



2020



# *The* Leicestrian









# Contents

INTRODUCTORY ————— 04

SCHOOL-WIDE EVENTS ————— 06

CORONAVIRUS CLOSURE PERIOD — 23

FOUNDATION DAY ESSAYS ————— 38

CHARITIES ————— 52

ART ————— 55

CLASSICS ————— 64

ENGLISH & DRAMA ————— 67

CREATIVE WRITING ————— 72

DT & FOOD TECHNOLOGY ————— 74

HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY & RS ————— 78

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES — 82

MUSIC ————— 85

SCIENCE ————— 93

SPORTS ————— 98

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## A Word from the Headmaster Mr Watson

**T**he Foundation Essay title of 'My Favourite Fictional Character' has perhaps resonated with all of us during a period when we may have felt at times that we are playing a role in some very strange fiction! It is doubtful that any of us could have dreamt up the story of which we have been a part over the last few months.

Schools closed on 20th March, and Years 11 and 13 suffered the huge disappointment of knowing that they would not have the opportunity to prove their worth in public examinations. They reacted with maturity, working with their teachers and engaging positively with a different sort of purposeful educational provision throughout the Trinity Term. I have been hugely impressed by the many creative ways in which staff and pupils have made the most of a high-quality remote learning experience and strong sense of community – even whilst apart. Fresh challenges and new Government guidance have frequently come our way, but we have been nimble and adaptable in our response, sometimes virtually solving the insoluble! Pupils have been offered

a full timetable of lessons, tutorials, house challenges and assemblies, making very good progress via a blend of videoconferencing and independent learning. The last weeks of the Trinity Term, after internal assessments, saw online charity, well-being, arts and sports days, as well as work-related learning and university preparation in small groups in school. Our learning curve has been very steep, but teachers and pupils rose very quickly to the technological challenges, nevertheless missing the fun of being in school.

With so many parents in the medical profession, we have provided key worker provision across the Trust for up to 80

children on a daily basis, and the Design Technology department worked with some of those children over the Easter holiday to manufacture an incredible 11,400 visors for the NHS – which were very gratefully received and which feature on the colourful front cover.

As I write, we have already had to reinvent much of what we do and, encouraged by the Government's plan to bring all children back in September, we are therefore well prepared for the next round of planning. The current crisis has been all-absorbing but it should not cloud our celebration of the many successes from earlier this academic year. We recorded some



record examination results last summer; we were declared 'Excellent' in the (only) two categories of Pupils' Achievements and Pupils' Personal Development in a full Educational Quality Inspection; we were found fully compliant with the 400 + regulations (most relating to safeguarding and health & safety) by the inspectorate; and we were crowned East Midlands Independent Senior School of the year 2020 by the Sunday Times. With Trustees, we developed a new mission statement for the Trust, as well as a new set of aims:

*The Leicester Grammar School Trust seeks to be an inspiring centre for co-educational excellence in academic and personal development, within a Christian ethos.*

*In order to fulfil this mission, the school aims to:*

- ▶ *Promote intellectual curiosity and academic excellence.*
- ▶ *Provide a broad, balanced and stimulating curriculum.*
- ▶ *Offer a rich range of co-curricular opportunities which enhance pupils' physical, cultural and personal development.*
- ▶ *Equip pupils with the self-belief, consideration and skills required for a principled and fulfilling life.*
- ▶ *Create a happy and mutually-supportive community of learners and staff, in which each individual is encouraged and enabled to do and be their best.*
- ▶ *Care for the mental and emotional well-being of pupils, and be proactive in the promotion of a healthy lifestyle.*
- ▶ *Welcome pupils of diverse backgrounds and faiths, nurturing their social and spiritual development.*
- ▶ *Foster a generous contribution to charity, community service and society.*

With pupils, we chose the values which should inform our planning and underpin all our endeavours:

**Respect:** *for self, others and our environment; kindness, courtesy, humility, tolerance, care, encouragement*

**Trust:** *honesty, integrity, responsibility, self-discipline*

**Courage:** *determination, resilience, perseverance, commitment, enthusiasm, self-belief, challenge*

**Curiosity:** *independence, initiative, creativity, spark, self-awareness, scholarship*

**Community:** *equality, service, empathy, compassion, collaboration, inclusiveness, selflessness*

The warm relationships between pupils, and between pupils and staff, remain key to the happiness and success of our school community. Every year sees some fond farewells but we also benefit from attracting some very worthy successors. Of particular note this year is the retirement of Mr Richard Longson, Head of Careers Development, after a remarkable 38 years' exceptional service to the Trust. He was there virtually from the beginning of Leicester Grammar School, daily parking his car over Richard III's body alongside Leicester Cathedral!

Very sadly, we lost Tom to cancer in June, after a very courageous battle. He formed a very special bond with his dog during his illness and, when he entered end-of-life care, we decided to raise funds for Pets as Therapy. The response of our community was phenomenal, with almost £21,000 raised in just over a week. Tom was aware of the inspiration he had provided, and we shall be working with the charity to ensure regular visits to school by a therapy dog as a lasting tribute to him. His family remains in our thoughts and prayers at such a painful time.

2020 is a year that none of us will forget, but I hope our young people will emerge with a generosity of spirit which will help them play an important part in making our world a better place. They no doubt have exciting stories ahead of them, where many will be the protagonists who make a real difference to the lives of those around them. We shall continue to have high expectations – not only of what our pupils can achieve, but also and primarily of who they turn out to be.

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**“The Leicestrian” is no work of fiction. It tells the tale of a remarkable community.**

“The Leicestrian” is no work of fiction. It tells the tale of a remarkable community, and I am grateful to Mrs Higginson, her editorial team, our contributors and all our pupils and staff for filling its pages to such colourful and vibrant effect.

## A Word from the Head Boy

# Nicholas Njopa-Kaba

I'm not sure which is more unlikely: the fact that many of my peers and I will somehow avoid taking our A-Levels or the fact that at Leicester Grammar School I have witnessed a solar eclipse and played the saxophone for the President of Malta. How much has changed over my time here: many staff come and gone, a new wing added – completely disregarding the previous naming scheme – and gone are the days when the bell meant the end of the lesson. Nowadays it is more likely just 1:00 pm Monday afternoon.

Having spent seven years here, I have met so many people, made lifelong friends and had truly life-changing experiences. Somehow I have found myself knee-deep in mud, next to an Irish Fjord, with a music concert later that same day. The Battlefields trip and visiting Auschwitz have changed the way that I look at life, pushing me to contemplate my own understanding of humanity. The staff at LGS make the school what it is. Every single one of them has great character and has inspired me to be passionate about learning in general, but I must highlight my personal tutor, Mr. Allen, without whom my time at Leicester Grammar School would not have been the same.

I have certainly been pushed out of my comfort zone over the last seven years: in house events (my blood bleeds yellow for Masters), on the rugby pitch, on the stage, and in the classroom. No matter how much you may hate the thought of something at first, you learn so much more about yourself when you are out of your comfort zone and I would encourage everyone to take the opportunities that present themselves, preserve an open mind and give everything your best. There are many feelings I will miss about LGS: getting to the school twitter page, a fire drill interrupting your lesson at the perfect time, the first time you play football on the field in the warmer months, and strolling into school after you get the foyer door fingerprint-reader to work on the first attempt. Although there is something sad about saying goodbye, I feel prepared to move on and start to make my mark in the wider world. It has been an honour to be Head Boy of the most exciting, young independent school out there. I am so fortunate to have been able to share my time at LGS with the great people that make up my year group and cannot wait to see the amazing things they go on to do with their lives. I am proud to call myself an Old Leicestrian and to be a part of the Class of 2020.

## A Word from the Head Girl

# Francesca Jones

After five years at LGS, it is remarkable how many opportunities the school has given me, from the Singapore and Malaysia sports tour when we almost found ourselves trapped in the mall overnight, to picking up a new instrument only two years ago. I have loved taking part in school musicals and will miss that dearly: even though rehearsals can be long and tiring, the excitement both on and off the stage is unmissable. Playing team sports has allowed me to form strong friendships and meet others from different year groups. The school chaplaincy has affected my time at LGS enormously. I have probably eaten twice my own weight in biscuits over the years and still do not know how to say the Nunc Dimittis properly, but have learnt so much thanks to the amazing Reverend Whittaker and Mother Liz.

This time last year the thought of being Head Girl and taking my A-levels as well as participating in many school activities was truly alarming.

However, I have found that the experience has been the opposite. Having deputies has made everything so much more enjoyable and, knowing that Mr Anderson was also finding his feet, I soon felt comfortable sitting in my new place at the front of assembly. I would like to thank a number of people. Firstly Mrs Village has helped to keep Nick and me organised and informed.







# Senior Head of House Report

by Miss Allcoat

The year began with House Drama, with frantic rehearsals every spare moment and incredible performances that left the adjudicating panel completely split. All the evening performances came together in true last-minute fashion and had the audience in regular and intense laughter. Judges came first with their “Alice in Wonderland” tale, full of colour and high-quality acting. General Knowledge was an end of term treat as ever, with everyone in their Christmas jumpers for Save the Children. Judges won overall after an exciting day of sectional heats. In Sport, the girls enjoyed their Hockey and mince pies, with a win for VCs, whilst the boys played football and Judges took the win. The New Year started with highly competitive chess matches, with Masters and VCs tying on points overall, and the ruthless Spelling Bee, a victory for Dukes. House Singing followed, showcasing a stunning

array of talent and resulting in a convincing win for Masters; they won three of the four weeks outright. The Swimming Gala had great energy and atmosphere and Dukes took a win after a lot of very close races. The Juniors didn’t get to compete in Rugby due to the weather; Masters won overall thanks to the Inters and Seniors’ efforts.

The pandemic had a heavy impact on the Lent and Trinity terms, with Netball, Badminton, Cricket, Tennis and Athletics all cancelled. It also brought a premature end to the House Charity fundraising, with Masters having raised the most up until this point for the NSPCC, through a cake sale, a chocolate fountain at the Lower School Disco and a raffle. Vice Chancellors supported Barnados, whilst Judges chose the Rainforest Alliance, and both made the most of fund-raising at the disco. Dukes ran a very successful Valentine’s Day chocolate hearts delivery service in aid of Healing Little Hearts. Only the Seniors had the chance to play Netball for their House, thanks to a previously organised charity event, and only the Juniors ran Cross Country just before the school closed, with both events resulting in wins for Masters.

Working from home saw some

alternative events keep pupils and staff engaged. Kahoot quizzes were a big success, with hundreds of competitors taking part in the House Colour, House System and Sports Records quizzes. Overall, Judges dominated this quick-paced domain, but I was impressed by the levels of participation from all the Houses. The Seniors competed in their Mental Maths in a House Meeting in November, but the whole school had the chance to compete during lockdown via a Maths Kahoot Quiz, with a win overall for Judges. Mrs Davies proposed creative and fun art challenges that brought massive joy to my inbox with an inspiring range of interpretations. Judges took first place in both the Rainbow Competition and the Loo Roll Challenge with imaginative artworks, but Dukes stole the stag’s share of the points in the Loo Roll Challenge due to the large number of entries from pupils. The LGS Steps Up for Charity House event in June was a great success; one pupil commented that “charity events like these are perfect for everyone, raising money for a good cause, helping us with more exercise at home and making it feel like a massive school community effort.” Dukes gained the House points from the event, having the most participants who logged their walks and runs. As a school, we raised over £22,000 and covered more than 2000 km. At the end of the year, our usual athletics-based Sports Day was re-imagined by the PE Dept. We ran a Sports Photography

My personal tutor, Dr Fulton, has supported me through stressful moments and Dr Griffin (King Julian), our form tutor, we know is secretly a little heartbroken at our departing the school. Finally, I would like to thank Nick for always being so calm, a great ally when chasing after duty-skiving friends.

Competition for House points, with a win for Judges.

All these changes and reinventions made for a surprisingly inclusive and exciting set of House events this year and I am so pleased that so many pupils have represented their House

in one way or another. Dukes take home the Midland Bank Cup, after an Advent term lead for Masters, and a Lent term leaning towards Judges. Judges were just one point behind in the final points standing! The win is very well deserved, after consistent high participation and

positive effort from Dukes House. A strong Senior House Captain team made a lot of this possible and I thank all the House Captains for their contribution. What a strange year it became, but what a wonderful set of memories I have of its varied House events.

## Mr Longson, Head of Career Development, Says Farewell

**I** was sent an offer of employment April 7, 1982, having come to an interview in half derelict buildings during the Easter holidays of that year. Since those times, it has been quite a journey both for me and indeed for the School. I have felt privileged to be part of the remarkable story that is LGS as it strove to fulfil its founders' vision of a grammar school with a Church of England foundation for Leicester and Leicestershire.

Throughout my time at the School, I have striven to stay true to that vision. In the early years, I taught History and Divinity, taking a rugby team and running a tennis team. I built a strong working relationship with Leicester Cathedral and I established Leicester Grammar School's Guild of Servers and Sacristans; and working with others established the new Chapel of St. Nicholas at the new site. Developing the School community was a central part of my work as I set up the Charity Committee and began Social (Community) Service; developing the House system as a housemaster and then Senior Housemaster; then also serving as founder Secretary of the Old Leicestrians with others setting up that organisation. From 1983, I have been involved in the development of Careers and Young Enterprise in the School, taking on responsibility for its evolution soon afterwards. The quality of Careers at LGS received recognition beyond the school and I went on to be elected as President of the Institute



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I have felt privileged to be  
part of the remarkable story  
that is LGS

of Career Guidance. Reflecting back on those years, I feel that it is now time to very firmly pass on the baton. I wish you, my colleagues, and the Trustees all the very best for the future of Leicester Grammar School as it comes to terms with these current difficult times and then moves on 'From Strength to Strength'."



# The Prep Class Sustainabili-TREE

by Tomas Zurdo Romao (Yr6 Prep)



On November 25, 2019, the Prep made a Christmas tree out of recyclable things such as bottle tops, cardboard tubes for the branches, bottoms of bottles etc. We did this because we feel that the world needs to recycle more, due to global warming. All of Prep worked really hard on this project and eventually we thought the tree looked fabulous.

**“As a huge surprise, Prep came out of the classroom...and it was my topper on the top!**

Without a tree topper it's not a real Christmas tree, we all thought, so guess what Miss Mould did? Yep, a tree topper challenge! So at home, we used our creative minds to think of a recyclable Christmas tree topper. I could not think of an idea, but I tried and tried. It finally got there! It was a cardboard star to match the

tree, with pasta strips on the edges, four pompoms and some red, fluffy pipe-cleaners, with an orange base at the back. As a huge surprise, Prep came out of the classroom to see the final version of the tree and it was my topper on the top! I was shocked but really happy at the same time.

The following Friday the Prep went to a Christmas tree festival in Oadby where there were many wonderful and amazing trees, e.g. funny trees, trees with chocolate, ones made out of corks. But I really thought ours stood out from all the others, because it was eco-friendly.



# PREP 2019-2020





# In Memory of Tom Ellis

May 20, 2005 – June 16, 2020

We shall remember Tom as a very bright, spirited, thoughtful and talented young man, with a great sense of humour and a love of life and of those around him. Supported by his family and friends and by his great companion and therapy dog, Maude, he was determined to the end to battle without fuss with his illness, and his courage is a great inspiration to us all. We shall pay a fuller tribute to Tom in due course.





## 2019 School Production: To Sir, With Love

by Noah Wessel

**"T**o Sir, With Love" by E.R. Braithwaite, set just after the Second World War, is a strong play following the story of Rick Braithwaite, an ex-RAF fighter pilot and Cambridge first-class graduate in Engineering, who is turned away from all the jobs he applies to, due to his skin colour. He ends up in West London, teaching kids classified as 'difficult' in a tough but progressive school, with an eccentric and forward-thinking headmaster. The play focuses on the prevalence of racism in post-war England, and the educational struggle of the working class in the late 1940s. These challenging topics and a demanding set of characters to be cast made this year's school play an ambitious task, to say the least.

We all gathered nervously for the first rehearsal and read through the script for the first time as a full cast. Soon it became clear to everyone that this play was going to be difficult, and that we all had a lot of work on our hands. Initially I had issues with the presentation of my character, Weston, as he

was a bigoted racist, but provided comic relief in the tense scenes. Through conversations with some of the other cast members and the teachers, I decided that Weston had come from a working class background and worked his way up, and was therefore infuriated by the notion that people should be given equal opportunity, as he had not grown up with that. This interpretation allowed me to better understand and develop my character. As the performances drew closer, we began to worry if the play was going to come together in time.

I'm sure I am speaking for the entire cast and the teachers when I say that the final week leading up to the three performances was one of the most stressful but rewarding weeks of my school career. As the date came nearer, we all worked tirelessly to bring the play together with rehearsals most days, and thanks to the brilliant efforts of all of us, something clicked.

All of a sudden, the play began to feel like second nature to us and whatever was missing before had

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What had once seemed a daunting and difficult task became second nature, as everyone lit up in the presence of the audience.



fallen into place. We all began to feel much more confident, and were excited and ready to perform.

Almost too quickly, the day of the first performance came. There was a buzz of excitement running through everyone. The Sixth Form and some Year Eleven pupils went to the Pug and Greyhound for dinner to calm our nerves and everyone enjoyed the meal. As we arrived back at school and got changed, it suddenly dawned on us that we were about to put everything we had practised for the last few months to use. In the last half-hour before the first performance, we did our warm-ups and went into St Nics. The minutes that passed felt like hours. We could hear the quiet hum of conversation from the audience, and the gentle patter of feet walking in. Then, the performance began. What had once seemed a daunting and difficult task became second nature, as everyone lit up in the presence of the audience.



### A Word from William House on his Role in the Play:

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Leicester Grammar has now seen three headmasters in quick succession: Mr King, Mr Watson and me, Mr Florian. Aspects of both Headmasters I have known influenced Mr Florian, I assure you. Mr King's cool demeanour and Mr Watson's ardent enthusiasm combined with some sublime dad dancing (if I may say so myself) to create the vibrant, animated and slightly posh headmaster of a "tough but progressive" East End school. Fed up with the lack-lustre education system in post-World War Two Britain he believed in a rather radical style of teaching. He did not consider corporal punishment to be successful or appropriate and encouraged, as much as possible, the involvement of the children in the running of the school. Whilst this made life difficult for his staff, it ultimately resulted in mature, fine young people, when Mr Braithwaite (Nicholas Njopa-Kaba) added his influence. Florian was an incredibly fun character to play and I would like to thank everyone else involved in the performance (cast, staff, technical team, backstage crew and front of house) for another brilliant effort.

# Alice

## 2019-20 Lower School Production

by Meghna Rao

In February 2020, the Lower School (Years 6-9) put on a performance of ALICE, written by Laura Wade. With only six weeks of rehearsals, time was very limited, but in the end, the whole cast, props team, sound and lighting crews were able to give two amazing performances at the end of a hectic few weeks.



Nearly everyone is familiar with the plot of “Alice in Wonderland”, but this version is the story of a twelve-year-old girl called Alice, played by Poppy Mayer, who is struggling to get over the loss of her brother, played by Gabriel Smith. The play begins at his funeral, but soon Alice’s imagination transports her to Wonderland, a place filled with weird and crazy characters that subtly show her how to navigate through her grief.

Since we only had six weeks of rehearsals, the shortest amount of rehearsal time ever for a production performed at LGS, we had so much to do in such a little amount of time. From devising physical sequences, blocking scenes and so much more, there was never a dull moment even

when your scene was not being run at that moment. Fast forward to early February, we had just had our first full rehearsal with sound, lighting, props and costumes. When all of the separate elements had finally come together, the production seemed to take shape in front of my eyes, and it was only then that I fully realised how close we were until everyone would be watching us, I remember asking myself, “Am I even good enough to do this? What am I getting myself into?” It hit me that in just one week I would be reminiscing about how I had just performed in front of so many people,





alongside so many amazing cast members that I had become so close to throughout the production.

Before we knew it, the opening night was upon us. We all scrambled to get into hair, make-up and costumes. Next, we had a quick pep talk from Miss Adams and Mrs Garner and then we were ready to show everyone our hard work. The buzz backstage was unforgettable: everyone had to refrain from saying a word so we would not be heard, yet we were so nervous and excited that all you wanted to do was talk to each other! All in all, both nights went extremely well and we came out of it really proud of ourselves and extremely thankful to be a part of something like this.

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The buzz backstage was unforgettable: everyone had to refrain from saying a word so we would not be heard, yet we were so nervous and excited that all we wanted to do was talk to each other!



The whole production would not have been possible without Miss Adams, Mrs Garner, Mr Stagg and everyone who took part or helped behind the scenes. I cannot thank them all enough, because without everyone helping, the production would not have been as amazing as it was. Being in the play and spending time backstage or waiting to go onstage with all of you who took part, allowed me to get to know people that I had never spoken to before. I thoroughly enjoyed every single minute of ALICE.



# House Drama

**2019** by Emily MacTaggart

**H**ouse Drama can be summed up in just a few words: vibrant, eclectic, inclusive and entertaining. The outcome cannot be taken too seriously as House casts only had three weeks for auditions, line learning, blocking, costumes and set design. It is an event which reinforces the sense of the school community working as one to achieve a commendable goal, as the year groups mix (an unusual occurrence) and form lovely relationships which defy the boundaries of age and the safety of consolidated friendship groups.

Duke's House performed "Bonding", a witty tale about a dysfunctional family on a camping retreat intercepted by aliens. It was an unknown storyline, which added to the excitement of the night. Vice Chancellor's House performed a quirky play set in a courtroom, a twist on the well-known "Little Red Riding Hood". The Big Bad Wolf faced a trial while framed by Granny and observed by other fairy tale characters. Master's

House took on the popular classic of "Beauty and the Beast", with rhyming lines and an array of anthropomorphic cast members. Judge's House (pictured above) reinterpreted the rather mad "Alice in Wonderland" with a plethora of elaborate costumes. Yash Bhatia's fitting role in the Duke's play, "Bonding", allowed for a hilarious duo with Anaya Kotecha's melodramatic failing actress character, Letitia. The comedic timing meant that the audience thoroughly enjoyed "Bonding" – you only had to hear their laughter. "Beauty and the Beast" tickled its viewers, with its haphazard approach, including a blunder with the lines, just suiting the action perfectly.

**"the aim was to entertain and this aim was very successfully realised."**

However, it was Nahbi Odeh's transformation into the noble stallion which stole the show. The entire cast of "Alice in

Wonderland", including the co-ordinated duo of Kate McCallister and Millie Warrilow (pictured right) as Alice at two different sizes, allowed the illusion of the rabbit-hole to work its magic and helped to create the disorientating dream-like adventure. Ruby Evans, in "Little Red Riding Hood" used her tremendous talents to control the stage, creating the atmosphere for the play to thrive. Although the performances were far from professional, the aim was to entertain and this aim was very successfully realised.

The incredible efforts and energy put into the performances reflected the work ethic of the entire cast, the Heads of House, the 6th form student directors and the sound and lighting team. Judges were the winners, with Duke's House second, followed by VCs and then Masters. Thank you to all who took part for a very memorable night.





# Our School Election

## December 2019

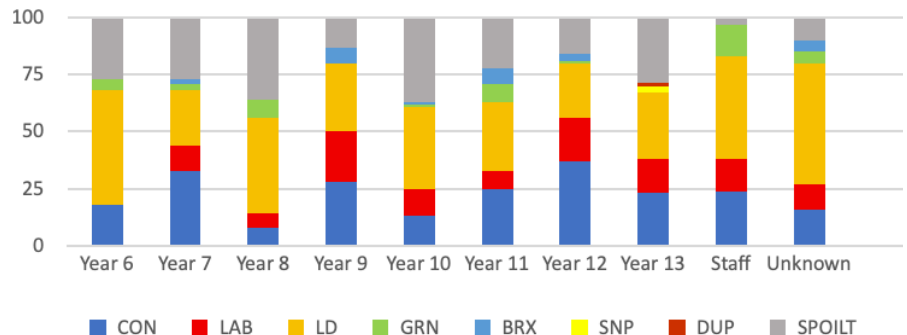
by William Wale, Year 10

**L**ike the rest of the country, we had a general election on the 12th December, 2019. We were not voting for representatives, just the parties and the policies they had put forward in the hustings, although we had supporters from all major parties in the UK.

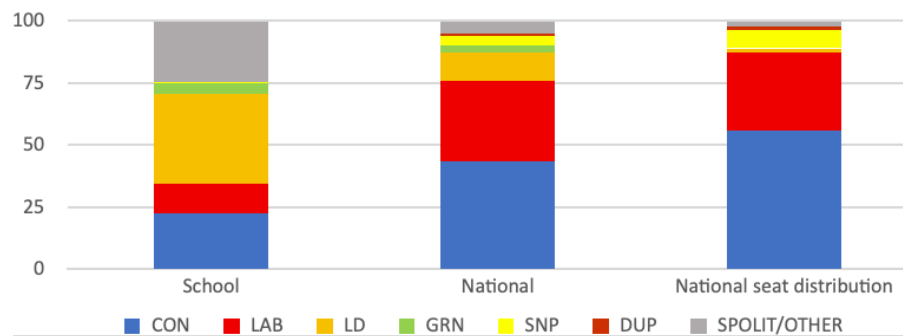
At the hustings, which took place on the Tuesday before the election, members of the school community from every year group asked those who had volunteered to argue for each party difficult questions, and each of the volunteers gave a speech of their key policies. As usual, the hustings were dominated by talk of Brexit, with the Labour party suffering particularly on the issue of a second referendum. There was great tension between the SNP and Green party as to whose environmental policy was going to be more effective in the long term, and the Conservative party was grilled thoroughly on the long-term economic effects of Brexit. While there was no clear winner at the hustings, it was clear that the Labour Party were somewhat damaged by their policy on independent education, and the Lib Dems and the Conservatives came out in front.

On the day of the poll, there was an air of excitement around the foyer where the voting was taking place. All the parties were actively campaigning, with posters suspended from the stairs and along the street. People voted over the duration of the lunchtime, and the votes were counted by later that afternoon. The results proved incredibly interesting, and somewhat different to what might have been predicted. While the Conservatives were dominant in some year groups, the Lib Dems were the clear winners. This was probably in part due to their great performance in the hustings, and their clear and concise policy on Brexit, as well as perhaps their other policies on

Vote Share by Group



How the school compares with the nation



social care, the environment and the legalisation of some substances. The Conservative party also came out strongly, with their strong policy on Brexit, which seemed very popular for many voters. The SNP, DUP and Greens all performed very poorly, and Labour was left lagging behind the other major parties, arguably due to their socialist policies on education, transportation and public services.

Our internal results greatly contrasted with those of the nation, in which the Conservatives had a clear win. If each year group had been a seat in a miniature parliament, the Liberal Democrats would have had a clear majority. The results also show that only Years 7 and 12 had a Conservative victory, in support of Brexit, whereas every other group supported the Liberal Democrats, whose position was strongly against Brexit. Overall, the school elections provided a fascinating insight into the politics of the school, and reinforced in some people's eyes the view that the young were less in favour of Brexit than older generations. While the Conservatives were expected to perform well, they performed less well than some people might have expected given the nature of the school's populace.



# Introducing Mr Anderson

## Our New Deputy Head

Interview by Mila Boersma and Alice Dobson

### What are your aims in your new position?

As the new Deputy Head (Academic) learning about the school is my first priority. One of the most exciting things about working in a big school like this is that there are so many interesting things going on all the time. I just saw House Drama, which is something I had never heard of before, but I thought was absolutely brilliant and showcased so many students' talents. After learning about the school, I will be thinking about what changes we might make to improve the school even further.

### What drew you to Leicester Grammar School?

This is cheesy but also true: schools are about people, and in the same way that you as a student pick a school where you will have an easy but challenging fit, a teacher does the same thing. I've always taught in Co-Ed schools. I came here and I felt it would be an exciting place to work as the students are excited to learn and the staff are clever and knowledgeable and both want to work hard.

### What are you grateful for?

Most of it, I feel ridiculously lucky for the opportunities I had in life. When you see on the news what some people have to deal with, you realise how fortunate you are.

### If you won, the lottery what would you spend it on?

I used to work in a school in London and so my wife and children are still living there, whilst I live here and go back down to London at the weekend. So, the first thing I would do would

be to buy a house for us all in Leicestershire. Other than that, I would probably buy a bright orange Ford Focus ST with blacked-out windows: it would be cool to turn up at school in that and then step out in your smart suit.

### If you could have dinner with anyone, dead or alive, who would it be?

Albus Dumbledore. I mean, he's the best teacher, right? Also, now I am at LGS, I get to wear an academic robe in Whole School Assemblies, so all I need is a two-foot-long grey beard and I will be all set for Hogwarts.

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I came here and I felt it would  
be an exciting place to work as  
the students are excited to learn  
and the staff are clever



# Young Enterprise Candle-makers

Interview of Ellen Blaine by Elliot Green



Raph Thompson, Ellie Moore and Ellen Blaine  
at Beaumont Leyes Shopping Centre

**This year saw the largest group of students involved in Young Enterprise, 32 in total. In the first round of the competition, LGS's Nebula team won three awards: finalist, customer service and financial management.**

## **What strategies did you use to try and keep everyone motivated and focused?**

This was a challenge as we only met once a week; however, my management team was an amazing support in keeping everyone motivated, including my vice Managing Director, Amaan and the Managing Directors of the other group. One way we helped to keep people focussed on achieving our aims was to sub-divide into smaller groups, so that there were never too many people at any one time in one group. At the start we had two main groups, Competition and Fundraising, with one

smaller Management group above that, which helped to split up the tasks and give everyone a specific focus. However, as we moved away from fundraising we reformed the structure into smaller teams, allowing people to choose what team they thought they'd work best within.

## **How were your candle products designed and produced?**

We started off with several ideas produced by the primary Competition Group. We ran with these for the first term; however, thanks to some investigative market research, it became obvious that we needed to adjust our product to increase demand. We then concentrated completely on candles, starting off with recyclable candles made out of old beer bottles, and then switched to our current product, candles set in a bespoke wooden base with a bottom plate engraved



with bespoke words or messages and a top plate which spins to reveal one in turn. In terms of manufacturing, Alex, the owner of Smith and Chamber's bespoke joinery was so supportive of our company throughout the whole process and manufactured the parts of our product for an amazing price. Our design team, including Caitlin Musto, Jack Show, Patrick Wang and Joe Parker worked tirelessly to assemble and laser-cut our products.

**At Beaumont Leys Trade Fair, you sold all your stock. To what do you credit this spectacular demand?**

That's right we sold all of our candles and received an order for more. We were very pleased with this volume of sales. Unfortunately, we have had to halt production of this order for now for obvious reasons; however, we are excited about completing it when we return to school.

**What leadership qualities have you developed in your management of YE?**

This whole process has taught me the benefit of delegation. I learnt that recognising the talent of people around me and spotting people who are working really hard and relying on them is the best way to run a team. It is tempting to try and do everything yourself, but asking people for help is really the key to success.



**What other attributes do you think someone applying to YE next year should have?**

Work ethic. That is the main one. Our best workers were not those that were the flashiest or most skilled, but the ones who consistently put in the work. If you are someone who is only interested in CVs and personal statements, don't apply. You need genuine pride and drive in order to partake in Young Enterprise successfully.



# 2020 Junior Quiz Challenge

by Mr D R Willis

**B**ack in March 2020, (pre-lockdown) we again hosted the annual Junior Quiz Challenge with teams from Manor, Gartree, Loughborough Grammar, Dixie Grammar and Stamford. LGS B team lost to Loughborough 140-600, then beat Gartree B 280-120 in the Plate Semi-final, but lost to Manor 210-300 in the Plate Final. LGS A team beat Gartree B 330-130, then beat (the holders) Loughborough in a close semi-final, 360-290, and won the Final, beating Gartree A 470-240, so they are now the East Midlands (south) champions.

On June 30th, 2020, we had a practice match in the morning, A team versus B team, to get used to Zoom and the other technology used, and the A team were victorious, 520-290.

The A team then played their National Quarter-Final versus Hereford Cathedral School in the afternoon.

It was an incredibly tight contest that could have gone either way (we were leading right up until the very end!) but eventually we were just , with the final score 470-490. We will now contest the Plate Competition Semi-Finals at some point in the summer holiday, when Will comes back from his camping holiday.

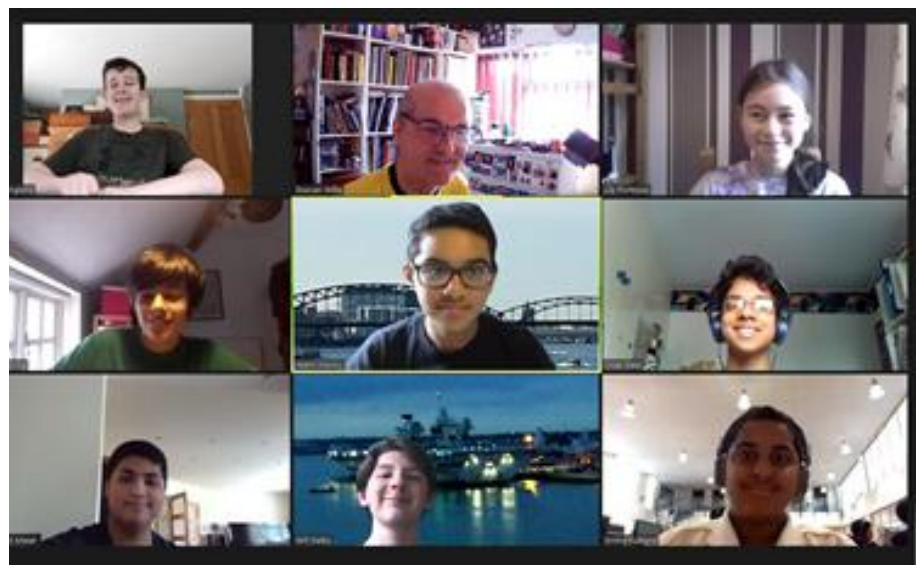
Congratulations to the team, who are understandably a bit gutted, but they did really well.

## BACK ROW

The B Team (left to right: Nikhil Shenoy, Lily Porteous, Vivek Patel, Arvind Kulkarni)

## FRONT ROW

The A Team, who are East Midlands (south) champions (left to right: Hamad Anwar, Boris Dring, Joey England, Will Dalby)



## Debating Club

# Moronic, Simplistic and Just for Children?



**On December 5, 2019, the Senior Debating motion, taken from a film critic in “The Times” and based on Scorsese’s recent comments, was that “Superhero films are moronic, simplistic and just for children.” For the motion were Annabel Onions and Urvita Roy, and arguing against were Priya Ganatra and Georgina Holmes.**

Annabel, arguing for the motion, spoke first, asserting that superhero movies involved absurd situations, plot contradictions, poor science and are repetitive: there is always a hero, a villain and a love interest. She argued that “disappearing into the superhero multi-complex” was an abdication of responsibility in an adult. For example, she related Thor helping humans to people buying homes they cannot afford, believing that anything is possible.

Priya countered her, by speaking of “superhero psychology”, i.e. people finding that they are much stronger than they had thought they were. Superman, she pointed out, was created during the American Depression. She also defended superhero films as having plots that are “multi-layered”, saying, for instance, that “The Joker” deals with mental illness, while other characters reference Greek myths. Furthermore, she claimed that misery ensues when sharp divisions are made between adults and children: both can enjoy Disneyland or colouring books, she said. In addition, these films raise the profiles of certain actors and hence publicise and boost their charities. The average family spends 49 minutes together a day, so surely it is a good thing if such movies bring families together more. She closed with a quotation from Miss Marvel: “Good isn’t a thing you are, it is a thing you do.”

Urvita began by saying that we should consider Malala, if we want a hero. The villains in these films are “pretty corny” she said: they wear a differently coloured suit, something odd on the head, and make a lot of puns. She asserted that villains only kill because superheroes

mess up first, and that the solutions at the end are too perfect to be realistic. The films are fun, but silly, and “have pre-teen built into their DNA.” For example, she argued that there are inconsistencies in “Avengers End Game” so that Stormbreaker is only as powerful as the plot requires it to be at any point. In “Batman Versus Superman” Superman’s speed is inconsistent at different points, so that Batman can win. Kryptonite ought to be useless to humans, she pointed out, as they are too slow to hurt Superman. There are better ways to examine democratic institutions, while spending only half the budget, she said; also, there are better ways to spend family time than sitting silently together in the cinema. Bruce Wayne’s depression makes him a poor role model.

Georgina began by arguing that the movies get some of their science right: on “Mythbusters” a similar suit to the one Ironman wore was built and did fly. Scorsese has said that he enjoys myths and history, so he should appreciate that superheroes are a way of retelling ancient stories. She also argued that Thor is no less serious than a Christian god. Superheroes are a gentler way to convey moral issues, she said, and superhero films are varied, including many genres: psychological thriller, comedy, romance. Not only is “The Joker” not a childish film, she said – it is harrowing, horrifying, eye-opening, and the third most popular movie on INDB.

From the floor, Ellen Blaine said that superhero films are sexist and glorify flawed characters – and she questioned whether “The Joker” is a superhero film at all. William Wale said that everyone should have the right to be childish at times. Patrick Davies said that Shakespeare was not found childish, despite his plentiful use of comic relief. Mr Allen asked whether too much money was spent on such films, but students answered from the floor that they make more than they cost. The con side, Priya and Georgina, won the debate.



# Remembering 2020

by Mr Allen

The request for all members of the school to come up with something visual, written, artistic, or poetic that we might use for a future 'school museum' generated some superb material. The sense of emptiness and difference came through strongly in films and photos, the more personal memories came through writing. My thanks to all who have submitted entries.

## Vivek Bulsara's Entry:

The picture I have created is a 'word cloud' of the 150 most used words from Boris Johnson's speech on Monday March 23rd, 2020 to announce the UK was to begin its period of lockdown.

I believe it reflects the lockdown phase very well because 'lives' and 'NHS' were frequently used as we were staying home to protect the NHS's capacity to cope with the people who were ill and to save as many lives as we could as a nation. No one would have imagined a period in their lives when over 45 countries were in partial or full lockdown because of a virus – unless your name is Bill Gates. He delivered a TED Talk in April 2015 titled 'The next outbreak? We're not ready' saying that an epidemic was a bigger threat than a war breaking out and that no countries would be ready for the next epidemic and this would endanger the world. Perhaps he was right, but what is admirable is the way the country has responded to COVID-19. One good example of this is when multiple critical care NHS Nightingale Hospitals were built at speed in response to fighting the virus.

The second-largest word on the 'word cloud' is 'home.' We have had to stay at home for months, and while this may have seemed boring and somewhat annoying, bearing in mind that the weather has reached over 25 Celsius in different places in the UK, for the most part we have done well in coping. We have been extremely fortunate here at Leicester Grammar School that our teachers have been able to educate us through online video lessons to keep up with our studies. It was difficult at first for people to adjust to the change, but it has shown our ability to adapt to different circumstances, a trait we have all strengthened. I believe a big contributor to the lockdown period is the level of technology we have. Families and friends have stayed connected through video calls



and social media to stop us feeling lonely at this time of struggle for everyone. But we must not forget to remain grateful for this, because in other parts of the world many people do not have the level of education we receive nor the interconnectedness that we may have with one another.

“

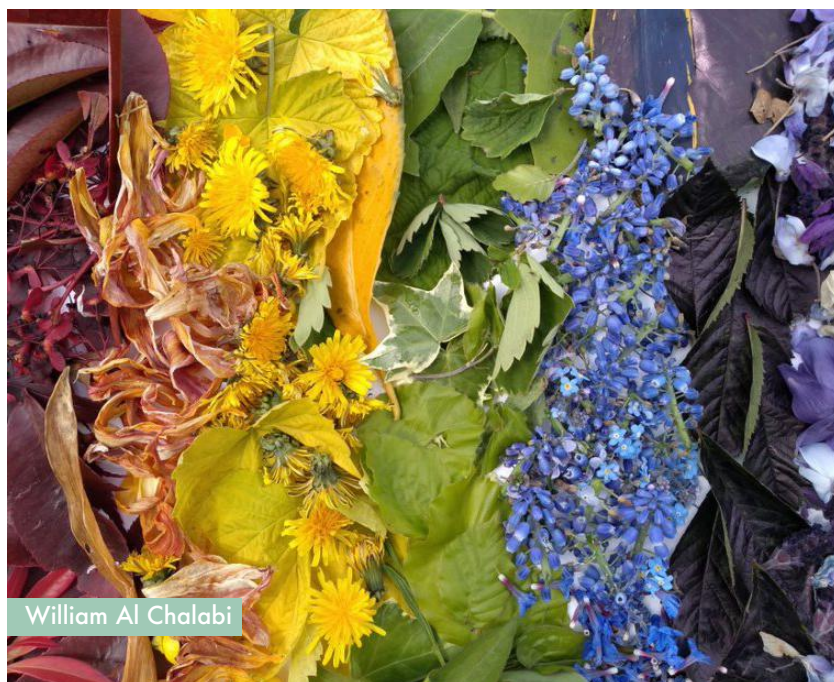
...although we have stayed two metres apart, we have bonded stronger as one country.

Finally, one small word I would like to pick out from the 'word cloud' is 'together,' which means a lot more than its size on the picture. It sums up how the nation has acted in the past few months. For example, we have come together to engage in the weekly 'Clap for our Carers' to show the health services how much we value them in this tough period. I hope this feeling of 'togetherness' stays within our country for a very long time, because although we have stayed two metres apart, we have bonded stronger as one country.

# The House Rainbow Competition

by Miss Allcoat

There were an amazing 65 fantastic entries to the House rainbow competition, in support of the NHS, which earned points for the entrants' houses. New pupils joining in September 2020 were invited to enter the competition as well and put in an amazing effort. They were assigned their Houses by Miss Allcoat, prior to our adjudicator, Art teacher, Mrs Davies, making the decision on the winners. (Students are always assigned the same House as any older siblings that they may have in the school.) It really was genuinely difficult to narrow down and select the winners because the standard was so high. Well done to everybody that took part.



William Al Chalabi

The third place in the competition went to Eleanor Jordan, Masters house, who will join Prep in the autumn. Her entry features all things to do with sewing. Second place went to William Al Chalabi, VCs house, who will join Year 7 in September. William has been very enthusiastic in the garden since lockdown and made his image



Bethany Toach

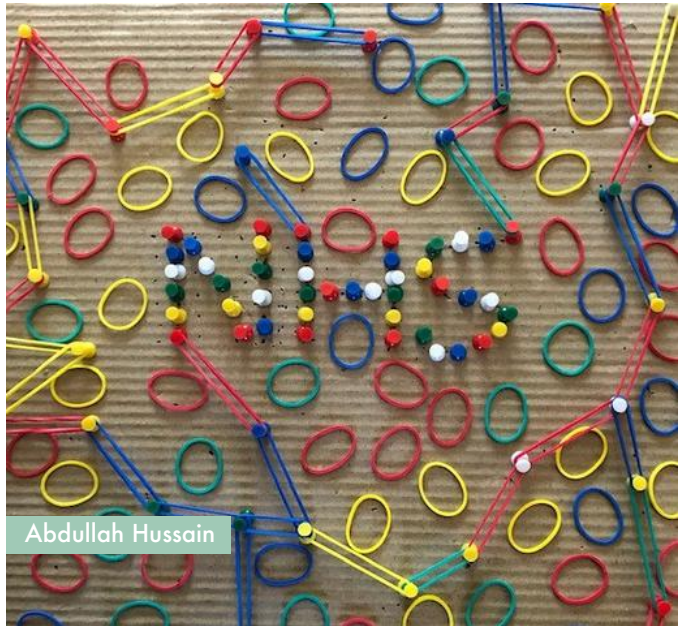
(pictured above) from flowers and leaves. First prize went to Bethany Toach, who will join Year 7 in September. Her entry (pictured at the top of the page) highlights her father's work buying and delivering fresh fruit and vegetables to suppliers in the East Midlands. Mrs Naomi Cresswell (Staff) was given an honourable mention.



Alice Chi



Abdullah Hussain



Thomas Mann



Mrs Cresswell





# Quarantine Hearing

by Lucy Weston, Year 10

**//P**lease can you just tell your stupid dogs to be quiet!" The phrase constantly swirling around in my mind at ungodly hours of the morning. Who, in their right mind, wakes up at 4 o'clock in the morning to let their dogs outside? And if you're going to do that, why would you leave them outside to bark at the numerous other pets who are also crawling around in their cages before sunrise? If the screeching, irritating, blood-curdling sound of two tiny little cava-poops isn't annoying enough, they set off the whole neighbourhood. The dog next door to them, who is equally as annoying, the two identical puppies living at the end of the street, whom I don't think are actually puppies, and the dog coming from the inside of our neighbourhood's very own 'Radley House'. I also hear the mellow sound of my dog barking downstairs, out the window. I'd like to think he's on my side, telling the other dogs to be quiet, but I'm not a dog, so I can't be sure. It honestly feels like I am the only person who can hear them.

Ever since quarantine began, I seem to have developed 'supernatural hearing'. Now I don't know whether this is because I have been bitten by some sort of a radioactive spider like Spiderman, or just simply my ears are not overwhelmed by everyday noises. I no longer hear the constant sound of vehicles passing by, or the sound of children chatting to one another at school. The sound of the school bell no longer rings in my ear, nor does the sound of Year 7 music on a Wednesday afternoon. Since my mum is a teacher, she is getting bombarded by emails. This means she stays up late answering them or recording lessons for the children the following day. I have never been so irritated by the dreaded words, "Hello everyone!". As much as I think it's great her children are getting educated, my mum doesn't have an off switch to her 'teacher voice' as I like to call it. Normally it would be on a bearable level, yet due to the development in my supernatural quarantine hearing, my tolerance level stands at precisely zero. And it doesn't stop at the talking either. I am infuriated by the sound of the mouse clicking on



the computer, the quaking sound of fingers tapping on the keyboard in reply to the thousands of emails, and the high-pitched, squeaking noise of the chair as she stands up to get some tea. Every single tap or click sends my mind spiralling as if I've lost control, being locked away for so long.

When all the work just builds up, I like to go outside and get a breath of fresh air. Except, I open the door, stand outside and just as I say, "Ahh, isn't this weather just delightful", I hear the sound of sheep. However, these are no ordinary sheep. They are the noisiest, most maddening sheep you will ever come across. It's like they know I have supernatural hearing. Their persistent, 'baaa, baaa, baaa -ing' all day and all night long. I would love to be able to understand what they are saying. Maybe I'll add "Learning to understand sheep" to my list of things to do in quarantine. The nearest sheep field is a good kilometre away, I have no idea how it is possible for them to 'baaa' so loudly that I can hear it, clear as day, as if they are right outside my window. I am trapped in a cycle of unwanted noise and I can't get out.

After a long day of computer tapping, listening to the painful words of, "Hello everyone!" repeatedly,





annoying sheep and not getting much sleep from the stupid dogs the night before, I look forward to seven hours of well-earned rest. It's now midnight, and I have had no sleep whatsoever. The dogs are still barking, and my dad's shift as a policeman ended an hour ago. He should be arriving home any time soon. "Woof, woof, woof", Louis howls. He is an excellent guard dog I must say. The back door opens slowly. I can tell he's trying to be quiet so as not to wake anyone up, as everything seems to happen in slow motion. I hear the sound of his keys placed carefully on the table and the plonking down of his big, black boots on the shoe rack. Any other person would have not even heard him open the door, but me? I can even tell what food he is getting out from the cupboards, based purely on the sound the packaging makes. He tip-toes, even though it sounds as though he is stomping, along the corridor towards his gaming room.



He turns on the X-box and it makes a 'ding!' type of noise. This 'ding' is haunting. It's the replacement sound of the school bell that echoes through my mind. I have no idea what games he plays, but

what I do know, is that it requires shooting things. I like to imagine he is shooting the dogs barking constantly, it makes me feel slightly saner. After an hour or so of shooting things, my dad finally turns it off and prepares to come upstairs to settle down for the night. He shuts the gaming-room door, then the living-room door, then wanders dreadingly to the kitchen and finally closes that door, the loudest of them all. But then, he opens it again, then closes it again, then opens it again and then finally closes it one more time. Or at least that is what it sounds like. It feels like he deliberately stands there, opens and closes it multiple times just to irritate me. He then tramples up the stairs, with the dog following, never too far away. Together they sound like a herd of wild buffalos racing across the savanna. Maybe that's why he has to open and close the door so many times, to let all the buffalos through.

I drift off at around two, only being disturbed by the occasional bark from next-door's dogs. I'm deep into my dream about wrapping duct tape around the sheep's mouths, when I suddenly hear a whirring sound coming from my laptop. I pray it goes away, but we all know how it has to end: me getting up out of my nice warm bed to take the plug out of the socket. I climb back into bed and sigh, "The nightmare is over". Until tomorrow.





# The Adventures of a Ballet Class Online

by Abi Loke, Year 10

**T**ime is of the essence. I try (fairly unsuccessfully) to race through my school assignments and homework, taking only essential breaks for food. The computer at home is now my exercise book, my keyboard my pen. When I finish in the nick of time at six o'clock, my sigh of relief is heartfelt. Thank goodness. Just in time for class.

My living room has been transformed into an impromptu dance studio. Foam rollers, yoga mats and pointe shoes litter the floor, with the pièce de résistance, a ballet barre, standing proudly in the middle. Granted, it has some... 'minor' flaws. Many a time it has been pulled too hard on, and every time, it crashes to the floor, normally bringing me with it. Perhaps that is the price I paid when we ordered the cheapest barre we could find when the country shut down, but we refuse to admit it. A bargain carries serious weight in my family.

Having warmed myself up slightly, I start readying myself for class. The rules on strict attire have loosened somewhat. No longer are we confined to dull, dreary, DRAB black leotards. We turn up

for class in a plethora of colours, showing off our yumiko leotards (the ballet equivalent to a Gucci top), and fancy new 'trashbag' warm-up pants. The most daring of us even pull out skirts, the arch-nemesis of my teacher, opting for fashion over the very real danger of 'cutting off the leg line'. This is a serious offense in our class; the leg line must be protected at all times. It is the most heinous crime to obscure it. It's rather embarrassing sometimes, how the ballet community's main worry is that they aren't getting enough exercise in. Three million confirmed cases, and my teacher's biggest concern is still my posture-: "Good gracious, pull up, I can see all the Easter eggs you ate through your leotard!" Somehow I wonder whether she be worried about my posture even if the purge itself were taking place. Actually, thinking about it I have never met a ballet teacher who has seemed completely sane. Perhaps it's part of the job?

Zoom is a wonderful thing. Mainly chaotic, but wonderful nevertheless. It took quite a while for my other teacher, a rather eccentric but lovely man, to get the set-up perfect. It took a few

duds before he got it right, with the first attempt culminating with us following along to his livestream where he muted himself, rendering him impossible to hear. However, I am glad to say that that has been the one and only silent class I have ever taken -- and thank goodness for that. You have to admit that something is missing when you can no longer hear the music that you are supposing to be dancing to! As many as a hundred bun-headed girls as can take class at once, and the distorted sound of our teacher's voice wafts through my phone's speakers. Needless to say, singing does not transfer well over Zoom. However, his enthusiasm does, and for sixty glorious minutes, it's as if you are back in class again. The music is splendid, the exercises tiring, but fulfilling, and it's lovely to see my friends at the start of class. It's so exhilarating that you can fool yourself that you're back in class. However, of course that notion is quickly taken care of when a pirouette smacks me into a wall and I fall, rather embarrassingly, to the floor. Some things, unfortunately, cannot be done so well at home.



# Lockdown Library

**B**oth staff and students were invited to share with us the best of their lockdown reading.

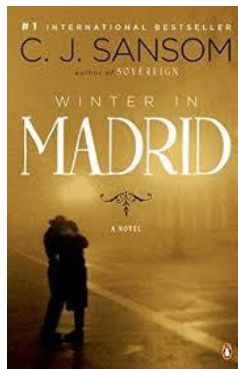
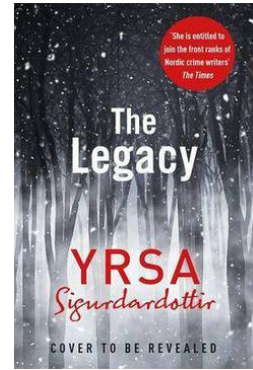


## MR McLEAN:

**Ursula Le Guin's "A Wizard of Earthsea" and Terry Pratchett's "Equal Rites"**. We have been enjoying reading together more as a family during lockdown. I dug off my old shelf a classic fantasy novel about a wizard called Ged, which I have read a few times but not for a decade or so, hoping it would entertain my seven and eight year olds. They were terrified but also hooked from the opening two pages, but despite their entreaties it was certainly not bedtime reading. So, for light relief we started another fantasy novel the same day, their first experience of the hilarious satire that is Discworld. This one is about a girl, Esk, who would be the greatest wizard the world had ever known, if only girls were allowed to be wizards. But what was most wonderful was that, unbeknownst to me until after we started reading, Pratchett's Esk deliberately parodies Le Guin's Ged, in obvious ways and otherwise. Bedtime was ruined anyway, but at least it was due to side-splitting giggles instead of terrifying dreams.

## MISS PATERSON:

The first book I read during lockdown was **"The Legacy" by Yrsa Sigurdardottir**. This is a crime thriller set in Reykjavik, translated from Icelandic. Not a book for the squeamish reader, the victims meet fairly gruesome and untimely deaths involving household appliances! Before committing the crimes, the killer leaves cryptic clues for the detectives; I was pleased to be able to solve the clues before any of the characters in the book, but I did not predict the twist at the end of the story. Having read the second book in the series ("The Reckoning") I will now be reading more of Sigurdardottir's novels.



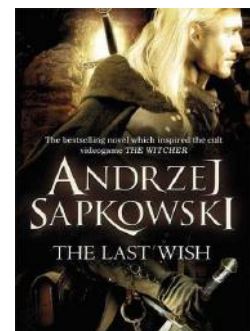
## DR AINGE:

**"Winter in Madrid"**: CJ Sansom usually writes historical detective stories set during the English Reformation, but here he has moved much further forward in time, to the aftermath of the Spanish Civil War and the start of WW2. Harry Brett, a Dunkirk veteran, has been (reluctantly) recruited to spy on an old school friend, Sandy Forsyth, whose shady business dealings have aroused the suspicion of the British Embassy and General

Franco's Spanish regime, against the backdrop of Spain's possible entry into the war... on the German side. In parallel, another old acquaintance, Bernie Piper, trying to survive in a post-Civil War Spanish prison camp -- he was originally believed to be dead -- has just been told he is part of an escape plan, hatched by his former girlfriend, who is also Sandy's current girlfriend, with Harry's involvement! At the time of my writing this, I don't actually know what happens next...but I fear something is about to go horribly wrong... The brilliance of the writing interweaves each subplot effortlessly, and the tension mounts steadily as new characters emerge, and form further crosslinks in the story. A real page-turner and not at all hard to follow, honestly! I heartily recommend Sansom's works: the school library has many of his best-known books on its shelves.

## MISS MACLEOD:

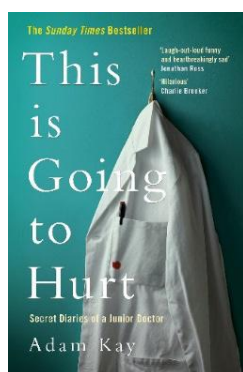
**"The Last Wish" by Andrzej Sapkowski**, the book I am currently reading, is a series of short stories that introduce what, in subsequent books, becomes "The Witcher" saga. Many will be familiar with our witcher, Geralt of Rivia, from the popular series of video games and Netflix adaptation, but I wholeheartedly recommend the source material. It is excellent fantasy. The lore is heavily influenced by Slavic mythology, though is sufficiently recognisable to hook and fascinate the reader. I have been very much drawn into Sapkowski's world, and I am excited to continue my journey through it.





## ISAAC CHI, YEAR 8:

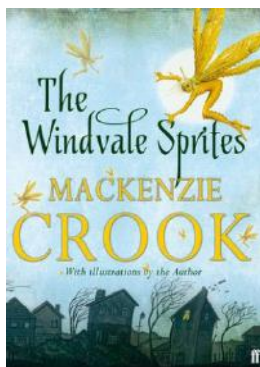
In lockdown, I have been reading the first volume of **The Book of Dust (La Belle Sauvage)** by **Philip Pullman**. It is a fantasy story set 12 years before Pullman's "His Dark Materials", which is a trilogy based around a girl called Lyra and her dæmon, Pantalaimon. "The Book of Dust" is based around 11-year-old Malcolm Polstead and his dæmon, Asta. Dæmons are companion animals that represent the personality of the person they belong to. Usually, they cannot leave their owners for long; otherwise they will feel pain, unless the person is a witch. In the early stages of life, your dæmon can change form between many animals to fit the circumstance. However, when you become mature, your dæmon settles as one animal, which represents who you are as a person the best. Young Malcolm works in his parents' inn, three miles from Oxford. He also helps the nuns at the priory of St. Rosamund with maintenance and cooking. He learns that they are looking after a baby called Lyra Belacqua. This is one of my favourite books because after reading "Northern Lights" (the first book in the "Dark Materials" trilogy), it helps to explain various situations, for example, the reason why the infant Lyra was kept at the priory of St. Rosamund with the nuns.



## ELLEN BLAINE, L6TH FORM:

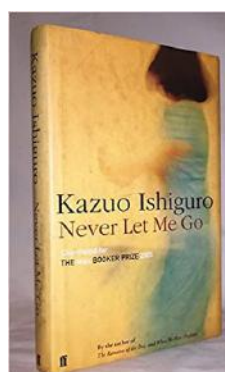
I've read lots of different types of books during lockdown, so it's difficult to choose, but my favourite has got to be **"This Is Going to Hurt"** by **Adam Kay**. It's a meaningful look into our NHS and the everyday ups and downs of a junior doctor,

especially the chaos that many of us often don't get a chance to see. Kay is not afraid to point out flaws in the system where he saw them and, of course at the moment, such a personal account from someone who was at the heart of one of our hospitals is especially poignant, reminding us that the doctors and nurses working against the coronavirus are not only heroes but real people, who have to endure stress as many of us never will. Somehow, while dealing with such serious topics, Kay manages to make it one of the funniest books I've ever read, and the stories he tells are both shocking and hilarious. It's the perfect book for these times, and the perfect book for people who find reading boring because its broken up into such small chunks.



## SAMANTHA CHAN, YEAR 7:

At the beginning of lockdown, I decided that I would make it a priority to finish reading **"The Windvale Sprites"** by **Mackenzie Crook**, a book I had started in Year 6 and not finished. I think that many people will underestimate the contents of this book because the cover isn't necessarily interesting or eye-catching; however, the storyline is unique and suspenseful. The genre is fantasy and the book begins with a big storm.

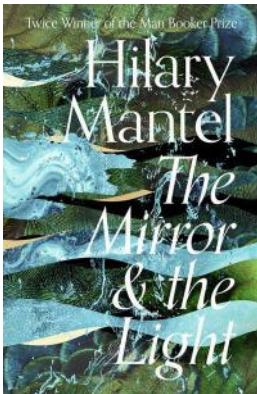


## SAM DEXTER, U6TH FORM:

The best book I've read during the lockdown has been **"Never Let Me Go"** by **Kazuo Ishiguro**. I've read it a few times, but it is one of those books that you have to read

again and again to understand it at a deeper level. Ishiguro, with seamless ease, pulls together three characters that heart-wrenchingly portray the human essence and the often tragic reality of life and death. It's a slow burner, but if you really invest your imagination in the story, there will be times when you feel the love and loss of the main characters as if it were your own. Reading this book in lockdown opened my eyes to appreciate everything that I have. Ishiguro is a brilliant writer, and this book is not difficult to read at all, but has some complex messages that might take a while to get to grips with; I struggled initially to understand it, but when I did, I could really appreciate what an amazing piece of writing it was.





### DR HIGGINSON, OLD LEICESTRIAN:

**“The Mirror and the Light”** is the final book in Hilary Mantel’s wonderful trilogy detailing the life and times of Thomas Cromwell, Henry VIII’s right-hand man. A lockdown was the ideal time to become deeply immersed into its 875 pages of beautifully crafted prose which are illuminated by Mantel’s

piercing insight into human motivation and the pursuit of power. The novel generates an all-pervasive sense of doom as Cromwell moves inexorably towards his inevitable fate. This story of a deeply flawed and capricious ruler and the machinations of his Machiavellian chief advisor in a time of rampant plague resonates strongly in the modern age. “The Mirror and the Light” is a fitting finale to a series that contains three masterpieces written by our greatest living novelist.



### ANNABELLE ONIONS, L6TH:

**“After the Fire”** by Will Hill was a rather distressing book (so probably better for older readers) but one I could not put down. It follows a young girl called Moonbeam who has spent her entire life inside ‘the Fence’, a settlement under a dictatorship by a Father John. As the world of her past breaks down, Moonbeam must learn to live in the real

world and to do this she needs to come to terms with the secrets she left behind her, however twisted they may be. The entire novel was gripping and I never knew what was going to come next. In my eyes it is an absolute masterpiece which, by the end, I felt very emotionally connected to. This book, which is based on real events involving a sect in Texas, USA in 1993, won the YA Book Prize in 2018 and was shortlisted for the Carnegie Medal.

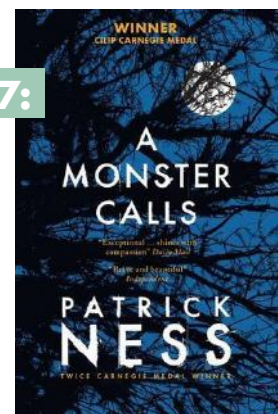


### ISLA MORRIS, YEAR 7:

**“The Secret Garden”** is a book by F. Hodgson Burnett about an Indian girl called Mary Lennox. At the beginning of the book, Mary discovers that both of her parents have died; when she asked someone why nobody came, they replied that there was nobody left to come. She was an orphan. She was then taken to Misselthwaite Manor, where everyone thought she was horrible and rude, because she was thin, and constantly had a sour expression. She was constantly ill, and people didn’t like arguing with her. She enjoyed the garden as it was a place for her to run around and be free. She particularly enjoyed talking to a little robin. One day, the robin found a key, and Mary discovered the secret garden...I love this book because it is calm and soothing. The beginning is quite interesting as it is purposely confusing.

### SHRIYA PRADEEP, YEAR 7:

The best book I have read during lockdown is **“A Monster Calls”** by Patrick Ness. The storyline is about a boy called Conor who lives with his mother, who probably has cancer. Each night Conor has been having the same dream, ever since this happened to his mother. But one night, he has a visitor at his window, an ancient tree who wants to tell Conor three stories. After the third, he wants something back from Conor, the thing he dreads the most, the truth. This is my favourite book because the narrations make you feel like it is happening to you. At the end of the book I felt a bit teary because the last few lines were, “Conor held tightly onto his mother. And by doing so he could finally let go.”





# Covid-19 Chess

by William House, U6th

**T**he other day I gave my father his 50th birthday present: a chess board; made from oceanic fossil and marble, or at least that is what the website told me. It is quite a majestic piece of work. The carvings are exquisite, the king and queen regal, bishops pious, knights noble, castles steadfast and the pawns are, well pawns. Currently it is sitting on the coffee table in the sitting room, fossil facing marble, white facing black, the Battle of Balaclava 174 years on. Politicians like to declare war: war in Iraq, the war on drugs (those wars went well...), so naturally we now have the war against Covid-19. In this game the virus chooses white and the rest of the world black, so white moves first.

"Oooh that bat tastes good". White pawn to h5. We are perhaps a little tentative in our reaction. Black pawn to h4. A blocker. White pawn to g5. The virus moves in. No attempt from us to shut it down quickly though. Silly. Black rook to h3. White pawn to h4. The virus claims its first victim. The rook panics and moves horizontally across the board in a frenzy. In the alarm, the virus has continued to advance. Its pieces fill the board. The rook continues to panic, sliding across the board, making neither retreat nor advance, despite the

warnings. The other black pieces do not bother to help. Why should they? It will not affect them, surely? It is all the way on the other side of the board. Finally, the rook takes action. Black rook to h4. Black rook to h5. He is safe. If you can build a hospital in a week, you will be absolutely fine. The virus concedes that one. But by now the whites have advanced across the board, filling almost every square and the other black pieces are stuck. They did not bother to stop the white charge when they could and now they find themselves penned in. Oh well, no one has died in the UK yet, we will be fine, just wash your hands.

Black pawn to c4. White rook to c4. Ooops. Black knight to c3. White pawn to c3. Ahhhh. Yes, that is a problem, but do not worry, we have got him now. Black pawn to c3. Blimey, some politician tweeted that we have got the lowest death rate in Europe! God we are doing well. Hey, it is all relative! Yes, but God was quite annoyed with the shutting of his churches. White bishop to c3.

Oh dear, we are back where we started. Maybe we should shut the borders? No, I think the way



forward is to stop tracing and containing and instead we will go into lockdown (others are doing that too so that must be a good idea) -- but it is not really lockdown because we are smarter than those other countries. Just walk around with a metre ruler in each hand and your arms outstretched. That should do it. Oh, and do not forget to wash those hands!

Black pawn to a4. White rook to a4. Black bishop to h4. White bishop to h4. Let's shut schools. Most kids have given it to Grandma and Grandpa already but everyone else has shut schools so we might as well follow suit. Hmmmmmmm, the death toll is rising quite sharply, there are a lot of black pieces off the board. What can we do to flatten the curve? What if we do not count the care home deaths? You genius!! That is it! They will never expect that. Black rook, black bishop and two black pawns retire from the board, but don't you tell anyone, keep it a secret – yes you! The odds are not looking good. The fossil is advancing swiftly, and the marble seems to be trembling in the face of its wrath. Just keep washing your hands!

All of a sudden, the white bishop moves from e6 to b3. Check. "Darling, Charles is looking a bit peaky; we really ought to move him to the country estate to let him recover."

"Yes of course Camilla darling. You should go with him! I have heard there is some lovely grouse shooting up there at this time of the season. I would come with you, but Daddy insists I go riding with the Duke of Norfolk at the weekend. Such a bore I know but has to be done."

King to c1. Phew that was close. The rest of the blacks are doing their best to avoid the onslaught, but they are getting bored and begin to break the rules, especially when the weather is nice. Must get a tan on at the very least! Who will be our saviour at this point? If this really is a war, we could do with the Athena... "She's busy, but we have got the Queen?"

Queen to g3. White pawn down. Queen to g5. White knight down. Queen to a5. White pawn down. Queen to a4. White rook down. She is going to do it! We shall indeed meet again, Queenie. Meanwhile, the two NHS pawns are also doing their best to block the white attempts to get at the King again, but they

need PPE in order to move left and right and since they have none there is nothing they can do. One risks its life to save the remaining knight. Black pawn to e2. White bishop to e2. In order to thank the pawn, the knight claps every Thursday and gives him a little badge to wear.

"But I don't want a badge, how about some PPE?"

"Oh, that's a tricky one, I'm not sure I have any of those."

"And what about testing to make sure the whites don't get me?"

"Ahh yes we can administer 100,000!"



The carvings are exquisite, the king and queen regal, bishops pious, knights noble, castles steadfast and the pawns are, well pawns.

"Fantastic. Where are they?"

"They're not here yet, but we have got the capacity to test 100,000."

The pawn suddenly realises some black pieces are missing and questions the knight on this. "Oh yes, by the

way we weren't counting the care home deaths all along! Had you fooled, didn't we? Ha ha!"

And so, as I gaze from the garden into the sitting room at the coffee table, slowly losing my mind and constructing battles between knight and castle, I realise the walls are tumbling down around me (excuse the pun) and I'm met with a rather sorry sight. White pieces fill the board and the blacks lie broken at the sides. Checkmate grows every closer, but I have an inkling the blacks will come back. Some continue to fight and still the orders arrive from on high, "Wash your hands, keep going". Still, I will go out to clap this evening and raise a glass to the key workers who are fighting to keep the world off its knees and offer my thanks for those who continue to risk their lives so that I can enjoy the fresh air of my garden, without coughing up a lung into a ventilator made by Dyson.

So, into the valley of death rode the 30,076 (as of midday on Thursday 7th May 2020). Idiots to the left of them, idiots to the right. It just does not have quite the same ring to it, has it?



# Cruel Mistress

A Radio Play by Charles Looker, Year 9

## CHARACTERS

**Rob Cooper:** male, age 38, 190cm, Caucasian, blue eyes, brown hair, spent the previous summer holidays in Africa helping the poor, was a doctor but was fired for refusing to kill an ill patient (he insisted there had to be another way), married to Jane Yvonne Cooper, no children

**Jane Cooper:** female, age 38, 150cm, Latina, brown eyes, brown hair, spent the past few years of her life working as an accountant to fund her activities helping others, married to Robert "Rob" Cooper, no children

*(SFX 1 Harp As they pulled up to the supermarket, SFX 2 Car engine stopping Jane dropped her hands from the steering wheel, as she attempted to comprehend the mass of angry shoppers which had formed by the door in front of her.)*

**R** Desperate times call for desperate measures, eh?

*(SFX 3 Car door shutting As they had brought their own bags, they could avoid the initial gateway trial and head straight into the monstrosity known as Asda. What they saw when they entered was shocking.)*

**J** Oh. My. God! (fearfully)

*(It was clear that what she had seen on the outside of the shop was merely a drop in the bucket compared to the inside. A horde of enraged beings who had never hurt a fly before the Pandemic had now become savage, ruthless shoppers.)*

**J** Rob, we need to go home.

**R** No! We came here for food and that's what we're gonna get.

*(Rob's determination inspired Jane. It was brief, but she was inspired nonetheless.)*

**J** Okay. Let's go then!

*(SFX 4 Angry crowd shouting They knew that everything would be bought, stolen, or destroyed soon, so they had to act fast.)*

**J** Stay together?

*(Despite knowing the danger of his idea, Robert proposed an alternative.)*

**R** No, we can cover more ground if we split up.

*(Never a line that instils confidence in those who hear it.)*

**R** I'll take aisles 1, 2, 3, and 4, you take 5, 6, 7, and 8, then we'll meet at the checkout counter.

*(They then made the greatest mistake of their lives, and split up. Both worked with cheetah-like agility and speed, scooping into their baskets everything within a one-foot radius of what they actually meant to buy. Despite the hectic pace, all was operating smoothly. That was, of course, until they heard a dreadful sound. \*Long Pause\* It was the sound that throws all plans off-track, the sound designed to bring every parent in a mile's radius to their knees: a crying baby. SFX 5 Crying baby. Jane knew she had to stay determined, focused on the task. Rob had different ideas.)*

**R** I have to help!

*(He scanned the entire shop, standing on a shop shelf to gain a height advantage, desperately seeking the helpless infant. Finally, he found her. A baby girl. She sat in a demolished pink pushchair. It was now clear that the baby was only crying due to the dummy that had fallen out of her mouth. Robert was envious: to be completely oblivious to the chaos, destruction, and*



panic of the surroundings was a highly enviable state. He knew there was no way to wade through the rabble between him and the baby. He needed an alternative. He scoured his brain and, finally, he found one. He lifted himself up, from shelf to shelf, until he was at the top. Being able to see all the people frantically running around was horrifying. He paused. With his new angle came a new perspective: these people were not angry. No, not at all. They were scared. Most of them were not even scared for themselves: they were scared for their loved ones, their friends, their family, the guy who makes their Subway. These people were afraid for the world, but had no idea they were making it a more chaotic place by worrying. This calmed Robert, which was good, considering what he had to do next. He crouched on the top shelf, took a deep breath, and leapt. He leapt from aisle to aisle, like a domestic Tarzan. He leapt to the other side of the shop until the baby was below him. Rob slowly lowered himself, shelf by shelf, until he was on the floor. He gently picked the baby up and began to climb the shelves again. However, at that moment, he heard a great thundering, a stampede louder than the people who had caused it: the shelves were falling. SFX 6 Shelves falling One by one, they fell like dominoes. They got to Rob. Some may call it instinct, stupidity, or just being a kind person, but Rob threw himself onto the baby, holding himself up for as long as he could to save her.)

**J** Rob? (screaming) Rob? Rob?

(There was no response. She knew very well what had happened. It had never occurred to her that, in this time with the world struggling to fight another cause of death, the Grim Reaper still comes for the ordinary. He still comes for the kind. The generous. The good. Jane ran. She knew not where she was going, nor how she got out of that death-ridden shop, but she knew one thing and believed another: she was alone and it should have been her under those shelves. She was nothing without Rob, a husk, a shell, and, finally, a body in a bathtub with slit wrists. Even sadder, the next day, a letter came to the door.

“Dear Mrs Cooper,  
I was devastated to hear about Rob. You don’t know me, but your husband saved my baby’s life. My baby Lily means everything to me, so I want to thank you and say that I am eternally grateful. If there’s ever anything you need, just call me.  
Regards, Mary Packer

It’s ironic that the letter didn’t arrive in time -- who knows if it would have saved Jane’s life. All we know is that, however kind, however generous, however good a person is, fate is a cruel mistress \*long pause\* and always will be.

# The Loo Roll Challenge

by Miss Allcoat

**T**he Loo Roll Challenge was another great idea from Mrs Davies, which led to lots of inspiring and imaginative entries. Mrs Davies whittled down the entries to the top five before Mrs Patterson, Mr Radford and Miss Feeney voted on the top three, without knowing who had produced them. Adding the results together, the positions of first, second and third were awarded. These were the top five:

- The good-enough-to-eat ice cream by Peter Rattay (Year 8, Dukes)
- The portrait by Abia Thangal (Year 8, Judges) - 2nd place (pictured below right)
- The saliva-inducing burger by Sarah Beadle (Year 12, Judges) - 1st place (pictured below left)
- The colourful patterned roll by Pharrell Chomo (Year 7, Masters) - 3rd place
- The toilet roll car by Sam Wildman (new pupil, Vice Chancellors)



# Best Wildlife Sighting Over the Lockdown Period

## **Mrs Higginson, English teacher:**

"From the Market Harborough railway footbridge, we saw a fox just sitting bemused at the side of the railway tracks."

## **William House, deputy Head Boy:**

"Did a speech and caught some fish -- a final day of school different to most but very enjoyable nonetheless. A rainbow trout like the one here has fantastic colouring, even if my grandfather caught one much bigger than mine."

## **Samantha Chan, Year 7:**

"During lockdown, I have been out cycling and walking with my family. On these walks, we always see wild bunnies hopping through the fields. There are usually about eight to a dozen. Although we have not been able to carry on with our once regular routines, we have been building a new routine that gives us more chances to step back and reflect on life. We need to try to live in the moment and appreciate the life that we have got."

## **Mrs Hird, History Teacher:**

"Week 4 of lockdown, we were just watching a movie in the dark and out of the corner of my eye I caught something big swoop and land in the tree in our garden...turned out it was a tawny owl. We were proper chuffed!"

## **Mr McLean, Head of Classics:**

"I was cycling at dusk along a Leicestershire country lane, when a white owl decided to glide silently alongside me for a few seconds."

## **Mr Anderson, Deputy Headteacher:**

"I have been cycling regularly through lockdown and have seen lots of animal activity. My best moment was descending at speed from Goadby one evening, only to look to my right and see a barn owl flying on the other side of the hedge next to the road. It cannot have been more than ten metres away. We must have travelled for more than a hundred metres together, before it disappeared from sight behind a tree."

## **Mrs Hunt, Public Relations:**

"Mr Hunt and I (having never seen one before in the 17 years we have lived in Market Harborough) have seen a green woodpecker almost every day for the last two weeks -- they are stunning! The one this morning flew about five metres in front of us and landed on the grass right by where we were."





# Our School's Contribution of 11,400 Visors for PPE Equipment

by Patrick Wang

**M**s Campbell, our Head of Design, Engineering and Technology, spearheaded a campaign to produce much needed visors for local hospitals, during the school closure period. In interview, she says that she was inspired by the actions of various schools across the country, who had begun manufacturing visors through the use of their design workshops and laser cutters. With the facilities available at LGS, she felt that our school should also join in and contribute to this amazing initiative. And so, after an afternoon of planning, modelling and refining designs, production began the next day – with 103 reusable visors made out of 0.8 polypropylene plastic and 0.5 clear PVC being made on the first day, before materials rapidly ran out.

The subsequent appeal to the public for materials and funds was met with heartening encouragement – receiving 9,000 shares within 24 hours. The support of individuals as well as local businesses helped the incredible production continue – with thanks to Carlon Plastics and Fancy Crafts in Leicester, Precision Laser Services in Market Harborough and COBA Plastics in Fleckney – but also, a hugely supportive and generous response in donations from parents and guardians of LGS students.

This feat has shown how much the community wants to help in a time of crisis. Furthermore, Ms Campbell says that there have also been a minimum of four teachers a day manning the production line daily, with the help of: Mrs Hunt, Ms Crampton, Ms England, Mr Hunt, Mr Burns, Mr Grimadell and Ms Feaney, all of whom volunteered their time and skills.

Production was ramped up steadily but explosively, and this was only possible with the help of laser cutters working through the night in homes and businesses all around Leicestershire; the 6,000 mark was broken on the 28th of April, with the majority of these visors already being in the hands of those who needed them



on the front line in hospitals from Northampton to Nottingham to Milton Keynes. They have also reached pharmacies, nursing homes and medical centres around Leicestershire.

We ceased production in mid-May, having reached 11,400 and seeing that demand was decreasing, as the level of supplies was getting to where it should be.

# Foundation Day Essays 2019-20

## My Favourite Fictional Character

First Prize for Prep Class

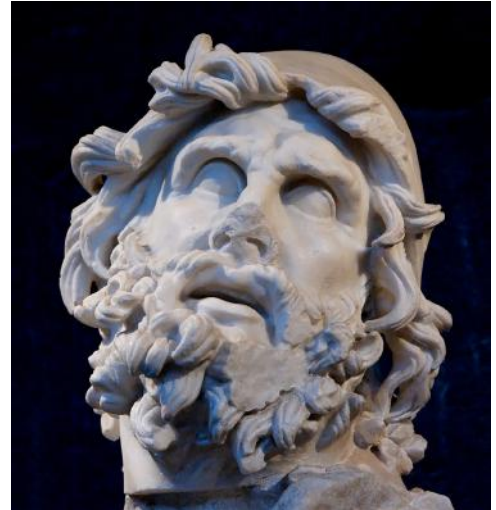
### Odysseus by Theo Woods

**M**y favourite fictional character is Odysseus, the great king, warrior and hero of Greek times. Odysseus helped the Greeks get Helen of Sparta back to King Menelaus. Odysseus was the king of Ithaca and lived with his wife, Penelope, and his son, Telemachus, and a dog called Argos. We know what we know about Odysseus because of a very talented poet called Homer. The stories of "The Odyssey" had been passed down the centuries until they reached Homer. Homer's epic poems, "The Odyssey" and "The Iliad", tell about the two stages of Odysseus' adventure.

Odysseus was brave, sly, cunning and as slippery as a bucket full of eels. Menelaus forced Odysseus to come with him and fight in the Trojan War. Odysseus pretended to turn mad, so he did not have to go, by sowing seeds into sand with a plough and singing strange songs. Menelaus soon uncovered his trick and Odysseus had no choice but to go. When Odysseus got to Troy he found the city was well guarded, but like I said, Odysseus was sly and would not be beaten, so he got his men to build a wooden horse. They wheeled the horse outside the gates of Troy and hid inside it. The Trojans wheeled the horse inside and had a great party: they thought the war was over. When they all went to bed, the few Greeks inside the horse let the whole army in through the gates to defeat Troy.

What I like about Odysseus is that he never gave up; he was resilient. He kept on trying, never gave in, and won the Trojan War. He was very stubborn, so once he had made up his mind about something he would do it. The second part of Homer's epic poem was "The Odyssey", describing the difficulty Odysseus had getting home. On his way home he faced many monsters and his ship was the only one of twelve ships that survived the journey back to Ithaca.

On the way home, Odysseus got trapped by the giant, Polyphemus, and escaped by blinding him



“

Odysseus was brave, sly, cunning and as slippery as a bucket full of eels.

with a hot stick. He escaped from the cannibal king and queen of the Laestrygonians. With the help of Hermes, he tricked the witch, Circe, with a magic herb that made him immune to her magic. He escaped from the dreadful, man-eating singers, the sirens. He lost only six men whilst travelling through the cavern where the six-headed monster, Scylla, and the whirlpool, Charybdis were. He was the only survivor when his foolish men ate the wrong cows, the cattle of Helios. He spent seven years with the beautiful nymph, Calypso, before finally getting home and getting his wife back.

I really admire Odysseus because he went through so much danger and won the Trojan War just by trickery and skill.



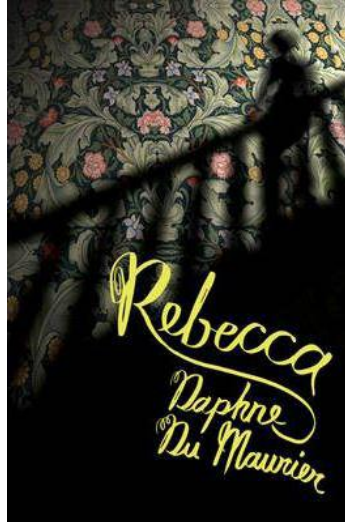
First Prize for Year 7

## The Second Mrs de Winter from "Rebecca" by Zahra Hardman

If you are hoping for another Harry Potter essay, I am afraid I am going to have to disappoint you. My essay is not about a stick-waving eleven-year-old, who tries to shift the blame constantly onto everybody else, but a relatable young woman. Calm down, neither is my essay about a certain Katniss Everdeen who can shoot from an extraordinary (and highly unrealistic) distance. My essay is about a character from a well-known yet underrated book, a character with depth from a story with suspense. Having said that, a good strong hero is always bound to inspire you as you cheer them on to the final battle. If you are wondering why I have not said the name of my character yet, it is because she does not have one. She is the narrator of the popular 1938 novel "Rebecca", which is probably most famous for its opening sentence, "Last night I dreamt I went to Manderley again." Now you are interested, aren't you?

What I find fascinating is how Daphne du Maurier was able to create such an incredible story with such a marvellous narrator, whilst missing out on such a crucial detail – a first and maiden name. Our narrator was the former paid companion of the obnoxious Mrs Van Hopper. She would have had a pretty insignificant story, if fate had not brought her and Maxim de Winter together on a trip to Monte Carlo with Mrs Van Hopper, and given our narrator a husband then and there. She came from a humble background, her parents dying shortly after she became an adult, and was forced to support herself, and turn to Mrs Van Hopper for help.

Believe it or not, our heroine is not exactly the beautiful, has-every-boy-tripping-over-her, elegant kind of girl, and that is why she inspires me so much. She is not Rebecca, the breathtakingly beautiful, first wife of Maxim, who was the perfect picture of sophistication and elegance before she drowned. Our narrator



was just a normal young woman who was swept up into a crazy and confusing life at Manderley. I find it so inspirational how she was a realistic underdog who had randomly found herself in the shadow of the beloved Rebecca, the perfect wife of her time. Rebecca could host a ball and run a 20th century house and was a social butterfly who knew all of the latest gossip – everything our heroine is not.

Whether it is wondering how to respond to a passive-aggressive comment or what to do during an awkward silence, I often find myself

asking, what would she do? On a regular basis. It is hard not to love her awkward, timid nature, and it is impossible not to adore how she faces problems head on, usually asking a direct question that gets right to the point. During her stay at Manderley, she is constantly bullied by the ever-loyal, former best friend and favourite servant of Rebecca, the horrible Mrs Danvers. Mrs Danvers is vexed with the newcomer, as she took her dear Rebecca's place after she died. Despite her provoking, Mrs Danvers can never seem to get a satisfactory response from our heroine, and that I truly admire. Despite her oppression, the narrator always keeps her cool, even when Mrs Danvers urges her to jump out of a window and end her own life.

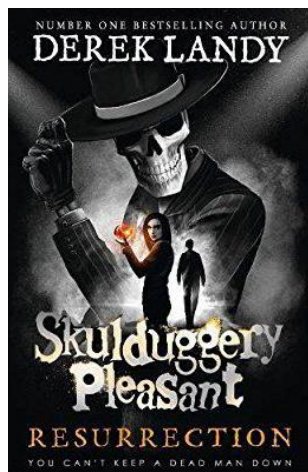
On top of that, and despite her lack of education, our heroine is also quite intellectual, as shown by this meaningful quotation: "Happiness isn't a possession to be prized, it is a state of mind, a quality of thought." This statement shows that the narrator has a great understanding of emotions and true peace of mind.

In conclusion, I believe I can truly say that the second Mrs de Winter genuinely inspires me, and surely, you would say the same. If you do not believe me, believe the general public, as the book has never gone out of print in over 80 years. I am sure we will not be able to say that about Harry Potter. This book will be an everlasting masterpiece, with excellent and deeply thought out characters that will stay with you long after you have turned the final page.

First Prize for Year 8

## Skulduggery Pleasant by Gabriel Smith

**W**hat is it to be human? Is it intellect? Is it strength? Is it creativity? Or is it a well-dressed skeleton? From the moment I picked up the first book, I was drawn to this fantastic universe. I loved the plot, the way it was written, and the goriness. But what I was most drawn to were the characters. And of these characters, Skulduggery, the famous skeleton detective himself. And I ask myself, why? What makes him so great? What draws me to him is that he is so irresistibly human.



I love this character firstly for his dry humour. Reading by torchlight (as you do), I have often had to stifle laughter in my pillow. This character is sarcastic, witty and big-headed. All of which make him so interesting.

Skulduggery Pleasant is motivated and hard-working. After his wife and child were brutally murdered, he became cold and impassive. He became a mass murderer. But when this phase passed, he worked hard to reclaim himself. He was driven by the sadness that he had committed such atrocities. I know that I have worked a lot harder when motivated by grief, such as when the teacher in my primary school moved me down to yellow on the “traffic light” system. I worked

hard to regain my place on green, to redeem myself.

Skulduggery Pleasant’s name is a reflection of his character. “Skulduggery” means devious, deceptive and rebellious, whereas “Pleasant” means nearly the opposite. His name is actually an oxymoron, but it suits him. He is a remorseless killer at times, and a comforting friend at other times. There are times when you feel safe with him, safer than with anyone else in the world, and there are times when it would be a death wish to go anywhere near him.

Skulduggery Pleasant is also a typical human because he holds grudges. The man who killed his family will always be hated by Skulduggery until he is dead. I hold grudges too, although when “Strictly Come Dancing” showed Pasha Kovalev beating Kevin Clifton a few years ago, I did not hunt down Pasha and remorselessly kill him, although it was not an easy choice. Skulduggery’s feelings and views of the world are believable. He views the people who worship crazy gods called the Faceless Ones as “thick” and the necromancers who want to kill three billion people as “mad”.

However, like all characters he has a weakness. He becomes so attached to some people like the heroine, Valkyrie, he cannot bring himself to perform actions that, while saving the world, could hurt her. When he realises Valkyrie is destined to destroy the world, instead of planting a bullet in her skull, he keeps her alive. He is Pleasant.

And that is why I love him. Derek Landy’s undead skeleton detective is more human than many world leaders are today. He is so unforgettable, so wonderfully real. And, let’s face it, nothing can compete with the sarcastic skeleton in a suit.

Tied Second Prize for Year 8

## Death in “The Book Thief” by Diya Bhatt

**“T**he Book Thief” is a story based around World War Two, about a German girl who secretly rebels against the Nazis. Death narrates this story and also talks about who he is and what he does (collecting souls).

One of the reasons why Death is my favourite character is that he is portrayed in “The Book Thief” in a way that

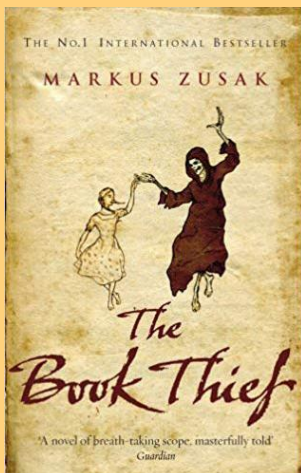
opposes common stereotypes. Commonly, people think that Death is something that should be feared and avoided at all costs. Stories tell of an elixir of life or a fountain of youth that can make a person immortal. Mythology portrays gods as almighty, living for thousands of years and not having to worry about passing away. Immortality has been represented as something extremely desirable throughout history, and



death has been represented as something repugnant, the worst part of mortality. However, in "The Book Thief" Death understands why people die and empathises with them. He is understanding and he does not seem scary. The novel describes him as gently carrying souls up to Heaven, where they can make their own journey in the Afterlife. This shows that we should not assume things about others.

Another reason that Death is my favourite fictional character is that he is interested in the main protagonist's story. He explains in the book that he would never usually write others' stories, but the protagonist's story moved him so much that he felt as if he had to pass it on. This shows that Death is not a monster and that he is capable of feeling emotions.

Death is misunderstood in this novel. He describes the look on people's faces when they see him approaching to take their souls away and he cannot tell them that he means them no harm. It gives the reader something to relate to, showing them that they are not the only ones feeling misunderstood, if this is how they do feel. I like how there are multiple lessons that can be learned from Death and his characteristics.



Sarcastic, charming and witty, Death describes and narrates the protagonist's story in a highly intelligent and humorous way, accepting that he will have to do his job for all eternity. He does not complain about never being able to take a break, and acknowledges that if he ever did so, the entirety of mankind would collapse due to over-population.

Death does not judge how or why people die. He accepts everyone as equal and knows all sides of every story. He is not like mankind, who are judgmental and rude. Metaphorically and literally, he floats above all the negativity and hate of the world below him.

We can learn so many lessons from Death's good-natured personality. Some of these lessons are not to judge a book by its cover, to aim to see the positive in every negative situation, to love ourselves for who we are and to accept that no one is perfect. Death resembles all the bad we encounter in life, and his positive personality acts as a metaphor that there is always light at the end of the tunnel.

### First Prize for Year 9

## The Joker by Sienna Amin

**T**he Joker is my favourite fictional character, because, unlike most villains, he used to be a kind, caring, normal person, who looked after his elderly mother and had a job. If the DC universe had not provided him with such a troubled background, the Joker would not be who he is today.

Throughout the recent movie, "The Joker", we learn that this villain has a condition which means that he starts laughing even when that is the opposite of what he is feeling. When he finally finds out that he has this condition, we, as the audience, pity him, learning that when he was young his dad abused him and his mother. His mother would just stand by and watch as his dad would tie him to a radiator and beat him, and he would try to laugh all the time to stop himself thinking about those terrible times. This makes us look at the Joker in a whole new way. We have always seen Batman as the superhero and the Joker as the villain, but in this film we see all the trauma that the Joker went through and the privileged life that Bruce Wayne had, and we wonder if maybe the tables should have been turned.

The Joker did not just think, "I know, I am going to go around and hurt innocent people." Damage was done to him that caused him to become a villain. For example, we see in the movie that people ridicule him because he sometimes laughs for no apparent reason. He cannot help it, but they do not know that. They think he is laughing at them, so they make fun of him.

The Joker's disillusioned behaviour seems fake and put on, but it is not. You wonder whether Batman is the enemy: after all, Bruce Wayne had the father that the Joker's mother had lied to him about having, which made him hate Batman even when he was just known as Bruce Wayne. The rivalry between the Joker and Batman is known world-wide, but do many people know why they hate each other? It is mainly because the Joker

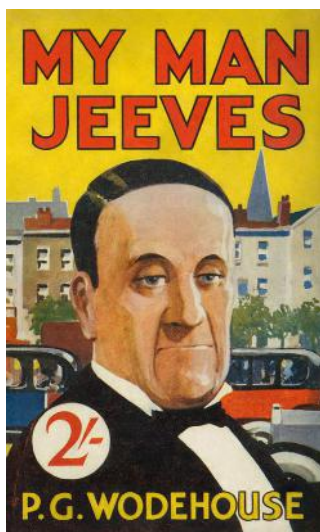
was told from a young age that his father was the host of a talk show and was running for President. It turned out that this was not the case and his mother had lied to him. His father was a man she had lost touch with and she did not know where he was. When the Joker found out that his supposed father had a real son of his own, he was furious and this is where the rivalry began.

We later get to know the iconic Joker: the psychopathic killer with a purple jacket, green hair and clown make-up. This just goes to show how much the Joker grew as a character: he first wanted to become a comedian and performed at comedy clubs, but when he got mentioned on his 'father's' talk show and laughed at because of his condition, he became more and more violent, resulting in the whole city erupting in outrage that the Joker had shot three rich men on a train for making fun of him.



The outrage, however, was because the word got out that they had been making fun of the Joker for his condition.

Overall, I think that the Joker should not be looked at as a villain, but as someone who was mentally damaged as a child and who never fully recovered.



First Prize for Year 10

## Jeeves by William Wale

In the modern world, there are so many real things that you wish were fiction and so many fictional things that you wish were reality. With the arguably worse-than-fictional rise of the far right, Trump and hard-line nationalists that the developed world has seen in the last few years, not only has it become easy to wish that current events were fictional, but the line between fiction and fact has begun to blur.

The rise of 'fake news' has proved more than ever how

important it is to have clarity, consensus and unity in the face of adversity, but most of all it has proved the need for a cool, clear mind who would make sure that the stupid and reckless decisions of western governments did not lead to any real harm.

P.G. Woodhouse's Bertie Wooster is not exactly competent. He has vast amounts of money, an excellent Eton and Oxford education, and has never needed to work a day of his life. He has everything he could ever want, but that does not mean that he is not, quite frankly, stupid. His choice of women is somewhat questionable, his choice of attire even worse, and he has an uncanny ability to land himself in deep water, whether that be by getting engaged to a fat, insolent woman while drunk, or pretending to be the famous author, Rosy M. Banks, just to try

to get a friend the chance to marry a waitress, only to discover that the waitress is actually said author.

Quite frankly, Bertram Wooster would be dead in a ditch without his incredibly useful and knowledgeable butler, Jeeves. No matter how deep the water, how arranged the marriage, or how annoying the nephew, Jeeves always has a solution that not only saves Bertie, but also causes no harm or emotional distress to those around him. Even when on holiday abroad for two weeks a year, he can think up an excuse for Bertie to have pushed a nine-year-old off a bridge into a river, or to get Bertie out of jail for drunkenly stealing a policeman's hat, or to save Bertie's aunt Agatha from losing her favourite cook. Jeeves is a hero, undeniably, and he seems to be a man who can solve every single problem thrown at him.

We need a Jeeves in the world right now. Instead



of Dominic Cummings advising Boris Johnson, we should have Jeeves. While we are at it, we should probably fundamentally restructure our democracy, but that is not the point here. Britain is going through great turmoil and difficulty – it is having an existential crisis. Britain has no idea what it is or who it should try to be. And it has no idea what it should do to wriggle out of the tight hole that is Brexit. But Jeeves would know what to do. He would always find a solution, because that is what he was born to do. He would not only solve Brexit, but he would calm everyone down, get them back to work, and make Britain the most powerful and prosperous nation on Earth once again. Jeeves would solve the deep fear of nationalism that I feel when I see an English flag. He would solve the madness of the President of the United States. Jeeves would solve everything: the troubles in Hong Kong, the difficulties in the Middle East. Jeeves would always find solutions that worked for everybody.

Jeeves is my hero and has the solution to every problem on Earth. If only he existed.

Tied Second Prize for Year 10

## Draco Malfoy by Abby Loke

**“W**ell look who it is, Potty and the Weasel,”  
Draco Malfoy, “The Prisoner of Azkaban”

Instead of going for one of the golden trio in the Harry Potter novels, when I was younger I always found Draco Malfoy to be much more interesting. A proud member of Slytherin House, son of Narissa and Lucius Malfoy, he does little to endear himself to Harry, opting to insult his new friend, Ron, instead. This prompts the line, “I think I can tell the wrong sort for myself, thanks.” An angry and humiliated Draco therefore resolves from the start to make Harry Potter his enemy instead of his friend.

I think that his character is three-dimensional and complex, which directly contrasts with Harry’s. Even though Harry had a hard childhood, his path in life is decided from the start and he has multitudes of friends to help him out. Draco, on the other hand, also had his life decided for him, this time by his parents. It would have been as hard for him to break free of his parents’ expectations as it would

for Harry Potter to have ceased to be “the boy who lived”. By his sixth year at school, Draco had no friends he could talk to and resorted to crying in the girls’ bathroom in front of a ghost. This makes a great contrast: from the cocksure boy in the first book to the young man in the sixth book.

For me he is the complete character foil to Harry. He opts immediately for Slytherin House during the sorting, whereas Harry desperately hopes to be anywhere but. Throughout the books, he gets less and less confident, as Harry’s confidence grows. Harry’s Dumbledore is the equivalent of Draco’s Voldemort, as both ask their followers to do impossible-seeming tasks.

One of the most interesting things for me is Draco’s capacity for good. No doubt, if he had been put into Gryffindor, his life would have completely changed. However, even as a Slytherin, he makes some good decisions. In the “Deathly Hallows” he is told to identify Harry, Ron and Hermione at Malfoy Manor, but fails to do so. This obviously does not seem like much, but he is actually betraying all of his family’s values by pretending he does not recognise them. By the end of the series, Draco returns to being what he really is, just a boy thrust into war, being saved by Harry twice in the final battle. When Voldemort asks children to join him, however, Draco still joins, but not after his father told him to do so, only after his mother did. That sounds cowardly and perhaps it is, but the problem was that if he did not switch to Voldemort’s side, the repercussions on the rest of his family would be catastrophic. He shows himself as fiercely loyal, but his loyalty is often very misplaced.

Despite disliking a clichéd happy ending, I was very happy when Draco got a relatively happy ending at the end of the series. I think that it shows he has a fresh start with his son and wife, so that perhaps he could be a better father than his father ever was. Despite having little in common with Draco Malfoy, bar being a Slytherin, I personally find him my favourite character, due to his complex nature and interesting decisions.



Tied Second Prize for Year 10

## Captain Picard by Arjun Kotecha



**M**y fictional character is from a long-running TV series about space exploration in the 24th Century, "Star Trek: the Next Generation". Captain Jean Luc Picard is the captain of the Starship Enterprise, the flagship of the Starfleet (from

Earth). Many of you may prefer Captain Kirk from the original series, but no, I prefer "the Next Generation".

Being in a starship fleet that explores many new worlds, the crew encounters many dangerous situations. Most of the time, being the flagship, she has many powerful weapons at her disposal, so the crew has the upper hand. However, Picard prefers to be non-violent and use his intellect instead of hammering the 'enemy' down with all the firepower he has in his control. For example, with the Klingons and Romulans, Picard uses bluff and guile (like a game of chess) to manoeuvre them into a position where they are cornered. They then reconsider their aggression. The Klingons would definitely fire and be aggressive at any point, so it is very skilful of Picard to out-think them. Whereas, Captain Kirk is very emotional in his thinking, and would just fire on impulse at whatever he thought was hostile.

Picard is someone who adapts to his environment and does not expect others to change to his liking. He speaks to other species in the form of communication that they understand. In the episode "Darmok", Picard said, "In my experience, communication is a matter of patience and imagination." In an era when universal translation can cope with pretty much any language that humans have encountered, Picard shows courtesy and believes that communicating face to face is always better. What I found particularly amusing was in one episode when a Klingon starts swearing at Picard in Klingon and Picard just swears back in the man's own language.

Picard is not a robot that is perfect, he is human. He has some flaws, such as fleeing a room where there are some people he is uncomfortable talking with. Diana Troy's mother runs rings around Picard when they talk: perhaps he is attracted to her, so he finds he cannot speak with authority. Although having weaknesses is a bad thing, Picard's having faults among his many attributes indicates to me that we humans can achieve anything we want if we put our minds to it.

I feel quite strongly against any form of prejudice, so the fact that Picard does not even have subconscious prejudices is admirable. For example, Warf is a Klingon and, historically, Klingons and humans used to fight, and Data is an Android (and many would have fears that an Android would take over the human race), but Picard gives both characters equal opportunities in missions, to lead an away-team, for example. He is self-sacrificing and puts his duty ahead of himself, maybe even at a personal cost to himself. He recognises that he has an obligation to lead the Starship and he cannot walk away from it just because he feels like doing so. For instance, he falls in love with a crew member, but when he realises that he could not carry on with his duty if the relationship continued, he has to end it. Whereas, Kirk had many relationships, at the cost of the Ship.

Picard is into being very morally correct all the time. He values ethical actions over expedient ones. In "The Measure of a Man", Picard said, "There are times, sir, when men of good conscience cannot blindly follow orders." In the episode, the Federation of Planets had ordered Data to be sent off to be dismantled and cloned, to replace people going on dangerous missions. Although the easy option would have been to say yes, since you would be saving many lives, Picard recognised Data as a sentient being. Therefore, he argued that it would be immoral to perform such an act of treachery, and he won! From then on, the Federation did not think of Data as property, but as a living being. Also, they changed their ideology about other technology. I admire Picard and would like to share some of his attributes. For example, he is self-sacrificing and respectful of life. Even a small machine that starts to exhibit life is treated as fully alive. Picard always strived to better himself through learning. I think he is a character we could all emulate.



First Prize for Year 11

## Thanos, the Villain who Deserved to Win by Mustafa Mamujee

**T**hanos was the most anticipated character of the last decade. In every past scene, all we saw was small glimpses of this titan, and each scene made us more eager to meet him. The Russo brothers were given the task of creating this character to supersede our expectations, which was no easy task. However, they managed to pull it off.

When reading my title, you may be confused as to why I would sympathise with a person who can only be described as a sociopath. This is due to his underlying characteristics, which make him the best villain the world has ever seen. Throughout “Avengers, Infinity War”, he displays his true intentions and his reasons. When you hear that his aims were to wipe out half of the universe’s population, you will most likely think I am extremely delusional. However, he has some characteristics that make him surprisingly somewhat admirable.

“

We wonder how we can  
sympathise with a mad sociopath

In one scene in “Infinity War”, we see Thanos trick the guardians into thinking they have killed him; he forces their hand until the point where they are too far in and in that moment he out-smarts them and beats them, almost making a fool out of them. He is like a puppet-maker, able to manipulate people with such ease that it is almost second nature to them. Furthermore, his sheer determination makes him extremely likeable. We see a person who is not doing this for himself, knowing that it will destroy him physically and mentally. Nonetheless, he continues. In his own words, “The hardest choices require the strongest of wills.” He sees himself in almost a messianic light, that he is the only one who is willing to do what needs to be done and, to a certain extent, he is right. He goes to such an extent, that he kills his daughter over it. In that moment, we see Thanos shed a tear.



This is what separates him from every other villain in the Marvel Comic Universe, from every evil genius who thought they had been hard done by and therefore think they have the right to inflict this on others. The reason Thanos is such a compelling character is because, in the end, we empathise with him. We see the struggle he faces and that he knows deep inside that this must be done. We see someone who seems to be one of the most powerful and sinister beings in the entire universe display vulnerability and, almost, humanise himself.

Lastly, why we are able to admire him is because, in the end, there is no clear villain. Although Thanos is the one we are told is the villain, we never see him be evil for the sake of it. During the final battle scene in “Infinity War”, we see the Avengers run at him and instead of killing them, which he could easily do, he subdues them. In the battle of Titan, we almost see the Avengers ganging up on him. One moment in the movie, we see them all forcefully detaining him and he screams in anguish. If this moment was to be taken out of context, we would see the Avengers as the villains.

Thanos is the reason why we come out of the movie with an uneasy feeling. We wonder how we can sympathise with a mad sociopath who commits mass genocide. He questions our morality and forces our hypocrisy. In the end, he lost the most out of anyone. He nearly kills himself afterwards, in order to keep anyone from undoing his actions. We see ourselves in this character.

Shared Second Prize for Year 11

## Clarice Starling in "The Silence of the Lambs" and against Thomas Hardy's Tess by Maya Joshi

**T**he first shot of the masterpiece of a film, "The Silence of the Lambs", is of a desolate FBI training ground, covered by cool early morning mist. As the credits begin to play, a figure slowly comes into view. It is Clarice Starling, our protagonist, hauling herself up a rope, trying to get up the hill. She continues on into the undergrowth, making her way through the carefully designed obstacles, until she is finally back at the base. This very first scene tells us a lot about Clarice Starling. She is dedicated to her job, more than any of her fellow recruits, waking up before dawn just to struggle her way through mud and dead leaves. It is implied later on in the movie that she does this so that she can hold her own with the rest of her colleagues in the male-dominated FBI of the 1980s.

Once Clarice is assigned to interview Hannibal Lecter, in an attempt to stop a serial killer, we see that Clarice has a kind of genius when it comes to talking to a psychopath. She gives Hannibal just enough so that he thinks he is in control, just enough that he gives vital information. She is intuitive, a great detective and skilled at bartering to get what she wants. In the final scene of the movie, when Clarice is trapped in a dark basement with the human skinsuit-making killer, she literally has to take a shot in the dark. The whole situation seems hopeless -- until Clarice's quick thinking and sheer bravery save her, ending a killing spree that could have gone on for years unchecked.

I think one of the reasons I love Clarice Starling so much is because of my hatred for another female in literature, Tess of the d'Urbervilles. I have a bad relationship with Thomas Hardy in general. His books are depressing. A mood of misery can, of course, be compelling, but Hardy takes it to a whole new level. I am still fuming about the sheep dying in "Far from the Madding Crowd". "Tess of the d'Urbervilles" was a whole other world.



A girl from a working class family, with a drunken father and an indifferent mother, Tess is perfectly set up to be an underdog character. The first time I read the book, I expected that, in the Dickensian Victorian tradition, Tess would have a rags-to-riches story, that through her wit or talent, or anything, she would make something of herself. How wrong I was. Tess begins her story with what is probably the most annoying event I have read in a book: she falls asleep at the reins of her father's cart, leading to the family horse being killed. Their only source of income is lost because a mindless girl could not pay attention for more than three minutes.

The story continues with Tess being sent to live with some rich relatives. This part of the story is particularly sad, as Tess is raped by someone who claims to be her cousin. For once in her life, Tess takes matters into her own hands, and goes back home. Discovering she is pregnant, she then gives birth to a baby who subsequently dies. I see you, Hardy, trying to make me cry! She moves on, gets work as a dairy maid, and falls in love with Angel Clare, who I almost hate as much as I do Tess. Angel leaves Tess on their wedding night, after she tells the story of her rape. What a great guy! To top all this off, Tess then decides to run back to the man who raped her. She seems not to be able to survive without a domineering man telling her what to do!

Where Clarice takes risks, Tess cowers. Where Clarice takes action, Tess sits passively waiting for her man to carry her off. Where Clarice has no love story, Tess gets raped and abandoned. Who would I want to grow up to be?

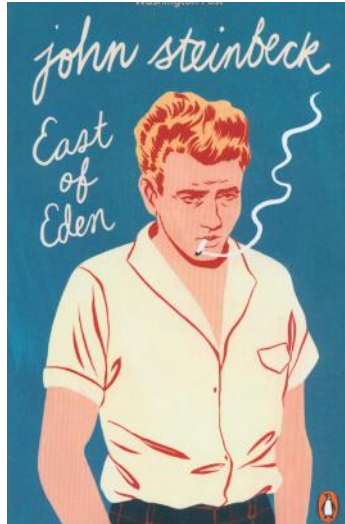


First Prize for L6th Form

## Cal Trask from "East of Eden"

### by Annabelle Onions

**"P**ain and excitement are in it and feeling good and bad, and evil thoughts and good thoughts, the pleasure of design, some despair and the indescribable joy of creation." This is what John Steinbeck says in his author's note for "East of Eden" and I find this statement a summation of life, humanity and human emotions. The character Cal Trask in the same book is the embodiment of this statement, and the embodiment of all of us, and that is why he is most definitely my favourite character.



referring to how his son made a profit out of pain and soldiers dying. This demonstrates the blinding quality of love. Cal Trask somehow manages to expose us all, our determination and creativity, but also our selfishness in the name of love.

Throughout the novel, Caleb Trask appears to be constantly wrestling with the two ideas of good and evil. At a young age, he discovers his mother did not actually die, as he had been told, but instead left his father to become a whore. This revelation results in Cal entering a downward

"Why, if you could make everybody like me, well I'd give you anything in the world." How many times have all of us had wishes like these? Caleb Trask voices this desire in a plea to God, having always been second best to his twin brother, Aron. Later on he also mentions, "I'm jealous. I don't want to be jealous." Both these statements startled me when I read the book. I was astonished that anyone, even an imaginary character, could be so brutally honest about their emotions. After this shock came the realisation that I had felt both of these things many times over the years and thus I began to see a little bit of myself in Cal.

If you ask any person about human qualities, they will undoubtedly mention love. After all, it preoccupies large amounts of our time. Caleb Trask somehow manages to capture all aspects of this quality, both the highs and the lows. In the book, when Cal learns that his father has lost a huge amount of money, he immediately makes his mind up to get this back somehow. Now, the way in which he does this is somewhat ingenious. Cal Trask becomes the partner of a businessman and craftily takes advantage of rising lettuce prices, as a result of the war. Consequently, he makes thousands, but when he attempts to hand over his profits to his father, he is somewhat cruelly rejected, "Not one will come back untorn, son. Do you think I could make a profit out of that?" Here Adam Trask is

spiral, constantly questioning whether he has the same evil within him. "I know why she left. I know because I've got her in me." Bearing in mind that throughout the book Cal's mother is dehumanised as a 'monster', we are forced to watch him struggle and it makes us question the amount of good and evil within our own selves. More importantly, it allows Cal to demonstrate one of the most important messages ever for me. No matter where we come from and how we were brought up, we still have freedom. We can still choose good.

"Timshel", a Hebrew word meaning "thou mayest", is used by Steinbeck throughout "East of Eden" to represent the idea of free will. When rejected by his father, Caleb becomes angry, as is human, and it is this anger that results in the death of his brother. This really awakens Cal and, though consumed by guilt, he begins to see that he is the master of his own actions; he has a choice. The real beauty of this choice for me comes at the end of the novel. Cal learns that he will not gain a single penny from his mother's will when she dies and thus he has managed to break away from the evil that he once let consume him. I believe that this is the most important message I have ever read.

Caleb Trask is the most perfect summation of all of us. He shows our strengths and our weaknesses. He is crammed full to the top with every good thing and every bad thing and that is why, although it is fictional, I find that Cal Trask is the most realistic character ever written. He is my absolute favourite.

## Jack from "Jack and the Beanstalk" by Nahbi Odeh

**M**y favourite character is a boy in a children's fairy tale by the 18th century writer, Benjamin Tabart. Jack made the most of his opportunity, resulting in a character that many children admire and adore. For me, he is an inspirational character, more than just a hero, but a saviour. He is Jack Spriggins in the fairy tale "Jack and the Beanstalk".

Jack is someone who is loved because of his ability to see possibility. This attribute could be a result of his youth, as younger people, particularly children, can be hugely optimistic. We first see this admirable quality when he makes the radical decision to sell his cow. Not for food, not for money and not even for power. He sells his cow for a bag of magic beans. A small bag of magic beans. A logical thinker would look at this action and exclaim, "What on Earth was he thinking?" This is what makes this action all the more amazing. Jack did not think, he saw. He saw possibility, the future, freedom. To Jack these beans would be his saviour, not the money he could have received from selling the cow. Some would call this stupid, but if it were not for Jack's vision, he and his mother would have died of starvation a few days later. In life, the way out is sometimes taking a leap of faith. You never know how far you will go unless you take that leap and Jack showed that it is very possible to take this step even in the most dire of situations.

If we compare Jack to his mother, we see how much better he was. Jack's mother saw her situation; Jack saw the way out. Jack's mother conformed with societal norms of people in their situation; Jack took the radical decision. Jack's mother was pessimistic; Jack was optimistic. Jack's mind-set is the complete opposite of his mother's, but both wanted the same thing, to survive. By having Jack's mother in the story, we are given a flavour of what Jack's life would have been without his seemingly stupid decision: depressing. Jack ideally should have been hungry for money, as this is what could have kept him alive. Money is what his mother searched for and it did not get her anywhere. Jack's decision shows us that maybe thinking bigger and believing in possibility is more useful than doing what is expected and that stepping away from this scramble for money may take us to the next level.



The most important attribute of Jack is his fortitude. He was brave to take the leap of faith to buy the beans and even more to climb the beanstalk, take on the giant and steal the gold. It is shocking that he probably had no idea what would happen in any of these situations. He was prepared to take the chance and was ready to bear the consequence of any mistakes he made. Although he was willing to walk into situations blindly, Jack is someone who did think a little about situations. This is proven in his tying the rope to the stalk. It is obvious he has logical reasoning but he does not allow this to get in the way of his imagination or bravery. For this, Jack can be seen to be someone who has worked out the perfect balance between risk-taking and logical decision-making. This is something that many struggle with and Jack shows that even though you may have decisions to make wisely, you should also embrace imagination and our natural ability to see beyond the natural. This brings out Jack's bravery.

In conclusion, Jack was not perfect or in any way privileged. The important thing is that he did not see any limit for himself and therefore there was no limit on his life. This inspires me to do the same and that is why he is my favourite character

First Prize for U6th Form

## Carl Fredricksen in “Up” by Nicholas Njoba-Kaba

**W**e are completely surrounded by literature, television shows, movies and now box sets, all filled with characters -- some better than others. Although we often tend to like characters that live lives completely alien to ours, doing things we dream we could, to me the best characters are those to whom we can truly relate.

The best characters usually emerge from the best stories, by the best storytellers and I do not think anyone could argue that Disney Pixar reliably prove they are one of the world's best studios, producing truly iconic movies and characters. One character of theirs that stands out to me is Carl Fredricksen. We see him grow from a young boy to an old man and during this time we cannot help but be swept along on the rollercoaster that is his life.

When I first saw “Up” I was a young boy and could relate to young Carl's excitement and wonder. During the tear-jerking opening scene we see Carl frolic home from the pictures, inspired by his idol and full of hopes and dreams. We see him meet his future wife, Ellie, and we see them grow old together. In the world we live in today, love is so exceptionally complicated and difficult, however, Carl and Ellie's story is refreshingly simple and romantic, although not without hardship. Part of me admires what Carl and Ellie have – a bond that is able to endure the loss of life and survive the test

of time. However, after Ellie's death, we see Carl left alone and miserable. We see their dreams unfulfilled. This is not enviable, but is so relatable. I think people often worry about life and all of its troubles, particularly the later years when our bodies no longer support themselves and our hearing fails. At this point, Carl embodies many of our fears, however, his life is filled with colour after meeting young Russell. He finds new motivation, rekindles old hopes and tries to fulfil his and Ellie's dream of going to Paradise Falls in the most ludicrous way – yes, the balloons.

“

How much do we miss, how much do we risk in pursuit of keeping things the way they were?

Here we can also relate to Carl as he struggles to hang onto the past, to his old possessions, his old emotions and aspirations. How often do we hold onto the past? How much do we miss, how much do we risk in pursuit of keeping things



the way they were? In the end, Carl does not end up where he hoped to be. His idol does not turn out to be all he imagined, however, in Russell he finds happiness and companionship, the son he never had.

To me, Carl is an exceptional character, not because he always makes the right decisions, but because he is able to realise that hanging onto the past is not the best way to live your life. His life does not go to plan, but in the end he gains so much more from letting go, physically, of the house he holds so dear to his heart and, metaphorically, of his wife, who he loved so much. I hope that, like Carl, when I reach old age, I may find joy and companionship that overwhelms the bitter-sweetness of life.



Tied Second Prize for U6th Form

## Light Yagami in “Death Note” by Akifa Azhar

**L**ight Yagami is everyone's perfect someone: perfect student, perfect son, perfect brother, and perfect boyfriend. And that is what makes his choices bizarre, compelling and utterly perplexing to us normals.

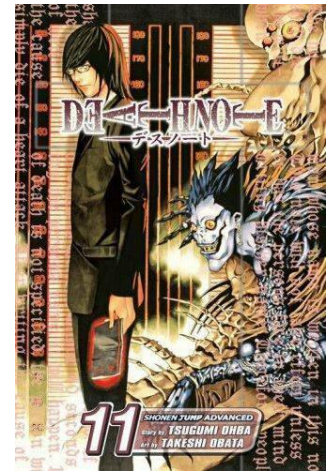
The story of “Death Note”, the Japanese manga where Light is the main character, is definitely original. Light is a normal young student, saddened by the evil and morally void world he lives in, when he comes across a death note. He finds out from one of the minor gods of death, who has been carrying that death note as a spare, that it could be used to kill anyone. Whoever one liked. Many of us often think about the question, “If you could kill anyone in the world, would you?” and views are always drastically polar. Some people say they would never do so, no matter how evil or sick the victim was. Others would say that it depended on who they were killing. Were they a serial killer, a mass murderer? A rapist perhaps? No matter your answer, the act of killing itself, placing a gun against someone's temple, for example, is gruelling and tough. But what if the physical act were to be removed? If we could not see the victim's guilt seep out through their tears, or their life flashing before them reflected in their eyes? Would it be easier?

In “Death Note” all Light had to do was to write the name of a person in the notebook and within 40 seconds they would die of a heart attack. Or he could write how they would die and specifically when, thus having an additional level of control. There were two conditions, however: he had to know the name and face of his victim. Rather than throwing the book away like a sane person would do, or giving it back to the minor god saying, “No thanks, I'm good”, Light decided to use it and this is where things get interesting. Getting rid of evil seems like a hopeless fantasy in our world, but in Light's world it became anything but that. At first he used it to kill gang members, human traffickers, murderers, serial killers and prisoners. He believed that what he was doing was right; he had been given a power and it was only fair that he used it to make the world a better place. It seems reasonable: the death of such people one could argue is of no loss to the world. Yet should that power really be within the hands of one man? Light would find new victims by watching the news and then strike. But there was the possibility that the victim was innocent, something that

Light never paid heed to. His judgements were black and white; you were guilty until proven innocent and if you were innocent, well, you were dead now. The main thing that makes Light my favourite character is not that he is a serial killer – I'm not crazy – but his charisma. He uses his good looks and charm to manipulate the people closest to him and redirect suspicion away from himself. This also works on the readers of the book. You know what he is doing is morally wrong, yet you cannot help but feel he has the right reasoning. He convinces himself and in turn convinces the reader. As the story goes on, you have almost been converted to his way of thinking and have to constantly remind yourself that he is not the protagonist but the villain.

Everything changes when L appears in the story, the world's best detective, known only as L, whom no one has ever seen in person. L is assigned to the case of Kira, as Light has been dubbed by the media, as “kira” is Japanese for “killer”. The Japanese police and L work together to try and capture Light, yet are constantly thwarted. Light even goes on to join the police department of his city (his father is the police chief) and work on the case right under their noses, where he can slip them false information. Light is more intelligent than all of the police force put together. The reader is on the edge of their seat rooting for the police, but rooting for Light too. The only person Light is not smarter than is L and, rather than a cat and mouse game, their duel is more a battle between two snakes. Yet Light manages to come out on top, having a death god as his ally.

The slow descent of Light into complete and utter madness is compelling. He goes from thinking that he was doing some good in this world into accepting the title of Kira and thinking that he is now a god. He starts killing anyone who becomes suspicious of him, good innocent people, and says that it is for the greater good. He kills his own father without remorse, not wanting his true identity to be revealed. “Death Note” is about Light, a charismatic individual who became mad on power. If you had a death note, would you use it?



## Staff Essay

## Winnie-the-Pooh by Miss Patterson

**T**eddy bears have always been important members of my family. They have their own names (Short-and-Stout, Twinkletoes, Cromarty, Special Ted, etc.) and their own personalities. They have accompanied us on holidays and on long car journeys, often doubling up as pillows against the hard doors. They have had their own adventures (Cromarty once smuggled himself into a bag on a trip to New York) and misadventures (Short-and-Stout mistook the washing machine for a cave and got washed with all the towels). They have provided companionship and, rather like a faithful puppy, they provide unconditional love. Even in old age and rather threadbare, they cannot be given away. My grandfather's bear, now over 100 years old, still sits on my mother's bedside cabinet.

I first came across Winnie-the-Pooh at the age of about five, after my grandmother bought me the set of A.A. Milne books. I loved the poems in "When we were Very Young" and "Now we are Six" and can still recite many of them now, but it was the stories of Winnie-the-Pooh and his friends which I remember the most.

Winnie-the-Pooh was Christopher Robin's bear. There is a lovely black and white photograph in the National Portrait Gallery of Christopher Robin Milne holding his bear; they are looking at each other and clearly having the sort of silent conversation that a child has with his bear. The bear in the photograph does not really look like the Winnie-the-Pooh we all know now. The one we all know and love was brought to life in the delightful drawings of E.H. Shephard in books first published in the 1920s.

So why does this bear appeal to me? Well, first the silly name. There is a classic cartoon from



Miss Patterson as a child with her bear

"Punch" magazine in which two bears in a woodland are looking at W-t-P and saying, "Winnie-the-what"? Anyone with "Pooh" in their name will appeal to a child. His original name was Edward Bear, but Christopher Robin renamed him after seeing a polar bear in London Zoo called Winnie. Pooh also lives in a house with "Mr Sanders" over the door, but I am not sure we ever find out why! Secondly, Pooh has a splendid and a rather eclectic selection of friends: the timid and loyal Piglet, the over-excitably Tigger, the busy

but anxious Rabbit, the not-so-wise Owl and the very mumsy Kanga with her baby, Roo. As children, my sisters and I had a similar collection of toys, and now in adulthood I have a similar collection of (human) friends with their own eccentricities and characteristics.

There is a lot to be admired in Pooh. He is Christopher Robin's best friend and ever-loyal companion. They have great adventures together and enjoy playing Pooh sticks over the stream. Pooh has a marvellous vocabulary, chasing "heffalumps" and eating "smackerals" and is a poet at heart: "How sweet to be a cloud, floating in the blue." He's a happy bear who hums and sings, "Tiddly Pom". He cares about his friends, giving Eeyore an empty honey pot as a birthday present and helping Tigger to find his tail. He is rather obsessed with food, honey in particular, and famously got wedged in Rabbit's door after over-indulging in honey.

Overall, he is a kind little chap with an innocence and naivety that all children will enjoy. Christopher Robin described him as a "Silly old bear" and he is known as a "bear with very little brain", yet he has so much wisdom. To me, he evokes memories of my childhood and a more innocent time. I may even go and re-read all the books this half-term...

# House Charities

by Patrick Wang

In October 2019, each house chose the respective charity they wished to raise money for in the coming year, and they were then presented to the school during assembly. There was a wide range of charities chosen, all representing great causes, and thus the race was on – to raise as much as possible in the good name of charity.



Dukes chose Healing Little Hearts, a Leicester-based children's charity founded in 2007, whose aim is to ensure that "children are given the opportunity to live the life they deserve". This focuses mainly around the 1 million children born every year with congenital heart disease – providing free open-heart surgery and interventional cardiac catheterisation in countries like India, Africa, Mauritius, Malaysia and more. Since its creation, they have successfully treated a total of 1,112 babies and children – with 281 patients in the last year alone, spanning four countries.



Masters have elected to support the NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children). "Abuse robs children of their childhood. Without help, the scars of abuse can last a lifetime." It is shocking that 1 in 5 children in the UK suffer abuse and neglect. The NSPCC is the UK's leading children's charity fighting to end child abuse. While remaining committed to this goal, they also offer support in sexual abuse and exploitation, which has been growing in recent years due to the wide reach of the internet. In the 'Speak out. Stay safe' campaign, they reached 8,000 primary schools and are currently also working directly with 21,700 children and adults to prevent online abuse.



Judges are supporting the Rainforest Alliance, which is a charity focused on advancing biodiversity conservation, while also helping farmers in developing countries to find sustainable livelihoods. Since 1987, they have supported over 2 million farmers in over 60 nations, being involved in \$190 million worth of production through their sustainable forest enterprise initiatives. These initiatives include providing drought and pest-resistant seeds, addressing price fluctuations in the market and also conversing with governments to push for sustainable development. The Alliance are at the forefront of trying to mitigate the climate crisis through monitoring and research.



Vice Chancellors have chosen Barnardo's, one of the UK's oldest and most deeply rooted children's charities, founded in 1870 by John Barnardo. To this day they continue helping children in need. They deal with issues ranging from drug misuse to domestic violence to trafficking. With more than 700 shops nationwide, they are the largest not-for-profit fostering and adoption agency in the UK. Thus, they can change children's lives by training and supporting carers and adoptive families, helping children to cope with practical and emotional traumas through therapy and counselling.





# Charity Committee Fashion Show

by Vaidehi Samani

On the night of October 3, 2019, in the drama studio the Charity Committee fashion show took place. In the previous academic year, a representative from Labels for Less reached out to the Charity Committee, asking whether we wished to raise money for a charity of our choice by hosting a fashion show. The models and clothes would be provided to us by Labels for Less. The drama studio was kindly set up by our site services team, with the members of the Charity Committee setting up the final touches after school. When Sarah, the lady who going to be running the show, arrived we were astounded by the vast number of items she had. There was a range of fashion from smart to more casual.

Sarah spoke about the items of clothing one at a time, giving the store each was originally from, its original price, and the fabric it was made of. She then announced the new price as well as suggesting styling techniques (how best to wear the product), whilst the two models took it in turn to model the garment and take it around to everyone in the crowd so that they could touch the item and get a closer look. The audience then raised their hands if they wanted to try an item on. This continued for about an hour; then everyone had a chance to try the clothes on, swap sizes and browse an additional sale. They had the opportunity to choose from a wide range of products such as dresses, hoodies, bags, t-shirts and jeans. Representatives from the Houses were also present to raise



money for their House charities: Duke's House were selling snacks and VCs were selling drinks. As the night drew to a close, people paid for the items they wished to purchase and made their way home. All the money from the ticket sales will be going to Women's Aid. A big thank you goes to Miss Allcoat for supporting the fashion show and to other members of staff who helped the event run smoothly.



# Eating Disorders Awareness Week

Interview of Katie Siddons by Patrick Wang



**F**rom March 2nd to 6th, 2020 the school took part in Eating Disorders Awareness Week to raise awareness for this cause, as organised by Katie Siddons. Money was raised for the charity Beat, a Midlands-based charity founded in 1989, by asking for a voluntary donation for the privilege of wearing funky socks with our regular school uniform on the Friday of that week.

## What work does Beat do?

They are the leading eating disorders awareness charity and they aim to end the pain caused by eating disorders,

by providing support through helplines and courses for carers. When they first began operating, eating disorders were widely misunderstood and stigmatised – but now, by increasing awareness through events like this one, it is becoming a more widely accepted and talked about issue, allowing people to speak about it and seek help and advice, instead of facing it alone.

## Was Funky Socks Day a success?

I think the main success was that many people got involved and had fun, so we achieved our aim of raising awareness throughout the whole school. During form

time, classes also watched videos about the topic and discussed it.

## Why is it important that everyone is aware of eating disorders?

In recent decades, they have become increasingly common – whether that is because people are more open about it or not. In particular, anorexia has the highest mortality rate of any mental disorder, and with an around 1.25 million people affected by eating disorders in the UK, I believe that most people will know someone, so it affects everyone in a way.



# Farewell to Dr Maddock

Interview by Mia Rhodes

**In the I have heard that you paint. Would you like to talk about some of your artwork? What are your favourite art forms?**

Oddly for much of my Foundation Course, I was more or less banished from the Art studios, because the teachers insisted that I should go out into the Nottinghamshire landscape to paint on location. Then, on my degree course, I changed to figurative sculpture. My work now brings both disciplines together, landscape and figure, light and form, to convey a narrative element. Beyond that, you need to see the work. It is okayish, but I have further to go. As for art forms, I have a wide range of interests, like most Art teachers. In addition to the 'greats' of Western tradition, I am intrigued by the little I know of Chinese art. Some of the calligraphic drawings that Mrs Yau Yan organised for us at the school in 2017 were superb, I thought. I have had a hankering to organise an exhibition of contemporary Islamic calligraphy at the school but never managed to do so.

**Who are your favourite artists?**

The artists to whom I keep returning are Vermeer, Rembrandt, Cezanne, Matisse, some but not all of Rodin, Giacometti, Brancusi, Modigliani, Auerbach – an eclectic mix, really, with no commonality that I can see. I also have favourite works of art. I think the stone leaves in the Chapter House of Southwell Minster, for example, are sublime. And I love the Elizabeth Fritsch, Hans Coper and Lucy Rie ceramic pots at the New Walk Museum in Leicester.

**What have you enjoyed most about teaching Art?**

I have been able to immerse myself in something I love doing and to share my enthusiasm with students at whatever level seems appropriate. It is possible to instill in them the skills and approach that will see them through to adulthood and set them up for careers in numerous professions in Arts or Design.



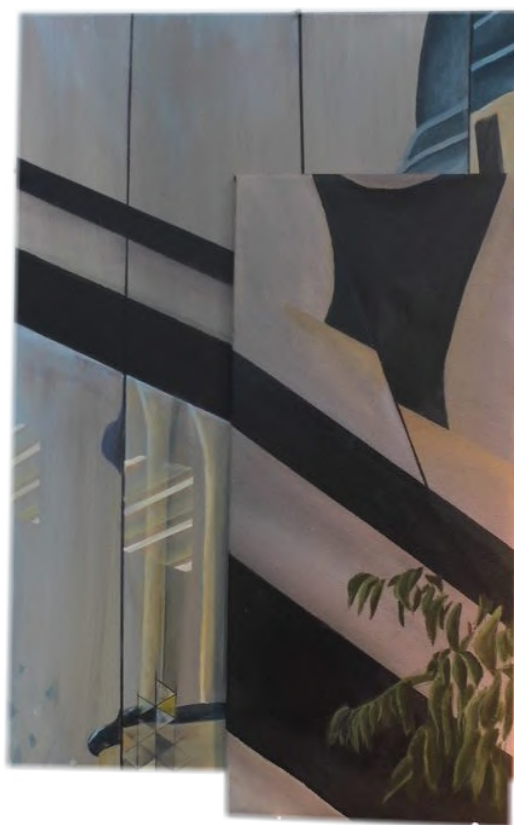
**What will you remember most about Leicester Grammar School?**

I will remember most my departmental colleagues and all of those vibrant, hard-working Art students, and, of course, the residential trips in New York, Paris (not the 2014 one!), Copenhagen, Amsterdam, and Barcelona. I should also mention the staff five-a-side 'zimmer frame league' in the days when that weekly institution could muster the requisite numbers, and of course the cross country club.

**What are your plans for retirement?**

To paint, of course, but I would also like to study various writers on aesthetics and to research and publish something on the Leeds Arts Club, together with the associated avant-garde group that emerged in that northern rail stop-over where New World migrants escaping eastern Europe during the early twentieth century broke their journey between the ports of Hull and Liverpool. Some of them stayed apparently. And then there is the Artists Rifles: I would like to write something on the exploits of that regiment.





ALEX BACON UVI — REFLECTIVE SURFACES



EMMA RICHARDS UVI — SUBURBAN ENVIRONMENT





HOLLY COULSON UVI — INTERIORS



ETHOLLE BROOKE-CLARKE UVI — STUDIES OF SISTER

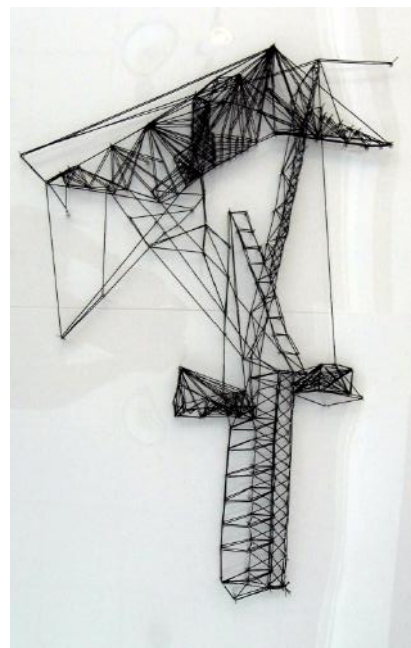
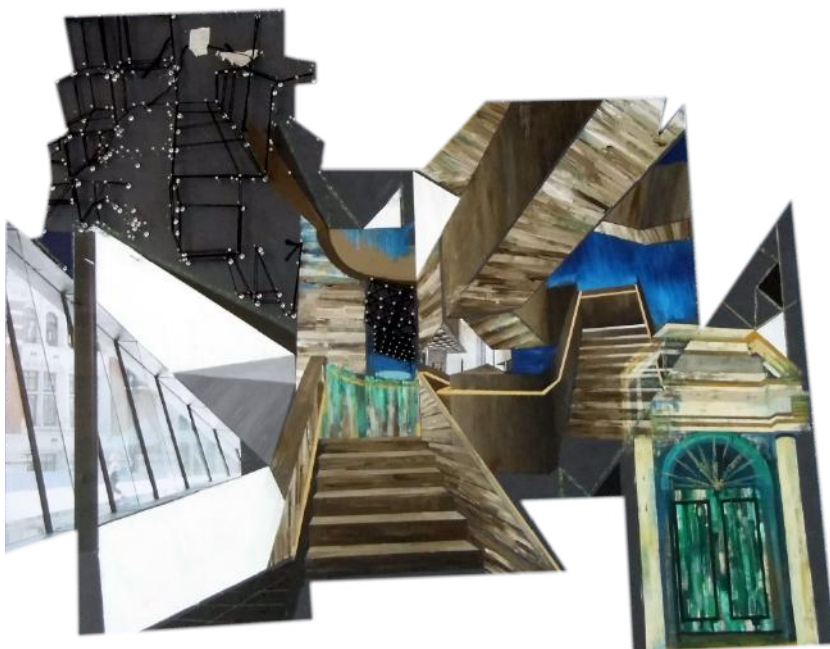


ETHOLLE BROOKE-CLARKE UVI  
— BARBIE





EMMA RICHARDS UVI — CHANGE AND / OR STABILITY



LILY LIVERMORE UVI — ARCHITECTURAL SPACES

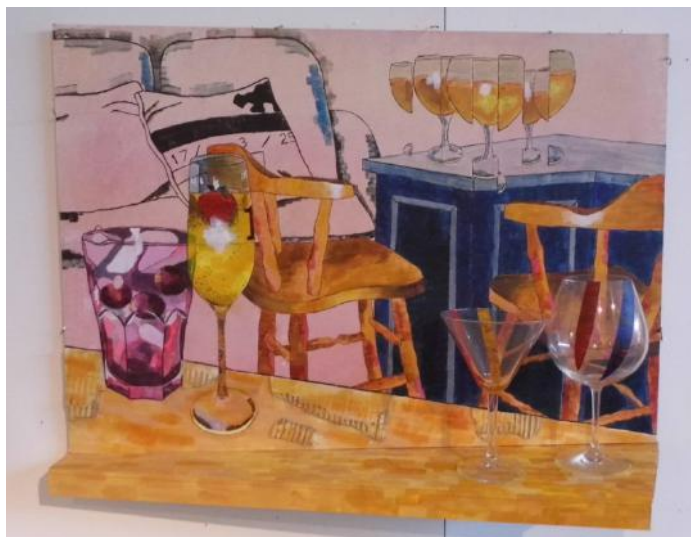


JESSICA HEMSTOCK UVI — DRAWING AS MOVEMENT





CAITLIN GERAGHTY



CAITLIN GERAGHTY UVI — WINE BAR



CAITLIN GERAGHTY UVI — CHANGE AND / OR STABILITY



JESSICA HEMSTOCK UVI — CHANGE AND / OR STABILITY

# Featured Art Student: Etholle Brooke-Clarke



Interview by  
Patrick Wang

## How did you first become interested in art?

I think I have been rather creative ever since a young age. The first chance I really had to display this was when I entered an art competition at the age of seven, when to my – and everyone else's surprise – I came first place! This was perhaps the point in time when I began to realize my passion for art, and I have continued to this day. As for advice to younger artists in the school, I think it is most important to keep your passion – be it through little sketches or anything else, as long as you keep practising you will see progress.

## What did you do for GCSE?

For GCSE, I focused on portraiture in an abstract manner, experimenting with diverse and bold colours. In general, I think it is most important to try and show off your potential, and try to push yourself – because, even if you don't think it looks good, you will improve and you won't know if you don't try. More recently though, in Art I did an extension project in which I

focused on 'period poverty'. For my project, I took photos over time, recording ice cubes melting. It was certainly one of the most abstract projects I have come up with to date.

## What artists have inspired you?

I think I have been influenced by many artists, but in particular, I try to replicate the brushwork and colour palette of Jennie Saville's work, which I hope you can see from my GCSE work. And, although my style of working has changed greatly, there is definitely still a link between where I started and where I am now. In terms of symbolism and underlying meaning, I like Paula Rego's work because it addressed the issues of gender inequalities and injustices back in the 1950s, when such subjects were avoided in the media of the time. In fact, her paintings played a huge role in the legalising of abortion in 1968. And, having been inspired by her message, for my A Level work, I tried to highlight a current and real issue, where women in particular have an unfair and unattainable beauty standard

pushed onto them through the lenses of social media and modern society. In one painting, I focused on how the Barbie doll is the perfect encapsulation of this problem; children are given these artificial expectations from a young age.

## Can you tell me about some of your projects?

For my GCSE in DT, I focused the project on the 'sustainability of materials' and decided to make jewelry. It was really cool because it was quite different from what most people were doing and that is certainly something I would advise – if you are doing a creative subject, be bold and don't be afraid of being different. In particular, during this project I contacted Doc Martens and asked for some of their left-over leather to use in my project; I also used scrap acrylic to recycle materials.

## What plans do you have for university and your career?

I am planning to go to the London College of Fashion at the University of the Arts London. I'll be studying footwear design there.





## Featured Art Student: Emma Richards

Interview by Emily MacTaggart

### When did you first realise you had a deeper interest in art?

I have enjoyed drawing, painting and visiting art galleries since I was young, although I don't think it was until studying art at GCSE, where we had greater freedom and independence, that I realised I wanted to pursue Art in the future.

### Which artists have inspired you?

I've recently been fascinated by Clive Head, who explores the idea of time complexity in his work, and emphasises the representation of movement through layering colliding multiple time frames with each other. I found Olafur Eliasson's recent exhibition at the Tate very inspiring, especially his shadow installations which put viewers at the centre of his artwork.

### What did you do for your major projects at GCSE and A Level?

At GCSE I mostly did figurative painting using acrylics, and had plenty of fun trying to get

my family to model for me. My final piece portrayed a young girl and emphasised the theme of nature by depicting a giraffe and monkeys among leaves. During A Level, my work has focused on the idea of movement and the interaction of figures with their surroundings. My favourite piece involved screen printing and collaging silhouettes, using elements of transparency and overlapping figures to suggest the chaos and mayhem of a crowd. I added

contrasting detailed figures to show the sense of anonymity within crowds.

### Do you envisage an artistic career after university?

I plan on studying Architecture at university and I hope to be able to make a positive impact on society through good design. I am interested in the effect that architecture has on human behaviour and emotions, and the ground-breaking advancements in sustainable design.







## Featured Art Student: Caitlin Geraghty

Interview by Mila Boersma

### When did you first become interested in art?

I think I first became interested in art when I was at Stoneygate School. I had very inspiring teachers and was introduced to lots of different areas like ceramics and textiles as well as painting and drawing. We were always trying new things and doing drawings from life. I looked up to the older students as well and admired their work, and I wanted to keep developing my skills as I grew older just as they did.

### Who are your some of your favourite artists?

One of my favourite artists is Catherine Mackey, as her style influenced my A-level work, which was such a big part of my Sixth Form experience. Her work incorporates found material from cities such as posters and cards. A less well-known artist called Jacob Dhein, who paints cityscapes and figure paintings also has inspired me. I admire his work as it is so intricate when viewed from afar, yet so simple and abstract from near. I learned from him that a simple application process can lead to a beautiful work of art.

### What did you do for your GCSE final piece?

I painted a montage of areas and objects from Amsterdam. The city is full of art and creativity, which



I wanted to capture, from the artisanal coffees to the colourful buildings. I did lots of experimenting in this piece including printing and layering, which introduced me to lots of skills for A-level.

### What did you do for your A-level final piece?

For my A-level final project, I focused on the activity of dance and the movement, stability and strength that it requires. I took photographs of my sister and then painted and edited them to disrupt the linework. I did this by using bold brush marks to show the direction and speed of her limbs as she dances. I also looked at worn dance shoes against new ones to show how the clothing also changes. This was by far my favourite project, and I think I was able to capture the beauty of dancing through a merging of colours and expression.

### What career plans do you have?

I plan to take an Art Foundation course in September so I can gain new skills, and because I still don't know what field of art I would like to go into! I think graphics, jewellery design or fabric design are my top choices.



## Featured Art Student: Holly Coulson

Interview by Mia Rhodes

### Who are your favourite artists?

Some painters that I really love are Jenny Saville, Daniel Ludwig, Pilar Lopez Baez and Alex Kanevsky, whose works revolve around the idea of transient or simultaneous moments. My favourite sculpture and installation artists are Cornelia Parker, Rachel Kneebone, Bill Viola and Antony Gormley, who have some similar themes of renewal, destruction and change.

### What did you do for your GCSE major work?

I took both Art and Ceramics GCSE so I did two sets of work. In my Ceramics project, I explored the idea of the encroachment of nature on man-made objects and vice versa. My final piece was a mutating pile of interlinking chains, placed on rocklike forms

with moss, leaves and flower forms growing over it. In contrast, my painting project focused on people with a theme of distortion. For my major project, I painted a distorted face through water, focusing on the light reflections and bright, saturated colours.

### What did you do for your A-Level major project? What inspired you?

I created some large-scale paintings, portraiture with a theme of light. My first coursework piece features multiple overlapping figures rendered with strong contrasting light and small windows of landscape in the negative spaces. Through this imagery, I was looking to explore how we see ourselves in contrast to the world around us. I aimed to convey subjective observation

via different ways of painting: idealistic landscapes, naturalistic portraits, as well as simplified and more geometric faces. In my second piece, I wanted to capture the in-between moment seen in blurred photography. I used a stylised way of painting, with brushed blocks of colour dragged across the boundaries of forms to create an almost pixelated effect. Futurism and the photodynamic works of the Braggaglia brothers inspired me, as well as contemporary artists such as Ken Currie, whose illuminated figures emerge from mysterious dark backgrounds.

### What are your career plans?

I am going to study Fine Art at university and would like to do (for example) editorial illustration or pre-production concept art.



# The Joys of Reading Classical Historical Fiction

by Eleanor Jones

**U**nfortunately, we are not yet able to enjoy time travel. But there is a way you could gain an insight into people's lives over two and a half thousand years ago. At first, this may not seem relevant to life today. However, there are many reasons why this is interesting, and the stories and history, despite being from hundreds of years ago, are certainly not irrelevant.

Homer is believed to have composed the "Iliad", an epic poem depicting events during the Trojan War, just before alphabets and writing were coming into use in ancient Greece, meaning it was composed in a world without writing. Imagine your life with nothing written down. This would impact almost every aspect of our lives: history would be conveyed as spoken stories, time would be measured in lifetimes and not specific dates... But Homer's work gives us a glimpse into a world like this. And not only Homer – thousands of authors can each give us a glimpse into a world that would otherwise be much harder to access. Just like modern literature, or films or television, classical literature is varied, including epic poetry by authors such as Homer and Virgil, shorter, witty poems by poets such as Martial, novels, plays, histories, letters, speeches... One list cannot capture the scope of a thousand years of writing and composing.

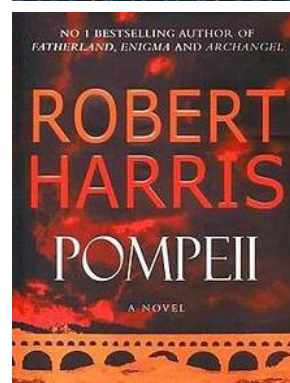
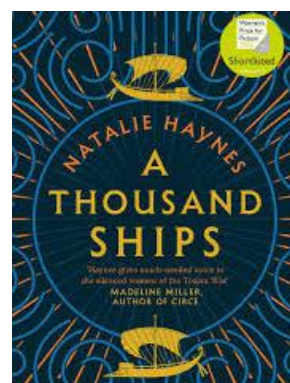
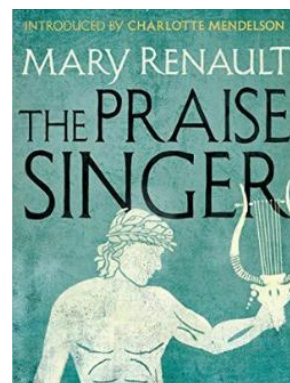
The only potential problem is that classical literature tends to be written in Greek or Latin, which can sometimes dampen the excitement of the story, as it requires a lot more effort to understand. Undoubtedly, reading these texts in the original language is extremely rewarding and worthwhile. However, there is a less time-consuming and easier way of accessing these exciting stories and thrilling worlds: classical historical fiction. Like any other good story or film, these books are exciting and engaging, but with one main advantage: by reading them you can learn so much about the era in which they are set. After immersing yourself in the world you are studying, learning about it in lessons feels more relevant and interesting.

Although it is incredibly difficult for us to imagine a world without writing, Mary Renault's book "The Praise Singer" gives us one interpretation of what this could be like, as she describes the transition from spoken to written culture through the story of

Simonides, a poet, who lived around the 5th century BC. (Other good books by Mary Renault include her trilogy following the life of Alexander the Great, starting with "Fire from Heaven"). Whilst these books may not provide the same amount of accurate information a textbook could, they depict a vivid and exciting interpretation of a world that could otherwise seem distant and unreachable.

As well as providing a way to understand and become engaged in the story, classical historical fiction can provide a different viewpoint and challenge your initial perception of a story or event. For example, in her book "A Thousand Ships", Natalie Haynes draws on numerous plays and other sources as she retells the story of "The Iliad" from the perspective of the women in the story. Although there are obviously some elements of fiction, it raises new questions to consider when reading the original "Iliad" – How justified was the war? Is Achilles really as heroic as he seems at first?

Another interesting read is "Pompeii" by Robert Harris. Although Robert Harris is probably better known for his trilogy on Cicero ("Imperium", "Lustrum" and "Dictator"), "Pompeii" is also a fascinating book. It provides a unique retelling of the eruption of Vesuvius, from the point of view of Marcus Attilius Primus, who is sent to the Bay of Naples as an engineer for the Aqua Augusta, the aqueduct that supplies the towns around Vesuvius with water. Again, this is fiction, but includes real historical figures and an incredible amount of information about the Roman aqueducts, as well as having an exciting storyline.







# Introducing Mrs Cade-Stewart

## Our new Classics Teacher

Interview by Sam Dexter

### What made you want to teach Classics?

It is a truly important area of our cultural heritage in terms of language, the arts and even science. I wanted to pass on my knowledge and enthusiasm for it.

### How has your experience at Leicester Grammar School been so far?

It is great to be in a school where Classics is respected in the curriculum as an essential element for study. The pupils are keen and hard-working, and the staff are friendly.

### Why should a student consider studying Classics at GCSE or A-level?

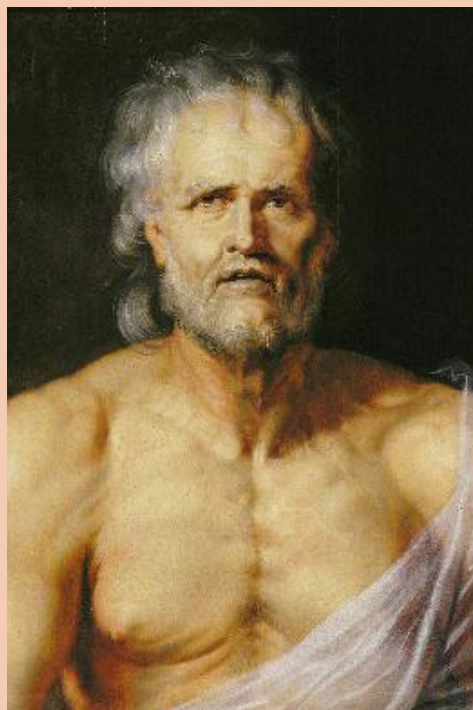
It trains the mind and the knowledge you acquire will broaden your horizons and make you a true 'cultural citizen'.

### How important do you feel the study of Classical Civilizations is today?

It is hugely important: with multi-culturalism threatened by regionalist tendencies, as a society we must recognise that we face many of the same challenges as Greece, Rome and Egypt.

### Who is your favourite Classical figure?

Currently, I am really enjoying reading Seneca: there is always something new to discover. I also love Aristotle and his "Ethics".





## Classics Trip to Warwick

# Tragedy, Tales & Taplin

by Georgina Holmes

**H**aving been on previous trips to Warwick's Classics Theatre Day I thought I knew what to expect: lectures (some interesting, some less so, and some I wouldn't understand), questions and a play. However, I was wrong.

Perhaps because I know more about the classical world now I could put the talks into context.

Perhaps because it was directly related to my course. But most likely it was the incredible insight in the lectures which enthused in me a passion for the topic.

Centred around the tale of 'Oedipus', the day began with two lectures. The first speaker – Dr. Emmanuela Bakola – helped set up the day, it was a great introduction to tragic conventions and the play itself (which I did not know before the day). The simplicity of the significance of identity and place in 'Oedipus' really stuck out to me. The next talk discussed sphinxes, sight and ignorance and other significant motifs within the tragedy of 'Oedipus'. The perceptiveness of this talk was really inspiring – it demonstrated the sophisticated complexity of the tale and how an understanding of the classical world allows one to draw parallels and insights into the meaning and significance of certain features in myth, history and culture. Comparing other examples of the 'Oedipus' story, plays, double-meanings of language and even the depiction of

sphinxes in culture, the lecture provided an insightful interpretation of what the play represents.

Motivated by the lectures, I was keen to see the play itself. I was more than a little surprised then when I found out we wouldn't be watching the play straight away. Instead we were having a talk. Coming from the 'celebrity' of Ancient Greek Theatrical scholarship

himself: Oliver Taplin. I had read a couple of Taplin's works beforehand, so I was buzzing to find out he was there at Warwick too. During the Q&A, I could not help asking a question. A microphone passed down the row of seats to me, and I had the eyes of students, teachers and scholars gazing back at me. It was more

than enough to be nerve-wracked, I fumbled out my question and was soon asked to repeat it – Taplin had not heard the first time -- what was I doing? I repeated the question and got an answer, not quite the one to my question but nonetheless interesting.

Following that, we were ready to watch the play, a more modern production than the Greeks would have seen. Watching the students at Warwick perform 'Oedipus' really helped me to understand the plot and the role of each character. Everyone's favourite character was a dancing Tiresias – it probably wasn't the performance Sophocles had in mind, but for our modern audience it made it fun (or as 'fun' as a tragedy can be).

“

Everyone's favourite  
character was a dancing  
Teresias

When the day ended, we headed home in the minibus. Most of us had been to a day like this before, I am sure we would agree that this trip was one of the best. In our lessons following

the day, we found the information we had learnt from the talks and the Warwick Theatre Day portrayal of the play became woven into how we approached and remembered 'Oedipus' as we began to study it in class.



# Introducing Miss Hadfield

## Our new English Teacher

Interview by Mila Boersma and Alice Dobson

### What drew you to Leicester Grammar School?

I used to teach at a state school in a deprived area of Coventry which was really interesting, but very challenging at the same time; there was a real drive on just getting our students equipped with the right mind-set before we could even begin looking at teaching the content. I started at this school through a charity called Teach First and that is what has always driven me to be the best I can be – that education can make a difference to a child's life. My move to Leicester Grammar School was to develop my academic teaching in order to further convey my passion for English literature.

### If you could have lunch with one person, dead or alive, who would it be?

Elizabeth I: I think it would be really interesting to learn about how she was strong enough to get on the throne, as she was the first true female monarch, and how she dealt with her male opposition. Also how she was able to stay single and never succumb to the Tudor traditions. I think there are definitely lessons to be learnt from her!

### What's the one thing you could save from your burning house?

My journal: it has all of my memories in it, including birthday cards and personal messages from my family and friends.

### If you were marooned on a desert island and could only take one book, what would it be?

My favourite book is "The Historian" by Elizabeth Kostova; it is a coming of age story and I really related a lot to this book growing up. I think it is always nice

to see where you have come from and where you are going and this book reminds me of that.

### What is the first thing you would do if you won the lottery?

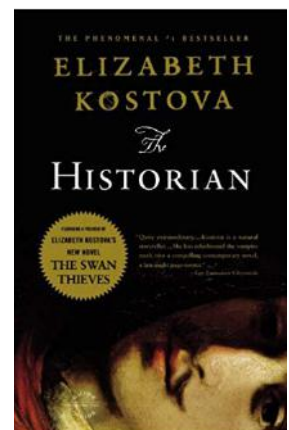
Buy a huge Georgian farmhouse with stables where my sister can keep her horses. I would also go on the biggest holiday you have ever seen in your life! A life of adventure would be the absolute dream.

### What in your life do you feel most grateful for?

This is an obvious one, but my friends and family; without them I would not be who I am today.

### What was the best book you read during the school closure period?

"Circe" by Madeline Miller: female empowerment, abandonment, loss, love. Throughout lockdown, I have found escaping to the many worlds which inhabit my bookshelves a comfort and a release, but this was a book which really touched my heart. Embarking on the journey with Circe, I shared her heartache as she was bound to a fate of isolation for her crimes. As the waves washed and crashed against her shores, she found solace in the small everyday things: tending livestock, foraging for sustenance and feeling the breath of the elements on her skin. It was an enlightening tale of determination and morality in the hardest of times.







# Introducing Mrs Barnes

## Our new English Teacher

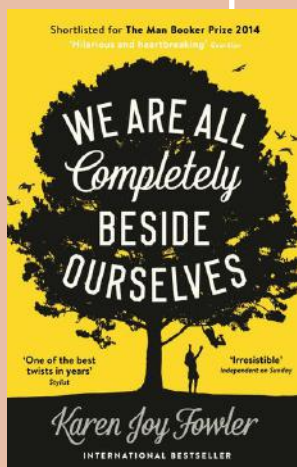
Interview by Shruti Chakraborty, 10DWM

### Which do you prefer to teach, English or Games?

Probably English because I have been doing it for longer – I have been teaching English for ten years now – which means I know it inside out and love it; therefore teaching it comes very easily. Whereas I have only been teaching Games for the last two years. I really enjoy it because I have played netball all my life, from primary school all the way through to university. I really value it, and it is not my main subject, but I like the contrast – I get to go outside and students are very different in different circumstances, so it is really nice having that change of interaction with the students. And when I get to play as well, I enjoy that too.

### What drew you towards teaching?

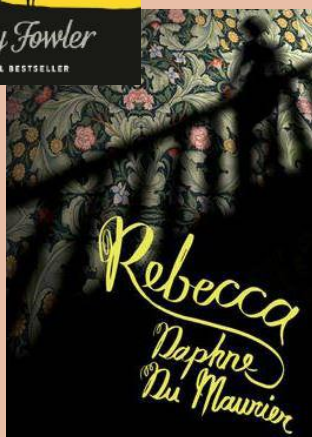
Many of my family members are teachers – my dad is a professor of Chemistry, my uncle is a headmaster, my aunts and uncles are all teachers to various degrees. I always thought I did not want to teach, and then I moved down to London and I got a job working in administration in a school. I was doing a lot of photocopying of resources, and I was photocopying some Shakespeare resources and because I had studied English, I remember thinking, “This looks really good fun; this would be really exciting to do.” So, I became a teaching assistant, which is where you support some members of a class, to see if I did want to teach, and I really loved it. And so, I applied to train to be a teacher and that was it.



### What is your favourite novel?

Luckily, I have many favourite novels. “Rebecca” by Daphne du Maurier is one of them; it is beautifully written and really thought-provoking. I like quite a lot of her other books as well – “Jamaica Inn” and “My Cousin Rachel” are also great. I love Louis de Bernières’ “Captain Corelli’s Mandolin,” and he has written another book I particularly like as well called “Bird without Wings”. He often writes historical fiction, often set during World War One or World War Two – it is amazing, and heart-breaking. Another book that I found – and I am not saying it is my favourite book but it was incredibly profound and I had a really strong reaction to it – was a book called “We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves” by Karen Joy Fowler, which is about this girl whose sister just disappeared one day when she was younger and the family

have never talked about it since, and now she is older and is at college she is struggling to process these emotions, but there is a big twist and it is incredibly fascinating. I recommend that novel because it is so unusual.



### What do you like to do outside of school in your free time?

I do quite a lot of exercise, such as cycling and going to the gym. I used to play a bit of netball and football when I lived in London. Also I like cheesy TV shows: “Brooklyn Nine-Nine”, anything about detectives I love.



## The Carnegie Readers' Group “The Black Flamingo”

by Milly Kotecha, 10WDB

Leicester Grammar School has a lunchtime book club that meets in the library, called Carnegie Readers, run by Mrs Kendall and the librarians, which I have been attending since Year 8. I like the informal, relaxed tone of the book club and the fact that I can discuss with pupils from different year groups books that I have enjoyed reading. Going to the club helps diversify the books that I read.

This year, one of my favourite books read for the club was “The Black Flamingo” by Dean Atta. This book was on the shortlist for the 2020 Carnegie Medal, a British literary award that annually recognises one

outstanding new English-language book for children and young adults. When the shortlist was published, the book club had a party to celebrate, with cakes and flapjacks, and we had the opportunity to see the collection of books on the list.

The cover of “The Black Flamingo” attracted me immediately and, as I browsed through the novel, it drew me in straightaway. The book is about a boy called Michael who is mixed-race and gay, and we follow his journey from primary school to university, as he embraces his identity and eventually becomes a drag queen. It depicts day-to-day realities and challenges of

his life, rather than one grand event.

This is one reason why I love reading so much: it allows me to experience life through multiple angles. The way that Dean Atta wrote about Michael’s life allowed me to dive into another world, and encounter issues with which I had little experience. In this way, novels have helped me to gain an understanding of challenges faced by different people, and gain empathy for their situations.

In summary, “The Black Flamingo” is a coming of age story, and although it is aimed at a teenage audience, I think it can be enjoyed by all.



Year 7 Workshops with Abeille Theatre Co.

2020

# Drama Overview

by A L Hulme

**I was going to describe this year as one of new ventures, the main one being the return of the Lower School Production after around twenty years' absence – and then there was a global pandemic and suddenly everything was a new venture...**

The year started normally enough, with rehearsals for the main school production of “To Sir, With Love”, staged just before Christmas. I rarely single out individual performers, but special mention must go to Nicholas Njopa-Kaba, who took on the huge lead role, alongside his duties as Head Boy and many other contributions to school life. The play is a challenging one, and more character-led (and with less levity) than many recent productions. But the cast and crew rose to the many demands, aided by Mr Stagg’s set, lighting design and running repairs on castors and pyrotechnics. School

desks whizzed on, off and around the stage, the staffroom appeared and disappeared, and the Victoria and Albert Museum, complete with exhibits, was constructed before our eyes in one of Miss Adams’ trademark pieces of physical theatre.

As soon as we returned after Christmas, work began in earnest on Laura Wade’s “Alice”, which takes the traditional elements of “Alice in Wonderland” and gives them a modern context. The play certainly maintains the many elements of the surreal, however, and there was some very inventive scenery, using everything from bar stools to pool noodles! The production, directed by Miss Adams and LAMDA teacher, Mrs Garner, involved over 60 performers and backstage crew from Years 6 to 9, and was a great success, performing to full houses on both nights.

We were delighted to welcome

OL Emma Rowbotham and her colleague Bettina, from Abeille Theatre to work with Year 7 again this year, developing devising skills and producing some highly entertaining and imaginative performances. As part of our new programme to introduce students to industry professionals, they took part in a very informative lunchtime Q & A for pupils throughout the school to learn about studying Drama beyond school and setting up a theatre company. Mark Wheeler, the playwright and author of the GCSE set text “Hard to Swallow”, also returned to LGS to work with Year 11 in another thoroughly enjoyable workshop. He contributed to the industry professionals programme through a ‘Meet the Playwright’ session, enabling those from the Prep to the Sixth Form to hear about his career and find out more about writing, publishing and staging plays.



LAMDA Speech and Drama lessons continue to be popular, and we continue to create new slots to meet the increasing demand. We had some very enjoyable trips to the theatre this year, beginning with “My Beautiful Laundrette”, an evocative depiction of racism in 1980s Britain, despite some unconvincing casting. “War Horse” was a real highlight, with captivating puppetry and many of the pupils and staff who saw it were moved to tears. “A Taste of Honey” was another visiting National Theatre production which, though not critically acclaimed, was a very useful piece of naturalism for examined Drama students to see. Although we didn’t know it at the time, our final visit of the year was to see the ever-popular “The Woman in Black” with Year 9 and above. Just a week before the long-awaited trip to see Frantic Assembly’s “I Think We Are Alone”, school closures were announced, theatres shut their doors, and that was it for live theatre. We have, however, been fortunate to have our Digital Theatre Plus subscription to fall back on, and the National Theatre, amongst other organisations, have stepped up and provided us with many (free) opportunities to see some fantastic productions from previous years. It is not theatre as we usually know it, and we are all very keen to get back to the live experience but, for now, we are certainly not without theatrical outlets.

Examined Drama started well this year, with a very entertaining and varied evening of scripted work provided by the Year 11 students. From Liverpool in the early 1980s to totalitarian Eastern Europe, the scripts ranged from the tense and

tragic setting of a prison in “Iron” to the comic, part naturalism, part direct address of “Back Down”. Shortly after this, social distancing arrived, and the Year 13 A-Level students gave their dress rehearsal performances to a skeleton audience. Their two verbatim pieces on marriage and divorce were both funny and moving, telling the story of a three-times married man in “Betrayed, Abused, Survived”, and setting a montage of several failed relationships against the backdrop of a wedding reception in “Table 13”. The scripted extracts from “Beau Jest”, “Closer” and “Eggs” provided a contrast and demonstrated the students’ abilities to work in a more naturalistic style, after the multi-roling and physicality of the verbatim piece. The work was hurriedly filmed before school closed, and we were very pleased that the students were able to perform, albeit a little ahead of schedule and not to a visiting examiner. Year 10 were not so lucky and missed out on performing by just three school weeks. Because we had a little warning (and our suspicions we were heading that way before that), everything was recorded by the groups, and it has been put to one side for now, to return to when social distancing is finally over. (It is not easy to do things like lifts two metres apart...). Similarly, the Year 12 piece – a reinterpretation of “Mrs Warren’s Profession” using the approach of director Polly Teale – has also been mothballed for now.

So, how do you teach Drama in lockdown, and what have we done? For Year 10 we just switched things around a little, and they completed their written coursework and moved on to start their set text. Year 12 focused on

the devised verbatim work, with the first draft of the script nearly complete. Year 9 tackled two completely new schemes of work, spending the first half of term looking at sound and dialogue, producing highly inventive and often amusing radio plays about lockdown and coronavirus, and the second half looking at visual design elements in theatre. Year 11 also had the opportunity to do something new, trying their hand at verbatim techniques, and those continuing with A-Level next year (including new students joining LGS) were able to collaborate, thanks to Microsoft Teams, on a filmed performance project. The Prep were lucky enough to return to school and have live Drama lessons with Miss Adams, and they greatly enjoyed working on and filming several pieces in response to lockdown, including Shakespearean silent movies, parodical sketches and a socially distanced music video, showcasing the new procedures implemented in response to Covid-19.

We have also made (and adapted and re-adapted) plans for next year, and I am delighted to say that there WILL be a school production! It will be a verbatim piece, based on the stories of real people, co-written by A-Level student, Anaya Kotecha, over the summer. We are expecting to be very flexible in our approach and are planning for every eventuality, including possibly filming the piece if we are unable to perform live. It will be challenging, but it is an opportunity to be inventive and we are looking forward to a term of creativity and problem-solving as we’ve never known it before. Whatever happens, I can promise there will be theatre, in some form, next year!



# Magdalene

by Aoife Murphy, U6th

Harlot, whore, femme de la nuit.  
Names uncountable, labels born  
Of loving the continent unloved.  
Was I not partner? Companion?

Wife. Witness to the triumphs,  
The crucifixion.  
"This is my blood," he said,  
Redder than wine, spilling cardinal  
From cruelly ripped wrists,  
Sublime, the blood of my love.

"Father, forgive them."

An empty cave, gaping  
Hole in my heart, my soul.  
And the sun rises,  
Light of the world  
Shines upon us,  
His holiness,  
his hidden bride in history.

Who am I?  
Holy Maudlin, Divine Madeline  
The Magdalene.

# Liesel Meminger

by Ellen Munsey, U6th

"Kommunistich!" they shouted –  
And that was all that I got –  
Until they took him away, abandoned I thought  
And probably best I forgot.  
But back then I didn't know why it meant he couldn't stay.  
So the big men with the banner, bright red,  
Black swastika, bundled him in the van, carried him away.

I see my little bruder's face some nights  
Smudged against the train windowglass.  
I remember those putrid scents that sprang  
from his failing gasps.  
He went on wheezing and wailing and weeping,  
Until just outside Molching his frail heart  
Stopped.  
As did mine for a moment, but not long enough to last.  
I can see him buried there, in the snow by the tracks.

The Hubermanns came next, an odd pair at first sight:  
Hans, the accordionist, and Rosa to his right,  
the washerwoman  
Whose face was somewhat wardrobe-like.  
They took me in, and I lived with them  
and learnt to love them too,  
For hidden in that small second-story room, I started  
Reading books, began with a few,  
But the addiction went on and, down in the basement  
By candlelight, Hans would write  
For me the alphabet, one letter at a time.  
I took it further, started stealing, the book thief  
couldn't get enough.  
Pinched one from the fire, just to piss the Fuhrer off.

Rudy Steiner, my love, though I never let him know it,  
Wanted a kiss from the day we met, obsessed.  
Until this day, it is my greatest debt.  
Aryan he was. He could think and he could run  
With his lemon-coloured hair and angelic blue eyes,  
But his soul had so much more to it  
than what the Nazis idealised.

I kept secrets during my time, the largest the Jew in the  
basement, Max Vandenburg, a fist-fighter.  
From a deal Hans had made with a man  
from the Great War,  
In our hands his life sat, so fragile and small.  
We smuggled him away, kept him secret, a living ghost  
A person. My friend, not just a Jew at most.

The bombs came to Molching on the night my heart died.  
 They ripped through streets, through Hans,  
 Rosa, Rudy Steiner, one at a time.  
 I screamed for a God, shrieked for mercy,  
 for death to take me too.  
 “Nein!” I let out. All a distorted dream, it couldn’t be true.  
 I kissed him, a real kiss, but Rudy’s lips lay cool, tainted with dust.  
 While the big man with the banner, bright red,  
 Black Swastika, carried on fighting and my spirit  
 Was left to rust.

Ellen was writing about the plot and characters  
 of “The Book Thief” by Markus Zusak.

# The Charm of Predictable TV

## A Review of “The Apprentice”

by Priya Ganatra, L6th Form

In today’s world of excessive choice, the options on our television screens are frankly exhaustive. This could be a new thriller on Netflix, ITV’s latest weak attempt at filling the shoes of “Downton Abbey”, or perhaps any programme advertising ‘strong female characters’ (in as prominently indiscreet a manner as Bugs Bunny’s teeth), since everyone is desperate to make sure they are on trend with the latest wash of feminism hitting the country. But there is one programme, about to debut its 15th season, which has managed to keep its wonderfully unwavering, predictable format: “The Apprentice”.

Before watching the beginning episode tomorrow, I feel as though I can already sense what is about to happen. The show shall begin with the ever-famous scene of new contestants marching towards the boardroom, purposefully yielding their black suitcases, and already selling themselves as candidates. Or should I say, attempting to sell themselves, as in my opinion all they manage to do is prove every last one of them missed the day in primary school when one is taught about manners. They are arrogant. Everyone has some absurd claim to articulate- ‘I’m so good at sales that I can sell ice to the Eskimos’ – but do you actually speak Inuktitut, the language of the Eskimos? My favourite, utterly overused line is ‘The sky’s not my limit, it’s the moon and the stars’. Why not stop there, I ask, and remark that the absolute upper heights of our universe are your limit? Only 12 people have even just walked on the moon, and I am guessing since you are applying to be on an apprenticeship programme that you are not one of them, but by all means, I am sure you can make it. Make no mistake, ambition is indispensable for anyone striving to pull ahead in the cutthroat world of business, but I fear the candidates may be taking the message too far.

Nevertheless, all will become quiet after the task has been dealt, an extravagant and no doubt confusing team name has been chosen, and finally, it is time to allocate the role of Project Manager. It is a shame, really, that the candidates vying to become Prime Minister after Theresa May, weren’t applicants for “The Apprentice”, as some of that hungry determination would not go amiss in this first week when nobody wants to put themselves at risk. Eventually, someone will be railroaded into the position, and after some fake smiles and promises of ‘support’ (that will be proven to be broken as easily as a Kit Kat), the task can begin.

While the events of the task are enjoyable enough, packed full of disastrous pitches, running in heels, and snide asides from Claude and Karen, my favourite scene is when the losing team are sent to the dismal Bridge Café to ‘work out what went wrong’. Of course, no one agrees, and the entire meeting turns into a disorderly debacle until candidates are left scowling into their drinks, their cheeks hot from frustration as well as the coffee.

And before you know it, we are down to the final three contestants. They sit outside Lord Sugar’s office unsmiling and silent, like three naughty schoolchildren caught truanting. The secretary will answer the most pointless, perfectly foreseeable phone call (‘Lord Sugar will see you now’) and then claws will be out as candidates fight to hold onto their position. Lord Sugar will watch the shouting, serenely sipping his water until he decides that ‘I’ve heard enough’, emphatically waving his hands. A brutal cross examination of each of the unfortunate three ensues, an ominous finger is pointed and a sarcastic ‘Thank you for this opportunity’ is spitted out from gritted teeth. The rest live to fight for another week.

It is undeniable that modern life has become impossible to predict in so many ways. Will robots destroy humanity? Will cancer be cured? Will Brexit ever ‘get done’, for all Mr Johnson’s claims? All I can safely say is “The Apprentice” will begin on the 2nd of October, and it will be worth watching. I, for one, cannot wait.





Nya Patel's regional main dish: chicken dumplings



Tara Bahra, Lili Mephram, and Nya Patel in the school heats



Nya Patel's regional dessert: chocolate mousse

# Cooking Competitions

by Tara Kaur Bahra, Year 10

**A**t the beginning of the 2019-20 school year, there was an opportunity to participate in two different cooking competitions. One was a Rotary competition, and the other was called Future Chef. Three people signed up: Lili Mephram (Year 11), Nya Patel (Year 10), and me, Tara Bahra (Year 10). The school heats took place on October 30th, 2019 and we were all guaranteed to get to the next round, and so this was an opportunity for the judges of this round, Mrs Pole and Miss Campbell, to assign us to the two competitions. In this round, Nya made mushroom tortellini, Lilli made salmon, and I made kebabs. It was a new experience for all of us, especially having what you have created judged for the first time, but it was also exciting and made me realise how much pleasure I get from cooking.

After the heats, Nya and I were entered for the Future Chef competition and Lili to the Rotary. The local finals were held at Stamford College and it was the most nerve-wracking

experience Nya and I had ever been through. The atmosphere was tense and we had to cook in a professional catering kitchen, along with four other competitors. For this round, Nya cooked dumplings in a broth for her main and mille-feuille for dessert. I cooked ravioli and Eton mess. The one and a half hours cooking time went rapidly, and having judges who we did not know examining our food in such detail definitely turned up the pressure. Nya won the local finals and I came runner-up; it was such a great experience for me and I am happy that it was so easy to participate in.

As Nya won, she proceeded to the regional finals in February, which took place at Loughborough College. There, she ended up three marks off the top spot, unfortunately just missing out on the national finals. In this round, she made dumplings for her main and a chocolate mousse dome for her dessert. Nya says that it was a great experience she will never forget.



# Introducing Mrs Pole

## Our Food Technology Teacher

Interview by Aditya Mathur and Svaraji Odedra

### Why did you decide to join Leicester Grammar School?

LGS has a reputation for responsible and motivated students and I wanted to be a part of that. If a student has a passion for cooking and baking then I want to be able to support them as much as I can. Here there are modern facilities and small class sizes.

### What is your favourite cuisine?

My favourite cuisine is definitely Italian. There are so many dishes involving time, patience and skill. I enjoy making my own pasta and ravioli with different fillings. My favourite meal is lasagne with salad and a garlic flatbread. I like making this at home, as you can add so many ingredients in, and I always seem to order this when at a restaurant too.

### When did you realise you had an interest in Food Technology?

I have always enjoyed making different dishes at home and took GCSE Food Technology at school, and then became interested in how food affects the body whilst studying Biology and Chemistry at A-level. I am also a Type One Diabetic. At university I studied Public Health and Nutrition and while working on

my dissertation I visited schools to see how the topic of food and nutrition was taught. I found that I loved being in a school environment, where I could put my knowledge to good use, as well as developing the students' practical abilities and interest in food.

“

I like to help students create challenging dishes like profiteroles or soufflés

### What is your favourite aspect of Food Technology?

I like to help students create challenging dishes like profiteroles or soufflés. These dishes are risky and something could go quite wrong, which makes the work more fun, and students

are often really proud of the result. Also I like that Food Technology is a broad subject with a lot of links to other subjects: we cover Chemistry, Biology and PE material.

### What hobbies do you do outside of school?

I have a three-year-old daughter, so most of my spare time involves entertaining her. We do many activities together: going to the library and the cinema, seeing friends and baking. I obviously love to cook and try to involve my daughter as much as possible in preparing sweet and savoury dishes. We spend weekends making and decorating cakes – and eating them! As my job involves making and tasting food, I also try to exercise as much as possible. I enjoy walking and swimming.

# Outstanding DT Student: John Budenberg

by Patrick Wang

## What made you choose DT?

I have always enjoyed DT, and it was an obvious choice at GCSE, given my personality and career aspirations. I have always been interested in creative subjects, and I just thought that it was a good balance between the artistic and practical side – the freedom to design whatever I liked for A Level was definitely a factor in my decision.

## What did you do for GCSE?

For GCSE, I based my project on reusing materials – I used an old car ‘face’ to make a speaker. It was definitely an unconventional design and I think I achieved a good result. It was quite encouraging to see the result of so much hard work – and definitely persuaded me to continue at A Level.

## Do you have any advice for younger students?

The main thing I struggled with was time management: for a subject like DT, where half your mark is based on your NEA, it is so important to manage your time efficiently. If you put in the work and follow your schedule it can actually relieve some of the stress from the exam, because you are guaranteed however many marks already from the coursework.

## Can you tell me about your a-Level project?

Because you have the freedom to choose your design brief at A Level, I found it hard to choose, but decided to solve the issue of storing our various gardening tools at home. Although it seems like a mundane domestic issue, it was actually quite interesting and challenging in the design. I wanted to make a product that you could display at home that was aesthetic as well as functional. For example, each box could be taken out individually, allowing for easy transport of the tools as well.

“

I thought that DT was a good balance between the artistic and practical side



(Ms Campbell said, “His product was so precise and well-made that it could potentially have been made on a CNC router. He was very independent throughout the whole process.”)

## What plans do you have for university?

I am planning to go to Sheffield to study Engineering.





## Outstanding DT Student: Charlotte Russ

Interview by Mia Rhodes

### What have you done for your major GCSE project?

I designed and built a ramp that can be placed on stairs so that dogs with short legs like dachshunds (who are prone to back problems) can easily go up and down the stairs without putting strain on their backs. Because of their short legs, they aren't supposed to use stairs, but it is very hard to get them to not use them -- so a ramp is the best solution. There are many other ramps like mine out there, but mine has supports underneath which are adjustable, so that the ramp fits on many different types and styles of stairs.

### What inspired you?

I realised when we moved house that the ramp we had used on the stairs at my old house no longer fitted the stairs at the new house, so we would need to make or buy a new custom ramp for this house. I decided that a ramp should be designed so it could fit on multiple different staircases.

### Would you continue with DT in the future?

I have chosen to continue to do DT for A-level.

Miss Campbell says:

“

Although this project looks quite simple, there was actually a lot of problem solving and a few challenging manufacturing techniques involved. The slats were wood turned on the lathe, she used cross halving joints for the step supports and also included 3D printing of clips to help the product be suitable for disassembly. Her modelling throughout the process was great and she made lots of models to test how the product could work.



# Toledo Trip

by Emily MacTaggart

**The Upper Sixth History classes spent the weekend of the February half-term in Toledo, in preparation for the History coursework task on the machinations of the Spanish Inquisition during the 15th and 16th centuries. A useful venture into the fervent Catholic convictions Spain rigorously maintained, from the Early Modern period into the Renaissance, our visits to various sights in both Toledo and Madrid allowed an exploration of the religious influences on its contemporaries and how powerful an institution the Church was shown to be, through the grandiosity of its visual presence.**

Our first visit upon arrival, was to the magnificent 'El Escorial' located in San Lorenzo near Madrid. It was built by Juan Bautista de Toledo during the reign of Philip II of Spain to reflect Spain's role at the centre of the Christian world, after a decisive defeat of the French. It was conventionally classicist, equating Philip to a Roman emperor. Its vast

overbearing presence was a fitting symbol for the omnipresence of Catholicism within Europe in this period. The building had been previously used as a monastery and a Spanish royal palace (with a church incorporated into it), emphasising the influence of Catholicism in Spain and the monarch's puissance. Whilst the exterior seems harsh, severe, and imposing, the interior is embellished with incredible frescoes inside the library and the basilica of saints and kings. Zuccaro and Tibaldi were the main artists within El Escorial, and were inspired by Michelangelo. King Philip's room was decorated

with impressive artwork and furnishings such as his desk were a reminder of his authoritarian, bureaucratic-style rule. It was a wonderful way to begin the trip, especially when we viewed the Hall of Battles mural, which depicts important Spanish military victories, such as defeating the Moors and Philip's

successful campaigns against the French – another flagrant display of power.

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Everyone took advantage of the time we spent stepping back in time to absorb the omnipotence of religion

Our next visit was on Saturday to Toledo Cathedral. An audio recording helped us to navigate the breathtaking interior, which contained incredible detail within the woodwork, the art frescoes, the pillars, and the stained-glass windows. It was again an ostentatious display of the power of the Catholic Church, leaving an impression on local citizens due to its imposing nature and gothic, towering architecture. A Burgundian architect, Felipe Bigarne, designed the upper choir stalls, depicting allegorical versions of the conquest of Granada, emphasising how much it meant to Ferdinand and Isabella to triumph against Islam, and displaying again the insurmountable power of Catholicism, along with the idea that religion and politics were never truly separate. For example, the Inquisition was under the direction of the King, who appointed Inquisitor Generals such as Torquemada, Cisneros, or Valdés. The Church's influence was extended to all of the population, including the poor, who were welcomed into the cathedral for food, giving Catholicism an omnibenevolent image. Religion pervaded people's lives and aimed to ensure a general orthodoxy.

We then took a tour around the city to see the entirety of Toledo, with stunning views of the city walls and the Cathedral, and paid a visit to the 'Inquisition museum', really a medieval torture museum. It gave a visceral insight into the grim realities of committing heresy or some form of treason within this time period. For instance, the well-known 'Iron Maiden' torture device was not made to cause death but to inflict unimaginable pain as a form of penance for committing a sin. There were also torture methods such as hanging, waterboarding and others I will leave to the imagination. Saturday was exceedingly busy, and we ended the day with a visit to the El Tránsito Synagogue, which contains a curious mix of the remnants of Islam, Catholicism and Judaism. Once the Catholics took control of Toledo, it was transformed into a hospital, plastering over all the

intricate decorations covering the white walls. It was a calming sight after such intimidating and imposing buildings.

Our final visit was to the El Prado museum in Madrid, before travelling back home on the Sunday evening. On arrival we were given specific paintings which we were obliged to see just because of their historical precedence and reputation: the portrait of Mary Tudor and the portrait of Charles V on his horse after victory at the Battle of Muhlberg, emphasising his superiority and heroic status. The latter was one of the biggest works in the museum and was displayed through a grand archway, framing it beautifully. The El Greco paintings were mesmerising, but also had relevance to our coursework as he painted during the Counter Reformation. Some of the most spiritually intense illustrations of the Catholic doctrine are El Greco's masterpieces such as "The Disrobing of Christ", "The Burial of the Count of Orgaz", or "The Adoration of the Shepherds". We spent four hours in this museum gazing in awe at the artwork. It helped to emphasise the power of visual propaganda, – whether political or religious, which has extended across the centuries.

A big thank you to Miss Copley and Mr Allen for organising the trip. It was a lovely weekend with lovely weather and a great dynamic within the group. Everyone took advantage of the time we spent stepping back in time to absorb the omnipotence of religion, and appreciate the impact it had on the lives of ordinary people.







# Introducing Ms McHugh

## Our new History Teacher

Interview by Charlotte Lewis

### What first motivated you to become a History Teacher?

It was a combination of many factors. My passion to teach stems from the influence of my Father, who was in the Navy and travelled the world in the early 1950s. Seeing all the black and white photographs of his experiences prompted a variety of family trips, where we visited so many amazing historical sites. This and the enthusiasm of my History teacher at school led me to study the subject at university. I have been fortunate to spend time working in the USA, having been awarded a Fulbright scholarship to teach American History in Arizona and this experience ensured I wanted to share the enjoyment of my subject with others.

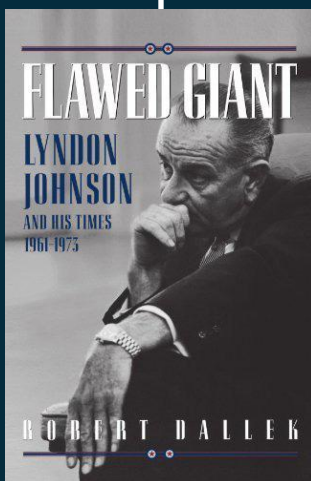
### Outside of teaching, what do you enjoy doing?

I really enjoy both playing tennis and watching tennis matches (specifically Rafael Nadal)! I also read quite a lot, obviously History books but also travel writing and American and Scandinavian crime so it is very hard to choose one. However, my favourite book is most likely to be 'Flawed Giant' by Robert Dallek, written about the US President Lyndon Baines Johnson. Travelling the world, skiing and walking are also great passions of mine.

### What are your favourite period of history and historical figure?

My favourite period in history has to be America in the 1960s, as I believe the influence

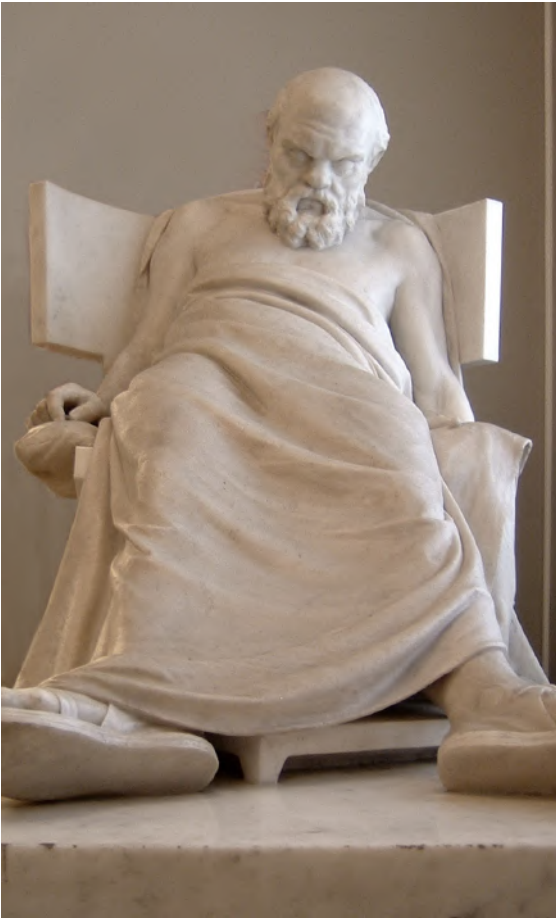
it exerted over other nations politically and socially was incredible. I find the concept of the protest movements both fascinating and inspirational. Therefore, the historical figure I am inclined to choose is the much maligned President Johnson. Whilst I don't think I would have enjoyed working with him, I agree with the emerging interpretations that his presidency should be reevaluated. He signed more pro-civil rights legislation than any other President, enabling the prosecution of people who were discriminatory. He also launched a set of domestic programmes called "The Great Society", in which he aimed to improve education, and healthcare alongside equal access to civil rights for all Americans, with his main goals being the elimination of poverty and racial injustice.



**"I wanted to share the enjoyment of my subject with others."**

### Final question... If you could teach any other subject, what do you think it would be?

I also teach Geography at LGS, so other than that I think it would have to be Politics. I am definitely a person who wants to discover more about the world in which we live.



# Introducing Mrs Brookes

## Our new Religious Studies Teacher

Interview by Svaraji Odedra and Aditya Mathur

### Tell us a bit about yourself.

I am from Leicester and am a keen Leicester City Football Club fan. Jamie Vardy is a hero of mine. I have two children, a girl who is ten and a boy who is twelve. I enjoy reading, film and music. Currently, I am reading "Circe" by Madeline Miller, which is a retelling of an Ancient Greek story. My favourite bands are Supergrass, the Cure and the Doors. My favourite film director is Shane Meadows and he directed my favourite film, "Dead Man's Shoes".

### When did you decide you had an interest in RS?

As a teenager, I studied at Ratcliffe College, a Catholic school, which used the Christian ethos of the school in all aspects of daily life. Catholic priests taught us RS. From Year 7

onwards, we read the Bible, starting with the Book of Genesis, working our way towards the Book of Revelation. I took RS as one of my GCSE subjects, and continued to study it at A-level at Robert Smyth. Here we focused on philosophy, religion and ethics in Christianity, alongside Buddhism. Studying Buddhism as my second religion for A-level increased my passion for RS, as I had never learned about any other religions at my previous school.

### Who is your favourite ancient philosopher and why?

Socrates. He is considered the father of all philosophy, but gained his nickname, the gadfly, a pejorative name, because he used to irritate people by

asking them difficult questions. For instance, Socrates would stop people going about their daily business in Athens and engage them in conversation by asking them a question that they would think they knew the answer to immediately. However, he would trick them into realising that they did not actually know as much as they had thought. His radical approach, challenging authority, meant that he was arrested for both apostasy (refusing to worship the state gods) and "corrupting the youth", as he told young people to ask questions, encouraging them to think for themselves. As a teacher, I really want to do likewise, encourage young people to think independently and to be critical and creative in their thinking.



## Auf Wiedersehen to Mrs Stout, Head of MFL

Interview by Holly Teasdale

### What are your favourite things about LGS?

I like the countryside location, the modern buildings, the length of the school uniform skirts. More importantly, I like the people, students and staff. My department is very close and we have done a lot of laughing together, but I will see them again, so it's not goodbye, it is just auf Wiedersehen.

### What is the best thing about teaching MFL?

The German exchange program is something that I set up and have been proud to see flourish. Also I have re-shaped the Year 9 end-of-year trips, the German and Spanish trips especially. Going on the end-of-year European trips has always been a lot of fun.

### What are your plans for the future after you leave LGS?

I am going to work for a very small school that is local to me, teaching three days a week. That means I will have a four-day weekend every week!

2019-2020

# German Exchange

by Harry Khalid, Year 10

In September 2019, a group of eight students from the the Elisabethenschule Hofheim (in Hofheim, near Frankfurt, Germany) came to Leicester Grammar School to spend a week with eight of the students doing GCSE German. Upon arrival, the German students had a lesson with their English partner; for my partner, Paul, it was Geography.

On September 20th, the group met with the other part of the exchange (students from the same school in Hofheim, but staying with a school in Solihull) at Beaumanor Hall for a day of team-building and outdoor activities. In the morning, the activity was orienteering around the vast, scenic grounds of the hall, and Paul and I won quite convincingly. In the afternoon, we split into groups of four to build land buggies. These consisted of two large plastic barrels, four planks of wood, nuts, bolts and rope. Building them was mostly easy, but racing them against the other teams was very challenging, with a lot of crashing and bending of the rules.

Over the weekend, organised by the students, we went to the cinema and watched the new Science-Fiction film, "Ad Astra". The German students did not necessarily understand all of the film, but nonetheless we had fun. On the Sunday Paul put up with watching me compete in a cycle race in the rain – not necessarily what he had expected.

On the following Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, the German students went on trips without us, to London, Stamford and the BBC Studios in Birmingham. On the final day, the German students got onto the bus to go to the airport. Our trip to see them in Hofheim in March 2020 was cancelled because of the pandemic.



# My Trip to Cape Verde,

**April 2019**

by Mrs Lopez-Correia, our Head of MFL



I have visited quite a few countries around the world. But none have made me feel quite the same way as Cape Verde has. Perhaps because it was home to my ancestors, it somehow feels a bit like home. Or it is the people: their kindness, the way they welcome others into their homes, their happiness and resilience, despite living in challenging conditions. Whatever it is, I love this country with a passion. It is a small archipelago of ten islands, situated in the Atlantic Ocean, on the West Coast of Africa. It is a Portuguese-speaking country, but everyone also speaks Creole. My main reason for travelling to Cape Verde in April last year was to take my family to my parents' homeland and to let my children discover their roots. I also wanted to explore how I could help the country, specifically with education. With the help of Miss Allcoat and the Charity Committee, we launched an appeal for a Cape Verde school in March of 2019.

We asked pupils to donate used items that they no longer needed, for the children of the Cape Verde school. Pupils donated generously, and so did staff. Our visit to the school was a day I will never forget: the children were so excited to have visitors in their school, as this was clearly not a regular occurrence! I had the privilege of teaching a French lesson, and this for me was an incredible experience. The children are so eager to learn! The lesson could have gone on for an entire day, and I am sure their enthusiasm would have stayed the same. Having to write with chalk on a very old blackboard made me appreciate my classroom at LGS all the more! We then gave out the school items we had brought there. There were not enough for everyone in the school, and so the children who had achieved the best grades, and who had displayed the best effort during

the year were selected to receive an item of stationery. You should have seen the smile on their faces, as they were given a pencil-case, a ruler, or even a rubber. Most children go to school with nothing -- some are lucky to have a couple of pens. So, for them, any item was a great gift.

In September of 2019, for European Day of Languages, the MFL Department held an LGS Bake Off, where pupils baked some amazing cakes. The money raised (£140) from the sale is being used by the Cape Verde school to install a couple of sinks, which are desperately needed during this pandemic.

Cape Verde has some well-developed tourist places, but my family and I decided to stay in a remote village, where we could meet local people and see what ordinary life was like.



Because there are not enough schools, children there rotate, and half go to school in the morning, whilst the other go in the afternoon. This was great for my children, as they always had someone to play with during the day. It was truly fascinating to watch them: they discovered that you can spend the best time simply enjoying each other's company, chatting, laughing (without any technology)! Although they did not really speak the same language, they found ways to communicate. I had taught my children a bit of Creole (the local language) before we went, and that helped them get by. We had bought some balls for them to play with, which for the Cape Verde kids was the equivalent of a

PS4 here. They learnt how to play Uno, which they loved. A typical day for a Cape Verde child is to go to school for four hours, usually eat one meal, and help at home with chores, including fetching water, washing clothes and looking after siblings. There is very little time for play, or study.

My aim is to continue to support the school in the village of Achada Lem (Escola de Volta do Monte). Initially, I plan to help them with material that they need. The teachers told me that they do not have any material for Art: paper, crayons, paint, for example. They lack rubbers, pencils, pencil sharpeners. Things that are so little for us, matter so much to them. I am looking forward to our next Cape Verde appeal.







## 2019-2020 Music Overview

by Mr Barker

**I**t has been a tremendous year of music-making at LGS and we are grateful for all the pupils, staff and parents who have lent their enthusiastic support to the goings-on in B Wing and beyond. We remain committed to creating musical opportunities for as many pupils as possible and so a few highlights from the year stand out.

We were pleased to welcome folk violinist, Duncan Chisholm, whose achingly beautiful evocation of the highland landscape entranced both our audience and the LGS folk group. Our own musicians were privileged to enjoy a workshop with him before the evening concert. A month later, our Big Band “sat in” with Chris Dean’s Syd Lawrence Orchestra, a high-octane musical experience like no other in the land! We continue to be humbled by the generous musicianship of this virtuoso band and look forward to welcoming them again before too many years have passed. At the end of October, some of our budding soloists played concerto movements with Leicester’s Bardi Orchestra. This concert took us on a musical “Voyage through the Ages”, designed to give

pupils a live experience of their set works from a range of GCSE and A Level specifications. We were delighted that 20 or so pupils from Gartree School joined us for this musical and educational feast that included “Star Wars”, “Wicked”, Beethoven’s “Egmont Overture”, Haydn’s “Clock” Symphony and solos from Jatin Naidu (Glazunov Saxophone Concerto), Vladimir Turapov (Prokofiev Violin Concerto), Akshay Patel (Mendelssohn Violin Concerto) and Sarah Beadle (Bach Brandenburg Concerto). Mrs McPherson (Deputy Director of Music) distinguished herself as compere for the evening, guiding us through all the salient details of each work. It was a relief to survive November’s Lower School Showcase, given the presence of inspectors from ISI. The 200 or so performers involved could have chosen to wreak havoc, but the triumph of this evening’s entertainment was a testament to their self-discipline and maturity, as well as the patient hard work and organisation of many colleagues across the school and the Music Department.

The Big Band had kept their powder dry for our concert at Stoughton Church in aid of the parish. A packed church greeted the band and



enjoyed some foot-tapping favourites such as “New York, New York”, “Tequila” and “Tuxedo Junction”. Gracie Fraser and Fran Jones were our star vocalists and ushered in Christmas with a few carols at the end of the performance. At the end of term, the Symphonic Wind Band, under the baton of Mr Jeans, received a wonderful reception at Fleckney and Kibworth Primary Schools. It is truly heart-warming to see the effect of live music-making on young lives and we hope that a few seeds of musical ambition will be sown as we continue to engage with local schools as much as we can. Manor and Gartree pupils joined forces with the Year 7 and Prep pupils for the Apollo 5 vocal masterclass in January. This interactive extravaganza introduced us to an incredibly versatile group, whose concert in the evening ranged from 16th Century Madrigals to Queen’s “Don’t Stop Me Now” -- and everything in between. Finally, the Little Theatre has become a familiar favourite date for the Big Band. We delighted to support their Centenary Challenge year after year and look forward to our return around Valentine’s Day in 2021. Many soloists took their turn at the front of the band this year: Freddie Klimowicz, Nicholas Njopa-Kaba, Lucy Mitchell, Emma Williams, Elena Bensi, Becca Faust, Lucy Weston -- to name but a few!

Sadly, Covid put paid to our ambition to host multiple schools at our annual Choral Society Concert and to our Big Band Charity Concert in aid of Menphys. However, we did manage to a virtual performance of Glenn Miller’s String of Pearls during lockdown, which, we hope, was a fitting way to mark the 75th Anniversary of VE day. Instrumental music lessons have continued throughout this time and we know that these have been a precious link to “normality” for a large number of our pupils -- and an opportunity, in many cases, to make stunning progress. It has been deeply disappointing to miss out on our many ensembles and choirs but I feel confident that we will all enjoy a surge of musical activity whenever, and however, the opportunity comes. Huge thanks once again to our stellar cast of visiting instrumental teachers, whose tireless work underpins a very happy and successful department.

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It is truly heart-warming to see the effect of live music-making on young lives and we hope that a few seeds of musical ambition will be sown as we continue to engage with local schools as much as we can.



Jack Strong, Year 7, playing outside a care home



Rishan Raja playing piano in lockdown

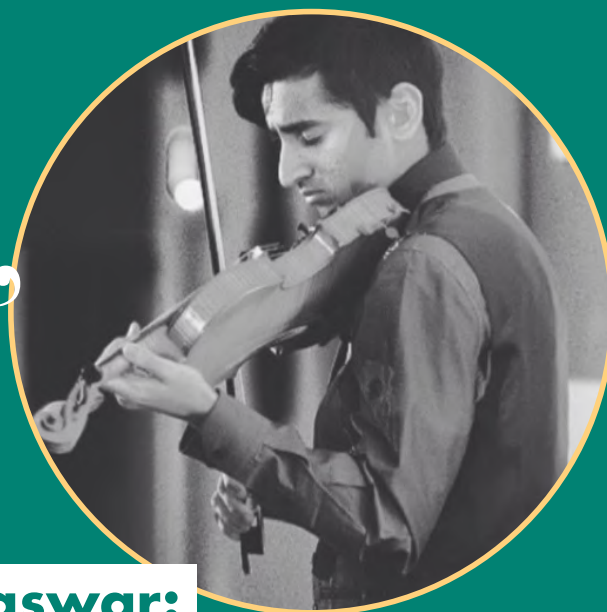


Jatin Naidu performing “Stand by Me” for charity during the lockdown period, as part of a trio with Moritz Wagner and Nicholas Njopa-Kaba

# Musical Diversity

## Tejas, Prisha, and Jatin

Interviews by  
Manraj Jaswal



### Tejas Easwar:

#### **What would you say is the reason you first got into playing the violin?**

Initially, I had been learning a bit of Indian Hindustani music, mainly singing. At the time, the school offered only a few instruments for Foundation children; one among these was the violin and I started group lessons. At the start, most violinists sound like a high-pitched screeching cat crossed with a crying baby. I thank my parents for bearing with the annoying racket. Slowly, my parents realised that I had an interest in the instrument, and so further supported me. Throughout school, the violin acted as an escape from the stress of academic subjects. The violin is technically challenging and even now I struggle with intonation.

#### **We can see from your social media pages that you perform in many genres. Do you have a favourite?**

When I was younger, my

favourite music was classical. I thought that any other music genre was 'sacrilegious'. I particularly enjoyed the works of Romantic composers: Rimsky-Korsakov, Beethoven and Mendelssohn. Whilst I still love these composers, I have tried to escape the 'tunnel-vision' approach to music. I slowly began to realise that there is a whole range of music that I had simply not been paying attention to. During my A level studies, I was introduced to jazz (although my success in actually performing this tradition is very limited); a particular inspiration was the jazz violinist, Stephane Grappelli. The LGS Folk Group has also introduced me to the folk music traditions, and I have been fortunate to meet and play with eminent folk musicians, such as Sharon Shannon, Lunasa, Session A9 and Karen Tweed. I

**M**usic is omnipresent. We hear it on our commutes to school, in restaurants, in elevators and just about most places you can think of. It has the profound ability to influence and adapt to our various moods and behaviour. From listening to elevating rap during a workout, smooth jazz or classical music to help concentrate when working, all of us feel captivated and connected to our own vast array of genres. It is one of the greatest expressions of individuality. But perhaps the most brilliant quality of music is its universality. Many of us would have heard the proverb, "Where words fail, music speaks" and that aptly summarises the beauty of it. If you share the same love of music, you have the capacity to communicate with anyone in the world, irrespective of language or background.

In the spirit of embracing the plethora of musical genres we proudly host at LGS, I want to share some particularly talented cases.

will miss the close-knit spirit of the LGS Folk group and the satisfaction of playing music at ultra-rapid speeds. Learning the organ with Dr Ainge introduced me to earlier works from the Baroque and Renaissance era. I was surprised at how ornate, lyrical and intricate early music is. Dr Ainge's influence has resulted in me trying out Bach's Partitas and Sonatas for violin and the "Goldberg Variations" for piano during the lockdown period. Although at the moment becoming half-decent at the organ seems like a bit of a stretch, it is still on my to-do-list. Also during the lockdown, I have explored a new genre of music, Indian Carnatic Violin and the Bollywood genre. Examples of such work, as well as other genres, can be found on our YouTube channel, "The Easwar Bros", where I mess around with my saxophonist little brother, Prakash. Returning to the Indian music that kickstarted my musical journey has helped me to learn more about my cultural heritage and reconnect with my initial musical interest. I do not have a favourite genre; instead, I like to experiment with a variety of music and to fuse different traditions. This makes sure that I never get tired of playing.

**How would you describe the influence that LGS has had on you as a musician?**

The LGS music department is, honestly, the most supportive environment for a musician. It has really helped me to flourish and explore new music. My first distinctive musical school memory was, as a Year 6 student, singing a small soprano solo in a Benjamin Britten choral number with the Choral Society. I remember the mighty Dr Whittle towering over me, swishing a wand in his hand, while behind him the colossal orchestra were scuttling around on their fingerboards. This certainly influenced my interest in orchestral playing.

As a shy Lower School pupil, I found my footing in the school after going on the Ireland Music Tour. I felt I had found my crowd. Indeed, the

indestructible and ever-changing 'Sibelius Gang' soon felt like a second home to me, and I still fall into fits of laughter when I see the memes on the wall. Having this group of friends that could cover for my mess-ups in orchestra



**The qualities and characteristics that I hold high as a musician, have translated into other areas of my life**

and ask for advice was incredibly valuable. In Year 11, I was fortunate to play a solo with the Bardi Orchestra, Beethoven's "Romance in F". It was the first time that I had played to a large audience, with a large orchestra accompanying me and my hands were so sweaty and trembling that I nearly lost grip of my bow during the performance. But being thrown into the deep end, helps build character. It taught me to be confident in my own abilities, especially in stressful situations. Leading the First Orchestra in my final two years of school was something I had always aspired to do, since joining at the back of the second violins. It was a challenge and I initially underestimated the skill required. I like to tell myself that, over my reign of terror, I improved and more comfortably led the orchestra. I am still amazed at the difficulty of the music we were playing; very few school orchestras could perform at our high calibre.

To sum up, music at LGS has been a great influence on my life – it is what I will most miss about the school. The qualities and characteristics that I hold high as a musician, have translated into other areas of my life. For anyone interested in playing an instrument, your school years are the best time to do so. I would like to thank Mr Barker, Mrs McPherson, Miss Graff-Baker, Dr Ainge, Dr Whittle and the rest of the Music department.



## Prisha Shukla:

### **Tell us a bit about the music you perform.**

Hindustani classical music is a genre of music originating in northern India and is extremely popular in south Asia. This form of classical music is based on seven basic notes and five half-notes, resulting in a 12-note scale. It takes inspiration from natural phenomena, where times of the day and different seasons are used to create 'raags'. A raag can be thought of as a scale: a musical theme created by choosing a specific set of notes from within an octave. Indian classical music derives from the spiritual and contemplative values of Indian culture. I have been training in Hindustani classical singing for the past 14 years and one of the main things I have enjoyed is the sense of peace and harmony it brings to me.

### **What initially got you into this genre?**

My parents always wanted me to be connected to our Indian heritage and Indian classical music seemed like

the ideal activity to get involved in when growing up, something different and unique.

### **What would you say is the most challenging aspect of Hindustani singing?**

Growing up singing this style of music has brought to my attention the lack of appreciation that people have for different cultures, resulting in a feeling of discomfort when sharing my passion for this hobby. People are quick to compare all Indian art forms to Bollywood, which undermines the intricacy and skill required to perform classical music. However, the beauty of this art definitely outweighs the challenges that come with it.

### **The whole school had the pleasure of hearing you during house karaoke.**



### **Is there any performance that is particularly memorable for you?**

I enjoyed house karaoke a lot. It was a chance to introduce something new as generally in house karaoke only Western music is performed. At the age of nine, I particularly enjoyed performing at the Leeds town hall for Diwali, where I sang "Jhansi ki Rani". The thrill of singing a song about a leading female figure during the struggle against the British rule in India was truly empowering.

## Jatin Naidu:

### **Over many years you have played in bands and ensembles. Is there any specific piece or concert that stands out to you?**

The Big Band's annual concerts at the Little Theatre and at LGS stand out to me. Also, I had an amazing experience playing the Glazunov saxophone concerto with the Bardi Symphony Orchestra.

### **Who is your favourite jazz artist and why?**

I would say Keith Jarrett, who is an American Jazz pianist. He sold 3.5

million copies and went on to have, not only the best-selling solo album in jazz history, but one of the best-selling solo piano albums of all time. My favourite piece by him would be "Country".

### **What piece of advice would you give to anyone hoping to get into jazz?**

I would advise them to pay a visit to the Music department and have a chat with Mr Barker about joining the Little Big Band or the Big Band. Listening to jazz is also very important, as it develops aural awareness and a jazz 'vocabulary'.

### **What plans do you have to continue with your music career in the future?**

I hope to carry on with Music at university and carry on with my passion for jazz. It would also be lovely to visit the school at some point as an OL and play with the LGS Big Band again!





# Pianists' Concert

by Manraj Jaswal

**O**n January 28th, 2020, the stage was set. A packed recital room, consisting of proud parents and Music teachers, were treated to hearing 19 young and gifted pianists. For many students this was their first taste of performance, so naturally nerves were high, yet they all seized the moment with composure and professionalism. Each student introduced their piece and composer, and then got the opportunity to perform on the remarkable Yamaha grand piano. From Classical to Jazz, Mozart to Camila Cabello, the concert did not disappoint in its plethora of genres and artists.

I had the pleasure of performing 'The Man I Love' by George Gershwin, a jazz classic

covered by the likes of Ella Fitzgerald and Nina Simone during the 1920s/30s. Other memorable mentions should go to Rishan Raja, who elegantly took us through the history of pop songs with an original medley featuring Bohemian Rhapsody, Havana and much more. Similarly, the young duo, featuring Alice and Isaac Chi, coordinated a breath-taking duet of Hungarian Dance by Grieg, pictured above right.

All those who participated should be immensely proud of their showmanship. To reiterate the words of Mrs McPherson, 'behind all the amazing performances lies a lot of hard work and slow practise, which as you heard tonight, has paid off'.



# My Experiences Learning the Organ

by Manraj Jaswal (L6th form)

**H**aving been bought up in a musical house, I was exposed to all the conventional instruments: piano, guitar, viola etc, but the organ was one that never crossed my mind. The first time I heard the majestic growl of an organ was during the legendary “Phantom of the Opera Overture” in a London theatre, and from that day forth it was an instrument I wanted to try. When Year 7 began and I stepped into Saint Nic’s for the first time, that familiar roar was heard once again, but being the rookie musician that I was, I thought I’d never play it.

Years went by until an email from Dr Ainge, while I was in Year 11, offering free lessons was sent out. I eagerly pounced on the opportunity. Having played piano and saxophone to a high level, I naively thought it was an easy and natural progression from my existing musical experiences -- little did I know what I was getting myself in for... I rocked up to my first lunchtime lesson, buzzing with excitement, until Dr Ainge demonstrated what playing the organ entailed. Most instruments require reading one line of music, the piano requires two, but it was revealed to me that I would have to simultaneously play three lines

of music. Most organs have three different manuals (three keyboards stacked on top of each other) and a pedalboard (a keyboard for the feet), in addition to countless stops (which control the distinctive sounds coming out). I was humbled to be thrown into the deep end by Dr Ainge, who had brought me back down to reality as I stumbled through pieces, horrifically trying to catch my feet up to my hands.

Lessons passed by and synchronising the pedals and manuals became more natural to me. I was increasingly intrigued each lesson with the immeasurable combinations of sounds that the dazzling instrument had to offer. Along with a few other pupils, I started to prepare for Grade 5, and the repertoire offered a new challenge, not necessarily the difficulty of the pieces themselves, but the process of transferring practise from a piano onto the organ. Granted, the organ isn’t the most accessible instrument to play, so invariably practise has to be done in different ways. Nonetheless, the organ has given me an incredible opportunity to

experiment with music in new ways. As a huge fan of learning popular music, such as movie themes tunes and pop songs, the plethora of sounds has been a game-changer for me. From Hans Zimmer’s striking “Interstellar” music, to pop classics like Coldplay’s “Paradise,” and the comical Nintendo Wii theme, I’ve always been one to pursue ‘unorthodox’ pieces. The Universal Studios movie introduction is a 25-second favourite of mine; I can imagine when we return back from lockdown, playing it as Mr Watson enters for assembly!

**“I was increasingly intrigued each lesson”**

Less than a year after taking up the organ I had the privilege of competing in the Leicester Music Festival’s organ competition. After a nightmare morning, waking up to the realisation that I had left my ‘Tuba Tune’ music at school, I had to spontaneously create sheet music from YouTube on



my phone and play from there. Despite this chaotic ordeal, I received invaluable advice from world-class organists regarding the sophisticated technique required for the instrument.

I must acknowledge that none of this would have been possible without the school, and in particular Dr Ainge and his pragmatic teaching. I've been blessed

to have had access to the brilliant organs the school hosts and am thankful for the patience of those who've had to endure my excessively loud playing in St. Nic's. The organ is an instrument you rarely get an opportunity to play, but it's one that is simply remarkable to experience. I highly recommend that any pianist try the organ out and reap the huge array of benefits that come from playing it.



## Apollo 5 Masterclass

by Grace Dhesi, Year 7

**O**n January 31st, 2020, an international award-winning acapella group, Apollo 5, performed a concert here at Leicester Grammar School, in addition to giving Year 7 and the chamber choir a singing masterclass. We were joined by Year 7 students from Manor High and Gartree schools.

We started the session by listening to Apollo 5 sing a beautiful song, before learning about scales, pitch, posture, and the importance of warming up before singing. We concluded the day by learning: "White Winter Hymnal" by the Fleet Foxes, which all the Year 7s sang beautifully! We would like to thank Apollo 5 for coming to Leicester Grammar, as well as Gartree and Manor High for joining us.

# Farewell to Dr Fearon

**D**r Christina Fearon has been teaching Biology at LGS since September 1998, and says, “I have always felt that teaching here has been like teaching the student that I once was. Students here have no airs and graces, and they sincerely want to learn.”

## What are some of your most memorable moments at LGS?

I have enjoyed the residential school trips: not only the Biology L6th field trips to France and the weekend trips we used to do to Snowdonia, but also the three Classics trips I have been on, to Greece and Italy. I feel grateful to have been included in those fantastic opportunities.

One of my favourite memories, from some years ago, occurred when I was dissecting what we call a pig's pluck in front of a class. (This comprises all the soft tissue of the pig: heart, liver, lungs, airways, connective tissue.) One student stood there and said, “This is amazing, how it all works together. If someone wrapped this up and gave it to me as a Christmas present, it would be the best present I ever had.” More recently I was telling a class off, saying that they would not want to be teachers, as it is not an easy job, when one girl said, with true sincerity, “When I grow up, I want to be just like you.” I was surprised and moved to hear that.

## What is special about LGS and how much have we changed over the years?

Everyone is so much busier now than we used to be, both staff and students, and we have lost some intimacy, but essentially the school still has the same ethos as always. What a lovely staff we have – and I would include our new Headmaster, Mr Watson, in that. We are mutually supportive and everyone talks to everyone else with friendliness. My closest friend on staff was my former boss, Mr Tony



Photo: Oliver Siddons

“

Students here have no airs and graces, and they sincerely want to learn.

Duffield: he taught me so much about Biology and was there for me when I needed him.

## What are your plans for your retirement?

I am retiring to support my family, primarily, and to help care for my grandchildren. (I have three children, who are amazing. We have been through many family crises over the past twenty years, but are a very close family. However old your children get, they continue to need emotional support. I am going to be a better mum, now that I do not need to say, “Not now, I have marking to do.”) I am also planning to improve my fitness, to walk more and perhaps get another dog. I love my greenhouse and I will take up gardening again. Also some of my retired friends play bridge together, so I plan to join them.



# Cern Trip

by Annabelle Onions

**Over the February 2020 half-term, various members of the Lower and Upper Sixth took a trip to Geneva to visit the Large Hadron Collider at CERN. It was a non-stop amazing experience with so much packed into such a short space of time (four days).**

We had a very early start on the first day of the trip so that we could catch our flight from Luton to Geneva, and we managed to check in all right, despite a few of us being still half-asleep. We had time for a much-needed coffee break before hurrying to our gate and onto the plane. Safely in Switzerland, we took a train to get to the hostel where we were staying, which was very nice, and after

dropping the bags off, we took a boat trip across the river to get some lunch. On our way back to the hotel we stopped off at the Patek Philippe Watch Museum, quite possibly one of the fanciest places I have ever been in, containing more than 2,000 watches. Our day ended with a late-night lecture about CERN, which involved an experiment to find out how many chairs it is possible to fit into a hotel conference room.

On day two of the trip, we took a two-hour coach journey to reach the Einstein Museum in Bern. The museum was very interesting

and interactive, and I divided my time between marvelling at how incredible Einstein was for coming up with the idea of General Relativity and being annoyed that he had had so many affairs. After looking round and attempting to understand some very complicated physics, we were all starving, so split off into small groups to get lunch. The group of people I was with somehow managed to end up in Einstein's apartment, which had been turned into a café where they had some great cakes. That night we ate at a fondue place back in







Geneva which was incredible, and some people took the opportunity to play the alpine horn, which was excellent entertainment.

On day three we finally had our chance to see CERN! We took a tram to the collider and then went round one of the exhibitions there. It can only be described as pretty snazzy, as it had purple-blue glowing lights and little sound chairs to sit in, which attempted to explain particle physics. (One of the chairs only spoke French, which led to a lot of confusion.) We also were lucky enough to see the very first computer made for storing data at CERN. After this we got our visitor passes (which were very fancy and had to be worn

on lanyards, so it practically looked like we worked there) and headed to the gift shop to stock up on authentic CERN merch. Lunchtime arrived and the cafeteria there had every meal you could possibly want on offer. With full stomachs we headed to a mini-lecture on the various colliders at CERN, before visiting a linear accelerator and one of the smaller circular ones, as well as a place called The Antimatter Factory. The experiments taking place there are at the very forefront of progress in physics, and they have devised methods of trapping things such as antiprotons (particles with the same mass but opposite

charge of protons) so they can experiment on them. The whole place looked like it was out of Star Wars and was phenomenal to see. As that night was our final night in Geneva (much to everyone's disappointment), we went to a shopping centre for food and bowling.

Our final day in Switzerland was mostly spent travelling home, although we did manage to sneak in a visit to the Natural History Museum. It was an incredible trip which I will remember for years to come. Thank you to everyone who came on it and to Miss Allcoat for organising it.



# Introducing Mrs Johnston

## Our new Physics Teacher

Interview by Rameen Masood, Year 11

### Have you always wanted to be a Physics teacher?

No, not really. I used to work in industry as an instrumentation engineer responsible for designing, installing and maintaining instruments that, for instance, monitored gas and fluid levels. Then I also worked as a software engineer, which I enjoyed greatly. My main motivation for being a teacher was certainly the holidays. I wanted to spend more time with my young child and so decided that being a teacher would be an excellent profession.

### How has your journey as a teacher been so far?

Very interesting indeed. I have taught at a number of schools in Leicestershire. My last school was Welbeck College in Loughborough, a Sixth Form boarding college open to young people who wish to pursue a career within the armed forces. They have a very active CCF (Combined Cadet Force), and so I was fortunate enough to have the opportunity of passing my weapons handling test.

### What is your favourite topic to teach and why?

I have two favourite topics: astronomy and particle physics. Astronomy describes the vast size of space and particle physics is concerned with the tiny, microscopic particles some of which have not yet been discovered. Both share an interesting size, and thus continue to dazzle me.

### What advice would you give to someone studying Physics?

Approach the problems in a logical and systematic fashion. Never stop believing in

your ability to achieve what you set out to do. Remain optimistic and never be afraid to ask questions. A Chinese proverb says, He who asks is a fool for five minutes, but he who does not ask remains a fool forever.

### How does Physics contribute to our daily lives?

It touches on everything, from why we do not float into space to why we slip on bananas. Physics also has a big impact on medical equipment, such as tracers, MRI scans and CT scans. In addition, particle physics research, for instance, opens many doors providing countless job opportunities.

### What sort of activities do you enjoy doing outside school?

I enjoy dressmaking and knitting. Previously I have made jackets, coats and doll clothes. Once I made an Anna costume for my niece and a matching one for her doll. It was so much fun! I also like cycling and sometimes go for a 5km run.

### Who is your favourite scientist and why?

Marie Curie. She not only fought adversity and sexism but also won the prestigious Nobel Prize, twice. She showed great tenacity at a time when not many women worked in the field and furthermore conducted pioneering research on radioactivity. Marie Curie maintained an excellent balance between her work and personal life; she looked after her two children whilst simultaneously pursuing her passions and working on life-changing research. Indeed, she is a great paradigm for all, especially young girls and women.



Photo: Mrs Hunt

## Farewell to Dr Ewers

Interview by Holly Teasdale, Year 11

### What is your favourite memory of LGS?

There are too many! I have loved seeing the students performing in music and drama – especially the surprise in their faces as they discover new talents and skills they did not know they had. I have great memories of the RHS gardening competition and winning £1,000 for the school. I have lovely memories of chatting with other teachers on trips and learning a bit more about them as individuals. Most of all I prize the memories of teaching Biology in the classroom – the satisfaction when a practical works or us all bursting out with laughter at a joke a student made – or, occasionally one of mine!

### What are your plans for retirement?

For the first year, travel in our campervan around Europe. After that, time with the family and volunteer work. I very much want to have links with Leicester Grammar and hope to continue to be involved in the gardening club

### I hear that you are particularly interested in climate change. What do you think we, as a society, should be doing to help the planet?

When I first started teaching, I was told that one of the most effective ways of changing a student's behaviour was "catching them being good" I think the environmental movement needs to do the same, celebrating the small changes made by lots of people and being more positive. A million people reducing their

plastic consumption by 10% will have far more effect than a handful of people cutting out 50% of their plastics, and if these million feel proud of what they are doing, it leads to an appetite to do more. I think people involved in the climate movement need to phrase the movement in ways are meaningful to people. For example, having a clean beach on holiday makes people see the importance of the environment. Finally, people need to recognise that health and the environment go together. I ride my bicycle to school for many reasons – it not only helps the environment, but my own physical health .... and saves me money!

### What do you think you will miss the most?

I will miss being in the building, surrounded by lots of interesting people of all ages doing lots of different interesting things. Most of all I will miss being in the classroom with the students! I enjoy being around young people. They see the world in a less jaded way than adults. They help me to challenge my assumptions. They also have an enormous sense of fun and are willing to give new things a go.

### What attracted you to LGS when you first joined?

The enthusiasm and interest of students and staff. The 'can do' attitude and the fact that most people think that learning is fun. It is lovely walking down the corridor, it's a really positive environment.





## Introducing Mr Stubbs Our New PE Teacher

Interview by Aditya Mathur  
and Svaraji Odedra

### **When did you realise you had an interest in Physical Education?**

When I was in secondary school, PE was always the lesson that I looked forward to. I enjoyed seeing what the human body was capable of doing and, through training, how it could adapt and improve.

### **What sports do you enjoy?**

I have always enjoyed swimming and cycling to improve my cardio-vascular endurance. Throughout school, I played football. One of my favourite memories is going to see my first Leicester City game with my father at the age of six. They beat Blackburn Rovers 1 to 0 and Jim Melrose scored a screamer. I started playing rugby while at university and used to relish watching the Leicester Tigers play. I enjoy getting out into the Leicestershire countryside and riding my bike with a group of mates and entering the occasional triathlon.

### **Why is PE an important school subject?**

I believe that everybody has a sport that they can succeed at, and they will benefit from that with an active and healthy lifestyle. Pupils need to take part in physical activity and sport, need to savour these activities, so that they become a lifelong experience. Whether an activity is done at a recreational level and enhances one's personal well-being, or at sport level, where the individual performance becomes more important, there should be a pathway for all to enjoy what the subject has to offer.

### **Who is your most inspirational athlete?**

Chris Hoy is a British track cyclist who has won seven Olympic medals: six gold and one silver, including three gold medals at the 2008 Olympics. He was inspired to ride after watching the film about ET, the extra-terrestrial. I love the idea that a skill that most children try at an early age, cycling, can motivate somebody to become the best in their sport.



## Farewell to Mrs Hutchinson

### **How long have you been at LGS and have you taught anything other than PE and Games?**

I have taught Mathematics, PE and Games at Leicester Grammar School over the past 12 years.

### **What will be your strongest memories of LGS?**

The Hill Walking and Campcraft – all GCSE and A-level PE students take part in this activity. It is the time when you get to understand the students better (and the staff as well).

### **What are your plans for retirement?**

In retirement, I will be able to have my holiday at the same time as my husband. At the moment, his holidays fall two weeks before mine, and even though he is not a teacher, he, like me cannot change his holidays. I also plan to work for one of the Examination Boards as Principle Moderator. I will be overseeing the practical performance of all students. I am looking forward to being able to run more and have regular training sessions to improve my half marathon time and maybe think about a full marathon. I will be able to spend more time with my dogs and I hope to have a litter of English setter puppies in the New Year. Also I will design and rig out a craft room for my new floor loom, which is over one meter wide and so needs more space if I am to have it set up permanently.

# 2019-2020 Badminton

by C. W. Howe

This has been another excellent year for Badminton at LGS. Badminton Club has run on Tuesdays and Wednesdays with a regular attendance often exceeding 30 pupils. Boys' and Girls' teams were again entered into the Team Leicestershire competitions at U14, U16 and U18 level. The U14 Boys won 4 of their 5 league games, beating Welland Park, Robert Smyth, Lutterworth College and Kibworth School. Once again, they narrowly lost to Brockington College (3-5, 129-15) which prevented them qualifying for the County Finals. The U14 Girls enjoyed two great wins against Lutterworth College (6-2, 143-134) and Kibworth School (4-4, 153-130). The U16 Girls had a really tough area group but played with great spirit and really enjoyed all 3 of the matches played. The U16 and U18 Boys both won their area leagues and qualified for the County Finals, where the U16 Boys finished a very creditable 3rd place overall from the 10 teams who qualified for the finals' night. They just lost out in the semi-final (2-3, 89-97) to the eventual winners, Market

## LGS Badminton Squads

**U14 Boys:** O.J. Bunce (Captain), L.J.T. Adediran, H. Selvarajah, A. Patel, A. Lewis

**U14 Girls:** A. Cunden (Capt), A.A. Shah, S. Naidu, L. Porteous, E. Ashcroft, G. Nisal, P. Patel

**U16 Boys:** K.Y. Wang (Captain), L. Hoffman, J.D. Modhvadia, S.Arora, N. Mistry

**U16 Girls:** R. Masood (Capt), K. Mistry, A..Goold, R. Rajput, E. Jones, M. Bishop

**U18 Girls:** N. Bhatt (Captain), G.E. Morris. E.A. Haward, S.Shah, P. Lad

**U18 Boys:** J.S. Naidu (Captain), K.A. John, T.W. Bunce, P.P.R. Wang, K.D. Desor

Bosworth. The U18 Boys' final was unfortunately cancelled due to the Covid-19 issue. The U18 Girls rounded off an excellent season by beating Wigston College (8-0, 168-113).

My thanks to all the players who represented the school this year, particularly the team captains for all their support, and to everyone who attended Badminton Club.



U16 Boys Team who finished 3rd at the 2020 Leicestershire and Rutland County Finals

# 2019-2020 Cricket

By Mr L. Potter, Master in Charge of Cricket

**T**he grounds are looking magnificent, the fixture list is full, the nets are ready for practice, the new scoreboard is up and running and the weather is beautiful. But we have no cricket... More important things than school cricket have been disrupted by Corona, but for some it is a major part of their summer.

LGS Cricket has made such strides forward over the last few years it is a shame that no cricket has been played this term. However, it does not mean that this academic year has been devoid of cricket completely. We now have a vibrant winter program in place that goes a long way towards producing the cricket we do in the summer months. Firstly we have our development program of winter coaching that runs throughout from October half term to Easter. Here any pupil that wishes, both boys and girls, has the opportunity to access coaching and indoor cricket. Before Christmas there are open sessions and in the New Year, squads are expected to attend, alongside anyone else that wishes to be involved. There are other opportunities such as shadow batting classes on Wednesday lunchtimes, specialist sessions on Monday lunchtimes and a girls-only practice session Thursday lunchtimes. It has also been fantastic to see the amount of playground (softball) cricket that was played throughout the first two terms of the year. To see up to four games going on during a lunchtime is such a pleasure – not just because it is cricket, but because of the enthusiasm and enjoyment being shown. We have also had Indoor cricket fixtures throughout the winter, with the girls playing in the County finals, the u13 boys winning their county final and the u15 boys narrowly losing in the final competition. The boys also played a number of age-group representative matches against Crown Hills Community College at all age groups up to u16, and also against Manor HS and Stoneygate at the younger age range. In total, they played 16 games of indoor cricket, helping everyone to develop the intensity of their play alongside fielding and



running between the wickets. During those 16 games, only three were lost.

It is incredibly disappointing for the leavers not to be able to represent their school throughout their last season at LGS. There are a number of not only fine cricketers but also fine servants of the game at LGS graduating this year. Our First Team this year is comprised of players that have played in A and B squads throughout their school careers, who helped to coach younger players or have just been part of the scene. I thank you all for the support you have given me and the game at LGS. It has always been greatly appreciated. These players are Jatin Naidu – consistent key All Rounder; Dru Rathore – Batsman, Keeper and Leg spin bowler; Nazir Sirajudeen -- Leg spinner and Batsman; Libby Haward – All Rounder; Bradley Crane – Excellent middle order Batsman and Spin Bowler; Tejas Easwar – Off-Spinner; Will House – All Rounder; Rubaan Chakrabarti – Batsman and Keeper; Kishan Desor – Batsman; and Thomas Bunce –



All Rounder. They will all leave the school this year and it is such a shame they have not played their last LGS season. It has been great fun watching you all develop -- enjoy the game and just be involved, thank you.

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general involvement and enthusiasm throughout the school, for the game, seems to be higher than we have ever had



We now have some of the best facilities in the county and they only keep improving under the care of Michael Hood and his grounds team. They have been tremendous and must be as frustrated as any of us are with the lack of use so far this summer. The prospects for the future look very exciting. A possible major tour is on the horizon and the annual Isle of Wight Year 8 tour is now a feature of the school sporting calendar. We have real strength coming through from all the

younger age groups and if they work hard, commit and remain enthusiastic we could have some of the strongest first XI's ever, in the next few years. The even more important thought is that general involvement and enthusiasm throughout the school, for the game, seems to be higher than we have ever had. Roll on 2021.



**Cricket 1st XI Boys 2018-2019**

P.N. Barlev (scorer), J.S. Naidu, D.S. Rathore, N. Sirajudeen, B.O.L. Crane, R.A. Kelkar  
T.H. Easwar, J.C. Moore, H.M. Pounds, K. Jussab, P.P. Chauhan, H.J.H. Jones





# 2019-2020 Girls' Hockey

by Mrs Laybourne

Overall the 2019-20 season has been a very successful one for both the School teams and individuals within them. A number of students have represented the county, whilst Sophie Levy and Tara Bahra have been involved in the Regional Performance Centres. Hearty congratulations must go to Anna Kendall, who has represented Leicester Ladies in the National League. This is a fantastic achievement ordinarily, but particularly for a student in Year 11.

The 1st XI season has been thoroughly enjoyable and I was particularly pleased with their cup run this year, including some very close and thrilling encounters. One of the highlights for the 2nd XI was reaching the Midlands Finals, where they were only one win away from a place at the National Finals. The 3rd XI went from strength to strength and I was delighted with their victories against Welbeck and Ratcliffe. In the Middle School the U15s had a great season and were very successful in the U16 Tier 3

regional competition. Emulating the 2nd XI, they were only one game away from a place at the National Finals. They were ably trained by our overseas coach, Olive Richmond, and I know they appreciated her expertise. The U14s quickly adapted to the 11-a-side game and progressed to the Midlands Finals, where they should be very proud of their efforts. The juniors went from strength to strength and I was delighted that every child in Year 7, and nearly all of Year 8, represented the school in fixtures this year. As always, one of my highlights was the House Hockey events and seeing every girl in Prep-Year 10 involved in these fiercely competitive competitions.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate and thank everyone involved in LGS Hockey this year, both staff and students. The term is always a busy one and it is your dedication and enthusiasm which makes it so successful. To the leavers, all the best for the future and I hope when you graduate it will not be the end of your Hockey career!



Overall, the 1st XI Hockey team had a successful season. We played seven outdoor hockey friendlies, winning 3, losing 3 and drawing 1 against Bablake. The draw was one of our most memorable performances as we showed strength, determination and teamwork in this close and highly contested game, ending up at 3-3. However, our main focus was towards the National Cup Plate, which we had qualified for in late September. We went on to beat The Queen's School Chester 4-2 in round 2, and Ecclesbourne 6-5 in round 3. However, our winning streak ended in round 4 in a very tense game, where we lost to Ratcliffe College 3-4 on penalty flicks. Other highlights include our 5-4 indoor hockey win against Wellingborough, which allowed us to prove how well we could work

together. Chiara Bensi was our highest goal-scorer of the season. She scored 13 goals in total, with hattricks in 2 games. Anna Kendall and Harriet Prior won "Player of the season" and "Most improved player" respectively, highlighting their potential and

the impact the two youngsters have had on the team. I would like to thank the girls for being such a hardworking and enjoyable team to play with. Thank you to Mrs Laybourne also, for all her coaching efforts, time and dedication this season.



## 2nd XI Hockey

### Charlotte Lewis

This year the 2nd XI Hockey team have had a fantastic season, with consistently excellent play from all members, resulting in many successful matches. One in particular stands out, when we defeated Stamford 3-2, as it was the point, early on in the season, at which we clicked as a team, despite having lost a number of players from the previous Upper Sixth. Our efforts this season also resulted in us reaching the semi-finals stage at the Regional Tournament, which whilst we were knocked out

on penalty flicks, was a great experience. What was really impressive this season in the 2nd XI is was the sheer determination to improve both our individual and team play, seen in Felicity Wheeler's attitude during matches and training, accumulating to her much-deserved 'Player of the Season' award, and also Ruby Evans, who won the 'Most Improved' award. During training, we worked especially hard on improving our short corner technique throughout the season. Not only on the pitch, but also off the pitch, we bonded as friends, which I believe really added to the strength and communication of our team during match play. I would like to thank the girls for making it such an enjoyable year, and also both Miss Feeney and Miss Percy for giving up so much time to coach and support us during matches.



## 3rd XI

### Shivali Pancholi

The 3rd team have progressed a lot throughout the season, with significant improvement from last season as well. We had two fixtures against very strong Oakham and Uppingham sides, which unfortunately we lost, but we were determined to better ourselves for the forthcoming games. Our next match was against Welbeck, which we knew would be a tough game. However, the team played very well together, and with fantastic goals from Prianka, Lizzie and Poppy,

we won 5-0. Our winning streak continued, with an excellent 2-0 victory over Ratcliffe College, thanks to some great defence from Alice, Grace, Olivia and Holly. The next game against Wellingborough also proved to be a great performance from the team, winning 2-1. Some excellent midfield work from Kate, Issy, Topaz and Lottie assisted our win. Imaan was a strong goalkeeper throughout the games as well. Thanks to Mrs Hutchinson for all her help, support and motivation throughout the season.



These included a 9-3 victory against Welland Park, a 4-1 victory against Wellingborough and a very tight 3-2 victory against Bablake. At the end of the season, we travelled to Repton for the regional tournament. During the tournament, we played very well, making it all the way to the semi-final, which we unfortunately lost 0-1, but it was a great time which really showed how much we had improved as a team. In conclusion, we had an excellent season, and thank you to Mrs Richmond and Mrs Laybourne for their excellent coaching.

## U14XI

### Amy Worliding

The under-14 hockey team have had an excellent year all round. This year we had three great wins, but unfortunately lost some matches as well. On October 19th we went to the county finals, did extremely well and won. We were very excited to get the opportunity to go to the Midlands, but we also knew that the competition was going to be tough, so we needed to

prepare well. Arriving at the Midlands competition, we won our knockout rounds and were through to the finals. We knew the finals were going to be the toughest match we had faced yet, but we had 11 days to prepare. At the finals we did the best we could; unfortunately, we lost but we came back from the game proud of the effort we had put in. Many thanks to Dr Kendall and Miss Mould for coaching us this season.

## U15 XI

### Sophie Levy

This year, the U15A hockey team had a great season overall. We managed to win 4 of the 7 games we played and had lots of fun whilst doing it. This year, we had the pleasure of having Mrs Richmond and Mrs Laybourne coaching us, and they really helped us to succeed. Although we didn't start the season very strongly, losing to Loughborough and Princethorpe, two very good sides, we came back stronger later on in the season with some great wins.

## U13A

### Amelia Wenlock

Hockey for the Year 8, A team squad of 2019-20 had mixed results; we suffered a few defeats but never lost our spirit to carry on and try our best. Fortunately, because of our strong teamwork we also had many successes and won some of our matches. We had some amazing goals from Grace Impey, Clemmie Buchanan, Jemima Kay, Katie Bensi and many

more who should be extremely proud. Sadly we missed out on our county finals due to the corona virus. Our total amount of goals this season was 11, which we definitely are aiming to beat in the upcoming season, as well as winning more matches. Thanks to Mrs Laybourne and Mrs Hutchinson for coaching us and arranging our fixtures.



## U12B

### Rhianna Jones

Hockey for the U13B team in 2019-20 was a great success. We won 4 games, losing 2, and drawing 1. We worked very well as a team, starting the season off well, winning our first 3 games against Bablake School, Nottingham High School and Princethorpe College. Everyone worked hard and contributed to our total of 19 goals scored. One of our toughest competitors

was Oakham School, as they had great players and strong passes. We managed to secure a draw, with all of the team working hard and trying to score in the last few minutes. We sadly were defeated by both Stamford and Loughborough School in tough matches, but the team never lost their determination and managed to end the season on a high by winning against Welland Park Academy. Well done to all the girls, especially our top goal-scorers, Avneet Flora, Sonia Naidu and Lily Porteous. Our goalkeeper, Sophie Burke, saved a lot of goals, helping us greatly through the season. Thanks to Mrs Calland for coaching and umpiring and also to Mrs Laybourne for organising the fixtures.

## U12A

### Georgia Mepham

The 2019-20 hockey season started in September with our first match against Nottingham High. The ball went back and forth, and disappointingly, Nottingham scored in the last minute of the match, resulting in a 1-0 loss. Our next match was against Oakham School, who we knew were going to be a tough opposition. The girls all played well, but Oakham won 6-0. The next match was against Welland Park Academy, where Lucy Free scored our first goal of the season and the score was 2-1 to Welland Park. Next against Stamford School, we did well in defence and kept clearing the ball out

of the D. The score was 2-0 to Stamford. Our last matches of the season took place in a county tournament at Oakham School. Against Welland Park Academy we won 4-0, and against Ivanhoe we won 5-1. All the girls played well, and our goalkeeper, Millie Warrilow, made some great saves; however, we lost the next three matches against Loughborough High School, Oakham, and Ratcliffe College. We came fourth in the tournament. We have all improved immensely and learned so many new skills that we can use next year. Thank you to Mrs Laybourne and Miss Feeney for all of their support.

## U12B

### Samah Khan

The U12 B hockey team has had a successful season. Everyone has taken part and thoroughly enjoyed playing. We all had a positive attitude, whether winning or losing. We won one game 2-1 against Nottingham High, lost three against Oakham, Welland Park and Stamford, and drew two against Stonegate and Loughborough. The most memorable fixture was probably our first one, where we went away to Nottingham High School. It was a sunny day, and we were full of energy and maybe a bit nervous as this was our first fixture as a team, but we won 2-1. Overall, it has been fantastic experience playing together.



## 2019-2020

# Rugby Football

by Mr P T Reeves & Mr H A Ellis

**D**espite the disappointing end to the playing year, it is very difficult to look back on the season without an enormous sense of pride in the progress made both on and off the field. It goes without saying that our Senior players have set an extraordinary example; led by our Captains of Rugby, the nominated Senior Playing Group have established their own principles and core values and all in the squad have responded very positively. They have produced one of the most outstanding years that LGS has seen in its relatively short history and this will be revisited in our 1st XV specific report. Our 2nd XV have made excellent progress and many have challenged for selection each week. It is clear that several players will make a smooth transition to the top level of school rugby next year with ease and we look forward to seeing further progress. Our U15s and U14s have again had challenging years but it is vital that they aspire to improve individually, as well as holding true to the core

values instilled by their older peers. At the lower end of the school, our U13s and U12s both show incredible promise; on occasion our U13s were capable of sparkling, expansive rugby, whilst our U12s had one of their most successful seasons, mixing power, speed and skill in equal measure. We must thank all of the coaches massively for their time, expertise and commitment to all of our players.

We will all remember this season with mixed emotions, particularly with the 7s season and the highlight of the Rosslyn Park National School 7s decimated and hopes of finishing the year on a high dashed. It is vital that all who pull on an LGS shirt realise why we have excelled this year – commitment, discipline, courage and enjoyment are cornerstones of our rugby, and we are very proud of those that have been outstanding advocates for our sport and our school this year.







## 1st XV Season Report 2019/20

This has been an extraordinary season with a group of extraordinary players. The most successful season at 1st XV level for the school has been a rollercoaster of emotions for all involved, and all can be proud of the fact that at every turn they have won, or lost, with dignity and pride. Few could predict the tremendous sequence of performances that saw the squad lose only one game before the last week of the Advent term and put together a Schools' Vase run that would take them to the Quarter Finals. In these results, taking Bablake's unbeaten record away from home and then winning at the Butts Arena in Coventry, and narrowly defeating Loughborough College stand out, however the pinnacle of the year was the preparation and performance put in to defeat Langley School 27-19 in our Vase Quarter Final. What happened following this will unfortunately stay with all of those who were party to it for some time, but as the group all know, the result of that game

of rugby stands and will never change. It was a monumental day for the players and all of those involved in LGS rugby.

We normally single individuals out for praise in reports such as these, but the team has performed at such a high level this season because of the commitment and passion shown by all of our players. It has been very much a collective effort, and this has meant the difference in tight fixtures and in beating teams who are better resourced or have players who are more physical. We are immensely proud of this group of students, not just on the pitch but also off it. These words could be clearly heard from the changing room in February just before kick-off, "Do it for us, lads...do it for us!" You did succeed, gentlemen, and we were lucky to be a part of it. Thank you for your collective efforts in making this year so special for us all.

# Star Cricketer, Lucy Weston

Interview by Abigail Loke

## **W**hat would you call your greatest achievement in cricket?

Probably going to New Zealand in 2018 for the Junior Indoor Cricket Under-17 World Series, as that was pretty awesome. I was fairly young (I turned 14 when I was out there and the majority were older), but I had a great time and I was representing the country. It was a great opportunity also to learn about New Zealand and some of the Maori cultures within it!

## **Do you ever find it hard to balance school and cricket?**

I think in some ways yes, but I've actually got a bit better at finding time between training, and matches and things like that. For example, there are usually more matches in the summer, when school is off, so that's not as bad, but when I have a lot of training going on at school it can be quite difficult. However, I've got a lot better at balancing school and cricket, as I've gotten older and more used to it. I do both indoor and outdoor cricket, so there's always one of them happening at any given time. When it's not indoor cricket, it's outdoors, and vice versa, so I'm always busy.

## **Do you see cricket as a potential career?**

Yes, I definitely do. It has not been that long since it was announced that women cricketers will be paid the same amount as men so it is really nice to see that women's cricket is becoming more accepted and popular, and people are starting to see it as a career.



## **Following on from that point, how is it being a woman in a male dominated sport?**

I think when I was little it didn't really bother me that much; you know you don't really care a lot when you're younger. As I've got older, more women have gotten into the sport. It can be a bit challenging at times when you are the only girl and you feel like the odd one out, but I've got used to that. It is also exciting, because if you bowl someone out, or hit a boundary or something to a guy, it's a good feeling to think "Wow. I've actually done that."

## **How has cricket impacted your life?**

It has impacted my life hugely in all areas, and I couldn't imagine not playing cricket. Even though it is stressful and nerve-racking, those are healthy emotions, and they inevitably come with any sport. Cricket just makes me feel so happy.





# Star Triathlete, Thomas Dixon

Interview by Aditya Mathur and Svaraji Odedra

## What encouraged you to take up triathlon?

When I was younger, my parents took me to an athletics race in Leicester and watching the runners on the lane was inspiring. From then on, I always watched the Brownlee brothers on television whenever they were competing in an event, and this ignited a passion within me to be the best I could be at triathlon.

## What are your favourite aspects of triathlon?

There are three main aspects to triathlon: swimming, running, and cycling. The race starts with swimming for 400 metres, then continues

with cycling for 10 kilometres and finally there is a run for 2.5 kilometres. The swim usually takes place in open water, a lake or a sea, although

sometimes it is a swimming pool, and is my favourite part of the event.

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I always watched the Brownlee brothers...and this ignited a passion within me to be the best I could be at triathlon.

## Who is your most inspirational figure in sports and why?

Alistair Brownlee is a British triathlete, who is the only athlete to hold two Olympic titles in the triathlon event. He won gold medals in the 2012 and 2016 Olympic

Games. He is also the only triathlete to win Olympic Gold whilst going into the event as favourite for the title. He inspires me to work harder at what I love.



# *The* Leicesterian

