward to hearing more of his stories.



Tennis

2023 - 2024

by Mr Godsmark

2024 has been an exceptional year of tennis at Leicester Grammar School, featuring many highs and a few tough losses in a very tightly packed schedule. I look back with great pride at the hard work, resilience and passion of our players, balancing multiple sports, school work and other commitments to continue to strive to improve their tennis games. I feel very grateful to have worked with such a fantastic group and look forward to what can be achieved in the future.

Some highlights over the winter include reaching the Year 11-13 regional finals for both boys and girls at Nottingham Tennis Centre, with the boys losing out in the final and the girls competing well and finishing 3rd overall. The summer season saw success for our U15 girls' team, reaching the County Cup final, to be played next term against Uppingham School. For the seniors, the school entered the U18 national competitions: the Aberdare Cup for the girls and the Glanville Cup for the boys. Our girls unfortunately lost out to a strong Uppingham team. The boys, however, managed to avenge the defeat in their group stage, eventually progressing through to the final, where they met a familiar foe in Repton School. We have managed to reach the same stage for the last three years and have lost out on shoot-out each year. We suffered a big blow ahead of the game as Filip Cupac, a member of the first team, suffered a fractured leg and was unable to play. The match culminated in yet another shoot-out, with Leicester Grammar ending up on the losing side.

By a stroke of luck, one of the 16 teams that reached the national finals was unable to participate, so (as the team who came the closest) we were invited to take their place. We were excited by the challenge of competing against some of the best schools in the

UK in what was our 13th National final. As a team it was a great way to conclude the school year. Beating Repton in a dramatic shoot-out, finishing at 10.30 pm, will forever go down in my tennis memories. It was a fantastic achievement and a nice way to sign off the LGS tennis careers of our Year 13 players, Theo Coats and Toby Christison. A special mention goes to Theo for going unbeaten in all four matches in both singles and doubles. The year's final tournament saw us take four teams to the annual Independent Schools' Tennis Championships at Eton College, where they represented the school with excellence.



U13 Boys by Saatvik Pissay, Captain

The U13 tennis teams have put in lots of effort training throughout this year in the mornings and sometimes in cold and windy weather. In our first A team fixture, we played against Lutterworth High School, but lost that match. This was a good learning opportunity. In our second fixture, we played against Lutterworth College and had a convincing 10-2 win. The B team had two matches against Welland Park and Dixie Grammar School, where some of the team played their first ever competitive matches and gained valuable experience. I would like to thank Mr. Godsmark for all his support.

U15 Boys by Ollie Gascoigne, Captain

This season has been yet another triumph for the U15 Boys' Tennis Team. In our cup fixture we faced a tough opponent, Uppingham College, and unfortunately lost. However, the team learnt from this defeat and strove to improve, in training always going the extra mile to be the best. Following this, two players were invited to play at Eton in an ISTA tournament. William and Ollie made a brilliant doubles pair and played incredibly well against many well-known schools throughout the country. They were knocked out in the Plate Tournament after narrowly missing the required games to progress. This tennis year would not have been possible without Mr Godsmark who coached the squad in all weathers and we have all benefitted from his knowledge.



U15 Boys B&C by Sunhith Boora, Captain

The Division 2 tennis season kicked off at Dixie Grammar for the first round of the LTA Youth Schools' Tournament. The tournament scoring system is based on the number of matches won. Both the U15 A and B teams played in Division 2, leading to tough matches for both. Our team persevered through lots of harsh weather, which weighs the balls down, while the wind blows them around. However, some of our successes were when we played Dixie Grammar for 12-0, and beat Lutterworth 10-2. We have seen a few setbacks too; for example, we were beaten 12-0 against Uppingham. Overall, we placed joint 2nd in Group A and 3rd in Group B. It was an honour to represent our school in the tournaments. Massive thanks go to our tennis coach Mr Godsmark and to Miss Rothwell for organising the fixtures.

U18 Girls by Shivani Patel, Captain

Everyone in the team this year has played well against some very talented opponents in the Year 11-13 Midlands Regional Finals, supported by Mr Godsmark and Miss Rothwell. The first match of the year was against Lincoln Minster School, which we won 8-4. Near the end of the tennis season, in July, we lost against some excellent players in the Loveband Box at Eton. We are all looking forward to more exciting and competitive matches in the next year.

U18 Boys by Theo Coats & Toby Christison, Captains

We have trained hard this season with Mr Godsmark, our fantastic coach, to build on the success of the previous year. We were able to qualify for the regional finals at the Nottingham Tennis Centre and put in a valiant effort to secure 2nd place, improving from previous years. This gave us a very good start to the season. We also managed to qualify for the national finals of the Glanville Cup (the schools' national competition) and placed 12 out of over 300 teams in the competition from around the UK. This successful cup run included an impressive win vs Repton leading to our best finish in the school's history in the competition! At the ISTA competition at Eton we were able to comfortably defeat RGS Newcastle in our opening game after having a bye, progressing to the third round. This again was an improvement on our performance from the previous year.

Star Cricketer

Ronak Rajashekar

Interview by Hasan Khwaja

What do you think sets cricket apart from other sports?

Cricket is an exciting game once you're able to fully understand it. Each format has its differences which keeps it interesting and the fact that you will end up under-performing more times than you will achieve your targets makes it even more rewarding when you perform well.

Who has been your biggest influence in cricket?

My role model is Virat Kohli. One of the best batters to have played the game, his attitude on the pitch and his flair in his batting really captivates me

How do you prepare yourself mentally and physically before a game?

Preparation before games is a key factor for me. The night before I like to visualise myself playing cricket and keeping a positive frame of mind. In addition, I keep all my kit ready the night before, and foam roll and stretch in the morning before heading off to the game.

What has been most memorable moment or match so far?

Representing the Midlands at the ECB Bunbury Festival (start of the England Pathway) and competing against the best 56 players in the country at the U15 level was a great learning experience. Winning the L&RCI Men's premier division and signing an U18 Leicestershire Academy contract are right up there as well.



What are your goals and aspirations?

I hope to play professional cricket for both Leicestershire and England. I also aspire to travel the world to play and inspire some others, I would hope, along the way.

What advice would you give to young aspiring cricketers?

My advice is to enjoy every moment and play with freedom, always endeavour to keep improving and learning, and push yourself out of your comfort zone.



Star Table Tennis Player Catherine Lv

Interview by Sophie Arif, Year 8

How did you first get involved in table tennis?

When I was seven, I saw my brother playing at a local club and was intrigued. I started playing for fun, watching him and joining in whenever I could.

How do you handle pressure during competitions?

I focus on staying composed by practicing mindfulness and breathing exercises. Visualisation techniques also help me prepare for matches. I remind myself to take one point at a time and stay positive, regardless of the score.

What aspects of the game do you most enjoy?

What I love most is making new friends and competing with them. Additionally, the thrill of winning and achieving personal goals keeps me motivated.

What advice would you give other young players?

My advice to young players would be never to give up. Consistent practice and a positive attitude are crucial. It's important to work on both your physical skills and mental toughness. Find a good coach, set achievable goals, and stay dedicated. Enjoy the process and don't get discouraged by setbacks — they are part of the journey. Most importantly, have fun and develop a true love for the game.

Can you describe a memorable moment?

One of the most memorable events was winning the nationals in 2022. In the semi-final, I was 2-0 down overall, but managed to bring the score back to 2-2. In the final set, I was trailing 4-8 but made a remarkable comeback to win the match. This victory was incredibly rewarding and reinforced my belief in my abilities, especially as I beat the England No. 2 and No. 1 players!

What challenges have you faced and how have you overcome them?

I started competitive play later than many of my peers. Most players began at six, while I only started playing competitively at eleven. Therefore, I dedicated extra time to practice and focused on improving my skills rapidly. With determination and hard work, I was able to catch up and compete at a high level.

What training regimen do you follow and how do you balance that with school?

I practise three times a week at a club in Derby, from 6:30 to 9:30 pm. Weekends are reserved for competitions. Balancing my passion for table tennis with school requires careful planning and discipline. I try to complete all my homework on my free days, and during exam periods, I revise at weekends and during breaks in competitions.

Who has been your greatest role model in table tennis?

Ma Long. His dedication, sportsmanship, and achievements inspire me to strive for greatness. Watching his matches and learning from his techniques has had a significant impact on my development as a player. His ability to remain humble and focused despite his success is something I greatly admire.

What are your aspirations for the game?

In the short term, my goal is to raise my ranking in England to the top five and win the nationals. I also aspire to represent England officially next year. Long-term, I hope to play at the Commonwealth Games and achieve a top world ranking. Ultimately, I want to leave a lasting legacy in the sport and inspire the next generation of table tennis players.



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