

THE ELIZABETHAN

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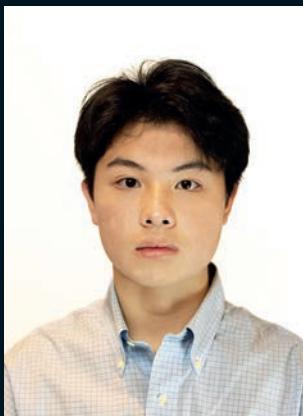
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THE ELIZABETHAN 2024

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Abbey address

The courage to continue...

by Jijith Thukaram (WW)

In my mind, I was ready, fired up – nothing could bring me down. I had been preparing for months; I ran five kilometres three times a week, I was in the gym every other day, and did 25-kilometre treks every Sunday. Then I saw the mountain. It humbled me.

Kilimanjaro was far from easy. It wasn't what I thought it would be, and it seemed like nothing could have prepared me for the coming week when it took me, my dad, and the other members of our group five days to ascend and two days to descend the mountain.

Despite having brought the British weather with me, the first three days were really enjoyable. The collective anticipation kept all of us motivated for the next day's trekking. When things got hard, we just sang songs, shared jokes, and lifted one another's spirits. But then we entered the fourth day. On the fourth day there were no songs, no jokes, just grunts of pain as we scaled a 1000-metre ridge with steep and narrow paths called the Barranco Wall. Apparently, most people quit when they reach this point, decreasing the summit rate to only 48%. It was tough, but everyone in the group had something different motivating them and pushing them to face the challenge.

It was tough (awful, in fact), but this was a profound day for me. It was the day I realised that I could positively affect those around me. Whether pointing out a hold or offering words

of encouragement, being able to help members of the group inspired me to keep going. That day, I learned that whilst I must take care of myself, belonging to a team ultimately relied on my ability to act selflessly – what I didn't know then was the danger this would put me in the next day.

The fifth day is known as the 'summit push', the day mountaineers both dread and anticipate. Oxygen levels drop below eight percent (it's currently about 20% here in the Abbey). And forget the drizzling rain; the hail stings your face, and -20C temperatures last over seventeen hours of painful endurance. I know, fun. But at this point, my sights were set on the summit.

So, with only four hours of sleep, my dad and I set off to reach the summit. I wanted to stay with him and the group, but after a few hours, the guide noticed I was getting colder and colder because the pace was slow, and if I didn't speed up, my chance of suffering from hypothermia would continue to increase. So, the decision was made to let me go ahead. Alone. I was nervous and cold but somehow excited. With a simple nod of the head, I was off and spent the next eight hours placing one foot in front of the other

in a solo battle only I could fight and one I will always remember. The struggle was worth it, and by 4am, the clouds started to lift as the sunrise lit the sky with an orange glow.

At the summit, I celebrated both the physical and mental achievement of reaching the top. The trek was long, but the view from the peak was so beautiful.

Thinking about all this at the start of a new year (and a new term), many of us may be facing an uphill challenge. Whether it's exams, friendships, or planning our future beyond this place. Whatever your summit, I hope you find the same encouragement that I found in the words of a Swahili saying that kept me going throughout my challenge:

Success is not final; failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts.

May you have the courage you need to climb your mountain.

Abbey address

On Identity

by Matthew Kemball (RR)

If you asked me who I am, I would happily identify as being Matthew; half-Nigerian and half-English, with two sets of white grandparents, and someone growing up in a household with British values.

But when I was younger, my Nigerian identity seemed hazy and hard to reach. Whilst I've always been aware of my Blackness, not least because – for most of my school life – I've been the only Black boy in my year, I've not found it easy to connect with my Nigerian identity. I'm proudly mixed heritage and I love my Blackness, but being Black is complex, and I've come to realise that the narratives of being Black are even more so.

For each of us, our ancestry serves to validate who we are as people, where we fit, where we belong, and whilst they may not fully define us, they are a rich part of our identity. Black history is all about this ancestry and re-writing the forgotten narratives, telling stories rarely told. In that way, Black History Month belongs to us all, not just Black people. Its purpose is to inform and expose different and varied outlooks to the Eurocentric history most often taught. It's about challenging the impact of dominant cultures, calling each of us to think again about how we, as a people and a nation, choose to represent ourselves, what we believe, and what we promote.

And this same theme of re-writing narrative can appear in unexpected places. Most poignantly through religion. Just look at where we are right now. Over 80% of Black Britons ascribe to a faith tradition and around 70% of Black Britons are Christian, compared to just 46% of the population as a whole. Faith, especially Christianity, matters so much to the identity of many Black Britons. This is what seems hazy and hard to reach. Why do people from the African diaspora hold to a faith imposed on them by European colonialists, which was then leveraged to justify further exploitation of African peoples?

Biblical narratives, such as the story of Cham were purposefully misconstrued to claim the Black race was made for subservience, for slavery, and exploitation. So, for Black people to hold onto this same faith, instead of rejecting it, fighting for their own racial equality, has never quite made sense to me. That was, until I realised that this was actually a sign of strength, and an even greater sign of resistance than rejecting Christianity completely.

Black people took Christianity and made it what they needed it to be, which was actually closer to the original message. They stressed the importance of liberation in the story of Jesus, applying it to the Black struggle against oppression.

They took on the status quo, and instead of completely rejecting it they subverted it. A significant voice in this was the Black American theologian, James Cone who rejected the Eurocentric idea of a 'white Jesus', asserting that: 'God is whatever colour God needs to be in order to let people know they're not nobodies, they're somebody'. Or in the words of Jesus '... the poor have good news brought to them'. Cone and others like him used scripture as a way of rewriting the narrative, reclaiming the story to bring fundamental change to human dignity.

So, whether it's a secular or religious context, re-writing the narrative, ensuring that no one's humanity or history is left out is the only way forward that will ever make sense of our past. Your story matters and so does mine. Together, our lives, our narrative, then becomes something that goes beyond just October, but instead will last a lifetime.



An interview with the Deputy Head (Boarding)

Jeremy Kemball joined the school in 1991 and leaves us this year. Alex Pilz (DD) and Alisha Vyas (CC) met with him in June to interview him about his time at Westminster.



AP: How would you describe yourself and your role at Westminster?

JJK: It is a role that has evolved over a number of years to get to the place where it is now. I suppose I like to see myself as a guardian of the past, but also looking to the future. I'm rooted in pastoral matters and partnerships with other schools – I've always tried to look outwards for Westminster and when I came, it felt a bit like a gated community. I've tried to do what I can to get outside and develop partnerships with different education establishments and see Westminster as an open place. I've tried to develop all our partnership roles like Platform, which we started some years ago, as well as introducing further collaborations with state schools and working on equality, diversity, and inclusion in both the pupil and staff body. The main part of my role now is being in charge of all the boarding, and sometimes that comes with a lot of pastoral support with the Under Master.

AV: What drove you to join Westminster?

JJK: When I joined the school, I was quite young and I'd worked at Charterhouse for four years, down in leafy Surrey! I had wanted to come to London, and it was a fortuitous set of circumstances that a role here as a biologist had come up. I wanted to go to what then seemed to be the best school academically, and I loved the idea of teaching very bright people. However, from the outset I also wanted to transform the fortunes of Westminster football, which I think we can successfully say we did!

AV: Outside of your professional roles at Westminster, what is your favourite hobby?

JJK: I used to play a lot of sport (before my knee injury!) but I am also a musician, and I like playing the clarinet and saxophone, and performing in gigs and bands. I've been to a lot of the big pupil-led concerts and musicals throughout my time here, too – so, probably music and sports are my two biggest hobbies.

AP: Robert J Meehan once said that a great teacher is someone who can learn from their students, who can learn with them, and learns for them. What is the most striking thing you have learnt from your pupils while teaching at Westminster?

JJK: That's a good question, and something I have thought about. I think there's probably two main things about teaching at Westminster; if you want to be a success, you need to have a bit of personality and make sure you know your subject, but don't be pompous. I would sometimes come across colleagues who interpreted Westminster as somewhere where you can never be seen to make a mistake. Yes, you should know your stuff, but always be humble enough to accept if you've got something wrong. Don't be a big head.

AP: Would you say that is something you've learnt from observing your colleagues or observing your pupils?

JJK: I actually learnt a lot from my Head of Department when I first arrived, as well as from experience. I hadn't come across so many people who were really quite scholarly in their subject. I had known people who were good deliverers of information, but I learnt a lot about being much more precise about what I taught and making sure to read up on things.

AP: You have devoted so much to this school and must have seen it evolve and develop over the years. What is the most significant change that has occurred during your 30+ years at Westminster?

JJK: I think it is a much nicer place to teach at, and to be a pupil at. I know we've gone through upheavals with Black Lives Matter, Everyone's Invited, and sometimes you can feel that everyone's unhappy. I don't think that's the case – I believe we are much more professional in how we approach things. When I first arrived (I was 28 so I wasn't a baby), you would still find it an intimidating place – it felt a bit like

a zoo rather than a school. The culture was quite abrasive, and you relied a bit on your wits. As a result, some people probably had a not great time but had to deal with it. I think the staff in many ways are much nicer because previously, they all had their little pockets, and they were quite difficult to manage. I know an old Head Master of mine said keeping the Common Room in line was a bit like herding cats.

I think we thought we did things quite well, and a lot of things we didn't, for example our co-curricular program needed a lot of improvement. We had bright kids and some great teaching, but this place is a whole heap better than what it was. We have a lot more buildings, more places to breathe. For example, Weston's is taken for granted but it didn't even exist when I joined, and we'd only really just opened the Science Department in Hooke. That all used to take place in Sutcliffe's, where the Art Department is. Overall, we are definitely a better place now – sorry to everybody in the past!

AV: If there was one thing you could bring back, what would it be?

JJK: I don't think there are any traditions I'd necessarily want to bring back, generally speaking we've kept all the good stuff! I'm sure there will be a lot of people saying to bring back House Singing – that was a pretty tough evening.

There have been some clever developments throughout the years, and the school is a nicer and an even more professional place now than it used to be.

AP: What are your thoughts on the plans to go co-educational in 2028?

JJK: Nobody can dispute the fact that it is a really good idea, and I will be really excited on everybody's behalf when it starts to come into fruition because I think a lot of work is going into it and a lot of work needs yet to go into it. We are thinking for the future, and this is a really important way of future proofing the school. However,

An interview with the Deputy Head (Boarding)

continued

it's going to be more difficult for us than some others because of our site – we are not expanding and that will affect our relationships with prep schools as intake changes. Even so, there is no doubt for me that one of the wonderful things about this school is the Sixth Form intake, and if we can replicate that lower down the school, it would be brilliant.

I'd love to pop back in however many years and see this place absolutely flourishing. To get the change right, it's going to be hard, but as JFK said, "we choose to go to the moon [...], not because [it is] easy, but because [it is] hard."

AV: What has been your favourite school tradition?

JJK: I am believer in holding onto traditions unless there's a good reason not to. We should not become a slave to tradition, and it should enhance what we are doing because the past is important. I think Abbey is absolutely amazing. Actually, that's something that pupils, having sometimes been

late for Abbey or having missed it, realise after they leave the school with a sort of reflective gratitude. I also look forward to the school musicals and the big shows; they're great and I've played in many of them!

AV: Have any of your biology practicals ever gone embarrassingly wrong? (AP: are there any stains on the lab ceilings that you are responsible for?)

JJK: One thing I can remember was doing rat dissections for an A Level practical exam, when that went wrong there would be a lot of tears and stress. However, I can't remember any practicals that went notably wrong, there was no smoke or fire or anything like that!

AP: If you could give one message to Westminster pupils reading this, what would it be?

JJK: This is an amazing place, take every advantage of all the different things on offer. Appreciate how lucky

you are to have it and give as much of yourself as you can! That will only be a benefit for you moving forward, and for this place as well. I always think the saddest thing is seeing pupils come through who don't contribute, whether that be due to lack of confidence or something else. Of course, everyone is different, but I think there are quite a few people who don't take best advantage of the school.

AV: Have you enjoyed teaching at Westminster?

JJK: Yes, I can't put it into words really! I think it's been amazing, and I think I've been very lucky to have had the opportunity to fill my professional life at a place like this. There have been times when I've wondered if it's time to leave or apply for other jobs, but each time I've ended up staying and building more of a life here, and I feel incredibly fortunate to have done so.



HOUSE REPORTS



HOUSE REPORTS

College

by Sebastian Eatwell

After the excitement of the Coronation last summer, this year in College faced the risk of passing in its shadow, a threat which now seems completely absurd. Indeed, the roaring success of our *Pie the Scholar* stall at September Saturday proved that spirits were as high as ever. Up House, a culinary revolution took us all by storm, with our two (yes, two!) kitchens constantly in use, and Matron's scrumptious cakes gracing our common room weekly at the very least. Apart from the need for a stringent cleaning-up policy, we've had miraculously few incidents.

On the sporting front, College has continued its illustrious heritage.

We emphatically defended our Chess trophy, with a selection of players so mentally mighty that we had to be split into two teams. House Netball saw the inaugural hybrid team Grollege cheated of victory in a tense final, while Kabir Kumar single-handedly secured 1st place in Golf. But perhaps most memorable were the shocked rumours that College had nearly won a match in House Football – needless to say, they were deemed too incredible to be true. However, the epitome of our scholarliness came in the form of Little Commem, which I'm glad to say has lost none of its magic, whether that be the sight of a candlelit Abbey, the intimacy of laying roses on the

tomb of Queen Elizabeth I, or simply the fact that we somehow remember the words to the *Benedictus*.

From the rambunctious Fifth Form to tight knit Remove, College life has been as colourful and rich as ever, expertly kept on the beaten track by Mr Mann and Matron. Nothing could have demonstrated this better than College Concert, which exhibited the same combination of virtuosic talent and heartfelt sincerity that makes it the highlight of each year. All in all, the words of the House song, *amici usque*, have never seemed more apt.

Floreat!

Grant's

by Oliver Buxo-Copp

In yet another unsurprisingly brilliant year, the sooty façade that dominates Yard housed those who dominated in every other regard. This year we outdid ourselves with our depth and breadth of achievements. Whether it be Tarund receiving a standing ovation for his electrifying take on John Mayer's *Gravity*, Rafa leading our team to the third General Knowledge win in five years, or achieving a third successive victory in the Towpath, there is no wonder why Grant's is the place to be.

The year began with a flying start. Towpath teams toiled together to edge out Rigaud's, with no age-category wins, but amazingly an overall win, demonstrating the depth of athleticism throughout all years. Up next came the Bringsty. Left without track star Nicholas Taylor, it was uncertain how the House would fare.

However, the Upper Shell stepped up to fill his shoes. While seventh was not the result the House was looking for, it left us second on aggregate in the running for the Tim Woods (OW) Trophy. In true Grantite fashion, we went out with a bang on sports day – Rafe and Adela both set new records in the shot put, Victor excelled on the high jump, and the 16x100m was the final touch on an exceptional sporting year.

In other news, Mr Mylne showed that he could stick with the youngsters – on the Go-Karting trip, the silver-haired speedster put together a 1:01.564 lap, missing out on a podium by only one place. The Grant's boarding community also continued to thrive – in accordance with tradition, all boarders were officially inducted into the House through a viewing of the timeless classic

Mean Girls, and banded together for yet another impeccable September Saturday performance, under the guidance and aid of Mr Mulholland, to raise nearly £2,000 for Phab.

We also welcomed new members of the House – a mouse, affectionately named Muffin, joined the boarding community. Despite Muffin's tendencies to eat our food without permission and rarely turning up for House meetings, she was welcomed in a most compassionate way, reflecting the empathy and positive atmosphere the House provides.

Regardless of all these fantastic achievements and moments to celebrate, there is one thing I believe we did exceptionally well. In the words of old Housemaster David Hargreaves: "There is only one duty of a Grantite – to demonstrate the many imperfections of Rigaud's."





Rigaud's

by Olivia Wright

We were so good this year they invented a trophy for us. The new Tim Woods trophy is awarded to the most successful House across all the running events throughout the year. By Election Term, our Senior Boys' legs were tired: not from taking the crown in the Towpath, the Bringsty or carrying us (almost) to victory at sports day, but from having to stand up so many times during Wednesday's Latin Prayers.

If there were also an award for which House had the most fun, it would certainly belong to us on behalf of the Senior Girls' performances in netball and football. Although you could count our wins on one hand, the smiles were innumerable.

This year, we brought glory on the pitches, tracks, and courts (law courts that is). We dominated in Mock Trials with Elizabeth Guo, Valerie Choi, Sophia Saunes and Edward Hu representing Rigaud's.

It was a (Thursday) night and the lights were low when our voices were heard loudly ringing from the MMC. The House Concert showcased many unseen talents and closed with a not-quite-on-beat rendition of ABBA's *Dancing Queen* as our House song, which was certainly memorable.

Rigaudites were seen everywhere this year: Felix Nielsen's performance in *When the Rain Stops Falling* put

Daniel Day-Lewis to shame, Timothy Gutsev represented Team GB in rowing (and still managed to stay humble), and Valerie Choi won best delegate in Model United Nations. To be a Rigaudite means many things: an inherent skill of insisting our House colour is orange and not yellow, a love for Ada (Mr Lutton's dog) and gossiping with Matron, a hatred for Busby's, and above all an animalistic passion when chanting *Ipsi Razu*.

In the trusty hands of Ms Choraria (after a seamless transition from the superb Mr Lutton), our beloved Matron and all the tutors, Rigaud's has continued to flourish. I'm proud to call it my home away from home.

HOUSE REPORTS



Busby's

by Seb Foster

"To win is Busby's DNA." These were the stirring words uttered by Mr Bradshaw in the House Meeting before sports day. 2024 was supposed to be the year Busby's finally faltered after seven years of success. Rigaud's were eagerly awaiting their coronation day. It wasn't to be. Every single Busbite came down to Battersea and cheered as hard as possible for every runner. By the end of the day, there were jubilant scenes from everybody in burgundy. An eighth successive victory (including 2020) was the result of the collective effort of every Busbite – it is that group House spirit that makes Busby's so special (and at times rather intimidating).

Busby's has not only flourished on the sports field. Following the purchase of the BBBBQ last summer, weekly barbecues have continued throughout – never failing to raise a smile as the whole House gathers for a hot dog on a Wednesday evening.

The creativity of Busbites has been in full force this year. In the music department, we have been front and centre, performing in the Abbey, St John Smith's Square, and the Barbican. A special mention must go to Maya Murali for singing the *Once in Royal* solo at the Carol Service. In Drama too, Busbites have excelled, Ardavan Pesendorfer taking the reins on sound across several productions,

while Jonah Hawksley gave an all too convincing performance of a New York gangster in *Anything Goes*. The work of Yanka Wong in raising money for Asian performers on her night of *CelebrASIAN* was truly wonderful. It was all singing, dancing, and acting. The entire House had a wonderful time.

Finally, as my time at Westminster draws to a close, I have grown to appreciate the work of everybody in Busby's ever more. Mr Bradshaw, Miss Loosemore, and Mr Coles work tirelessly to make sure that we are well, and they somehow manage to do all this in good humour. A huge thank you to them.

Liddell's

by Temiloluwa Aladejuyigbe and Maximus Walker

Holding steadfast to being a House to watch, our valiant feats this year keep sentiments such as 'it's the taking part that counts' dust in our history. Striking gold, Liddellites dominate House Swimming yet again, and our Girls' Netball team hold onto their triumphant reign, beating College 5-3 in the final. Footie's been fierce for us too, with our Girls' team taking home a painful third place. But victory has never tasted sweeter for the Boys: after a tight and teary loss to Rigaud's in February, we tore through the ranks to victory (with Deniz Tarman tearing through his House shirt!) defeating Milne's 2-1 in a six-a-side final a month later. Coming an impressive 2nd in House Chess and the annual Bringsty Relay, we took the category win for Senior Girls in the latter event. An honourable mention to Beatrice Ambrose who ran through an injury,

achieving 2nd place in this bracket and finishing the gruelling race with a time of 00:08:42.

Give us some range, Liddell's! We glittered in the school production of *Anything Goes*, with tap routines worthy of the West End and stellar performances from Harrison Slocock (as Billy Crocker), Maddie Limpenny, Zain Sathe, Alexander Ross, Kieran Kwa and Maxi Brooke, and Qihan Chai as stage management.

Our mascot ('the bunny') made its debut this Sport's Day, donned handsomely by Alexanders Naughton and Newman, paying homage to Alice Liddell (the muse of Lewis Carroll's 1865 classic). Victory was just snagged from us in the season's most crucial event. Hanging on to mere threads from what felt like an eternity against

Busby's, we were ultimately bested by Ashburnham (!) in the finals, relinquishing our title as Tug of War champions.

The House spirit lives on, largely in our formidable rendition of *Viva La Vida* during House Concert (highly praised by teachers residing above the MMC), but no stronger than in our Housemaster, Dr A-K: our rock, foundation and pizza provider. Our gratitude also extends to our resident tutor, Dr Jones; Matron Mrs Northcott; Izabela and the wonderful housekeeping staff; and all our lovely Liddell's tutors.

Bidding farewell to the world behind No. 19, my soul overflows with pride for the place I call home. But in all its chaotic wonder, who wouldn't be proud to call themselves a Liddellite?



Purcell's

by Vikrum Shah

This is the year of Mr Allchin's debut as Housemaster, and with him has arrived a newborn, plenty of innovation and a lucrative income stream for Mio's.

Purcell's is a House famed for its festivities. As we showered the windows with spray-on snow, a white-bearded Mr Mikdadi

crouched in a bespoke grotto (built by our very own Housemaster) in the corner of our common room. Our Christmas-tree-decorating party was rivalled in its ambition only by our enlistment of an actual bunny to mark Easter. Just before the Easter break, the Purcellites raced through the House in a large-scale, inter-year, high-intensity Easter egg hunt.

Aside from such sporting endeavours, the abundance of Purcellite talent was plain for all to see at our House Concert, at which the audience was transported from a classical recital – courtesy of Naoki Aso, Alex Knight, Mercutio Silmon-Clyde and more – to a hard rock concert (thanks to Rohan Kapisthalam). Whilst House Song rehearsals were far from euphonious, the final performance was spectacular – so much so that it merited an encore. One parent later declared, “Your perfectly synchronised dance routine [credits to Rita Wu and Allegra Hooper] would have put Carly Rae Jepsen to shame”, and we couldn't agree more. This year, our musical prowess has been celebrated with a flurry of pizza evenings, film nights and go-karting outings, culminating in a pizza-making party in Ashburnham Garden.

Purcellites are notoriously humble, but when the House has triumphed in prestigious competitions such as House Climbing (for the third year in a row), it's difficult not to wax lyrical. What's more, extrapolation from current trends regarding our placement at Sport's Day – sixth place this year (up four places from last year) – suggests we are in for a tremendous second place next year. Nevertheless, the House remains a close-knit community in which winning comes second to spirit and solidarity.



Ashburnham

by Mai Noubir

This year has been another great year for Ashburnham!

As a House, we never miss, as shown when we won the House Shooting competition (again). Our House Football performance this year may not have been our best, but all the other Houses are trembling with fear because they know that there is an unstoppable blue wave coming in the next few years with our particularly talented Upper Shell – watch this space for future victories! In other sporting events, we have the best Junior Climber, Kiri Tran, and the Cricket Captain himself, Dhruv Gupta, who is sure to bring us some House Cricket silverware this summer.

We're also officially the strongest House, having continued our streak of winning collective teamwork events at sports day: last year it was the 16x100, this year it was the Tug of War (known to be the most important and

impressive House competition of the year). But we've got brains as well as brawn, winning House Bridge and coming third in House Debating. The Best Dressed House in Competitions prize must surely go to Ashburnham, with our signature blast of blue: blue hair, blue nails, blue warpaint... you can't miss us.

Under the guidance of our wonderful Ms Franco and an excellent team of Monitors (with the best Head of House), we enjoyed loads of internal House events too. This included a pizza evening, House Quiz and House Concert, allowing Ashburnhamites to show off all their talents, from pizza acrobatics to vocal versatility and dancing flexibility. With our unbeatable House spirit, I'm sure next year will be equally amazing for Ashburnham!



HOUSE
REPORTS

Wren's

by Matteo Aliboni

Once again, it has been a fantastic year for Wren's. Apart from being led by an excellent Head of House (me) the entirety of Wren's has proven itself as the rightful occupants of the Wren's-Dryden's corridor. The Remove common room became a hub of activity. On top of being the location of our weekly House meetings, in October we hosted a Halloween-themed Wren's birthday, singing some AC/DC and consuming a ridiculous number of snacks. As the end of the Play Term approached, the room was converted for Christmas celebrations and the end of term saw carolling,

even MORE candy, and all the House together once more. Later in the year, the House also housed a very important announcement – Ms Clarkson's pregnancy! This year also saw the introduction of House Families for the first time. Aside from giving the tutors a much-needed break, the House became a lot more united. Friendships were formed across the years over weekly games of Uno or conversations with the older years passing down their advice. But that's not all, during the House Concert, Wren's boasted a range of new and wonderful genres, from

pop to hard rock, to perfecting our classical base. I believe it is fair to say that Wren's also became Westminster's greenest House this year, with a large part of the House involved in Sustainability Society, and both Heads of Sustainability in Wren's; I know the Remove will miss our weekly green tips from Henry Li. It has been a very busy year for Wren's and, despite the most mischievous Fifth Formers imaginable, we have come out a more united and stronger House. I have no doubt next year will be perfect, just like this one. Go Wrenites!!!!





Dryden's

by Adam Hepburne-Scott

The year kicked off for Dryden's with another successful September Saturday; our Dryden's Pong and Human Fruit Machine have, over the years, become a mainstay of entertainment at the event, and this year was no different, with 'Hardwick the Hamster' succeeding his much-loved predecessors Jeffrey and Howard the Giant Bears as the much-coveted prize – complete with House tie.

House Football followed and, after so many years of scarlet dominance, the aim this year was not victory, but to put on a show for the ages. This was certainly achieved by 'Edlin's Girls', who produced one of the great finals, conceding a winning

goal to Wren's in the dying seconds of sudden-death extra-time after a nail-biting game, while the Senior Boys kept things equal in the Corridor Derby, beating Wren's on penalties in a third-place playoff. The sporting show went on; a twisted ankle in the Bringsty Relay showed the DD commitment, but undoubtedly the highlight was a record points haul of 86 for a superb girls' team in Athletic Sports, surpassing any previous score for in the event for as long as records go back, and taking us to a very respectable fourth in the newly minted Tim Woods trophy.

Off the sports field, the House Concert (held in collaboration with our corridor cousins) comprised

of a fine variety of brilliant performances, and the year has reached a triumphant conclusion with a superb victory in House Debating, putting the case for turning to religion in a time of crisis. No signs of crisis up DD; Matron's new pizza evenings have brought much delight, particularly to the Fifth Form, who managed to eat catastrophic quantities of uncooked dough, while spirits have remained high throughout.

Of course, none of this would be possible without Mr Edlin, Mr Hopwood, Matron, and all the House tutors, who keep this magnificent House going; we are all very grateful.

HOUSE REPORTS



Hakluyt's

by Anaira Jalan

Hakluyt's has been filled with immense House spirit this past year. We started off the year fuelling ourselves for our victories ahead. With an incredible pizza evening, accompanied by an ice cream van donated very kindly by Joshua Liau, we revelled in having the best House event yet, whilst other school members gazed enviously at our delicious ice cream cones. We remained steadily on our successful path, raising an incredible sum on September Saturday with our carnival games and candy floss – not many Houses can claim they have been trained to wield a candy floss stick quite like us Hakluytians. More success followed, as we won the

Black History Month competition with a stellar video created by the Sixth Formers, led by Giulio Sotti. We filmed far and wide – even took shots all the way across the pond, showing just what us Hakluytians are capable of.

We fared well with our sporting events this year. Continuous success for our Juniors show the promise of a talented Hakluyt's generation that is preparing to overthrow Busby's as sports day champions. With wins for the Juniors in the Bringsty, sports day and House football, our young Hakluytians are not to be underestimated. Whether it was skilfully concocting tactical

arguments in House MUN, tapping into our untouched trove of general knowledge, or speedily darting through Putney in the Towpath, Hakluytians came strong and proud to every event and made their mark.

As the year now draws to a close, being a Hakluytian has become synonymous with having strength, pride, resilience and talent – all while winning with grace. With thanks to the brilliance of our Housemaster Mr Kingcombe, and the support of all our tutors, Dr Parry, and Eva, we remain a fighting force in the school community, a powerhouse of spirit and feist.

Milne's

by Alice Gelosi

With steadfast vision and teamwork, this year we succeeded in putting Milne's on the map in everything we have done.

We opened a new chapter with the guidance of Mr Morgan in his first full year as Housemaster, even welcoming little Amelie in time for spring. From pizza making and a girls' bonding trip to Itsu, to Lachlan's mum's signature September Saturday cake, new traditions were added to old.

The Terracotta Army envies the Winnie the Pooh collection we clay-modelled together at the Sixth Form induction day, which proudly watches over our common room. The House interior glowed with a remarkable process of transformation, too: from the buzz of smoothie-making for September Saturday, to the comfort of Christmas decorating, and the excitement

brought by the new air hockey table. We nurtured our sense of community and supported each other from start to finish. From pop to classical and opera, our House Concert was testament to a growing house spirit, culminating in a hilarious rendition of *Orange Submarine* for the House song.

It has been a year of perseverance and many satisfactions in sport: we triumphed in House Climbing, winning both the Best Male and Best Female Climber prizes, and achieving a strong third place overall. Milne's defended its place on the podium with grit across the board: third place for the girls in House Netball and the Bringsty Relays (with an arduous trek out of muddy Wimbledon Common), and second for the Senior five-a-side Football for the boys. We had many personal successes at sports day, and despite unfortunately coming in last

overall, we are still on top for the trophies that count, winning the Boys' Greaze for the second year in a row.

And we have not only been sporty, but smart, too: reaching the finals in House Debating and the Mock Trials, Milnites certainly know how to argue their case well. We also stood our ground in Chess, narrowly missing out on the final.

I am confident that Milnites will continue to achieve both personal and collective success as they step beyond Westminster. The House has been a springboard for growth for all of us, helping us to develop our character and pursue our ambitions, teaching us to pick ourselves up from failure and rejoice in success, with the knowledge that we form part of a community and are never alone.

Up the Orange!



SALVETE



Zafirah Ali



Sarah Davies



Freya Hall



Sophia Bellaoui



Joseph Fenton



Tom Hendriks



Sophie Currie



Conor Foster



Peter Olive



Harry Petty

Zafirah Ali
Archive and Records
Management Assistant

Zafirah read History at the University of Birmingham, taking particular interest in South Asian and Middle Eastern History. Her appeal to archival work emerged from her experience at the Cadbury Research Library where she explored the significance of art in Islamic Arabic and Persian manuscripts. Zafirah is currently pursuing a Masters degree at University College London in Archive and Records Management. Her work at the Westminster School Archive has presented the perfect opportunity to put her knowledge and skills to practice, alongside her studies. Zafirah has already immersed herself in Westminster life and has discovered a newfound passion for book binding as a result.



Fania Weatherby

Sarah Berwick
Teacher of Geography

Sarah joins the Geography Department after recently completing her MSc in Development Studies at the London School of Economics. Prior to this she spent two years at the Godolphin and Latymer School completing her PGCE after graduating with a BA in Geography from the University of Oxford in 2020. Her passion for Geography was ignited as a child, having the opportunity to live in a variety of countries from a young age. It therefore comes as no surprise that a major hobby of Sarah's is travelling! Alongside this Sarah can be found sitting in various cosy nooks with a book and a cup of tea.

Sarah joined Westminster for this academic year (2023-24).



Chris Whyld

Sophia Bellaoui
Teacher of French and Spanish

Sophia hails from Paris where she completed a BA in English Studies and a two-year diploma in Film Studies at the Sorbonne. After moving to England, she worked as a freelance translator in the film industry for several years, relocating to the Bahamas and Thailand in the process. She then came back to England to train as a French and Spanish teacher and gained a PGCE at the University of Sussex. She joins Westminster School after teaching languages at Reigate Grammar School, the British International School Ho Chi Minh City and Harris Westminster Sixth Form. Always fascinated by different cultures, she has travelled extensively throughout South-East Asia and took a sabbatical in 2015 to spend time in India, Indonesia and the South Pacific Islands. Out of term time, she enjoys visiting her relatives in France and Spain and heading off to destinations offering great scuba diving.



Claire Zanelli

Sophie Currie
Graduate Trainee Librarian

Sophie recently graduated from Royal Holloway with a BA (Hons) in Music with Spanish, where she won the Music Undergraduate Dissertation Prize and the Edward and Florence James Prize for all-round excellence. During her university years, she worked as a Student Ambassador, was on various society committees, played flute and piccolo in her university orchestra and was a Chapel Warden. She has also previously worked as Project Research Assistant for various archive projects surrounding music history, with a focus on folk song, country dances, and women making music in the early nineteenth century. Outside of the library, she is a keen aerialist and trains several times a week in aerial hoop.

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Sarah Davies

Actor in Residence

After studying Theatre and Performance Drama, Sarah continued her training and work in acting (theatre and screen), directing and arts leadership. She's enjoyed working as an actor, theatre director, voice artist, lecturer, playwright and public speaking coach across theatre, live arts and education. In a previous life Sarah led a Theatre Company making interactive outdoor arts adventures, specialising in participation and interdisciplinary performance, whilst teaching Scriptwriting and Performance Drama at universities and schools in Yorkshire. Passionate about the art of a good story and jazz improvisation, she's often found on a tennis court, trail running on the Heath, failing at comedy improv, or singing. Sarah's research and body of work intersects cultures, the dynamics of play and live experiences for connection. Sarah has studied Leadership and Theology, and hopes to commence a PhD in the future alongside her life-long goal to Kite Surf. She loves being on her bike, up mountains and will begin her QTS this year.

Sarah joined Westminster for this academic year (2023-24).

Joseph Fenton

Head of Theology & Philosophy

Joseph was educated in Somerset where he established a lifelong love of rugby, religion and school food. Following a bout of theological correction at Oxford University and an aborted stint in the city, he returned to (two of) his first loves. He cut his teeth first at Kingston Grammar, then Reading Blue Coat and City of London School as Head of Department. He lives with his wife and two children in South London. He was the lead singer of the Manic Street Teachers and has a particular keenness for charity MMA, raising money for Cancer Research UK. Despite a wealth of evidence to the contrary, we're told he still thinks he has another bout in him. Be wary if he comes round asking for sponsorship.

Conor Foster

Learning Development Assistant

Conor graduated in Russian, Spanish and Linguistics from Clare College, Cambridge. Having spent a year working at PwC deciding which pens to push and whether Financial Solutions was indeed a misnomer, he now enjoys assisting pupils one-to-one with their organisation (something his mother finds hilarious), modern languages, and general productivity.

Due to the pandemic, Conor's year abroad to Moscow State University was conducted on Zoom, which has certainly increased his wanderlust for the future. Recent sojourning includes Vietnam, and this year Lithuania and Kazakhstan are on the cards. At Clare, Conor was also a choral scholar, and now he enjoys an action-packed singing schedule in the week, even foregoing his Sunday lie-ins in the quest to attain full circadian enlightenment.

In his spare time, Conor can be found in bookshops, at plays, operas, and musicals, in opera choruses, singing at weddings and funerals in a ratio of 4:1, learning the intricacies of a new language, or watching his beloved Liverpool.

Freya Hall

Teacher of Biology

Freya joins the Biology Department after studying Biomedical Science at Durham University and a PGCE at St. Mary's University, Twickenham. She has a particular interest in epidemiology and pathology of neglected tropical diseases and hopes to study this further in the future, alongside teaching. Freya has a great passion for travel. She has lived in Perth, Western Australia and travelled extensively in Europe and Asia. Having grown up in the beautiful Worcestershire countryside, Freya is a keen hiker, runner and horse rider, who is driven by an even greater love of French pastries.

Freya joined Westminster for this academic year (2023-24).

Tom Hendriks

Learning Development Assistant

Tom is a new arrival to the teaching staff at Westminster despite being in his sixth academic year at the school as Shooting Coach. After reading History at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, he spent his twenties in various roles in property, journalism, events management, and hospitality consultancy. The opportunity to teach marksmanship to Westminsters convinced him to pursue teaching full-time, and he joins Learning Development following on from his work with Haberdashers' Academies Trust South. In his spare time, he enjoys competitive target rifle shooting, cooking, and music production (at one point having experienced modest fame in the world of experimental ambient music). A Londoner by birth, he considers himself an adoptive Scot by marriage. When he is not in London, he tries to spend as much time as possible north of the border.

Peter Olive

Teacher of Classics

Peter joins Westminster from St Catherine's College, Oxford, where he has been completing a DPhil as a Senior Scholar. He previously read Classics at Wadham College, Oxford. Between his undergrad and DPhil, he worked in hedge funds for a few years, and later taught Greek and Latin at UCL, Royal Holloway, and University College, Oxford. As a classicist, his interests converge upon tragedy and the tragic — whether in the proto-tragedy of the Iliad, Attic tragedy itself, the pitilessly amoral world of Thucydides, or in the works of Virgil. In his spare time, he enjoys French philosophy, architectural history, long-distance running, choral music, and being thrashed by Cambridge on University Challenge.

Peter joined Westminster for this academic year (2023-24).

Harry Petty

Teacher of English

Harry joins us from Trinity School, Croydon, where he was in charge of the school's *More Able and Talented* programme. Having studied English at Bristol University, he is looking forward to returning to his subject at Westminster, alongside completing a Master's degree in Literature and Arts at Oxford University. An avid theatre goer and aspiring writer, he performed his own poem, *Another Hour*, on the ITV London News and has successfully taken two original plays to the Edinburgh Fringe. Sad to be missing his beloved rugby, but excited for a new challenge, Harry will also be taking charge of the U14A football team. At the weekend, he is just as likely to be found cheering sporting victory (though not often being a Crystal Palace fan), as he is walking down the South Bank after a trip to the National Theatre.

Chris Whyld

Director of Drama

Before joining Westminster, Chris was Director of Drama at City of London School for Girls, and prior to that was a jobbing actor performing at the National Theatre, Gate Theatre, Young Vic, and several of London's fringe theatres. Chris recently completed an MA in Text and Performance at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art and Birkbeck, where he wrote and performed a one-man, confessional monologue, 'desk play', entitled *Attention Must Be Paid, Part 1: Returning to Ripley*. Originally, Chris hails from Derbyshire but has spent the last 25 years or so in London, apart from a yearlong sojourn to Sri Lanka where he taught at Colombo International School, and a year in Romania where he was employed as an actor at the Teatrul de Artă, Bucharest. Other than theatre, Chris enjoys spending time at his seaside home in Margate where the sublime Turner skies never fail to inspire.

Fania Weatherby

Teacher of History of Art

Fania completed her degree in Art History at the University of Oxford and her master's at the Courtauld Institute of Art, where she specialized in European modernism. After graduating, Fania spent three years teaching Art History to international students in Italy, where she enjoyed frescoes and gelato in equal measure. Prior to Westminster, Fania was Head of History of Art (maternity cover) at Wycombe Abbey School and Lead Teacher for Art History Link Up, a charity that offers the Art History A Level to state school students. Outside of teaching, Fania is a practicing artist and her favourite pastimes are going to concerts, films, and for strolls in London's many parks.

Fania joined Westminster for this academic year (2023-24).

Claire Zanelli

Teacher of Art

Claire joins the Art Department from Frederick Bremer School in Walthamstow where she held various roles during her time there, including the Head of the Creative Curriculum and the Induction Lead for Early Career Teachers. Growing up between New Zealand and Italy she brings a diverse blend of experiences to the classroom and her art practice. She gained an honours degree in Fine Art and developed a devotion to learning the skills of the Renaissance and Flemish Masters. When Claire is not in the classroom, you'll find her either painting in her home studio or pursuing her newly found passion for knitting!

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Susan Joyce



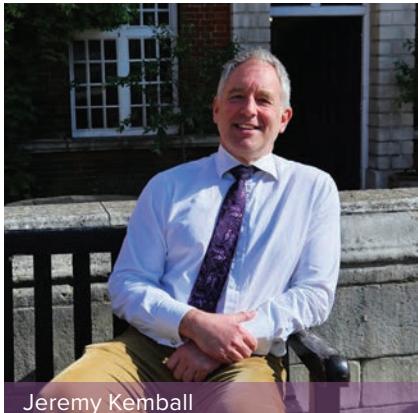
Geran Jones



Katie Stone



Kevin Neuroth



Jeremy Kemball



Stephen Bailey



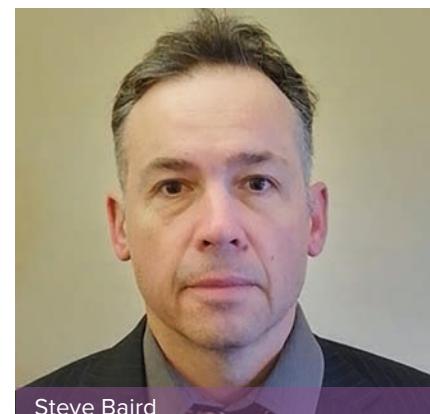
Robert Harvey Wood



Richard Hindley



Helena Barton



Steve Baird

Geran Jones

by John Witney

In my early days at Westminster, with no networked computers, scant communication and languages classrooms dotted around the site, I rarely saw Geran. In fact, I only vaguely knew who he was: the Head of German who also taught French in Sutcliff's; I taught Spanish in College basement, with occasional lessons up on the mezzanine above Dryden's. So when I eventually introduced myself some six months after my arrival, by the pigeonholes in the lower Common Room I recall, Geran looked at me rather quizzically and simply told me that our paths probably wouldn't cross – after all, why would they? Such was the nature of the school at the time: we all did our own thing, forged our own paths and TJP managed us all.

What happened next is probably worthy of a novel but suffice it to say that a combination of staff reshuffles and departures saw the appointment of Geran as Head of Modern Languages, a role he would fulfil with aplomb for the next 15 years, nine of which he was also Housemaster of Ashburnham – an inconceivable workload for one person in the Westminster of today, as it was even back then, but he relished both the academic and pastoral challenges. Geran is above all an astute and skilful manager, and this served him well in both roles, earning him tremendous respect throughout the Westminster community. Indeed, he would soon become arguably one of the most significant figures in the day-to-day running of the school – an éminence grise, I remember a former colleague suggesting, a sobriquet that no one could deny him.

As Head of Modern Languages, Geran brought erudition and acumen to the role, providing strategic leadership of the school's largest and most complex Department, whilst delegating substantial autonomy to individual heads of languages – he had total confidence and trust in his staff; this paid off and was hugely appreciated, allowing all languages to develop their own identities and to flourish in their own, idiosyncratic ways; public

examination and Oxbridge results soared as a result and morale was high, further boosted by the Department's move to a new home in Weston's and Geran's own pioneering role in the development of the Pre-U, which we would adopt across all languages with enviable success for the duration of the qualification, cementing Westminster's place at the vanguard of modern languages teaching in the UK. More success would follow for Geran with the School's UKLO involvement, and a steady stream of competitors soon excelled at both national and international levels, having received expert tuition and preparation during his popular LSA and Linguistics Option.

Alongside Modern Languages, Geran championed for many years the power of the humanities more broadly, a passion that culminated in his appointment as editor of the school's Liberal Arts magazine Camden in 2014. Quite remarkably, a strategically-placed annual notice in Weston's lobby in his trademark 12-point Times New Roman typeface was all it took to get pupils queuing outside his classroom, desperate to have their work selected – but quite rightly so, as this publication has arguably remained for ten years the finest the school has ever seen, showcasing the very best talent through scholarly articles and opinion pieces worthy of a high-ranking, peer-reviewed journal.

And then there's Geran, the man: a quintessentially traditional school master – 'old school' appropriately enough, I suppose, for Westminster: meat and two veg for lunch, red pen and mark book never far away, highly-polished shoes and a suit only ever substituted by 'the Geran fleece' in times of national emergency. And yet, come the summer months, the picture is altogether different as he jostles in shorts and Havaianas with the locals for the best deals in the bustling markets of Menton, savouring a bouillabaisse in one of the marina's restaurants or a pastis with Gaby on the balcony of their elegant Belle Époque apartment.

I will miss Geran in many ways, but I am also excited for him as he begins his MRes in East European Studies at SSEES in the autumn, a programme of study for which he is entirely suited, as anyone who has worked with Geran will know: he possesses a keen analytical mind and a deep understanding of current affairs, geopolitics, and global interactions; his insatiable intellectual curiosity has served as a constant driving force, making him a perpetual learner and an invaluable source of advice and wisdom for his Westminster colleagues and pupils for more than thirty years. Play 2024 will seem strange without Geran, but he knows that a place will always be there for him at the French Department dinner table. See you soon, Geran!

Jeremy Kemball

by Tom Edlin

Jeremy first arrived at Westminster in 1991, under David Summerscale. He was a refreshing Young Turk in a Department of three alongside botanical painter and austere academic Andrew Brown and total gentleman David Custance (who remained sceptical about these new-fangled "moe-lick-yewls" but was invariably chirpy in asking what was for lunch). JJK has retained his radical edge ever since – no relaxing into the role of elder statesman for him – and though his time as Head of Department in the 1990s was so brief that even this pedantic chronicler of that decade's neglected trivia had forgotten all about it (and I was here!), he has retained that powerful presence at the top of Hooke throughout.

That briefest of tenures running Biology is explained, of course, by the gilded career he has subsequently enjoyed: Housemaster of Hakluyt's for thirteen years and a stalwart of the SMC for fourteen, with an evolving role variously defined as Senior Tutor, Deputy Head for Boarding, for Partnerships, Diversity & Inclusion, and more besides. It has been an eclectic portfolio reflective of the man himself, taking in oversight of so many aspects of school life: parent forums and WSPC business (so carefully

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marshalled with Kemball tact!), major events (who else could hold the line as senior steward at the East Cloister Door when assertive latecomers tried to demand entry?), our rapidly expanding links with partner schools, the flourishing Platform programme, the powerful volunteering culture which would amaze a Westminster from thirty years ago and (perhaps most challenging in recent years) complex questions of diversity and inclusion, not least in our response to the Black Lives Matter movement. How could one man juggle all of these, and maintain such a positive demeanour at all times? Jeremy's resilience and essential rootedness are remarkable – and they spring from profound convictions about what is right, and what is feasible. He knows the school exceptionally well, its foibles and its charms – and while he is not averse to the odd moment of nostalgia, he is admirably clear-sighted about the flaws of the past, and the self-indulgence of those who eulogise uncritically or lapse into an over-precious 'anec-dotage'.

In all of this, Jeremy has been brilliantly supported by Ade (is it permissible to share that Jeremy and I have often agreed that a teacher is ruined by having an uncritical wife?) and, of course, by Thomas and Matthew, whose own journeys through Westminster have given Jeremy the parent a perspective to set alongside that from the Singleton's eyrie. There was a time in 2019-20 when arranging a Thursday morning meeting with Jeremy gave me the great joy of 'triple Kemball' before lunch (a detail he hugely enjoyed) – and what clear delight he took in his sons' musical performances, record-breaking feats at Athletic Sports, and academic achievements.

His sense of what families can be was, in a sense, the keynote of his tenure in Hakluyt's. Taking over Dave Cook's 'baby' at Christmas 1997 must have been daunting in many ways, with the elements of laddishness in the House combining with a full-throttle interpretation of the concept of 'survival of the fittest'. As a great admirer of CD (not just Riches, that HH tutor extraordinaire, but Charles Darwin –

in his own recent one-liner from Latin Prayers...), Jeremy quickly identified the key elements of species, habitat and evolving traits. Subtly, over time, he brought kindness and culture to the House, and a decade on, when I returned to Westminster, I felt the change was palpable. He has always understood that if you want to effect change, you have to take the herd with you (a photo from the Elizabethan of the early 1990s of JJK 'explaining the joys of science to supine pupils in Yard' springs to mind) – and this was abundantly true of his tenure up Fields as Master in charge of Football, the unique combination of effete viciousness which once held sway there giving way to a more properly competitive edge, and seriousness of application.

Some readers may have heard my extended comparison between the changing nature of how Westminster School has been run since the 1990s, and the so-called 'Tudor Revolution in Government', that phenomenon so persuasively identified by Geoffrey Elton as, in effect, the imposition of uniformity of practice across a unitary realm. A monarch surrounded at the centre by an ever tighter and more executive Privy Council (SMC) appointed to perform specific roles and with the added duty of maintaining the personal links with the shires (academic departments) given the decline in autonomy of the once over-mighty subjects (Housemasters)... Well, for a long time I wondered exactly how Jeremy fitted into that model; as a member of SMC he has always been different. Now I realise why: his main role has not been that of a regular councillor at all – no mere operative he! – but rather that of Will Somers, the astute, insightful presence at the heart of a complex and changing institution, and the only one licensed to speak genuine truth to power, and say what he really thought – knowing that if he went too far, it could be conveniently defined as a jest, and he wouldn't have his head cut off. So, here's to Jeremy, the Deputy Head (Honesty) and Keeper of our Conscience: we shall miss him more than we know, and I hope that we'll continue to see him often as he 'retires' to Battersea.

James Kershen adds:

In all, Jeremy Kemball was Master i/c Football at Westminster for 17 years. He was well-qualified, having represented Scottish Universities and played semi-professionally at Walton & Hersham FC before serious knee injuries cruelly hampered his playing days. In his own shy, modest way, this was information that Jeremy was willing to share with the populous, like the fact he had played County Squash, attended the Royal College of Music and appeared on Top of the Pops playing saxophone.

Despite injury Jeremy was still the doyen of the Common Room Football team for many years, every match prefaced by the obligatory JJK comments: "I shouldn't be doing this you know, my knees are going to regret it." Following which he would charge about the pitch like a colossus, unbeatable in the air with salmon-like spring. No one who saw it can forget his final CR match where he signed off by controlling the ball effortlessly on his chest, allowed it to bounce and then volleyed it into the top corner from 30 yards out.

His work transforming the Westminster Football programme stands as one of Jeremy's game-changing legacies to the School. He educated numerous teams thoroughly in the techniques and tactics of the game, creating and consolidating a coaching infrastructure which guaranteed a high level of instruction across all year groups. Twice JJK's 1st XIs reached the quarter-finals of the Boodles ISFA Cup – the blue riband competition of Independent School Football – as well as reaching the Elgin League and London Independent Schools' Cup Finals, and putting in numerous good showings at the ISFA Sixes. Jeremy's coaching efforts and achievements were so substantial they were recognised by ISFA themselves as he ran their U16 Representative side for a number of years, before being made a Life Member.

Jeremy's contribution to Westminster Football can perhaps best be summarised by the New Zealand All Blacks' core mantra: "You leave the

jersey in a better place". There is no doubt that JJK left the Westminster Football jersey in a far, far better place when he stepped down as Master i/c. For that we can only be immensely grateful and thank him wholeheartedly. *Floreat!*

Richard Hindley

by Gilly French

Richard was, basically, the "effing legend" (© MRB) of the school. Arriving in 1994 as a Maths teacher, he was assigned a classroom with the same number as his age – 22. Richard's time at Westminster has been characterised by a wonderful sense of belonging and by his complete understanding of the needs of the school, its pupils and staff. He epitomises the Westminster community – he organised bridge for staff and pupils, sang in the choir, coached a boat in Putney, went on riding expeditions and was a member of the Abbey congregation. A choir of staff and pupils sang at his lovely wedding at St Margaret's. His son John became an Abbey chorister before joining Purcell's. More recently, at the start of the Covid shutdown, when we were still teaching (or trying to) on Teams, four faces at a time, a quick "leave it with me" resulted in a Zoom account large enough to host the entire CR for end of term virtual drinks. Suddenly, thanks to Richard, all was (sort of) well with the world.

Sometime during Richard's first year he had been summoned to see David Summerscale and emerged looking very pleased with himself: he had been invited to become founding editor of the new *Westminster Week*, a pink (of course) sheet of A4 (single-sided) with all that was going on in the school. We think it's because he was one of the few people who knew how to type.

Westminster back in the day was somewhat reluctant to engage with IT. Nobody had a mobile phone. The then CR secretary had a computer – we were all impressed – and I'm told there was a BBC machine up Hooke somewhere, but that was about it. TJP recognised a gap in developing

IT and Richard fitted into it, putting together the school's first ever website (the then Registrar was somewhat less keen, thinking it might result in too many applications). Eddie Smith, in a characteristic attempt to conceal the reality of technology creeping into everyday life, pronounced Richard our *Magister Araneae*.

As a member of the exams team, Richard was the first to realise the value of a school database. A school network emerged and quickly became the intranet. Richard became IT Services Manager and eventually Director of IT. He essentially invented Westminster IT. Ask any former colleague what they miss most about the school: it's the intranet.

All this has led, ultimately, to Richard indeed being the only member of staff who mattered. His massive support of anything IT-related, at the drop of a hat. Contact helpdesk in the middle of the night and an answer would be immediate. Problems that have been solved before we even realised they were problems. Back in March 2020, Richard masterminded the school going onto online lessons overnight in a way that actually worked.

Richard also knows how to hold a room. We all remember, for example, his piece about the Korean first family, or another showing his text exchanges with John. They were the highlight of INSET, putting across serious messages in a lasting way.

The reason that Richard is so remarkable is essentially because he has been involved in so much as a full-time teacher and so intuitively understands what people want and need. Richard brought about a dynamically-integrated operation of all parts of the community and he can only have done this from the perspective of having been a full-time member of the teaching staff. It is rare indeed to find someone working on digital infrastructure who understands the tech, the teaching and the pupils' needs.

Speaking to Richard recently I asked what he was most proud of, or most

enjoyed. He mentioned the human side of change management. He told me it was "good to be able to walk a journey from nothing to seeing IT embedded everywhere". Richard, we are so grateful to you for sharing that journey with us, and we wish you every happiness at Emmanuel and your new home in Stanmore.

Katie Stone

by Caroline Goetze

What Katie did at school

Katie and I have worked together for over 14 years, having both joined Westminster in 2010. Beneath her professional demeanour Katie has a heart of gold. Always cheerful and approachable she has been an exemplary colleague and librarian, transforming the library into a vibrant hub of learning and exploration and curating a magical and inviting collection of books to transport us to realms of imagination and wonder. I remember our first task working together to move the 5,000 books in John Sargeant. Dusty work then and now! Since then, Katie has not only touched minds and hearts, but also every book in the library as she kept the collections up-to-date and relevant, her extensive knowledge of books ensuring there was always a perfect recommendation available for readers who are not sure what to read next.

Katie's commitment to inclusivity – she meticulously curated the library's collection to reflect diverse voices and perspectives – has given pupils the opportunity to see themselves represented in the stories they read and her efforts have fostered an environment of acceptance and understanding within the school, creating a more empathetic and informed library user.

Katie's tenure at Westminster has been filled with meaningful connections and lasting memories making her an integral part of the school community. Her generosity with her time, participating in various activities and school events with enthusiasm, is reflected in the comments from colleagues below.

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"Getting to work with Katie for a whole decade was a real privilege. As well as learning an enormous amount from her, I frequently laughed until I cried, and we have shared many wonderful experiences – Phab and the Lyke Wake Walk of course, as well as stranger pursuits such as hosting part of a dinner party in the Drawing Room and wading in a river (not on the same day). She is generous, organised, clever, funny and wise, even if she'd sometimes try to have you believe differently. I'm sorry to all other Katies but she really is the best Katie." – Alice

"Katie has been fantastic company on many outdoor trips over the years. Her fried eggs, sausages, and good humour will be missed on the moors. As a Director of Phab, she has been hyper-organized, friendly, kind, and ready to handle anything thrown her way." – Ben

"Katie has been the ideal teammate, reliable, supportive, problem solver, enthusiastic and kind! I will miss her so much after sharing nearly fifteen years of our love of books – in fact I miss her already." – Elisabeth

"Katie has been a linchpin of the community in so many ways: at the Library, Phab, the Elizabethan, and September Saturday, among others. I will miss our conversations about books and Katie's contributions to the engaging and inspiring library emails extolling the virtues of both classic and contemporary publications, in both physical and digital formats. Katie's recommendations have provided a cornucopia of reading from a consummate librarian. Thank you, Katie, and good luck!" – Gary

"Additional highlights of Katie's contributions include coordinating the delivery of Brick Lane bagels on Friday afternoons for colleagues, with the salt beef ones being top-notch. She has initiated above-and-beyond projects like designing tote bags and has always been a presence at September Saturday. Katie is a real presence around the school, approachable and frequently attending social events." – Jim

"Katie is one of those people who seem to turn everything she touches to gold. I have never worked at a school where the library is such a fundamental hub for all pupils and a place they want to be, much of that is down to her fresh ideas and incredible breadth of literary knowledge. Most importantly she understands teenagers and hits the perfect tone of compassion for the struggles of being a hormonal teen." – Julia

"She has shown exceptional support for pupil societies and Phab, going above and beyond in her role. Her positive relationship with the pupils is evident, and she will be greatly missed". – Simon

"As I have learnt over the past year working with her, it is no easy feat to manage and maintain a school library, yet she does so with such enthusiasm – truly going above and beyond to ensure that the collection is representative of the diverse and fast-paced pupil experience at Westminster." – Sophie.

What Katie did next

"Oh dear!" said Katy, "it is very trying not to be able to be in two places at once" (Ch VIII, Coolidge 1886).

Katie leaves us in August to move closer to her family in Newcastle. We will miss her greatly!

Stephen Bailey

by Thomas Woodroffe

Stephen joined the Westminster Theology and Philosophy Department in January of 2014, initially to cover a maternity leave. He quickly established a remarkable rapport with the pupils who appreciated the thoughtfulness with which he approached each and every lesson. We were lucky to be able to have him stay on and he became a reliable colleague whose commitment to pedagogy enriched the Department in significant ways. He took on an MPhil at Cambridge and did valuable research into character education, bringing together his love for teaching

and learning with his passion for Aristotelianism. For Stephen, this wasn't some sort of theoretical undertaking and it did not go unnoticed by pupils that he was an excellent role-model, a caring teacher who sought to excite the curiosity of his pupils and to get the very best out of them. As his Head of Department for much of his time at Westminster, the consensus from all of his pupils was that his classroom was a place of intellectual integrity and lively discussion, where the pursuit of knowledge was a collective endeavour between teacher and pupil. Stephen masterfully took on the role of Head of Sixth Form Options and Cultural Perspectives before, finally, swapping roles with me. As I took on his job and he took on mine, I was honoured to have been able to briefly have him as my Head of Department. It is to his credit that Stephen fostered an atmosphere of collaboration in the Department that reinvigorated the teaching of the subject. During his time as HoD, he has significantly raised the profile of the subject in the school – he encouraged the publication of the Bentham magazine, reformed the pupil-led Philosophy Society, and set about thinking through the purpose of our subject in an ever-changing world.

Not only this, but Stephen also took on the formidable role of co-ordinating the John Locke lectures and the school's new Horizon lecture series. With the Locke lectures, he has breathed new life into the programme by attracting a wide variety of excellent speakers. Importantly, these have been speakers – some famous and others less well known – who are at the forefront of addressing the challenges that face young people today. As masterful steward of the Horizons programme, Stephen has forged global connections and pupils have been able to hear lectures from eminent thinkers from across the world, or discuss the ethics of AI and the problem of consciousness with the Stanford Online High School.

Stephen's unimpeachable commitment to the Theology and Philosophy Department and to the Westminster community as a whole will be sorely missed. He is a rare breed of person – exceedingly generous and

compassionate; and an even rarer breed of teacher who can inspire a genuine sense of collective learning amongst both his pupils and his colleagues. As he moves on to a new challenge at Queen's College, he leaves behind a remarkable legacy at Westminster. Our loss is very much Queen's College's gain. We have been enriched by his contributions to the school and, indeed, by sharing in the joys and sorrows of the Bailey family. The legacy of his collegiality and his friendship will remain long after he has left the school.

Helena Barton

by Sam Clarkson

Helena arrived at Westminster in 2014, and has since inspired hundreds of pupils in her teaching of modern history, specialising in Germany, the UK and Russia in the 20th century. Her deep historical knowledge and her pedagogical approach (think: benevolent cult of personality) has gained her many devoted followers, including her last batch of Remove pupils, who sent her off with a fully choreographed rendition of *So Long, Farewell*. Such was the fun and focused atmosphere in her classroom—to see her teaching is to see a skilled, efficient practitioner who understands the power of pedagogy paired with plenty of good humour, as well as communal cake breaks between double lessons.

Closely aligned to her teaching of History is Helena's commitment to feminism. She has ensured FemSoc remains one of the most lively societies here at the school, with talks nearly every week from pupils and staff alike, ending this year's season of talks with perhaps one of the most iconic of all FemSoc presentations, *Life Lessons: What Feminism, Cher and Drag Race have taught me*. From Millicent Fawcett to Celine Dion, Helena always flew the standard for wild, wise and wonderful women at Westminster. Helena's approach to teaching is undoubtedly a balance of the academic and pastoral; her roles as first Resident Tutor in Liddell's (after a brief stint in Wren's), day house tutor in Dryden's, and

Head of Year certainly embodied that integrated approach. As Head of Year, she stewarded Sixth Form and Remove pupils alike through the academic and social pressures, all the while remaining a stalwart female role model for new joiners to the school.

Having visited every country in the European Union, it is no wonder that Helena's list of expeditions and school trips is prolific; Greece, Prague, Israel, Warsaw, Rome, Berlin, Cologne and undoubtedly more. Her eloquence and assurance as tour guide and trip leader is second to none, whether it's jaunts abroad or just outside the gates of Dean's Yard. Indeed, her commitment to co-curricular life did not always venture so far afield—Helena's commitment to the sporting life at Westminster was just as influential as she encouraged pupils into the Sports Centre studio for her beloved DanceFit, set up the Boxing LSA and even leading the once very popular (and quintessential summer sport), Hula Hooping. As she did to so many things, Helena helped define sport for our pupils not as oppressive or intimidating, but as exuberant and fun.

Even as Helena moves on to her new role as Head of History at UCS, we know there could not be a teacher and colleague more devoted to Westminster. We are not only losing a dynamic teacher, but a brilliant friend—her wit, uncanny impressions, and fierce loyalty are things we won't easily part with. As the indomitable Cher once said, "women are the real architects of society." As we say so long, farewell to Helena Barton after ten years, we are losing not just a skilled architect of intellectual and co-curricular life here at Westminster, but a pillar itself.

Susan Joyce

by Chris Kingcombe

Susan arrived at Westminster as a Biology teacher in 2015, fresh faced and full of enthusiasm, having completed her PGCE and then a maternity cover at St Paul's. Her passion, organisation and strong

work ethic were clear for all to see from the very start and in her nine years here she worked tirelessly to make the school a better place.

In the Biology Department, she developed fantastic resources, meaning that every pupil she taught was not only incredibly well prepared for their exams but had also been given a plethora of interesting extension work and generously supported when they have needed extra help. She is the kind of teacher pupils will remember for a long time. The Department benefitted from her creativity with fantastic circuses on the carbon cycle or the human senses as just two examples.

She soon gained more responsibility, taking charge of Hockey. Here she brought a new level of energy and excellence to the Station – from small things like organising kit and improving the equipment, to tirelessly planning drills or organising a fuller fixture programme while still managing to get good match ups for our mixed age teams. During her own impressive hockey career, she always played to win, and her dedication and drive were infectious, pushing the pupils and staff around her to give their best.

Not long after, she was made Director of Phab. Here too she worked incredibly hard to organise such an important week for so many people. Covid sadly impacted a couple of her years in charge, but her work to make sure everyone – from teaching staff through to catering and security – in the Phab community feels valued and included has left a lasting impact on the program.

Personally, the role I will remember her most in is as Housemaster of Purcell's. Here she simply flourished. Her leadership was marked by a perfect blend of firmness and kindness, creating a nurturing environment where pupils could thrive both academically and personally. She always went the extra mile, be that staying up talking to the pupils, making sure the House was in the best shape possible (including painting the roof terrace herself) or by decking everyone out with House

VALETE

stash, including giant flags and banners, for House competitions, while deafening anyone around by screeching “come on Purcell’s” at the top of her lungs.

She has a strong sense of equality that has weaved into her time at the school. For example, in her moving Abbey address on International Women’s Day about the plight of Ukrainian mothers or in her work behind the scenes, campaigning for fellow teachers who are parents. She has been a fantastic female role model for so many, be they pupils or staff. Her strength, empathy, and ability to balance so many roles with grace and humility have been truly inspiring.

As she embarks on her next chapter, she takes with her our deepest gratitude, but we are excited to hear about the incredible things she will accomplish next.

Kevin Neuroth
by Oliver Hopwood

Kevin Neuroth – or as he is now known, Dr Kevin Neuroth – has been with us for three short years but his impact on the richness of life in the Department far exceeds this.

Kevin joined the team up German as a Modern Languages Assistant and quickly built wonderful relationships with pupils at all stages in their learning of German. His friendly, warm, mild-mannered and good-humoured nature was instantly successful in helping learners foster a love for the language and a confidence with which to speak it. Pupils found themselves not only in profound admiration of his clear intellectual credentials but also in great appreciation of his supportive, enthusiastic personal touch. This has been an incredible asset to the Department – for us as teachers as much as for pupils. It is no surprise at all the pupils always looked forward to their time with him to develop their conversational skills.

Nobody could have been better placed to make the switch to being a fully-

fledged classroom teacher when Kevin did so in 2023, taking up teaching responsibilities in both English and German. His outstanding subject knowledge across both languages and cultures combines exquisitely with his calming, friendly classroom presence in a recipe for teaching and learning which is truly hard to replicate. We are – throughout Weston’s – hugely grateful for all that he has contributed to the learning experiences which take place here. Advising pupils on coursework essays, teaching beginner vocabulary and grammar, exploring complex topics and texts in both English and German: these are all endeavours in which Kevin has brought to bear his mastery, patience and flair.

We appreciate, too, his efforts outside the classroom – supporting a wide range of pupil-led societies and events, accompanying expeditions to Munich and the Alps (including some excellent ice-cream parlours) and developing the German Departmental news and cultural affairs circular. During this time, he has successfully completed his PhD on modernist literature and male hysteria at King’s College London and the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin: a truly remarkable feat of time-management, dedication and intellect.

We will miss Kevin has a teacher, colleague and friend. We hope that his time at Westminster marks the start of a long, successful, fruitful, adventurous and rewarding career in teaching. The profession is so lucky to have him. Auf Wiedersehen und bis bald!

Robert Harvey Wood
by Iain Butler

Robert Harvey Wood joined Mathematics in January 2022. However tempting it may be to do so, I shall avoid the standard trope of querying rhetorically whether anybody outside the Department noticed the minor swelling of our ranks caused by this young, bespectacled, dark-haired male mathematician. In fact, I rather think it probable that the sartorially aware did indeed notice the ‘new chap’ – especially on those occasions when

Robert was unable to contain his glee at having matched his bow tie to his umbrella.

In what is likely to be a new record for recruitment speed, Robert’s considerable talents as a baritone were uncovered by scout Helen Prentice before he had officially started his teaching role. Helen must have been acting under orders from Gilly French because, in a heartbeat, Robert was signed up for both Cantandum and Floreat. He is an excellent singer as well as an uncommonly reliable one: he has barely missed a rehearsal. Floreat is only eight or nine voices, so, if one falls ill on a concert day, the group is in a potentially precarious position. Last December, exactly that happened – but it was an alto who was unwell. Serendipitously, Robert confessed that he sings counter-tenor as well as bass, and, stepping easily into the breach, he sight-read a completely new line in performance with zero fuss or bother.

Up Maths, Robert has engaged pupils right across the student body. The Remove Further top set relished his lessons covering the group theory material for the optional Additional Pure module, while, at the lower end of the school, his Fifth Form set have made wonderful progress under his gentle tutelage. He also ran a Problem Solving club aimed primarily at Lower and Upper Shells interested in taking their first steps towards Maths Olympiads; just like Floreat concerts, these were attended by a small number of people who shared a curious interest and didn’t have anywhere better to be.

Robert has served most recently as tutor to the Lower Shell up Ashburnham, with whom he has slipped readily into a quiet equilibrium. Irregularly, a scheduling quirk compelled him to accompany Holly Wagstaff and the Ashburnhamite Fifth Form to Nenthead. Perhaps there was some initial reluctance, but this writer’s spies suggest that Robert proved to be – amongst other accolades – an excellent chef, with the absolute highlight being the exquisite pizzas made on the outside oven in lashing rain. He led the Fifth Form on

a walk along Hadrian's Wall, and didn't laugh too much at Ms Wagstaff when she fell on her bottom.

Robert now goes on to UCL, where he will embark on an MSc in Financial Mathematics, and we all hope that he has a good time. Being known as he is for his animated dance moves during staff parties, we're quite certain that he'll experience no difficulty in shaking off the 'mature student' label. We wish him every success.

Westminster class of 2023-24. We will miss his good humour, upbeat nature and 'can do' approach to everything he does. Valete!

Steve Baird

by Simon Wurr

Steve arrived at Westminster in March 2023 as Julia Hughes's maternity cover. We thought we'd found a gem of a teacher, but little did we know that was underselling Steve's geo-abilities, not to mention his all-round positive characteristics. What a superstar! Could you be a Fifth Form tutor and go to Nenthead? No problem. Take Football and Tennis Stations, with multiple fixtures to assorted different venues throughout the Southeast? Easy. Help with the EPQ? Of course. His classes quickly realised that they had a total pro at the tiller; indeed, in addition to being a Head of Department in the past, he had also worked as a Firefighter, so could even save them from a building that was burning down. In fact, Steve was so good, that when the Department did their bit for the dwindling rate of global population increase, Steve was quickly given an extended contract to cover the final stretch of Emma Blakemore's maternity leave, and so worked in the Department for just over four terms. Steve rapidly became our 'go to' colleague for any niche questions about rocks (he has a Geography and Geology degree), at the drop of a hat rejuvenated multiple different schemes of work and was always a wise contributor in Department meetings. Charterhouse are exceedingly fortunate to have re-secured his services after working with them on two previous occasions, and so expect their U15B football team to display skills as silky as the

Afro-Caribbean Society (ACS)

by Charlotte Morton (DD), Temi Aladejuigibe (LL),
and Matthew Kemball (RR)

ACS has made waves this year, blending vibrant cultural celebrations with enlightening educational experiences and thought-provoking talks.

We've covered the whole spectrum – from Matthew Kemball's (RR) talk in September 2023 on *The Significance of Religion in the Movement for Black Liberation* and Charlotte Morton's (DD) *Black British History through the Decades*, to Abbey addresses, theatre trips and art gallery visits. Never seen too far behind a banging set of tunes, we have never felt so inspired than by how well-received our community was by all of you, nor more impressed by 'Last Last' warriors, who gave Burna himself a run for his money.

ACS has been an incredible way to connect with our own culture and history, and of course share such passion with all Westminsters. One key highlight for us this year was most certainly One World Week, where cultural dress day gave us the opportunity to share some (oh so fashionable) traditional outfits and devour some of the most tantalising delicacies from the continent, collaborating with HWSF's TIRAH (There is Rice at Home), all while raising money to help the current crisis in the DRC.

We would be remiss not to appreciate the backbone of our society, Dr AK, who not only enriched us with a ridiculously large supply of plantain chips but worked tirelessly behind the scenes to make all our wildest (and expensive) dreams come true, without asking for anything in return. His devotion to ACS was like none other.

Running a society with the purpose of the celebration of cultures integral to the fabric of the community has been such a fun yet humbling experience we will carry with us forever. We hope you've loved it too, and continue to share the love.



Christian Society

by Alexia de Silva (DD)

Nestled within the venerable walls of Westminster Abbey, the Westminster School Christian Society stands as a testament to the enduring legacy of faith and fellowship.

Our society, steeped in the rich tradition and spiritual heritage of this historic landmark, serves as a beacon of inspiration for generations of alumni. Through prayer, service, and intellectual exploration, we honour the timeless values instilled within us during our time at Westminster School.

Recently, we have held an event with an external speaker, Rico Tice, with the help of Mr Eburne, Father Dan and more – it was a prosperous hot cross bun making session; discussions on faith were thought provoking. It was a great way to reach out to the wider Christian community at Westminster. Overall, this has been a very productive time for Christian Society, we look forward to what the coming year will hold for us: more events, more speakers, and hopefully alumni involvement as well!

Classical Society

by Charlotte Moore (GG)

Salvete Westmonasterienses! This year, venimus, vidimus (some prestigious speakers), and we certainly conquered (lesser societies) with our impressive programme.

The year started off with a bang as we welcomed several acclaimed speakers to Room 54, not least our very own Jessica Yang (PP). Jessica's talk covered the crisis of the Third Century, a tumultuous period of political upheaval and civil war for the Roman Empire. In November, we had the pleasure of hearing Professor Amy Smith, Reading University, talk on *Festival ware from the Panathenaia* and, as Christmas approached, we had Alexander Newman (LL) give an excellent talk on Classics and the East.

Play Term also saw the release of *editio* (our Classics magazine), which was compiled last year by our predecessors. Mr Baker presented the findings of his research into the reconstruction of partially-lost Greek papyrus, whilst several pupils contributed articles, reviews, and classical crosswords.

A plethora of talks kept us sustained throughout the Lent Term. Andreas Metzger (DD) explained the intriguing links between Oedipus and Freud and Frederick Field (GG) explored the topic of worldwide neoclassical architecture. Professor Armand D'Angour, Jesus College Oxford, also visited us to give a talk on Catullus and Lesbia, a fascinating pair of literary lovers. His new take on the identity of Lesbia was both enlightening and enjoyable.

The year was also sprinkled with quizzes and theatre trips. My personal favourite was the UCL performance of *The Song of Arms and A Man*, extracts of Latin from the Aeneid accompanied by music on a reconstructed Greek αὐλός!

Special thanks to Mr Ireland who was able to coordinate fantastic speakers and events for all of us keen Classicists. This year's wonderful programme would not have been possible without him and the rest of the Classics Department!



Conservative Association

by Lida Zhu (DD) and Oskar von Widekind (GG)

The Conservative Association has sought not only to invite the best speakers this year, but also to encourage open-mindedness and promote lively discussion, whether you be an unaffiliated Fifth Former, or a zealously committed Remove pupil.

We were very fortunate to be able to invite numerous renowned and accomplished speakers, from former Minister and MP for Westminster, Mark Field; to the Father of the House, Sir Peter Bottomley (OW); and Dominic Grieve (OW), former Attorney-General. Each gave us a different perspective on current affairs, insight into their political principles, and reflections on their experiences. We were all much impressed by the rigorous reasoning that supported their views, as well as how concisely those views were presented, and their willingness to educate the potential next generation of British politicians.

Each talk was followed by a lengthy Q&A – for us the highlight of these events – where through the discussion that followed, we would learn more about the nuances of our guests' views, and also see Westminsters of all opinions defending and, in some cases, reevaluating their views. We especially focused on trying to promote this sort of discussion, believing that a well-considered and reasoned view, even if eventually wrong, is better than an assertion solely based on feeling and instinct,

and so it was great to see pupils throughout the school seeking to share and debate their own thoughts with our guests.

We have also sought to participate in other political events; we are supporting the campaigns of the Conservative and Reform candidate in the upcoming Mock Mayor of London election (Reform lack their own society), as well as planning a debate with our great adversary Left Society.

All in all, we are extremely grateful to all of our speakers for giving up their time to talk to us – the experience was truly valuable – as well as each and every pupil who attended a talk. Above all, the Association could not have done any of this without our Master in Charge, Dr Parry, and the copious help we received from Mr Chapman.

We warmly welcome anyone who wishes to take part or help run any of our events, no matter your political allegiance, and we wish Frederick Field (GG) the best of luck running the Association next year.

Fem Soc

by Mimi Hudson (PP)
and Jasmine Kang (GG)

Women in Music

Shining the spotlight on our
favourite up-and-coming
artists



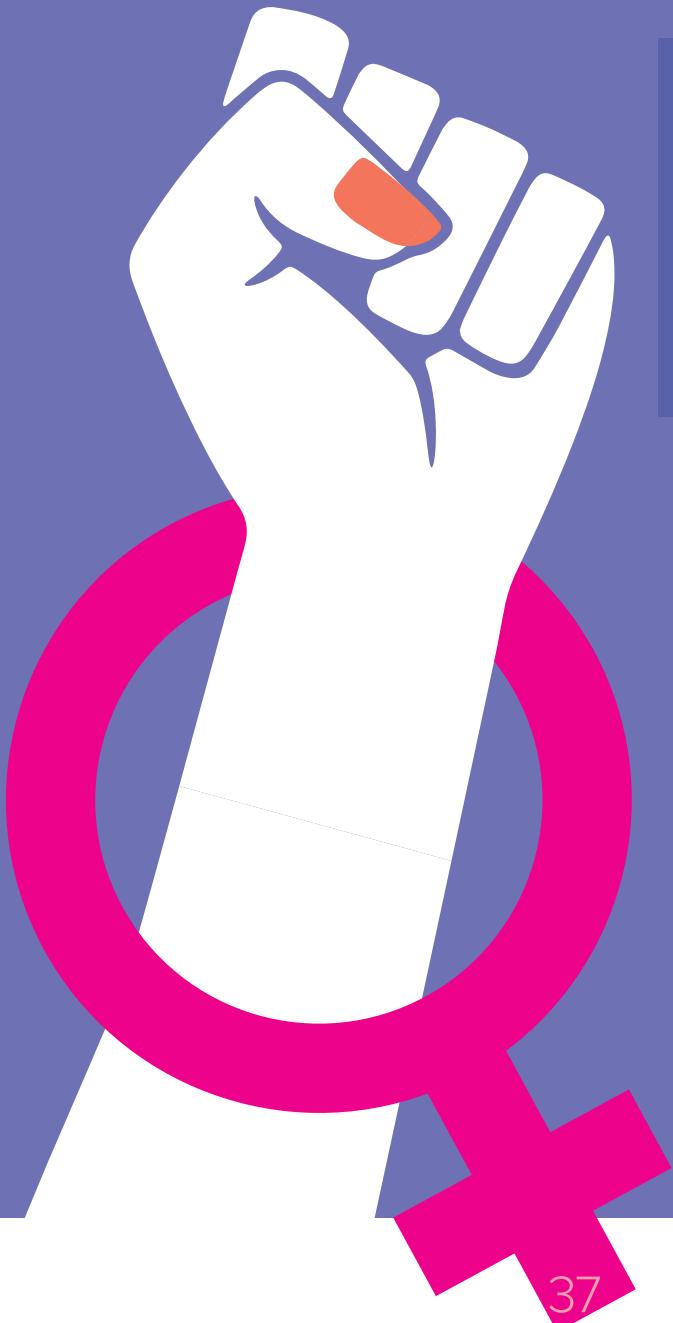
In a year witnessing the record-breaking successes of the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup, the aftermath of overturning Roe v Wade, and a marked boom in online discourse surrounding Popular Culture, there has been no shortage of lively discussion here at FemSoc. From Barbie to the Manosphere, rampant anti-ageing anxieties to girl dinner and girl maths, we have been unafraid to delve into topics spanning feminist conversations worldwide.

There have been a range of diverse and stimulating talks, such as *Challenging Western Perceptions of Islamic Feminism* (Hannah Lee (RR)), *On Gender Identity and Sociolinguistics* (Jasmine Kang (GG), Valerie Choi (RR)) and we cast our minds back to the 60s in *Selling Stereotypes: Unpacking the Role of Women in 60s Media* (Angelina Wu (WW), Mimi Hudson (PP)).

International Women's Week also proved a delight. We enjoyed two musical talks, from Mrs Newton's exploration on *Madonna: Cultural Icon* to celebrating gender expression and inspirational figures on *Women in Music: Shining the Spotlight on our Favourite Artists* (Helen Zhang (PP), JunXi Mah (RR), Mimi Hudson).

8 March started with a moving Abbey address by Louisa Hoogewerf (CC) and Melissa Ward (MM) and a performance of *The March of Women* by Alisha Vyas (CC), Alex Pilz (DD), and Emily Tan (PP). At break a cookie sale took place, raising over £200 for Malala's Fund for girls' education.

We are thus proud to affirm that FemSoc has thrived this year as a hub for lively debate, and we continue to be a place of empowerment, welcoming engagement with feminism. We are looking forward to further endeavours next year!



History Society

by Seb Foster (BB)

While history was being made across the world, at Westminster, history was being explored and evaluated in the classroom.

The year began with the Remove keen to pad out their UCAS personal statements. Consequently, there were a flurry of talks spread around the world. I attempted to sound knowledgeable about Song Dynasty China, and the marvels of its surprisingly modern social environment – it was indeed the world's first restaurant culture. In addition, Allegra Hooper (PP) gave a wonderful talk on Isabella of Castile – the *mother of modern European Queens*. Two Fifth Formers, Alec Apostu (CC) and Imaad Nasir (HH) gave a joint



talk on the *Breakup of Yugoslavia* – an extremely impressive effort from two of the youngest members of the society. It is certainly in great hands!

The best event of the year was no doubt the presentation put on for Black History Month, in which Kristina Akova (PP), Rafael Leon-Villalpulos (GG), Arran Syed-Raja (MM), and Thomas Jolly (MM) focused not only on important figures, but also on how narratives of Black struggle and oppression have been preserved, and how crucial it is for these stories to live on. They spoke on the Haitian Revolution, the Mau Mau Uprising, the Harlem Renaissance, and the Role of Statues in Modern Collective Memory.

Understanding the role history has in maintaining cultures and catalysing meaningful change is one of huge value. The History Society attempts to bring a voice to whatever anybody feels passionate about. Within the multicultural environment that is Westminster, there are always fascinating stories to tell.

Huxley Society

by Yuquan Zhou (MM)

Huxley Soc continues to be proud to be one of the most active and well attended societies in the school. Once again, pupils fought for lunchtime time slots to share their scientific passions, with numerous Double Huxley weeks.

Highlights include a brilliant demonstration of arc lamps by Spike McNulty (BB), discussions regarding how to catch seals in the talk *We all live in a Yellow and Orange Submarine: A Guide to Ocean Robotics* by Blake Morris (HH) and drawing force diagrams on skateboards in Arin Mo's (BB) *The Physics of Skateboarding*. Not surprisingly, the applications of astronomy and quantum physics have been explored in various talks including *The Power of Single Cell Sequencing: From Decoding Tumour Cells to Quantum Teleportation* by Zhentao Zhou (GG) and *The Greatest Discovery To Be Made: Life Beyond Earth* by Kieran Kwa (LL). We were also very fortunate to have Professor Richard Smith and Dr Isabel Quiroga speaking about their experiences about *The First Uterine Transplant in the UK* at this year's Hooke lecture. Their story was truly inspiring and

the lecture was absolutely fascinating for many.

Huxley Soc continued to publish newsletters containing the latest science news and the Huxley riddle with problems ranging from sea level rising to Pret coffee. If you want something lighter than the 'arduous' reading of the one-page long newsletter, the much loved @westminster_huxley always has more news, memes, and jokes for you to enjoy.

It's been a great pleasure leading the Huxley Society this year and seeing so many people participating and sharing their scientific enthusiasms. Thanks, as always, to Mr Ullathorne for making this all possible and who, I'm sure, will continue to enjoy booking rooms for many more great Huxley events yet to come.



JSoc

by Emma Tori (AHH),
Joshua Reiniger (MM),
Max Rozenfeld (GG)

2023-24 was a busy year for the Jewish Society, so we have chosen three highlights.



Friday 26 January marked Westminster's celebration of Holocaust Memorial Day, which began in the Abbey. Emma and Joshua gave respective addresses about their own heritage and as the importance of commemorating those not alive to tell their own stories, followed by the lighting of a commemorative candle. Later in the day, we were fortunate enough to be visited by Bob and Ann Kirk, two Holocaust survivors, who spoke to a packed room of over 100 people about their own experiences regarding the Kindertransport. The talk was truly enlightening, and their powerful testimonies and messages were deeply felt by all.

Additionally, JSoc was delighted by the addition of Rabbi Jonny Hughes to the chaplaincy. Over the course of three 'Lunch and Learn' events, he warmly invited Jews and non-Jews for informal and informative sessions in Boult. These events are both brilliant opportunities for learning and engaging with our faith, especially around festivals such as Hannukah and Passover, as well as a safe space for us to share concerns and seek reassurance, with Kosher bagels always supplied! During what has been a difficult year for many Jews, we have been very fortunate to have Rabbi Jonny join us, offering teaching and support throughout.

Another highlight in our year was the JSoc stall on cultural food day, tucked in right next to the fried Mars bars amidst the bustle of a packed School. Max brought in home-made falafel, and we made pitta wraps with Joshua's hummus and delicious traditional salad. These were paired beautifully with Emma's marble cakes, which tasted so good you'd think a baker had made them! Seeing people enjoying our food together is a memory that will last – it was an absolute privilege to be able to share our culture in that way.

Korean Soc

by Hannah Lee (RR)
and Harry Chang (GG)

This year saw great numbers flock to KoreanSoc, with a record-breaking 144 members signing up during Societies Fair (perhaps incentivised by *Gangnam Style* blaring on the speakers).

As part of One World Week, a screening of the award-winning film *Parasite* was squeezed into lunchtime with some our favourite Korean snacks on offer. We also held a food stall, coming equipped with stacks of Tupperware of traditional dishes, including japchae (잡채) and kimbap (김밥), as well as street food favourites, like tteokbokki (떡볶이) and fried chicken. We're sure our mouth-wateringly authentic dishes secured some lifelong Wagamama boycotters. The numbers speak for themselves, as we successfully sold out, raising £350 for UNICEF in the process.

We also joined with the other East Asian societies in yard to celebrate Lunar New Year. Again, we sold food to raise money, this time in aid of period poverty in China. Tteokbokki was back by popular demand, which had us running back and forth from Liddell's with steaming pots and pans.

From our very first 'Korean' instant ramen night in Purcell's – complete with spam fried rice and a selection of four ramen types – to adopting Nikhil (Sarah Kumar (WW)) as sous-chef, Westminster has been a place for us to nurture our community and we're grateful for all these opportunities.

Law Society

by Yovana Konrad (DD)

Naturally adhering to precedent, Law Society remains as bustling as ever judging by the array of events that took place over the past terms.

October kickstarted LawSoc's first meeting with a quizzical bang as Westminster's legal minds grappled with (among other things) the meaning of jurisprudence, the number of practicing barristers in England and Wales, and the New York State Attorney General in a spirited Kahoot!

Pupils proved their equal capacity for flair in print with the release of the first-ever edition of the Westminster Law Review in December. Its content reflected expansive interests, with articles and commentary ranging from personal injuries litigation to the history of international law to the intellectual property challenges posed by AI. In addendum was a reflection on Antonia Romeo (Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Justice and OW)'s John Locke lecture on the mathematics of criminal justice, some titbits on law-related news, and a comprehensive general knowledge crossword.

Lent term began with a discussion on *What is law?* Attendees offered fascinating insights into the separation of powers, the purpose of the judicial system, and Dicey's notion of the rule of law. At the time of writing (April), LawSoc looks forward to Stephan Zuev (PP)'s talk on the notorious Post Office scandal and its legal horizons.

Special thanks to Dr Aidonis and the rest of the LawSoc committee for their support, as well as all participants in events and contributors to publications without whom such a productive year would have been a difficult feat.

Maths Society

by Elsa Lin (BB)

At Maths Soc, we believe that 15 maths lessons each week just isn't enough. This is why we congregate in Room 13 on Wednesdays to do even more maths.

We kicked off this year strong with a problem-solving session tackling problems we stole from Tonbridge, which may or may not have descended into a Haribo-eating party. After this, we held many sessions solving (and failing to solve) various Olympiad problems after the discovery that writing 'British Maths Olympiad prep' in the emails exponentially increased turnout. These proved somewhat successful – I even ran out of printer allowance to print sheets in Play Term! Dr Wagner gave a fascinating talk about error-correcting codes, while a wonderful Tonbridge trip was organised by Mr Harvey Wood (which I unfortunately cannot write about in more detail as the school banned the Removes from going).

It has been a pleasure to lead this year's Maths Society. Thank you to everyone who showed up – you are honestly the best. We would also like to thank Mr Harvey Wood for his unwavering support (and if he is reading this, we sincerely apologise for running sessions on Wednesdays against his wishes).



Model United Nations (MUN)

by Rafael Leon-Villapalos (GG), Secretary-General

Compromise, diplomacy, and tact: while a cynic might say Westminsters are not commonly blessed with these virtues, the blooming health of Westminster MUN in what has been an excellent year gives the lie to this notion.

On the grand scale, Westminster delegates once more attended and demonstrated their prowess in the internationally renowned Berlin MUN conference in November, and closer to home participated in two joint conferences with Harris and Greycoats in what is fast becoming a fixture of the MUN calendar.

The internal MUN scene continues to go from strength to strength, with our LSA one of the best attended in the school and the lunchtime society consistently a hive of lively debate: topics discussed have ranged from military coups in the Sahel to a historical debate on the Vietnam War, as pupils learn to engage with key international issues and strengthen their arguments. Any discussion of Westminster MUN would, however, be remiss without the annual jamboree of Inter-House MUN, which this year discussed the ongoing Myanmarese civil war: while every Secretary-General likes to claim this, the standard of debate was exceptionally high this year, with College narrowly reclaiming their crown from Rigaud's. Most importantly of all, this year (thanks to Mr Brown's efforts) marked the first full year when chairs have had their own gavels to pound with a cry of "Order!", with this change a welcome one, though perhaps not to the eardrums of the LSA pupils.

All joking aside, many thanks to Secretary-General Alexander Newman (LL), Deputy Secretaries-General Sohan Vohra (RR) and Cheryl Luo (CC), all the MUN Committee, and especially Mr Brown, Ms Franco, and Mr Petty, whose tireless support has helped Westminster MUN flourish this year.



ACADEMIC

Pride Society

by Olivia Wright (RR)

Hettie Nolan (AHH) kicked off Pride Society this year with a talk on the intersection between trans rights and gender critical theory.

She neatly summarised the major modern challenges for the trans community as 'prisons, toilets and sports' and highlighted the evolution of 1970s political lesbianism as a branch of radical feminism. Next, we heard from George Wilkinson (DD) who provided a whistle stop tour of the origins of pride. He touched on stories from Enkidu in the Epic of Gilgamesh to the 150 pairs of male lovers who fought as the Sacred Band of Thebes.

In March, we held a viewing of *Sisak*, India's first silent film on queer love, followed by an eye-opening discussion on internalised homophobia and our experiences of this at Westminster. To end the academic year, we plan to journey out of the confines of D07 and hit the streets of Whitehall on 29 June for the London Pride parade.

Pride Society continued to provide a safe space for anyone and everyone. Abbey addresses from Luke Bannister (DD) and Maddie Limpenny (LL) especially helped to achieve this. They brought light to experiences of losing and regaining touch with queerness and questioned how wholly our LGBTQ+ identities should define us.

As ever, Pride wouldn't be possible without the enthusiasm of all the pupils involved and the guidance of our well-loved Mr Page.

Sir Richard Stone innovation competition

by Ishan Agarwal (AHH)

The Sir Richard Stone Innovation LSA is my favourite way to end a long tiring Wednesday, jam-packed with ideas, learning and fun all in an hour-long session.

This LSA is a driven competition, with each team brainstorming their own million-dollar business. My experience in this LSA has been fantastic with in-depth presentations on intricate financial details, hands-on mentoring and a helpful, friendly environment. I personally am developing an eyewear product, and with the help of the great Sixth Formers it's shaping up to be a solid entry. My friend Joseph on the other hand, is designing a product on phone cases! The vast options of innovation in this LSA make it special, with endless opportunities for projects, whether you are interested in football to even clothing. This range of options make this LSA my favourite end to a long school day, just channelling your passion for anything into a solid business proposal.

by Joseph Ling (MM)

The Sir Richard Stone Innovation Competition has been a great experience and an LSA that I would recommend for everyone. The competition is a Dragon's Den style business competition where throughout the term we develop a large-scale company. We all present our companies at the same time in an authentic Dragon's Den experience. We develop our companies and ideas using the lessons we have learnt throughout the term and the expert help of our mentors. Every week we receive a new presentation about a key element of our development process and we use this information to further our understanding of business and finance.

This LSA has been great fun and I look forward to the competition.





Subcontinental Society

by Rishik Sen Vishwanathan (MM)

This year has been Subcontinental Society's most active and exciting. We kicked off with a bang – the Bollywood dance at September Saturday was our biggest yet!

Dhruv Gupta (AHH), supported by me and Anaira Jalan (HH), led our crew of 16 dedicated dancers (from across cultural backgrounds) to *Chammak Challo*.

Our Westminster One World Week schedule was jam-packed! We started with a Bollywood movie night, where a high turnout came to watch *Student of the Year*, and Raaghav Das (CC) provided delicious Indian food for us to tuck into. Our Diwali celebration saw Maya Murali (BB) bring in henna/mehndi artists to school – they were a big hit! WOW Week culminated with our food stall (NB the most successful stall). Selling Bangladeshi, Tamil, Gujarati and Punjabi treats that various society members brought from home, we raised nearly £300 for Sikh charity Nishkam SWAT, who provide free meals (langar) to homeless people across the UK.

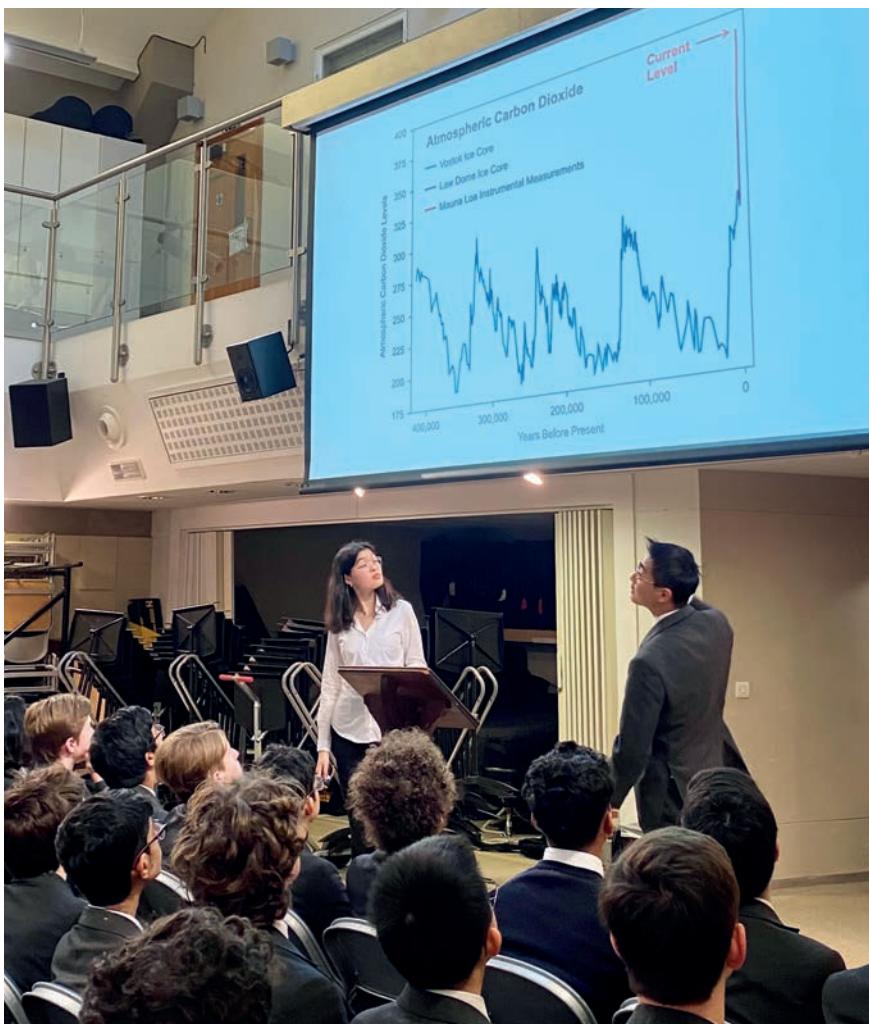
That wasn't all though – Shiv Thakrar (CC), Alisha Vyas (CC), and Raaghav ran a 'DIY street food' stall in the Lent Term where pupils came to make *pani puri* or *fuchka*, a snack popular across Pakistan, Bangladesh and northern India. The henna artists were back again during Mental Health Week. To kick off Election Term, sweets were given out for Eid al-Fitr!

It has been a busy, busy year for us, and I must thank the committee (Anaira, Shiv and Raaghav) for all their work to organise these events, as well as Ms Franco for always helping with a last-minute room bookings! As the year comes to a close, I can only hope Subcontinental Society remains as inclusive and diverse in its reach, and even more of a presence on the school's society scene – continuing to share South Asian culture with our community. I feel confident that I am passing it on to safe hands!

The Success of Sustainability Society

by Henry Li (WW)

From Parliamentary petitions to sustainable finance and from academic talks to waste reduction, Sustainability Society has spearheaded the environmental movement at Westminster.



At the beginning of the Play Term, we worked with other schools to launch a Parliament-approved petition on carbon takeback obligations for fossil fuel companies. Following last year's introduction of Stir, an eco-friendly lunch option, Westminster's recycling company recently awarded the school its first certificate to celebrate our success in sending zero waste to landfill in 2023.

Sustainability Society has also hosted a series of academic talks. In March, Alex Pilz (WW) and Henry Li (WW) gave a presentation to the Lower Shell. As part of Lower School Societies Week, Angad Kohli (BB) and Kimon Kantouras (RR) presented a fascinating talk on *The Sustainability of Football*.

Another highlight was Matteo Aliboni (WW) and Henry Li's (WW) Latin Prayers Address to the whole school in March. In his speech, Matteo announced our plans to improve education at Westminster by integrating sustainability into the Wellbeing curriculum. Our lesson plans have been developed by pupils for pupils and aim to educate about the problems facing the environment and the strategies to solve them.

Henry outlined how we are working with the Bursar to introduce a sustainable finance policy at Westminster, which involves transitioning the portfolio towards greener investments. Sustainability Society is also leading a global coalition of secondary schools towards a similar path.

This year has been a success for Sustainability Society. However, none of our achievements would have been possible without the unwavering commitment of Ms Stone, Mr Lynch, and Ms Ribarska. We would also like to thank pupils and staff for their input and passion: your support has been invaluable to us and we hope Westminster's flourishing environmental movement continues to grow in the future.

A year in Music

by Sebastian Eatwell (CC)



The musical year started as it meant to go on, with the choir's enthusiastic performance of *O thou the central orb* at the New Parents' Service. Within days, musicians were thrown into their first individual lessons, assigned chamber groups and performing in the first MusSoc of the year, a wonderful opportunity for players of any standard to stand up and have a go in front of an encouraging audience. The academic side of the musical scene was also busy, as those studying A Level Music attended the Proms to hear Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* at the Royal Albert Hall.

The Prep School Heads' Dinner in September presented the first opportunity for a soloist to impress in a more formal setting, a task to which Aiden Bhak (PP) rose admirably, giving his rendition of the *Allegro* from Henri Vieuxtemps' *Concerto Opus 19* on the violin. The Lower and Upper School Soloists' Concerts followed, with Westminster's musical talent assembled to dazzle us with an incredible range of performances across all genres. The vocal concert provided yet more entertainment, with a number of more modern choices making for a truly eclectic evening.

At St John's Smith Square in November, the Symphony Orchestra took to the stage for the first time this year, performing Amy Beach's *Gaelic Symphony* under the keen baton of Mr Garrard. Eliza Ruffle (RR) also performed Saint Saens' *Piano Concerto No.2*, displaying virtuosity and tender lyricism in equal measure. To complete the concert, Mr Price conducted the Lower School Orchestra in John Williams' rousing *Superman: A Symphonic Suite*. The Carol Service, as always, was the culmination of the Play Term's music efforts, whether in choir, brass or even composition, and it certainly did not disappoint. The magic of Lauridsen's *O magnum mysterium* sung in a hushed, candlelit Abbey, is an experience that no one could forget.

Lent Term musical highlights included the Sir Adrian Boult Memorial Concert at St John's Smith Square on the first day of term, where we were delighted to welcome Sheku Kanneh-Mason (cello), Tom Poster (piano), and Elena Urioste (violin). In the Concerto Concert up School, seven Remove Pupils – Hojung Kim (BB), Naoki Aso (PP), Oliver Davis (CC), Sebastian Eatwell (CC), Hector Elwes (WW), Cyrus Tahbaz (HH) and Lukas Talmacszi-Marby (PP) – performed chosen movements with the symphony orchestra. The Chamber Music Concert was also a real joy, featuring pupils from all year groups. We were deeply moved when the Choir sang *Even when God is silent* by Michael Horvit, and Mercutio Silmon-Clyde (PP) performed *From Jewish Life: The Prayer* by Ernest Bloch, at the Holocaust Memorial Service in the Abbey.

Pupils gained invaluable insight into musical performance when we welcomed Thomas Hancox (woodwind), Charles Owen (piano), Marcus Farnsworth (vocal) and Alex Ho (composition) for a series of masterclasses. The organists were particularly fortunate since, at the beginning of the Election Term, they were welcomed to Westminster Cathedral by Simon Johnson (Master of the Music), and each had the opportunity to play the Grand Organ. Shortly afterwards, they had a masterclass with the Abbey's Sub-Organist, Peter Holder, on the brand-new Harrison & Harrison Organ at The Guards' Chapel.

February was particularly frantic as the Music and Drama Departments combined to produce this year's musical, *Anything Goes*. The result was a highly entertaining three evening





run, where singers and musicians synchronised perfectly, leaving the audience no choice but to give a standing ovation. Throughout the Lent Term, MusSoc continued weekly with prodigious efficiency, while Mr Wray's Piano Forum flourished. Trips by GCSE and A Level musicians to see *Wicked* and Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique* respectively were also thoroughly enjoyed.

Other highlights included our Sixth Form taking part in the Merton College Choral Experience in Oxford, and hosting the annual Pop Concert in the MMC, with both soloists and bands performing a mixture of original material and covers. A few days later, the Choir performed Allegri's *Miserere* in the Abbey, the interplay between full choir, solo quartet and cantor making for an enthralling fifteen minutes.

Finally, before the Spring Concert and the end of term, we returned to the Barbican for our annual choral and orchestral concert. A choir of 200 comprising of 165 members of the Westminster Choral Society and 35 members of the chamber choir performed Brahms' *Requiem* with

a seventy-strong school symphony orchestra. Separately, another choir of 200 featuring pupils from Westminster, WUS, and our state school partners, sang Cecilia McDowall's *The Girl from Aleppo*, in the presence of both the composer and the librettist, Kevin Crossley-Holland.

Our brass players had a busy Election Term, participating in a brass day with Alan Thomas, Principal Trumpet of the BBC Symphony Orchestra, and playing in Abbey on at least three occasions with the choir, most recently with a performance of Parry's *I was glad* to commemorate the anniversary of the Coronation. Singers from Westminster and Westminster Under School were joined by organ, brass, and the King's Scholars with their Vivat acclamations.

We hosted Music and Wellbeing Webinars for our musicians, with speakers including Helen Epega and Jo Hensel who dealt with aspects of

a musician's life like healthy practice habits and performance anxiety. Meanwhile, the Jazz Evening up School was an excellent evening, as was our A Level trip to Bizet's Carmen at the Royal Opera House. Our musicians joined forces with the WUS choir to sing Brahms' *Geistliches Lied* in Abbey, and also contributed to WUS's Piano Fest, further examples of the many collaborations between the two Music Departments.

In the second half of term, in addition to the Leavers' Service, Election Dinner, Summer Concert, and Choir Tour to Spain, Emily Tan (PP), Crystal Liu (LL), and Alex Pilz (DD) curated the third annual Women Composers' Concert. Meanwhile, our singers participated in the Marylebone Music Festival in a performance of Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* before our choir tour to Madrid, Zaragoza and Barcelona brought a thrilling end to an extraordinary year in music.



Music Department Valete

by Tim Garrard

Rebecca McNaught
Music Partnerships Coordinator
(2022-2024)

At the end of the Lent Term we bade a fond farewell to Rebecca McNaught after two years as Music Partnerships Coordinator. Rebecca has now taken up a permanent cello seat in the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and we wish her all the very best in this exciting new phase!

When we were given the green light to advertise for a stand-alone Music Partnerships Coordinator I was excited, of course. However, it was impossible to know of the calibre of applicants, and the role itself would rely upon the successful candidate running with ideas and delivering these. We could not have wished for a more perfect fit. Through her musicianship, empathy, administrative skill, preparation, intellect, communicative skills, natural gift as a teacher, and her passion for partnership and inclusion, Rebecca: ventured out into our local community and, skilfully and tactfully, built upon existing relationships whilst creating new ones; built a thriving group of upper school musicians who now understand why this work is so invaluable and enriching; equipped this group, through her own fabulous teaching and the coordination of a series of wonderfully informative sessions given by professional experts in the field, with the confidence, skillset, and resources to deliver

a programme of music education within a variety of different settings; built a blueprint of partnership which her successors will now be able to build upon; inspired, both indirectly and directly, thousands of young people within the City of Westminster.

Rowan Lovell
Music Department Technician
(2019-2024)

Rowan has left an indelible mark on the Music Department, and we all feel incredibly fortunate to have worked with them over the last five years. They began here as a Part-Time Music Technician on a 20-hours-per-week contract, and it was immediately clear how precious these hours were and how much we missed Rowan for the rest of the week. I am incredibly proud of the work that the Music Department did to ensure that the show carried on when Covid arrived, and we became a digital community overnight. Given our reliance on technology, Rowan's role expanded to a 40-hours-per-week post, and their legacy is, at the very least, the post of a full-time technician.

I cannot thank Rowan enough for everything they did during successive lockdowns: holding our collective hand via phone calls, texts and emails as we ventured into the world of Teams and Zoom for the first time; making the MMC fit for business with metres of

masking tape across floors, protective barriers, dog nappies to catch the saliva of brass and wind players, innumerable risk assessments; 'how to' videos and pdfs for remote teaching; setting up the audio and cameras within each of the MMC practice rooms; creating and editing en masse collage videos; making professional audio recordings of some of our socially-distanced ensembles and soloists; and so much more. The list goes on and on.

There is no doubt that Rowan has all the skills and capabilities in abundance to deal with our technology. But what has really stood out has been Rowan's humanity, kindness, generosity, empathy, courage, and perseverance. We will miss Rowan very much, but we're delighted that they are heading off to train to be a Chartered Forester!

Toby Purser
Teacher of Conducting and Piano
(1998-2024)

We have been incredibly privileged to have Toby on our staff, as a piano teacher from 1998 and then in recent years as a conducting teacher. Toby is admired and respected hugely within the music profession. He was an ENO Mackerras Conducting Fellow, conducting productions of *The Turn of the Screw* and *La Traviata* at English National Opera. He is Musical Director

of the Vienna Opera Festival and Academy, and the founder and now Principal Guest Conductor of the Orion Orchestra. In 2020, he was appointed Head of Conducting at the Royal College of Music. The combination of this role and his blossoming freelance conducting career has meant that life has simply become too busy to maintain his teaching here!

Toby conducted the school orchestra and the Westminster Choral Society in a performance of Brahms' *Requiem* in Westminster Abbey. More recently, he conducted the school orchestra once more in Shostakovich's *Fifth Symphony* at St John's Smith Square. Behind the scenes, he has been a wonderful mentor to many colleagues within the Music Department who have sought conducting advice! We will be very sorry to see Toby go – he is a brilliant colleague and an inspirational teacher!

Steven Wray
Head of Piano (2019-2024)
and Teacher of Piano (1991-2024)

Steven Wray began teaching piano here in 1991, though his Westminster journey really started in 1983 when he became the Assistant Director of Music at the Under School. Dan Swana, now Head of Pop and Jazz here, remembers lessons at the Under School with Steven well and

has never forgotten that, with regard to rests, "minims mount and semibreves suspend"!

Life in the Music Department was different back in the early '90s, and Steven recalls a phone call he received after two or three years of teaching at Westminster from Penny Baird, dearly departed colleague and the music secretary at the time, asking if he had ever been paid! Thirty or more years later, and Steven has given so much to the school and to generations of pupils. And, since 2019, he has brilliantly taken on the additional role of Head of Piano.

We will miss Steven's expert counsel regarding music examinations as a highly experienced ABRSM examiner. We will also miss his encyclopaedic knowledge of piano repertoire, particularly during our 13+ and 16+ music award auditions when he would delight in discussing opus numbers with our applicants!

Steven helped us choose the Steinway Concert 'D' which can be found up School, and he played a central role in arranging for the reconditioning of the Yamaha Grand Piano in the Recital Hall. He has also brought in a Dampf Chaser system up school which should keep the humidity of the Steinway in check. As Head of Piano, he has curated an annual programme of Piano Forums in which our pianists can perform

to each other and then discuss interpretation and performance practice. He has also created a collaborative piano class, in which our pianists are paired off into piano duos and given a weekly coaching session by one of our piano teachers. He has invited stellar international artists such as Roger Vignoles and Charles Owen to give masterclasses, and has given our most experienced and advanced pianists a platform on which to start their own professional careers.

The breadth of opportunity afforded our pupils has been wonderful. Steven has nurtured our young musicians through such a stimulating programme of events and with such pastoral instinct and wisdom, and I am extremely grateful to him for all his hard work and determination to give pianists here a voice, and a seat at the table.

This quote from a parental e-mail to Steven speaks volumes: 'You were the first (and one of the very few able to 'get through to him') member of staff, early on in his time at Westminster, to show (rather than tell) him how to study. This was a turning point in his approach to life and his studies and we – and he – are very grateful to you for this valuable lesson... Finally, it goes without saying that you have nurtured his deep love for music, and this will stay with him for the rest of his life.'

A year in Drama

by Chris Whyld

To take on the mantle of Director of Drama at Westminster School was a daunting prospect. “Your first task is to produce and direct two back-to-back theatre festivals, which in total will involve in the region of 300 pupils.” Gulp.

The Sixth Form Festival this year celebrated 50 years of girls at Westminster, presenting scenes written by female playwrights. The rehearsal process was a wonderful opportunity for the Sixth Form to get to know each other and collaborate, providing two evenings of thought-provoking and entertaining theatre.

The Fifth Form Elizabethan Festival was next, focusing on 400 years since the publication of Shakespeare’s First Folio. Fifth Form performed scenes from plays which would have been lost forever if it wasn’t for John Heminges and Henry Condell publishing the First Folio in honour of their late friend. The HandleBards, a professional and travelling Shakespearean acting troupe, were in school for the week, directing the Fifth Form. It was fascinating to observe them sharing their knowledge, wisdom and directing talents with our pupils.

Blake Morris (HH) had contacted me even before I arrived at school: “Mr Whyld, allow me to introduce myself. I’m Blake Morris and I would like to translate *The Good Soldier Švejk* from the original Czech, adapt it into a play and then produce and direct

it and have it performed over three evenings to audiences in the Millicent Fawcett Hall.”

And that’s what he did. The Drama Department was in utter awe of Blake’s passion and resoluteness. He and the team of actors, technicians and stage managers produced a play worthy of any professional stage.

Meanwhile, musical rehearsals were underway. On a visit to Westminster in Election Term 2023 I presented musical director Mr Hopkins with a list. *Guys and Dolls*? “No, done that.” *My Fair Lady*? “No, done that.” *Les Mis*? “Possibly.” *Carousel*? “Perhaps.” *Anything Goes*? “Ah, yes.” A relief, as I had had my eye on the Cole Porter classic for a number of years.

This proved to be an ideal vehicle to showcase Westminster singing, acting and dancing talent. I had been reliably informed that Westminster pupils enjoy very difficult challenges and so I thought a ten-minute tap-dance routine to close Act 1 might do the trick. To witness the entire cast learning this, for most from scratch, was quite something.

The tap, the acting, the oft sublime singing, was supported beautifully by Mr Hopkins and his orchestra. The standard of playing really was impressive, the pupil players indistinguishable from their professional counterparts; it was a privilege to behold, and I wept with relief when opening night went without a hitch!

In addition to *Anything Goes*, a ‘straight’ play was on offer. Mr. Tully directed, and reports, “The new initiative of an Upper School play for those who may not want to be in a musical allowed pupils to explore and perform Andrew Bovell’s *When the Rain Stops Falling*. This play is one that is both challenging and thought provoking. The rehearsal of only four weeks and then performances in the MFH produced some wonderfully nuanced acting, and the pupils should be truly congratulated for producing work that was so mature in their

undertaking of some very difficult themes and issues. It is wonderful that we were able to tackle this play and very exciting that this new initiative will now become part of Westminster’s theatrical programme.”

Being new and keen I thought it a good idea to introduce the idea of an annual bilingual play. I accosted Mr. Massey, Head of Russian, in the Common Room and asked if he would be interested in putting on Chekhov’s *The Cherry Orchard*, performed in both Russian and English. He was soon on board as the dramaturg. We assembled from Westminster and HWSF a troupe of Russian speakers who were willing to perform, despite, for some, having never acted on stage before and learning Russian for only year. I bow to these determined and brilliant young performers, who at the end of February delivered two hours of Chekhovian excellence: I believe they achieved something truly remarkable.

Next were the GCSE and A Level Drama examination performances. Upper Shell and Remove pupils performed an array of pieces exploring challenging and confronting themes and issues. The pupils demonstrated such determination to perform at the highest level, they really do deserve the richest of accolades.

At the end of March, Remove A Level Drama pupil, Yanka Wong (BB), produced, directed and performed in an evening of *CelebrASIAN*. We were treated to music, dance, and acting which showcased Westminster’s East and Southeast Asian talent. Not unlike Švejk, the notion of a pupil-led production seemed not entirely feasible. However, Yanka and her team made it happen. And more than this, converting the MFH into a forum of ideas and discussion, to give those sometimes overlooked or marginalised a voice, well, there is no finer aim for theatre.

The Fifth Form play, *The Wind in the Willows*, followed in May under the direction of our Actor-in-Residence,

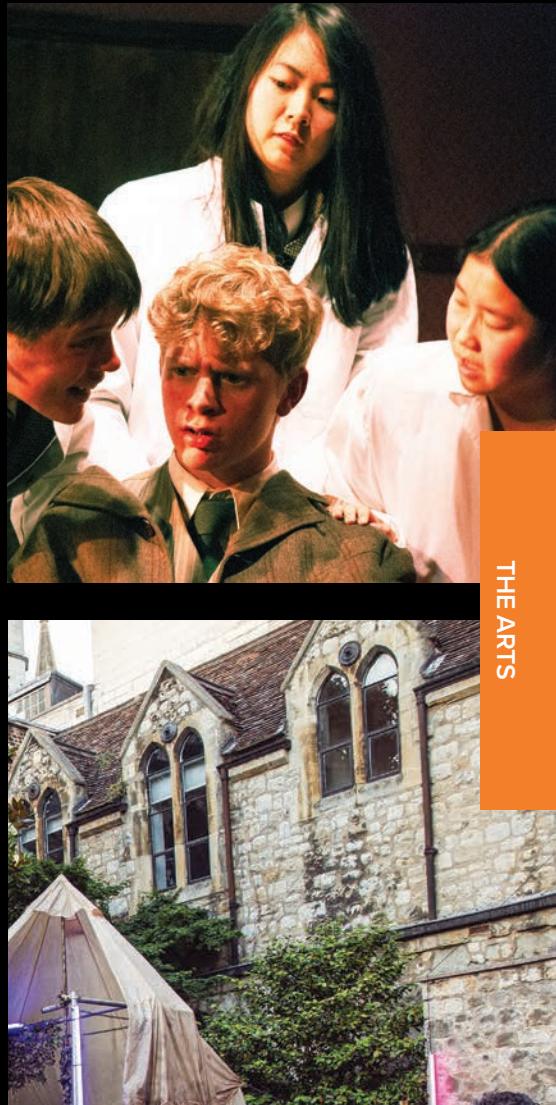
Sarah Davies. Miss Davies shares her thoughts, "A wise allegorical fable and intimate Brechtian retelling, asked us the question, 'What is home?'. Following the stories of Toad, Ratty, Mole and Badger, the piece was a homage to a socialist uprising and discovering 'home' in their steadfast and loyal friendships. Stripping the MFH Theatre back to essentials, (scotch eggs and prosecco), and relying solely on the young actors' storytelling through movement, mime and voice, the simple, less is more approach, allowed inventive choices from the cast and gave the audience permission to explore and liberate their imaginations. Westminster pupils rose to the creative challenge with stamina, boldness, and tangibly grew in confidence each night."

As I write, the final theatrical offering of the year, *The Tempest*, to be performed by Sixth Form actors, is in rehearsal. This revival of Shakespeare in the Garden will focus on the themes of race and colonisation and we aim to set the play in a near future dystopia, imagining Prospero's island perhaps as climate change ravaged and bearing the evidence of those who have passed through in their quest for a better life. With the garden strewn with the detritus of migration and underscored by early Krautrock electronica composed by our Music Department, this *Tempest* promises to be totally unique.

The Tempest will also mark Paul McLeish's final production as Westminster's Lighting Technician. Although I have only known him for a year, I have come to hugely admire his atmospheric, yet subtle and nuanced lighting. Our pupils have undoubtedly, since 2012, been extremely fortunate to have had their performances supported and enhanced by such mastery of the lighting art. I often found myself saying, "Paul, could I just...yes, that's it". He will be missed, and we wish him all the very best.

Whilst conducting a spot of research I stumbled upon this Elizabethan article written by Piers Gibbon (OW) in 1984: 'Westminster has a high reputation for its Drama. I have seen some astonishingly good productions as well as a few almost wholly without merit. This article is intended, however, not as an attack on the dross that sometimes appears on our stages; I have been in some prime dross myself so that would be hypocritical.'

And, in this year in Drama, I believe there has been little, or dare I say, absolutely no dross, and though at first daunted, I finish the year thankful that the high reputation for Drama at Westminster remains relatively intact.



The Sixth Form Drama Festival

by Alexandra Pilz (DD)

One of the many events of the bustling, chaotic start to the year was the Sixth Form Festival – an annual production of excerpts from a range of different plays. This year, all were written by female playwrights to celebrate 50 years of girls at Westminster.



Women. Westminster. Wonderful.

by Alexia de Silva (DD)

They ranged from settings in the 13th century to present day to years in the future. I found participating in it an exhilarating experience; while it was a big commitment, the outcome was rewarding. The festival brought people together from across the year, and a sense of unity was forged through late-night rehearsals. Most, including me, had never performed before and it was incredibly reassuring to work towards a common goal with others who also felt a little out of their comfort zone.

My excerpt was from *Strategic Love Play* by Miriam Batty, highlighting the struggles of modern-day dating, centred around two characters who initially do not get along, but are constantly drawn to each other. It was comedic and reflected all too well the awkwardness of real-life interactions, prompting laughs from our audience who could probably relate to the situation – a blind date at a bar between two people who are exhausted with dry conversation and clashing interests. We emphasised the realness by having two couples in our scene, wearing matching costumes but giving different takes on the characters to demonstrate how universal the context was.

The festival spanned three days, and every performance was different as we learnt from our mistakes and grew more confident. While I participated as an actor, it is also possible to get involved in lighting, staging, or costumes. Many thanks to our stage directors who ensured that the festival went smoothly, as well as to the Drama Department for their organisation of the entire event!

I attended the festival on opening night, Wednesday 4 October. As soon as we walked in, we were greeted by fog, mist, and electronic music.

In *The Glove Thief* by Beth Flintoff, Lola Titcombe (AHH) was Rose, a 16th century commoner. You couldn't take your eyes off her – affable, lovable, and relatable, she was the complete opposite of the villagers crowding around and accusing her. Titcombe made a seemingly inaccessible text thrilling and engaging.

A story of passion from Moira Buffini's *Loveplay* featured Felix Nielsen (RR), a bohemian artist, and Adam King (AHH), a vicar. You could feel the tension, Nielsen a madman obsessed with beauty, with the power indeed of Lucifer. The audience was immersed in the flamboyance of Nielsen's work and life, and King brilliantly portrayed the vicar torn between his duty to the Church, to God, to his marriage and to his feelings.

Perhaps my favourite scene of all, from Sophie Treadwell's *Machinal*. There is drudgery, suddenly cut by a stenographer, Nadia Olsen (WW). Most captivating was Eva Cohen (HH), who plays a telephone girl. Cohen's voice jarring, almost Harley Quinn like. The *Hello? Hello?* as she picks up the phone was raspy with vocal fry. Superb voice change from Cohen, it still haunts me.

A scene from *Dinner* by Moira Buffini, reminiscent of the food waste bin at school, primordial soup. Will Hamp (DD) is a microbiologist, at an upscale dinner party. Zara Mehmood (HH) is a glamorous news presenter, married to Hamp, but swayed by the attentions of another.

In Yasmina Reza and Christopher Hampton's *God of Carnage*, Layla Davar (WW) perfects the yummy mummy accent. I'm sure you have heard of it. The "Pilates is easy" voice, passive aggressive, the poster child of SW postcodes. Her husband, Alejandro Gomez de Membrillera Daly (AHH) plays an unfeeling hamster murderer, but a charismatic audience wower.

The highlight of the present-day love story, *Strategic Love Play* by Miriam Batty, was Harold Greenfields (WW). Greenfields walks in, rather nervously, in his leather bomber jacket, thinking of ways to woo his new date – first date tension he presents so awkwardly.

The stage crew were superb, with seamless transitions in sprawling scenes from trains to dining tables. The soundtrack was superb, with my personal favourite being *Rebellion (Lies)* by Arcade Fire, an upbeat track.



The Elizabethan Festival – Shakespeare and the First Folio

by Alec Apostu (CC)

Elizabethan Week was our personal insight to one of the oldest schools in the UK, and a fun way of getting to know our school more thoroughly.

An exciting off-timetable week, it was packed full of Elizabethan-themed activities, including an enticing trip to the Globe Theatre, where Shakespeare himself performed his plays that shaped so much of our modern world view.

This was followed by a modern recreation of a classic Shakespeare play from the First Folio, a crucial publication that granted us most of the plays that we know today. It was a race to get everything done, having just over two days to learn a fifteen-minute extract, but all groups had a very good, and very modern, response to the task at hand. A tour of the Abbey and its captivating history was fit into the timetable as well, casting a light on the treasure trove of history on our doorstep.

by Daniel Yang (CC)

The Elizabethan Festival has been an interesting and strange week. It was refreshing and intriguing to learn about Shakespeare and the publication of the First Folio and how Westminster has some exciting connections with it. Despite the challenges and limitations we had, due to the brief time, we still managed to shape our plays and perform them to a high standard. The sound, lighting and direction were all very professional, making our experience more fulfilling. We explored ideas and collaborated to overcome problems such as casting.

The festival helped us to get to know each other better, talking and working together.

We were given a choice about what we would like to do as part of the team: I wrote an introduction with some of my classmates and others worked on the lighting and physical theatre. My favourite part of the week was the enthralling talk on social media law from an expert in the field.



Anything Goes

by Lily Crawford (PP)

After 90 years, with countless productions, the much-awaited Westminster rendition of the hit musical *Anything Goes* came out to thunderous applause during its three-day run.

The musical is jam packed with brilliant escapades and absurd mix-ups, brought to life by a cast of extremely skilled actors.

With several chaotic characters all on a ship together, we're bound to witness a series of incredible mishaps. The love stories rival Shakespeare and gangsters rival Capone. The cast immediately charmed the audience with their witty antics and lively performances, in particular, Luca Bavasso's (DD) incredibly entertaining role as Moonface Martin, America's 13th most wanted criminal.

The songs were the highlight of the evening, especially the whole cast performance of the titular *Anything Goes*. A special mention to Aelwen Hamley's (CC) show stopping singing, as well as her charismatic and confident performance all round as Reno Sweeny, the lead role. The ensemble tap dancing number at the end of Act 1 showed the sheer dedication and drive of everyone involved to put on a great show, especially tap choreographer Claire Miller.

All this wouldn't have been possible without the incredible talent of the orchestra, conducted by Mr Hopkins, who really brought the musical to life and bolstered the already amazing musical numbers, plus the incredible direction of Mr Whyld and all the creative team: the breathtaking set by Stewart J Charlesworth and the costumes by Andrea Mizzen, Angelica Wilson and Erin Elliot. Behind the

scenes was a talented stage management team that helped the production stay on track. Organisationally the production was fantastic. To put on such a comprehensive performance of such a complex show was truly a feat of pupil excellence and go through it without mishap (minus a broken pole) is highly commendable.

I entered School with doubts of some pupils' ability to put on a truly entertaining musical, but through the passion, dedication and skill of all involved, my fears were proved definitively wrong.



A Fish Fanatic's Fantasy

A review of *When the Rain Stops Falling* by Seb Foster (BB)

Have you ever thought of a fish? Now think harder. Have you ever thought about a fish falling from the sky? No, I thought not.

The year is 2039, and a fish, a species which is practically extinct, has fallen at your feet. It seems to be a miracle, something to finally bring your family back together as your son arrives for a meal for the first, and perhaps final time.

The year is now 1988, you've left your mother, and travelled to Australia to find out more about your long-lost father, but your focus is disrupted as you find love along the way.

Or maybe it's 2013, and your whole world is falling apart, a broken world with a broken family.

Or how about the 1960s, where the happy promise of a future is stolen, with consequences spanning generations.

When the Rain Stops Falling, written by Australian playwright Andrew Bovell, follows one family across four

time periods, documenting how collective trauma can bring about tragic consequences. It was an ambitious directorial vision by Mr Tully, employing Stanislavski's Naturalist style to the max. He sought to convey the pain each character possessed as convincingly as possible. Consequently, the rehearsal process was intense, but amid the difficult discussions and occasional tears, each member of the cast brought a new level to their acting.

It was performed twice in MFH on 18 and 19 January to huge applause. Jonty Wynne-Baerwald (MM) opened the show beautifully, providing a five-minute monologue in which he took the audience through anger and regret, optimism and hopelessness – all after a fish dropped at his feet. Jasmine Kang (GG), playing my resentful mother, was a convincing miser, as she hardly concealed her disdain for her rather aimless son Gabriel.

The set was left minimalist, which added further sentiment to scenes of intense emotional heartache –

not least between Felix Nielsen (RR) and Lola Titcombe (AHH), as we watched their marriage break down for disturbing reasons. It was easy to see the close connection between the cast, not least between Eva Cohen (HH) and Temi Aladejuyigbe (LL), who took up each other's mannerisms to best reflect the progression of their character. Their performances as Gabrielle York will never leave me: Eva's moment of heartbreak as Gabriel died in a car crash was crushing, while Temi took on this burden, and amplified its pain, all while acting with a ghost-like vapidity, as Alzheimer's took hold of her memory.

As the lights dimmed on the final scene, the audience sat rooted in their seats. It was a harrowing ninety minutes, but one, we hope, that will live long in the memory.

The Wind in the Willows

by Calum Ellis-Tate (MM), Vikram Navin Chandra (AHH),
and Raphael Bertrand (PP)

The Wind in the Willows, an esteemed childhood classic, originally written by Kenneth Grahame, was performed by the Fifth Form (directed by Mr Whyld and Miss Davies) over three nights in the Election Term, bringing a witty adaptation by Mike Kenny to the audience. The MFH was transformed into the Wild Wood, as Raphael Bertrand (PP), presented an abandoned, yet grand Toad Hall, overrun by nature to the audience.

Ishan Agarwal (AHH), appeared from the ground, taking the audience back to a time of glory for both Toad Hall and the riverbankers. He plays a timid, naive Mole, a stranger to a life above Mole End. Tired of living underground, he meets the world above. Finally stopping at the riverbank, he meets the modest and generous Water Rat, played by Charlie McGonagle (LL). Together, both live a quiet life by the river.

This quiet life was soon to be disturbed, as the energetic and affluent Toad, played by Calum Ellis-Tate (MM),

brought us to the open road in his gypsy caravan with Rat and Mole, before disaster struck. A technically difficult scene ensued, as Paul McLeish and his team created a road accident, complete with sound effects, smoke and flashing lights, and providing great technical contribution throughout the play too. The scene culminates in Toad's new passion: motorcars.

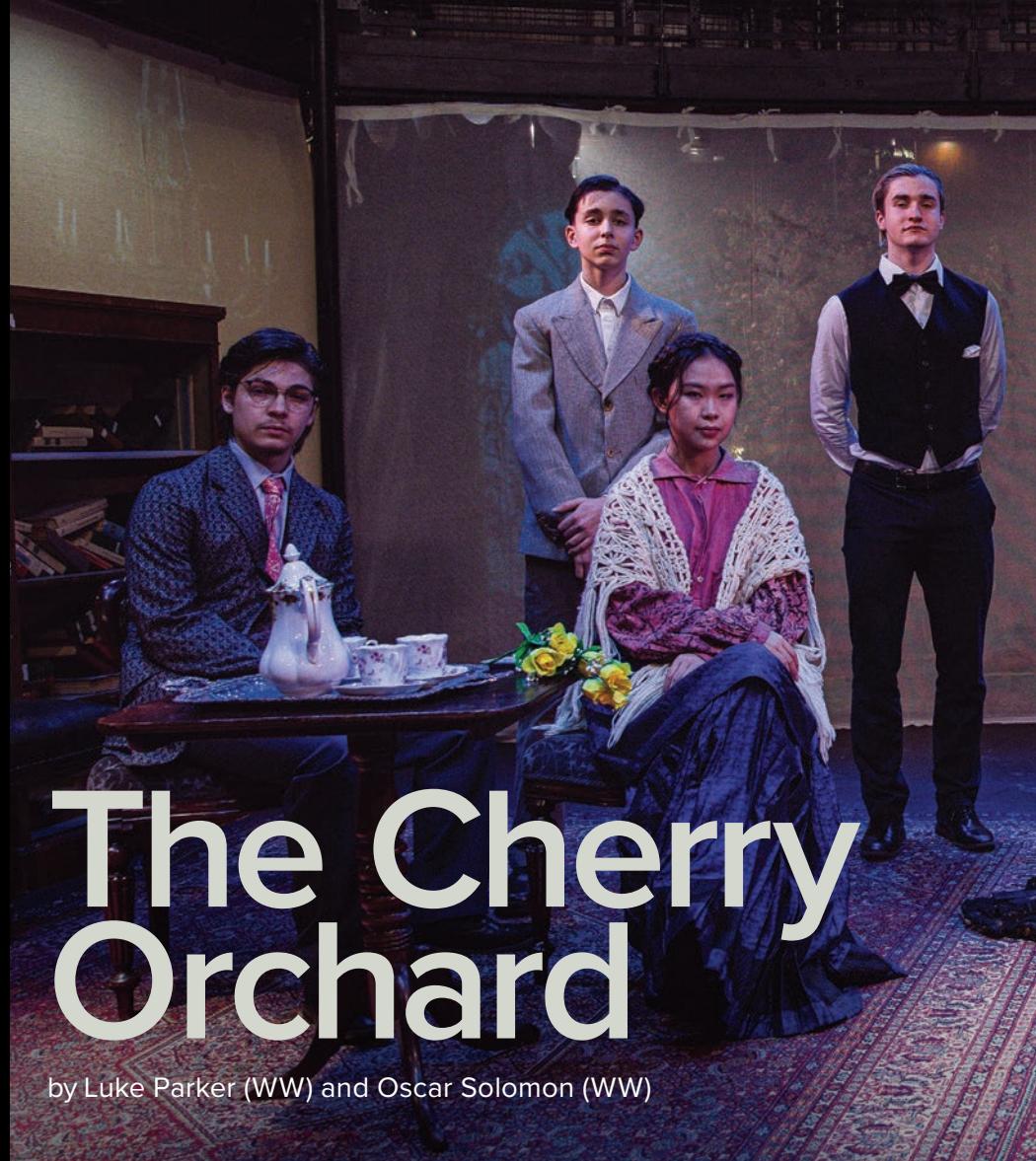
After this first meeting, Rat and Mole, and Toad went their separate ways. The former ventured into the depths of the ominous wild wood, home of the weasels, visiting the wise yet imposing Badger – Orion Tomasi (DD). Toad, on the other hand, followed his new passion, stealing a motor car, and proceeding to crash it. He is imprisoned but escapes to find Toad Hall inhabited by weasels and ferrets. The foursome's tale concluded in an epic victory, after taking back Toad Hall.

Throughout the many scenes, one thing remained constant: four blocks were in the middle. These blocks could become

anything, from Ratty's boat to a steam engine. This multi-purpose piece of equipment challenged our miming skills, to demonstrate exactly what it was. Accompanying the acting was the musical performance by Mr Swana and Blake Morris (HH), elevating the action of the play and entertaining the audience during the interval as well. Kazumasa Miura (HH) worked on projection, providing a suitable backdrop on the gauze curtain. The play would not have been possible without the invaluable contributions of these people.

The audience reception was amazing, as they watched with interest and laughed with gusto at the comedic moments. We are delighted that they enjoyed our performance and thank them for their support!





The Cherry Orchard

by Luke Parker (WW) and Oscar Solomon (WW)

Westminster's production of Anton Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* was revolutionary – arguably more revolutionary than the play itself, which was published in 1904 as a commentary on the unsustainable, old-fashioned ways of Russian society at the time.

The play follows Lyubov Ranevskaya – Alisa Kubzin (PP) – a wealthy landowner returned from fashionable Paris, as she struggles to get to grips with her changing position in Russia's evolving class system.

The task we had set about was ambitious: performing a play that was over a hundred years old, with half in the original Russian. It was no mean feat, especially because we had nowhere near enough willing Russianists. Despite enrolling some talented native speakers from Harris Westminster Sixth Form (including Sonya Ovcharenko as Varya), cast shortages were so extreme that Anton Drel (PP) had to pick up two completely contrasting roles, and we had to play mash-up with Chekhov's original genders. Oscar Solomon (WW), a "bad native speaker" and abnormally handsome young man, played the

17-year-old girl Anya, which, when adapted to Anton left several inaccuracies, notably his open, unquenchable love for Stefan Watts' (HWSF) 'eternal student' Pyotr Trofimov, which did not quite tally with early 1900s gender roles in Orthodox Russia. Add this to the fact that three members of the cast had zero experience of Russian before Westminster and the task did not seem simply ambitious – but downright impossible.

Under the watchful eyes of Mr Whyld, Mr Massey and our 'enthusiastic' GCSE Russianist director, Luke Parker (WW), however, the play slowly came together. At first, it was tough. Not only had most of the cast never been in a play before, but many were struggling to read the script – even if we could pronounce the words correctly, the chance we



understood them was minimal. This issue was exacerbated by the fact Mr Whyld spoke no Russian, and soon we were getting worried. Would this play be ready in time? Could it ever be ready? Would the audience walk out, or, worse still, start laughing?

In the face of such insurmountable pressure, it was tempting to walk away. Some did, but those of us who stayed, persevered. Extra rehearsals were scheduled, line-learning deadlines were enforced, and after the Christmas holidays, the play transformed from a beginner's Russian lesson to a West End headliner. Our spirits were lifted. There was belief. To be honest, we hadn't had a change of heart, nor an epiphany – there were chairs. The ever-innovative Imamul Ameen had hired a set of period furniture from the National Theatre and upon it we were unstoppable. Suddenly we were

projecting our voices, furrowing our brows, and using our upstage arms unprovoked... our beloved 'weird uncle Gayev' – Sacha Hunter (CC) – provided such impassioned performances that he reportedly suffered many a collapsed lung. Will Sandford (WW) deserves special mention for his peasant-turned-merchant Yermolai Lopakhin, the crux of the play, despite his liberal interpretation of line-learning deadlines. Credit also to Timofey Kartashov (HH) for single-handedly programming and operating the vital surtitling machine, and to the other crew, led by Paul McLeish, for willingly sitting for two hours in the sweaty lighting box each night. The level of work that went into stitching the whole production together was gargantuan, and as we went through the three-night run we felt it bear fruit.

Ultimately, the play was nothing short of a phenomenal success. Through *The Cherry Orchard*, we hope we have not only showcased the very best of Russianists at Westminster and Harris, but also interpreted Russian culture for what it truly is: rich and vibrant, untainted by war and dictatorship.



Boris Eldagsen *Pseudomnesia: The Electrician*

(AI)rt

by Jim Allchin

The earliest widely available photographic process was made public in 1839 by Louis Daguerre in the form of the daguerreotype. The polarisation of photography caused a great stir to the art world; photography could depict the world more accurately than painting, paving the way for movements such as Impressionism and Fauvism, where artists explored emotions and impressions.

Photography was initially intended for scientific curiosity and not as an art form and it wasn't really considered art until the 1890s. Portraitists of the time were considered more as craftsmen than artists and the rise in photography didn't displace them, but rather enabled a new class of people to afford a simple photograph of themselves.

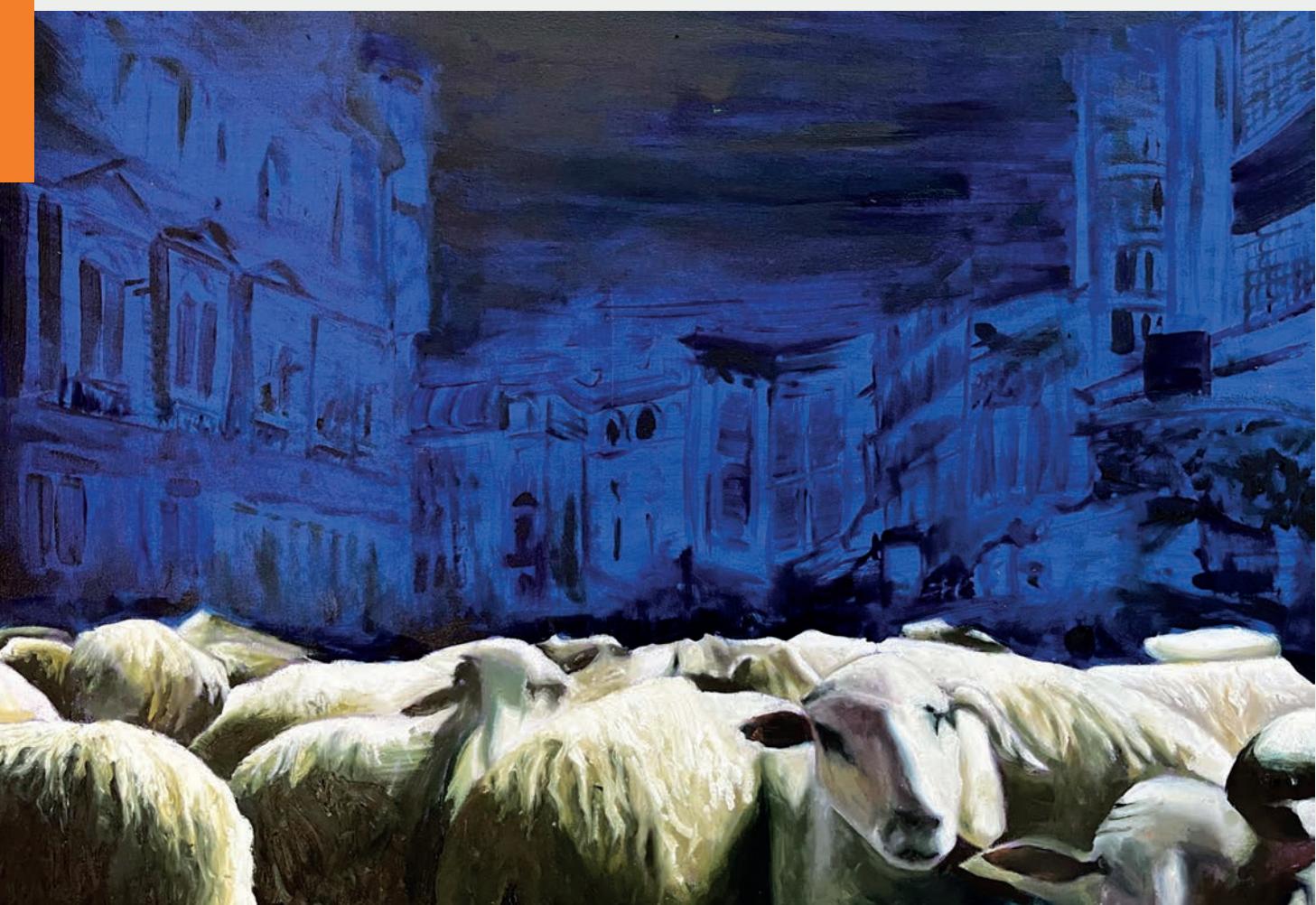
Like photography, AI has become a major talking point in the art world with debate centred on its creative value. In March 2023, the photographer Boris Eldagsen submitted an AI generated image to the Sony World Photography Awards and won. His image depicts an older woman embracing a younger one and is entitled *Pseudomnesia: The Electrician*. Although Eldagsen turned down the award, he sparked controversy and conversation about the validity of AI-generated or assisted images as art. Eldagsen speaks of the freedom AI generators can bring, with the concept of his prize-winning image founded on his own experiences and interest in vintage photography. Using DALL-E2, his image was created using text prompts and 'Inpainting' and

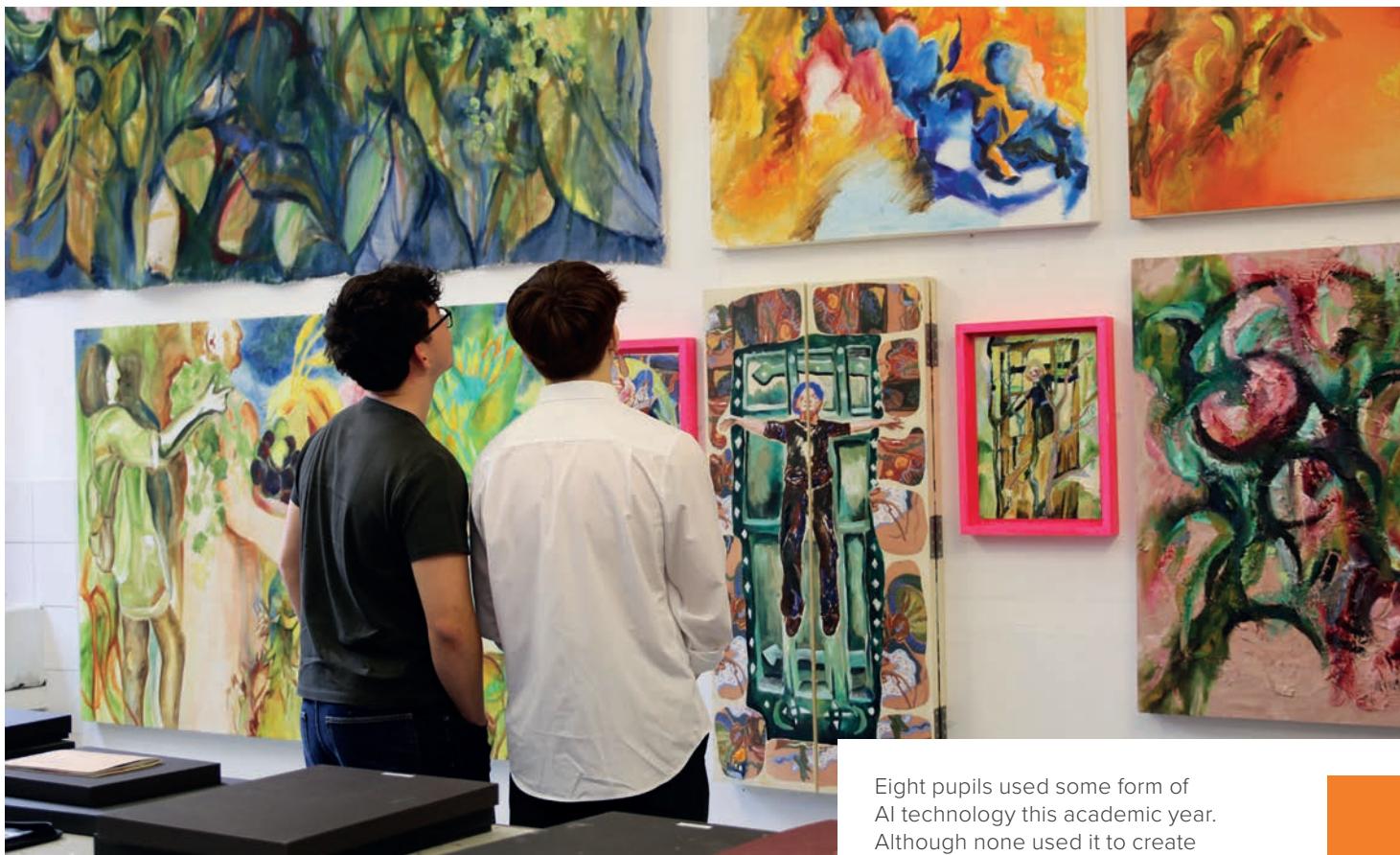
'Outpainting'. Inpainting is when you tell the generator you don't like something, like the colour of a hat and that you'd like it to be pink. Outpainting is where you can extend the framing of the images, add legs or a backdrop. Eldagsen has been experimenting with the medium for months and states that it takes a great deal of time and patience to arrive at something satisfactory. With technology advancing so quickly he feels that it is becoming more and more impossible to tell whether an image is authentic or not, an area of concern all of us can relate to. We are talking about photojournalism. With social media and algorithms delivering us new information and imagery each time we look at our screens, unless a system is put in place to make it clear which is authentic, manipulated or generated, anyone has the power to misinform with just five words typed into a generator. Eldagsen has suggested AI imagery could be renamed as 'Promptography' with the next step to talk about the relationship between Promptography and Photography.

To explore this further, I asked GCSE artist Noah Bertrand (PP) to pen a few words about his use of AI generated imagery:

"I discovered AI as a potential process by mistake really. I realised that Adobe Photoshop had developed a new generative AI which allows you to add, remove and expand content. It allows you to layer and seamlessly blend or stitch more than one image together. I experimented with this using both my own images and found images. Using a set of images of sheep and Soho, I wanted to create a painting that played on the term of herd mentality and the so called rat race. With a few clicks of the mouse my vision was quickly realised, I still had control of formal elements such as composition and placement of elements, but all of a sudden there were sheep in Soho! I also used other AI generators such as Deep AI and DaVinci AI writing just five or so words like 'densely packed flock of sheep' to gain multiple images I could then use to form my composition. With the images created using AI I was then able to draw and paint from the source material an outcome."

Noah Bertrand (PP) Upper Shell





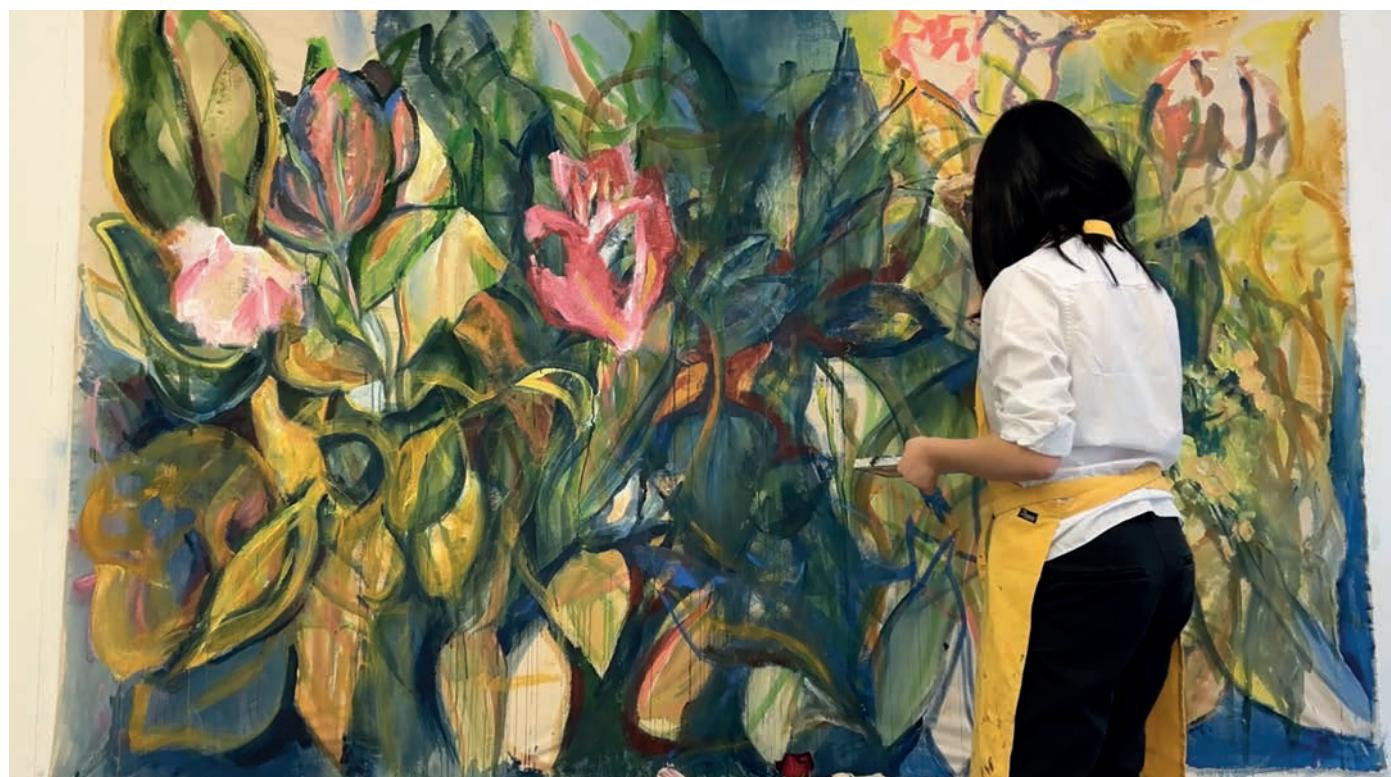
Eight pupils used some form of AI technology this academic year. Although none used it to create a final work, it was used to expand and explore imagery or playfully extend initial ideas. For us, as long as pupils are still maintaining other forms of exploration, as stated in assessment criteria, AI is another alternative which, for the right project idea, brings great value. I have written to exam boards and asked whether they'll be referring to AI as a 'medium or process' within the assessment objectives and their stance on this new way of working, but my feeling is that for the time being, while the technology unfolds in front of our eyes, they'll wait a little while longer.

For this year's exhibition, pupils were encouraged to bring friends, family and their dogs and they didn't disappoint. At one point we had eight different dogs walking the Department, with Mr Crow's dog Micky staying the whole evening to soak in every last artistic vibe. The exhibition spanned five different spaces and lined the walls of the stairwell. The show was a complete triumph and was a fine way to celebrate the impressive dedication, skill and ambition of all our pupils. Exhibition highlights included Alexander Knight's (RR) *Nocturne Victoria Street* paintings which were later chosen by Dr Savage to line his office walls for the year, and Laurence Hartnell's (GG) series of paintings exploring Zen gardens and Buddhism.

This year's Funaki Prize winner was GCSE artist Rohan Varsani (AHH) who responded to the theme of colour by creating a painting based upon the reference photographs he'd taken whilst on holiday. Using photoshop filters he explored how thin layers of paint enabled the yellow ground to pierce through the complementary purples. As for the Oli Bennett prize for Outstanding Exhibition, A Level Artist Cheryl Luo (CC) was our worthy winner. Cheryl created an exhibition where during the course of two weeks she continued to paint in situ. The paintings changed on a daily basis and visitors were encourage to visit the exhibition more than once.



Funaki Prize Winner, Rohan Varsani (AHH) GCSE



Cheryl Luo in the making of her award winning art



Sixth Form trip to Nice – Foundation Maeght above
Picasso plates (below)



Trinity Buoy Wharf Drawing Prize Saturday visit

In May, we visited Nice with our Sixth Form artists, a trip which will live long in the memory. A highlight was our visit to Foundation Maeght which houses some of the biggest names in 20th Century European sculpture including Calder, Miro and Giacometti. Set in the hills some 20km outside of Nice, it was France's very first private art institution, modelled on American institutions such as the Guggenheim foundation. The Catalan architect, Josep Louis Sert created a place where art, nature and architecture blend perfectly. Our pupils spent over four hours studying and drawing sculpture, and painting while in the shade of large trees and beautifully modernist sculpture halls. We also visited Antibes' Picasso museum where pupils studied his ceramic works and created their own renditions on paper plates finding that every other visitor wanted to make one

too! Other highlights included morning swims and ice creams whenever we came across one.

This academic year also saw us wave farewell to Colin Wagg, our technician of 35 years who retires and moves back to Norwich to be closer to his daughters. During his time at Westminster, Colin worked under four different Heads of Art, four Head Masters, and masterminded the building of each of our end of year exhibitions. He'll of course be missed, not just as a colleague, but a great friend to all of us. However, our Colin Mark II, has arrived in the form of Michael. Michael has a keen interest in 3D modelling and carpentry and has moved over from the Works Department to fill our Colin-sized void, and with a background in Fine Art and vast experience in

working as an artist assistant, he is a natural fit. Michael has Colin on speed dial in case of an emergency!

Next academic year we welcome Matthew Bunning to Westminster to take on the role of Head of Art as I will be stepping down to focus on my role as Housemaster of Purcell's. Matthew joins us from St Paul's Girls' School where has been Head of Art for the past nine years. With a degree in Architecture and a passion for printmaking, he'll no doubt complement what we already offer in the Art Department; we all look forward to working with him. In other news, John Woodman, who has taught art here since September 2011, will be on sabbatical for the Play Term and will be presenting a new body of work accompanied by an artist talk in early 2025.

Finally, on the theme of AI, using DeepAI, I have created four images through a simple written instruction. See if you can work it out what I have written. It is a real shame image three didn't come to fruition.



A horse in Tesco | A fish and chip tree | Gareth Southgate winning a trophy | A panda on the phone



Andrei and Rose, the judges of the Under School model competition (Andrei won the Year 3 prize when he was there!)





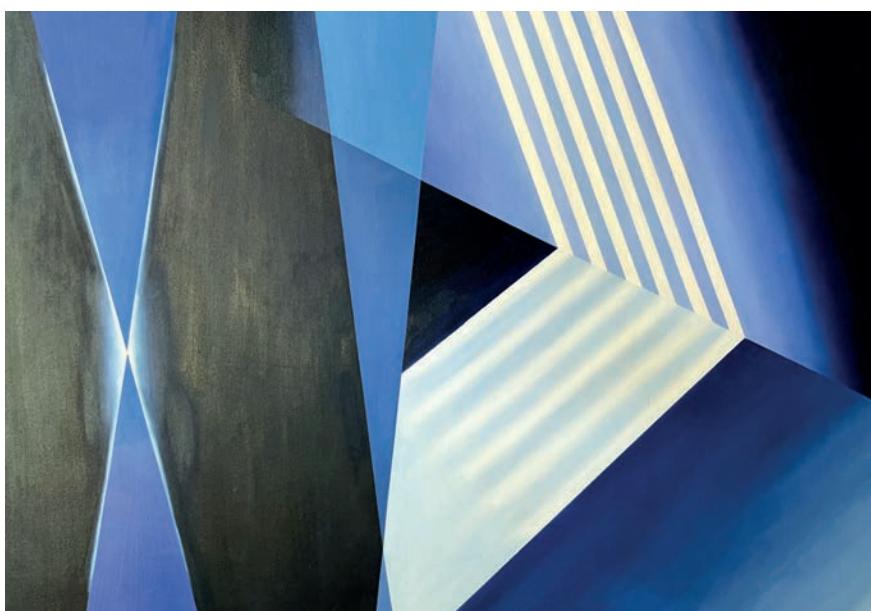
Bruno Crosby (RR) Remove (detail)



Hector Elwes (WW) Remove



Ben Ludwick (LL) Remove



Marc Bavasso (DD) Upper Shell

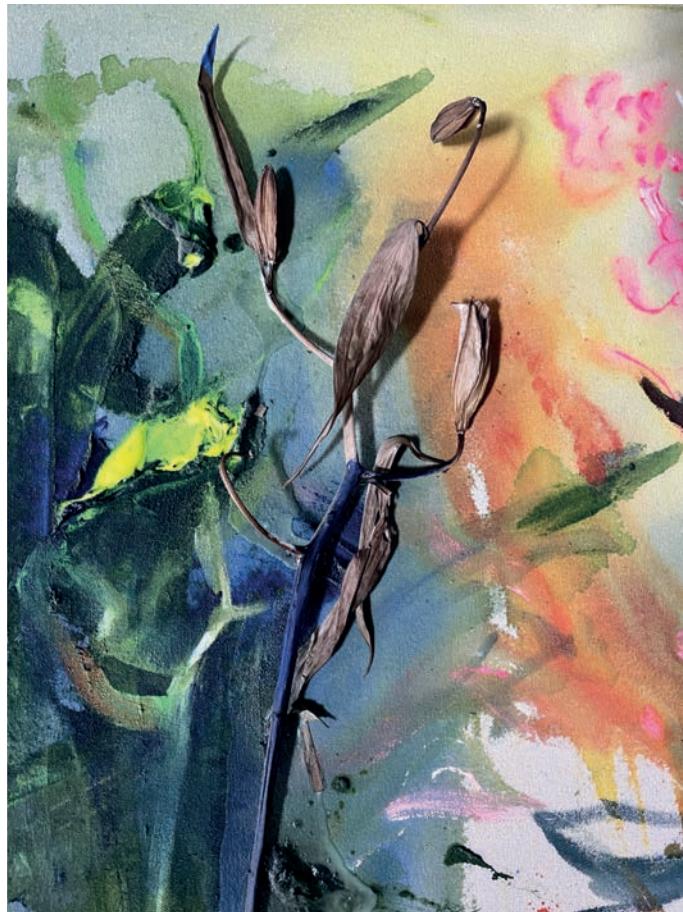


Kiri Tran (AHH) Upper Shell

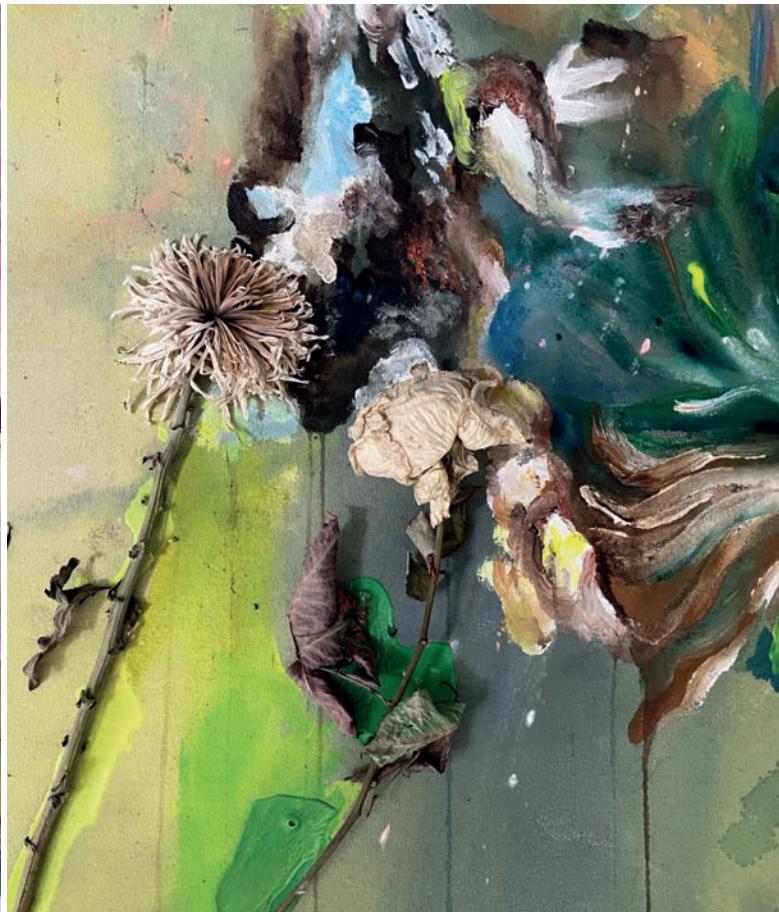


Memento Mori Lower Shell





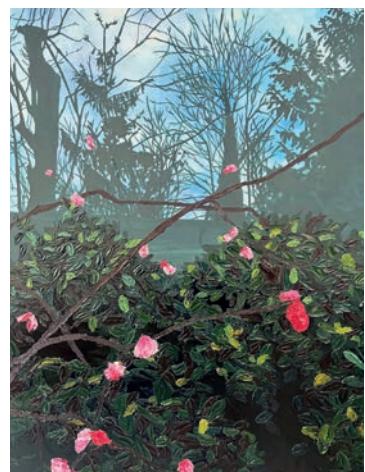
Oli Bennett Prize Winner, Cheryl Luo (CC) Remove (details)



Tim Gutsev (RR) Remove



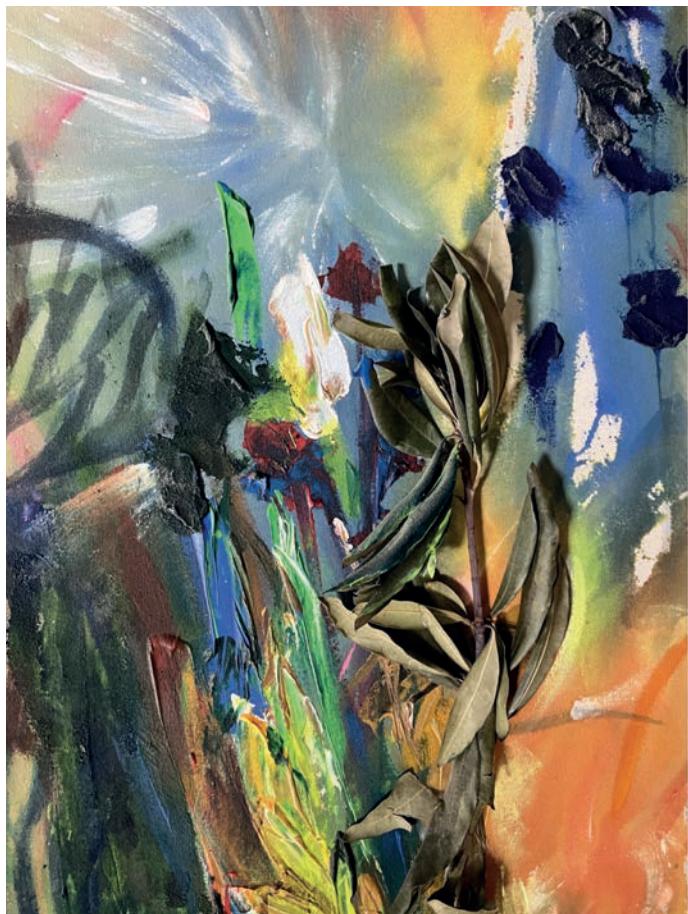
Vincent Muirhead (HH) Remove



Dom O'Malley (AHH) Remove



Sebi Michelli-Marsden (LL) GCSE



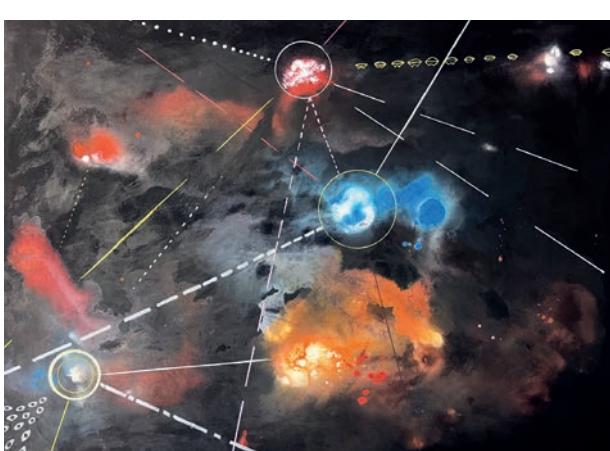
Alexander Knight (PP) Remove



Laurence Hartnell (GG) Remove



Ned Bell (BB) Upper Shell



Gabriel Levy (BB) Upper Shell



Mikhail Gribov (PP) Upper Shell



Kristof Sitanyi (RR) Remove



September Saturday



Platform+

by Solly Hardwick

What is a Westminster education for? Ask Mysoon, a Platform+ student from Kingsford Community School in Beckton, and she'll say, "the conversation-like learning... access to the most gorgeous library [she's] ever seen, learning how to learn, and being pushed to wonder."

Barbara from Greycourt describes how access to this education has "revolutionised [her] understanding" and is "as incredible as it seems." But "Who is a Westminster education for?" is a question that has often had a restrictive answer. Platform+ tries to change that.

Platform+, our flagship outreach programme, has allowed people from outside 'traditional' Westminster backgrounds to benefit from the Westminster experience. From rat dissections in Hooke to gazing at Francis Bacon paintings in the Tate,

the programme offers courses in STEM and Liberal Arts designed to extend beyond the standard school curriculum. We partner with 15 state schools across London, recruiting around 40 Year 10 pupils to come to Westminster for bespoke Saturday sessions.

At the heart of Platform+ is the belief in pursuing knowledge for its own delight, and exposing pupils to subjects and topics that aren't offered in all schools: Russian, History of Art, Classics, Electronics, Computing, and Scientific practicals all feature.



Deborah from STEM describes how the "interactive" classroom allows for "learning things beyond the curriculum and expanding [her] knowledge". Kerim from Liberal Arts talks of "learning new things like the topics about nationalism, identity and creative writing".

Platform+ generates an incredible sense of community; pupils love meeting people from different walks of life and schools all across London, united by a shared love of learning. After just a few lessons they've been swapping numbers and creating a community of like-minded individuals, many of whom describe the programme as the highlight of their week. Some have loved it so much they've been coming in to use the library on their free Saturdays, and taking out book after book from our expansive collections.

Platform+ has expanded this year by incorporating creative writing workshops from top writers in their fields, aiming to help pupils find their own writerly voice and submit work to The Spark Awards writing prize, run in collaboration with the charity WriteSpace. Novelist and former Westminster teacher Rebecca Wait ran an inspiring fiction workshop, prize-winning poet Susannah Hart led on poetry, and FT Science writer Anjana Ahuja showed pupils the arts of journalism and communication. These have been hugely successful in encouraging pupils to write, with one STEM pupil saying to Anjana, "I never thought I could write before, but I love doing this."

For me, I love teaching on Platform+ as the pupils' sheer delight in experiencing what Westminster has to offer is palpable. They stay behind to ask questions and clamour for suggestions for extra reading. When I asked Mysoon how she'd found the programme, she candidly said "for me, a life-changing experience" – and that is all we can hope for!

Phab: the time of my liphe

by Katie Stone

Westminster Phab has been running at school for nearly 50 years and is an enduring memory for many Old Westminsters.

The week is hosted in partnership with the national charity Phab England, whose mission is to provide safe and fun places for disabled and non-disabled people to work together, learn from each other and make new friends.

At the beginning of the school summer holidays, around 50 Sixth Form volunteers (known as hosts) and a group of staff transform school into a holiday home for 30 disabled guests, many of whom have been coming to Phab for over a decade. Supported by our wonderful resident nurse Mandy, the hosts provide care for the guests throughout the week, and our excellent catering staff keep everyone well fed.

As someone who works in school over the holidays, I was aware of Phab as far back as July 2011, before I got my fingers into all the pies around school, or a new job title, and was just the Assistant Librarian. I sat in my office (the old one, that actually had windows, before it turned into a staircase and lift) and looked out over Yard, seeing the staff, pupils and visitors having a great time and wishing I could join in. For several years this was the story: I was younger then and less bolshy.

I finally joined the team for Phab 2017: Phabracadabra. The week was more than I could ever have imagined. It was non-stop from dawn to dusk (and beyond), with an ever changing list of jobs, from mail merges, to topping up 50 Oyster cards in a local newsagent, to blowing up hundreds of balloons and covering everyone in glitter.

Over the years I took on a lot of the admin work that takes place during the year – Phab really is an all year round endeavour, starting in September and going right through to July – eventually (somewhat reluctantly: being in charge is not my forte) taking on the role of Director in September 2022.

The staff, the hosts, and the guests give it their all, with the pupils showing great maturity and emotional resilience, working flat out all week while having fun at the same time. They spend their mornings in workshops (this year we had Art, Drama, Design and Music) and the afternoons are for small trips in the local area, with the Friday trip seeing everyone go further afield for an afternoon out together – Greenwich this year, in the past Kew, Barnes Wetlands and during Phabracadabra, when we had received a generous donation from an OW family, a trip to the Harry Potter Studio Tour in Leavesden! In the evenings we have events both in and out of school: a trip to the theatre, karaoke, movie night, and our formal dinner and disco.

Phab is an exhausting week – you don't stop from the start to the end – but it's truly a highlight of the school year for everyone involved. Seeing the guests' families at the beginning and the end of the week really brings home why what we are doing is so important – the guests are excited to attend, and the fact that they are attending means their families get to take what is perhaps their only holiday of the year. They return refreshed and thrilled to hear about what their loved one has been doing all week, and the guests and hosts take great pleasure in sharing their highlights at Sunday's show.

I feel privileged to have been involved in Phab for the past eight years, the last two as Director, and to have spent so much time with our guests. This was my last Westminster Phab as Director as I am leaving the school to move to Newcastle and I will miss it hugely, but I hope to be back next year as a helper. They can't get rid of me that easily!



An art historic tour of The Big Apple

by Molly Hunt (MM)

Just before last year's summer holidays, I applied, along with a friend of mine, for the Philip Hendy Art History bursary. This provides successful pupils with the funds to organise a trip, orientated around an area of Art History that intrigues them, to go anywhere in the world. My friend and I chose to spend a week in New York visiting museums and art galleries, and generally observing the architectural hybridity of the city. My primary reason for visiting New York centred around this last point since I have always been fascinated with the way in which the city is a nexus for architectural diversity, spanning the Neoclassical through to the Post Modern. Nowhere in the world is there such a concentration of architectural styles in one small space. Within the 60km squared space of Manhattan Island it is possible to see outstanding examples of Neo Gothic, Art Deco, Art Nouveau, Beaux Arts, Federal, Colonial and Brutalist buildings, all of which are located next to each other in a stunning, completely jumbled timeline of architectural development.

Furthermore, the trip provided me with the opportunity to explore the various churches in New York, and I was struck by the difference between The Basilica of St. Patrick's Old Cathedral (located

in Lower Manhattan and built between 1809-1815) and St. Patrick's Cathedral on Fifth Avenue (built in 1879). The newer church features far more imposing facades, with two large, pointed towers and gothic arches which create a far greater vertical emphasis than that of St. Patrick's Old Cathedral. During my visit I explored its catacombs on a guided, candlelit tour.

In addition to these architectural aspects of the trip, much of my time was spent in the art galleries New York has to offer. I visited MoMA and the Guggenheim on the same day and particularly enjoyed their vast collection of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist art. This emphasis on Modernist art continued at the Brooklyn Museum which includes pieces such as Judy Chicago's *The Dinner Party* (1974-79), whilst simultaneously exhibiting stone carvings from ancient Egypt in the long-term exhibition *Growing Up Tutankhamun*, which I found particularly interesting. Whilst I expected most artworks in New York Modernist, I was pleasantly surprised by MoMA's extensive collection of Byzantine, Carolingian, and African art; presenting a comprehensive insight into the origins of these civilisations.

The sheer variety to be found in each gallery was highly invigorating and I hugely enjoyed attending exhibitions which I normally would not have thought to go to. Whilst the paintings of Rousseau, Kahlo, Bacon, and Dali were wonderful to view in person, I was particularly drawn to the Renaissance works such as Ghirlandaio's *Portrait of a Lady* (1490) and Tullio Lombardo's *Adam* (1490-95).

Overall, my time spent in New York was incredible, not only because I gained some first-hand knowledge for my Art History A Level, but also because it gave me an opportunity to develop my own interests outside of the curriculum. For anyone considering applying for the Philip Hendy Bursary, I cannot recommend it enough.



Yorkshire Cycling '23

by Thivahar Anantharajah (AHH)



Day 2 – 20 miles for Pizza

The first day of cycling. After leaving York on our bikes we travelled to Kirkham Priory Ruins, founded in the 12th century. It, like many other sites we visited, fell victim to Henry VIII's Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1539. It was also a pretty good spot for lunch, ignoring the freezing cold and the rain...

After lunch and a wild game of Hide and Seek, we left Kirkham Priory for our destination, Malton. We also encountered a very steep hill, which managed to defeat 11 cyclists out of 15. The hill was worth it however: everyone worked up an appetite for some pizza, and earned a luxurious night in a hotel.



Day 1 – Night Walk

An evening walking along the River Ouse after a two hour train ride from Kings Cross to York. The air was chilly but fresh, a needed break from London.





Day 3 – A hill, an Abbey, another hill

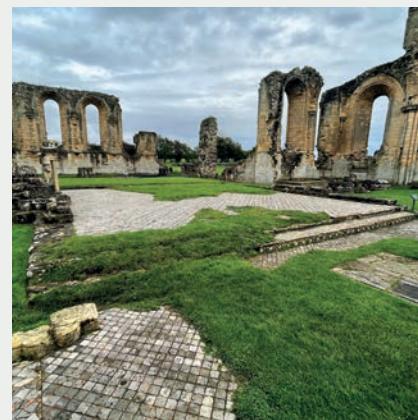
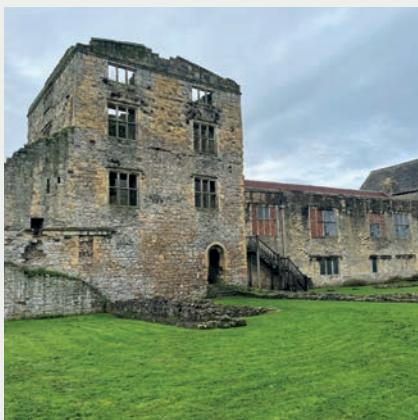
We set off in freezing but gloriously sunny weather for our lunch destination, All Saints' Churchyard in Kirkbymoorside.

A 'short climb' followed lunch. What that really meant was three massive ascents to the top of a hill, one after the other. It ended with whole packets of sweets devoured and bottles of water chugged. However, we realised later how worth it that climb was on the descent to the ruins of Rievaulx Abbey, a huge monastery that was also dissolved by Henry VIII in 1539.

The punishment didn't end there. To get to Helmsley, our overnight halt, there was one more hill. Grinding gears and falling chains put an end to most of our attempts. A fast descent into Helmsley waited for us at the top; the wind howling in the ears and cooling the face was the greatest reward we earned that day, aside from dinner in the Feathers Pub.



Day 4 – Back to Base, A Sky Full of Stars and Pasta



The final day of cycling started with a heavy downpour of rain and a puncture overnight. After a repair, the rain had thankfully stopped and we cycled into the centre for the final shop for lunch. Afterwards, we went to Helmsley Castle, a medieval castle on the southern edge of the North York Moors National Park.

Lunch followed in the ruins of Byland Abbey, another Abbey established in the early 12th century that inspired centuries of Gothic Church architecture that followed it. There was a well-preserved tile floor, likely where Mass took place.

Day 5 – Looking at trains, then onto a train

We spent the final morning at the National Railway Museum, looking at exhibits like the Shinkansen Bullet Train and the Mallard. Then, shortly before noon we boarded our LNER train back to London Kings Cross.

A huge thank you to Mr Butler and Ms French for organising the trip, it's fair to say that navigating admin and planning a route for 13 people isn't easy.

The Easter trip to Greece 2024

Participants from the Fifth and Sixth Form recall their experience.

Daniel Richardson
(GG – Fifth Form) writes:
The Greek Trip took 17 Fifth Formers and ten Sixth Formers all across the Peloponnese; from the metropolis of Athens to the ancient ruins of Mycenae. With us came Mr Mylne, Mr Olive, Mr Lutton and Mrs Shaw.

We flew into Athens and were greeted by a delicious midnight feast, the first of many such feasts on the journey. The next day, the Acropolis awaited – and it did not disappoint. Next were the Greek Agora and beautiful modern Acropolis Museum. The first day really set the tone for the rest of the trip – incredible ancient sites, gorgeous views, authentic Greek food and quality hotels.

Throughout the trip, we visited a mixture of sites, from the most famous in Ancient Greece to peaceful little-known gems. My favourite site was Delphi, not only for its historical significance but also the views afforded by its position perched on the mountainside. I never realised how hilly the country is, but the sights you can see from the hilltops are unbelievable, especially views of the sea.

On top of the sites, the trip provided plenty of other activities. From the Olive Oil Factory to the Olympic Running Race, there was ample chance to enjoy yourself and opportunity to gather souvenirs, eat more food or immerse yourself in Greek culture. We saw the marvels not just of Ancient Greece, but also Byzantine and modern Greece – the Byzantine monasteries, the famous bridge at Naupaktos, the Corinth Canal, for example: but seeing Kalavrita, the site of a Nazi massacre, and the monastery of Agia Lavra on 25 March, the date on which Greece marks the beginning of its journey into independent existence, let us properly consider the importance of this public holiday. The thing that really made the trip for me was the incredible volume of information provided at the sites and in the museums. The teachers worked hard to give us the best possible experience while we were there. Mrs Shaw was diligent in making sure everyone was feeling well (which took a lot of effort). Mr Lutton was given his moment where he described to us the journey from Euclid to Gödel. Mr Mylne's historical knowledge and Mr Olive's expertise in the Greek arts



were the basis for great talks that brought the ancient sites to life. I never realised I would be so interested in or learn so much about the Orders of Architecture or Contrapposto, but in truth this knowledge really brought so much to the trip and will resonate with me for the rest of my life. I truly could not be more thankful for what the teachers that came on the trip gave to us.

Adam King (AHH) and Alexander Ross (LL) offer a Sixth Form perspective:

The Westminster Greek trip is one of the most long-standing at the school and, this Easter, we were lucky enough to go on it. Journeying on an epic odyssey, we entrenched ourselves in the wealth of culture and history provided by the nation's ancient roots. From the mountains of Arcadia to the shores of Gytheio, from the Oracle at Delphi to picturesque Kalavryta, the trip never disappointed: each location amazed us either with its religious

importance, its architectural innovation, or its sheer natural beauty.

We indulged in fascinating art-historical discussions at the temples of Athena Parthenos and Epicurean Apollo and were able to follow in the footsteps of intrepid archaeologists and 'gaze upon the face of Agamemnon' by viewing his death mask in the Athen's Archaeological Museum just a day after seeing his 3,300 year old tomb in Ancient Mycenae. The experience of hearing the words of Clytemnestra in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* read aloud in Mycenae itself was one which will live with us for a long time.

We hiked up the walls of Ancient Messene, and, in the theatre at Epidaurus, heard the words of Euripides recited by a chorus of Fifth and Sixth Formers: we visited the site of the Battle of Marathon, and even competed in foot-races in the footsteps of Heracles in the ancient stadia at Olympia and Nemea.

The trip allowed for cross-curricular enlightenment too – the opportunity to confirm the eagerness of Renaissance artists to reinstate the Classical paradigm was stimulated by witnessing the incredible beauty and naturalism of Praxiteles' sculpture of Hermes and the Infant Dionysus at the Olympia Museum.

The trip however did not confine itself to the ancient world. From Byzantine churches, to the crusades, to the Greek war of independence of the nineteenth century, we learnt about the entire history of Greece and how over a period of over three millennia the nation's complex collective identity and culture was formed.



Paris Exchange 2024

by Siddarth Shah (RR)



Immediately after lessons on Friday, we took the Eurostar from St Pancras to Gare du Nord where we were greeted by our host families.

We spent the weekend with them, doing a variety of things: I visited Notre Dame and played basketball with my exchange partner on Saturday and visited an exhibition at the Monnaie de Paris on Sunday, after which we all went together to visit the Tuileries Garden near the Louvre.

On Monday, we started lessons at Lycée Janson de Sailly, a large school in the 16th arrondissement of Paris with over 3000 pupils! My lessons on Monday included Chinese, where I learnt some Mandarin via French, and an English lesson that included all of the Westminster pupils in the class giving presentations in French at the end. After lunch, we all went for the first cultural visit of the week, to Père Lachaise Cemetery, where we visited the graves of several famous people including Oscar Wilde, Frédéric Chopin and Édith Piaf. Having returned from the cemetery, we were met by our exchange partners at the school and went to the Eiffel Tower briefly before deciding to go and play football.

Tuesday was much the same, but I had Computer Science, where luckily the code was all in English, and History, in which we learnt about the history of cartography (map-making) and the various voyages that helped us to form our modern understanding of the geography of the world. In the afternoon we visited the Palace of Versailles, which had a good macaron shop. One difference to Westminster was the class sizes: they sometimes reached 35 people, and this became particularly evident when we kept getting moved to different classes because there wasn't enough space.

After lunch on Wednesday we went on my favourite visits: first to Les Invalides, originally constructed as a hospital for veterans but now housing the tomb of Napoleon; and then the Rodin Museum. Rodin's *Les Bourgeois de Calais* has a replica near school, in Victoria Embankment Gardens.

Thursday brought undoubtedly the most exciting lesson to be taught in France: French Literature. The lesson that I was in was an introduction to the essay that they would have to write for their French Baccalaureate at the end of next year. The literary movement of study is Realism, so they study *Le Rouge et le Noir* (Stendhal), *Madame Bovary* (Flaubert), *Germinal* (Zola) and *Bel-Ami* (Maupassant), a range spanning from early Realism to Naturalism. In the lesson, we discussed how each book was typical of Realism, and how the protagonists exemplified the qualities of the ideal hero. In the afternoon, we visited the Musée Carnavalet, a museum dedicated to the history of the city, and in the evening, we went to *vin d'honneur* with the host families, then went to see *Kung Fu Panda 4*.

On Friday, we weren't meant to have lessons in the morning, so only some of us were allowed into them, then we said our goodbyes and left for Gare du Nord and home. Many thanks to our teachers and our host families for looking after us!

A bite out of the Big Apple

by Zeb Jenkins-Hall (LL) and Sofia Gerhardt (AHH)

A caffeine-fuelled 3.00am start was unable to dampen the spirits of our plucky band of economists. After a quick hop over the Atlantic, we were led on a bus tour of the Big Apple by tour guide Ryan, who regaled us with anecdotes of his life in New York and his recent escape from a cult.

After a hearty meal at Bubba Gump Restaurant, where Alex West (HH) demonstrated his *Forrest Gump* expertise, we made our way to Pod 39 Hotel, which had a welcoming atmosphere and unique, modern design. A tour around the United Nations headquarters was inspiring, as we learnt about the UN's vital work to protect human rights, even having the opportunity to go into the General Assembly Hall. This was followed by a fascinating talk by senior UN development economist Dr Shantanu Mukherjee, who discussed the difficulties of realising the UN's 15 Sustainable Development Goals and the flaws of GDP as a measure of economic wellbeing.

There were spectacular performances all round at Madison Square Garden as we watched the New York Knicks triumph over the Detroit Pistons, with Donte DiVincenzo netting a 40-pointer as Mr Mikdadi and Mr Eburne demonstrated their dancing talents in a spectacular rendition of *Footloose*.

A 40-second ride to the 72nd floor of the World Trade Center took us to the offices of DAZN, where Jared Kass, DAZN's Vice President of Global Strategy, discussed DAZN's rapid expansion and plans to counter sports piracy. The Federal Reserve provided opportunities for learning, through an insightful talk on monetary policy, alongside detailed note taking on the security systems of the Fed's gold vaults. A journey to the top of the



Rockefeller Center provided stunning views and \$8 hot chocolates, followed by a much-awaited trip to *Hamilton*, which was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

The penultimate day of the trip saw the group split up, visiting Apax Partners and Offit Capital, where senior analysts expertly answered questions on the private-equity industry and life in New York. No doubt many of us on the tour were planning future careers.

A short ferry ride took us to Liberty Island, where we learnt about the cultural development of the United States alongside a trip up the spiral staircase of Lady Liberty herself.

A much-anticipated visit to 'Beat the Bomb' escape room did not disappoint, as our teamwork skills were put to the test. A team comprised of Mr Mikdadi, Ms Wagstaff, Mr Eburne and Ms Iida demonstrated their exceptional problem-solving skills (losing every round and getting splattered with paint). A visit to Time Out Food Market was a welcome break from our steady diet of (albeit

delicious) hotel bagels and Shake Shack, as we dined on top-quality food, enjoying New York classics, such as pastrami sandwiches, alongside global cuisine.

The final day of our trip took us once again to Ground Zero of the 9/11 attacks. A walking tour, followed by a visit to the Ground Zero Museum, was extremely moving. An artistic installation bearing the names of each of the victims of the 9/11 attacks was particularly poignant. An assortment of groups went our separate ways to independently explore as much of New York as was possible in four hours, with each group arriving back at our hotel in time, despite the best efforts of NYC's subway system.

A prompt arrival at JFK, courtesy of Mr Mikdadi's minute-by-minute itinerary, assuaged fears among senior White House staff that we were part of a second coming of British settlers. Thank you to Mr Mikdadi, Ms Wagstaff, Mr Eburne and Ms Iida for organising a brilliant, inspiring trip.

The Prag Award at the Royal Institution

by Alexandre Assant (AHH) and Giulio Sotti (HH)

This year, we were awarded the Prag Award, one of Westminster School's travel awards offered to Upper School pupils. We applied for this award on behalf of our team competing in the Davidson Inventors Challenge, a national competition hosted by the Department of Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology at the University of Cambridge, where teams complete a project over the course of five months researching and designing an innovative solution to one of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. In our project we worked on an accessory designed to be attached to a bicycle which uses the kinetic energy (energy which arises due to an object's motion) from the bicycle's wheels to power an ultraviolet light source which disinfects a container of water.

We used the Prag Award to attend an event relating to pathogens and disinfection at the Royal Institution and to conduct an experiment investigating the effect of UV light on bacteria.

At the Royal Institution there were about 50 people at the sold-out event

where Maya Pidoux, a PhD student at the Weatherall Institute of Molecular Medicine at the University of Oxford, discussed Killer T Cells and, more broadly, pathogens and the human immune system. The one hour talk and Q&A was both engaging and informative; the content covered was not only extremely pertinent for our Davidson Inventors' Challenge project, but also fascinating in its own right.

The part of the presentation we found particularly informative was the discussion of the general structure and sub-populations of pathogens and the various designs and functionality of the human immune system designed to mitigate the harmful effects induced by these pathogens. We had limited prior knowledge of the content covered, allowing us to learn more on a variety of new subjects, while also being able to keep up and understand topics covered throughout.

In short, our trip to the Royal Institution was an extremely informative, useful, and enjoyable experience.

We also conducted an experiment in one of the Chemistry labs, kindly supervised by Mr Eburne. Along with the rest of our team, we investigated the effect of UV light on the concentration of a sample of *E. coli* bacteria. This experiment was part of our investigation for the Davidson Inventors Challenge where we dealt with the UV disinfection of pathogens, mainly bacteria, in water. The focus of our experiment was the distance up to which our UV source would still be effective at pasteurising bacteria, an experiment with very little comparative available data and prior in-depth exploration in the field of science. This experiment gave us some first-hand results that informed the design of our project – specifically the maximum distance between our UV source and any water in the filtration unit.

The experiment took just under two hours to conduct, and it was both a valuable and enjoyable experience throughout. Overall, it met our aims of gathering some first-hand results which amplified the quality of our project.

Prag award

The Prag Award was established in 2008 in honour of Adolf Prag who was Mathematics Master and Librarian at Westminster from 1946 to 1966, together with his wife Frede who was also much involved with the School. The Award aims to reflect the way Adolf encouraged pupils to follow up things that had sparked their interest.

Peter (WW 1956-62),
John (QS 1954-1959) and
Thomas (BB 1960-1965) Prag



STATION





CRICKET 1ST XI

1st XI Record 2024 P12 | W10 | L1 (Abandoned 1)

LSCA U19 Cup:

Quarter-final
UCS 85-6 | 1st XI 89-7

Semi-final
1st XI 157-4 | Latymer Upper 139-6
Final
Newham College 97-6 | 1st XI 101-2

Other matches:

Jim Cogan Cup –
Old Westminsters 105 | 1st XI 106-3
MCC 134 | 1st XI 125
1st XI 235-4 | Chigwell 86-5
1st XI 184-4 | Aldenham 75
Alleyn's 98 | 1st XI 100-6
John Lyon 103-5 | 1st XI 105-3
London Oratory 75 | 1st XI 79-2
Butterflies 14-0 (abandoned)
Charterhouse 127 | 1st XI 130-5

The 1st XI team this year had strength in all departments, managing an almost perfect season ably led by Dhruv Gupta (AHH) who bowled economically but often without success. He had an excellent deputy in Aidan Hincks (PP) who enjoyed another fine all-round season with both bat (252 runs @ 28) and ball (14 wickets @ 16.43). In general, the team's bowling outperformed their batting, and the attack was led splendidly by Player of the Year, Jamie Feldman (WW) (20 wickets @ 10.30) who displayed speed and great skill with the ball, whilst contributing some vital batting knocks also. He was backed by the sheer pace of Rohil Bhattad (AHH) (26 wickets @ 8.19) who was leading wicket-taker and the Most Improved Player. Arran Duguid (HH) continued to show his outstanding potential with both the bat (241 runs @ 30.13) and his off-spin, whilst Jai Gupta (BB) (385 runs @ 38.50) was the leading run-scorer again, playing some memorable, devastating innings. Aidan Brooke (LL) showed promise with the bat before injury cruelly ended his season, whilst Aryaman Gupta (PP) (15 catches & four stumpings) led the fielding effort with greatly improved wicketkeeping and played some vital batting cameos. We hope for more from Nirvan Ramesh (MM) with ball and bat next season with regular availability, whilst Alexander

Berridge (MM) improved markedly his bowling and fielding. Ayaan Diddee (HH) was hampered by injury but still showed all-round promise, as did Alfie Jewell (MM) and Toby Postlewhite (HH), whilst Aryan Bagade (AHH) was loyalty personified, including one brutal, eye-catching innings. The team were indebted also to squad players Seb Kershen (RR), Alexander Ross (LL) and Prakrith Rao (CC) for their commitment and fielding efforts throughout.

Finally, I would like to thank all the staff and coaches connected with Cricket Station for their efforts throughout the year, and especially, Keerthi Ranasinghe for his expertise and enthusiasm as 1st XI coach. In addition, I would like to thank the Groundsman, Franklin Barrett and his team for all their unstinting hard work. Thank you too, for their devoted support, to the parents who were most welcome spectators at Vincent Square and beyond.

This year will be a hard act to follow but with most of the squad returning, hopes are high for another memorable season in 2025.

James Kershen



CRICKET U17S

We expected to take the 1st XI to The Cricketer Schools' Hundred Tournament but it was not to be, and so it was an U17 XI that travelled out to Almería to take on 1st XIs from five other English schools.

Back home, the U17's English season consisted of knockout matches in the National Cricket Paper U17 Cup. The competition began with a convincing win over Ibstock Place as Westminster racked up a huge total in just 25 overs with a superb century from Arran Duguid (HH, 108*) and fifties from Aidan Hincks (PP, 74) and Aidan Brooke (LL, 54*). Next up was the visit of the powerful Forest School, including several Essex colts. Two of these players came off with the bat as the Westminster bowling attack was put to the sword for once, unused to playing consistently at this higher level. In reply, only Hincks (31) and Jai Gupta (BB) suggested any permanence and we subsided to defeat and what we thought was the end of the U17 season.

However, unbeknown to us, there was a Plate competition and we found ourselves travelling to Tiffin School, alma mater of England legend, Alec Stewart. Batting first, we were 9-1 off only two balls! The frenetic tempo continued as we scored quickly but frittered away wickets like confetti. Nirvan Ramesh (MM, 31) showed stickability, supported by Duguid and Aryaman Gupta (PP) but we were still bowled out with nine balls left unutilised. Tiffin looked clear favourites at 80-2 with 12 overs remaining but Westminster's competitive spirit came to the fore, led by a superb spell by captain Hincks (5-14), ably supported by Ramesh's off-spin and some excellent out-cricket as Westminster progressed to the National quarter-finals. Here they travelled to Canterbury to face an impressive Simon Langton Grammar School side containing several Kent players. Wickets fell early but Duguid (52) and Hincks consolidated and looked well-placed to post a challenging total before more batting madness ensued and we were bowled out for a below-par score with 13 balls unused. Halfway through their innings, Simon Langton were 60-2 and the game was evenly poised. However, a horrific finger injury to Brooke demoralised Westminster and left them a man short in the field. The opposition took full advantage and accelerated to a deserved victory.

A disappointing end to the unexpectedly busy U17 season but they had an exciting journey on their travels through Spain and the UK playing some outstanding cricket.

James Kershen

U17 XI Record 2024

P9 | W4 | L5

The Cricketer Schools' Hundred Tournament (Desert Springs, Spain):

Dean Close School 74 | U17 XI 78-4
St. Paul's 90-8 | U17 XI 69-7
U17 XI 128-5 | Bloxham School 95-4
Canford School 126-4 | U17 XI 101-7
U17 XI 77 | Epsom College 81-2

National U17 Cup:

U17 XI 270-3 | Ibstock Place 67
Forest School 177-5 | U17 XI 117

National U17 Plate Cup:

Last 16 –
U17 XI 143 | Tiffin School 116
Quarter-final –
U17 XI 130 | Simon Langton School 135-2

CRICKET U15

P11 | W9 | L2

This was an extremely successful season for the U15 cricketers, showing guts and resilience to win all of their non-cup fixtures and also claiming the runners-up spot in the England Schools U15 London Cup – where they were second best only to a very strong Dulwich side.

The team was no doubt inspired by the Bazball exploits of the national side, as they did not fear losing and played with the freedom to express themselves.

Winning a thriller against John Lyon when only putting 99 runs on the board was perhaps the highlight, as they showed their excellent team spirit, but there were several individual standout performances. Toby Postlewhite's (HH) masterful batting, including a top score of 83 against Alleyn's, was often the cornerstone of the side, not to mention his quality with the ball and in the field. Seamers Krishna Agarwal (HH) and Lucian Walker (LL) both took amazing (and identical) figures of 3-3 against Chigwell, with Krishna often contributing elegantly with the bat as well. The devious leg spin of Leo Chatterjee (PP) returned the best bowling figures of the season with three wickets for two runs at Aldenham, showing his prowess.

The Lower Shell first teamers, Ayaan Diddee (HH) and Arran Duguid (HH) both joined the team for crucial runs and wickets in a few of the cup games, including Arran scoring a century against Colfe's in the quarter final. All-rounder Gabriel Erasmus (PP) and wicket keeper Albert Sparks (MM) added some class to the team, and it was ably captained by the irrepressible Jai Khowala (BB). However the player of the season, with metronomic opening spells with the ball, and more than useful contributions with the bat – including several 30+ scores – was all-rounder Arnav Sinha (WW).

Huge thanks to Mark Mason and Mark Parry for their support, and with the success of this team alongside the U15s from the last few years, we are hopefully entering a golden age of Westminster Cricket.

Charlie Ullathorne



CRICKET U14AS

CHASING AN IPL FANFARE

P10 | W4 | L6

A season of thrilling matches, nervy run-chases and a rousing campaign in the London cup.

Kingsdale were the first visitors. After Kabir Kumar (CC) was caught off one of Vincent Square's famous plane trees, Westminster rallied to post 88. A good spell (1-12) from Vikram Navin Chandra (AHH) delayed the opposition's chase. Next, Westminster's batters were again under pressure at St. Paul's, before Raul Shivapathy (LL), with a hard hitting 17 and Vikram (11*) led a recovery. Max Menton (BB) conjured some magic to bowl out the top order. His wickets (4-12) and a direct hit run-out from Ishan Daga (HH) raised the tension before St Paul's edged a three wicket win.

More nails were bitten at Chigwell. Thanks to the flashing blade of Riyan Hargunani (MM), whose 20 and a composed knock of 14* from Nishant Sumon (WW), 91 was a competitive total. Raul took a brilliant running catch off Kabir's bowling and the pair shared six wickets, but Chigwell's tailenders hung on for a two wicket victory.

Meanwhile, the game-plan for the season had crystallised; apply pressure with tight bowling and fielding and chase whatever total was set. This worked in the cup at Colfe's, where Ishan (2-12) took key wickets and 'keeper Arjun Bose (AHH) orchestrated the fielding and run-outs. Angad Kohli (BB) found his timing to reach 28 but was curiously dismissed obstructing the field by handling the ball. His partnership with Max Menton (30) propelled the team ahead of the rate, leaving Nishant (9*) and Max Basirov (RR; 12*) to secure a five wicket win.

The boys were confident of chasing 120 against Alleyn's and Kabir's 47 included three big sixes, while Parin Kumar (5*) continued the chase until he ran out of partners. Vikram (19*) played a similar role at John Lyon, but this time in a winning cause. His ramp for six over Third was the shot of the day, marked with an IPL-style fanfare from Arjun on the boundary. Earlier Raul had bowled some perfect inswingers to take 4-19 and Agastya Priyank (WW) made key breakthroughs in his spell of 2-16.

House cricket recruited Tommy McMahon (BB), who shared four wickets with Angad against London Oratory. A fine running catch from

Agastya helped dismiss Oratory for 78. Raul's 32* heralded an early finish, only for Westcliff to rain on the home side's parade with a nine wicket win. Tommy (21), Parin and Nishant (both 14) each contributed with the bat.

The long-awaited semi-final against City was a cracking game. Pace from Tommy, bounce from Ishan, Angad's swing, Max Menton's guile and Nishant's control restricted City to 136. A nasty collision between Parin and Raul meant a catch was dropped but both were fit to bat. As anxious messages were sent to the GP surgery to where Max Basirov (14*) had retired, nothing could distract captain Angad from playing the innings of his life (81*) to take Westminster into the final.

On the day, Dulwich were too strong but Westminster left inspired by the occasion. A true wicket, a large crowd and an afternoon out of lessons. Tommy and Raul's partnership ensured the team left with pride after a very enjoyable season's cricket. Many thanks to Buddy Mason and Mr Anderson for their coaching and support throughout.

Joseph Ireland





CROSS COUNTRY: WURR'S WICKED WARRIOR WIN IN A WHIRLWIND

Truth be told, I am yet to discern the true purpose of Station summaries: are they an innocuous facet of Station propaganda endured by wide-eyed Fifth Form in their taster sessions, an opportunity to broadcast successes in a publication more permanent than the 'Recent Sports Results' bar on the Intranet and Dr Horsfield's congratulatory announcements in Latin Prayers, or even thinly-veiled attempts at reinforcing cult mentality with inside jokes of negligible significance to the outside reader?

What certainly is of importance is that this – at least, as I understand it – is only the fourth Cross Country (hereby abbreviated to XC) article since 2002 Mr Wurr has delegated to a pupil, and the first not written by a male-identifying individual. As such, I thought it best to skip over the running jokes about our skimpy clothing and budgeting, promise I won't detail the sensation of running, and focus on the true appeal of XC: the Team.

The Team this year has worked phenomenally hard and played even harder; our runs in the Royal Parks, the outer rim of Vincent Square and the occasional trek to Battersea Park are

characterised by our unspoken agreement that everyone leaves their best effort on the track (preferably by the penultimate lap). It'll also be hard to forget the laughs we shared when a graciously unnamed Fifth Former ended up neck-deep in the Serpentine, having 'slipped' on the road about five metres away, and a Lower Shell ran in the opposite direction during a relay.

There's no doubt this training and camaraderie are at the core of the truly exceptional results this year. The Girls' team enjoyed a first-place finish at the London Schools XC Championships, the Senior and Inter Boys walked away with a notable third and the Junior Boys with fifth, highly significant considering the category's competitiveness. Well done especially to Emily Rowe (DD) and Nicholas Taylor (GG) who were selected to run at the English School XC Championships, with Nic placing just outside the top 100 in the country! Embracing the Team's secondary identity as the Nic Taylor Fan Club, it is worth mentioning he came 4th in a Last Friday of the Month 5k with an excellent time of 16:16 and won the Jim Forrest Serpentine Cup by a minute and the Inters Towpath by almost two. Other winners of the Putney race

include Ishaan Daga (HH) in the Juniors, Matthew Kemball (RR) in the Seniors and Emily in the Girls. The Bringsty wins materialised in the form of a gold medal for Rigaud's, silver for Liddell's and bronze for Hakluyt's.

Many thanks go to Mr Wurr, Mr Coles and Mr Walton who ceaselessly inspire us to be excellent athletes and outstanding teammates, and put up with a certain two Remove's discussions about Hungarian linguistic syntax in between reps. I'd also like to extend gratitude to the OG XC runners (you know who you are) for turning a sport that is literally about the number of people you've left behind into a genuinely supportive and inclusive community that I could not imagine my time at Westminster without.

However you interpret the purpose of this article, I can only hope I have made it clear that XC this season has left us all XD.

Kristina Akova (PP)

CYCLING

I still vividly remember being told that we don't get very many girls cycling, as most tend to quit within the first half term, especially after cycling at the velodrome.

The first time I ever cycled at the velodrome was last year, in early September, during a heatwave. It was the outdoor velodrome in Herne Hill; the temperature had exceeded 30 degrees, there was no wind, and I was cycling on a bike with no brakes. Thank God I wasn't the only new cyclist that day and had someone else to be nervous alongside. Cycling at the outdoor velodrome became more enjoyable over time, especially as the temperatures started to cool down. There was something so thrilling about screaming, "On your left!" as I overtook a slower cyclist in front of me (note: this is a very rare occurrence, as I am not a very fast cyclist, which is why I prefer cycling indoors on stationary bikes. Also because there's always good music playing). Over the past two and a half terms, I've realised how much I enjoy cycling, and I would highly recommend it to anyone wanting to switch Stations next year, especially to the girls.

Samrin Khatun (WW)

Cycling is a fantastic Station I would recommend to pretty much anyone. It's extremely accessible, and caters to any level of ability, from total beginner to advanced. It offers great opportunities, such as cycling at Lee Valley VeloPark, where cyclists can learn from professional coaches and experience racing on the Olympic velodrome. Sessions alternate between trips to track cycling facilities, including velodromes and mountain bike trails, and gym work on static bikes in H2 Clubs gym in Victoria, where pupils will have access to outstanding training from Mrs Kershen to improve their power and endurance, and to perfect technique that they can then apply to track cycling. I've been doing Cycling Station since Lower Shell, and not only have I always hugely enjoyed it, I've also been able to make huge improvements thanks to the incredible facilities and training. Learning, for example, to ride confidently around the Olympic velodrome, something that felt quite daunting at first, was a particularly surreal experience. I would really recommend the Station to anyone, as it offers fantastic opportunities for improvement as well as a lot of fun.

Adam King (AHH)



DANCEFIT

Whether you are a dedicated dancer, or drop in occasionally for an afternoon of sweaty fun, DanceFit Station is a haven for all, and undoubtably one of my biggest highlights at Westminster. From reggae rhythms, to salsa, K-pop and hip hop, once you enter the studio, shimmying is not only mandatory, but irresistible!

Amidst the gloom and doom of academia, DanceFit twice a week has been the silver lining of our weeks at school, with Mandy's brilliant choreography and unforgettable core workouts (literally unforgettable, because your abs will only just recover in time for the next session). Even as someone who has never formally danced in my life, in just two years of DanceFit, I have found myself *Shake(ing) it off* to old classics, learning how to do forms of the Charleston and swing dancing, as well as forms of dance I would have never experienced otherwise, like jazz and even tap! Long days spent slouching over a desk can make you want to *Scream and Shout*, but no matter how exhausted you feel, I have never seen anyone leave a DanceFit session without a smile on their face, their back a bit straighter (thanks to the dreaded midway workout that specifically targets the back and core) and their head held high.

We are so lucky to have such a lovely, talented instructor, Mandy, but do not be fooled by her sweet smile because you are guaranteed to have sweat buckets and feel rather *Sweet but Pyscho*, by the end of these challenging sessions that fuse dance with HIIT, Pilates and aerobic exercises.

Overall, DanceFit is a Station that welcomes everyone to work out your body and fuel your soul. If you want to forge close bonds through sweat and laughter, and find a pocket of joy amidst a perpetually hectic school life, I could not recommend this Station more!

Samara Benjamin (HH)



FENCING

It has been another magnificent year for fencing at Westminster, as both our numbers and competitive edge have reached new and lofty heights. Fencers of all years and levels of experience spilled onto the pistes, each with the same impatience to duel a worthy opponent. Apart from occasional grumbling over footwork and fitness sessions (which, we are regularly assured, are vital for developing good technique), camaraderie and a healthy dose of rivalry tended to prevail. The one-on-one lessons with our excellent coaches, Tomek and Leo, really were the icing on the cake.

We started the season as an already formidable force, only becoming more skilled, determined and successful with the experience of each match played. We were thrown in at the deep end, fielding five teams against a strong Harrow side that had given us some difficulty in previous years. Nevertheless, this was to prove the beginning of a glorious streak, as we defeated them 3-2. Success against Tonbridge followed, with a beautifully timed flèche from épéeist Timur Hursever (WW) securing victory in an inexpressibly nerve-wracking final bout. Clean sweeps against Winchester, St Paul's and Charterhouse followed, with Mr Kennedy trying and failing to conceal his glee after each triumph. After a draw against Eton (although we technically won on points), we seemed to slow down a little, but faith in our abilities never wavered, and victories remained just as frequent as defeats for the remainder of the season. Special commendation must go to Ethan Li (PP), Raphael Bertrand (PP) and Maxime Charbonnier (MM), who combined forces to win the British Schools Team Championships.

The culmination of all our efforts came, as usual, at the Public Schools' Fencing Championships. The main individual tournament of the year, it provides our fencers an opportunity to prove themselves at a national level. Alex Strassberg Alonso (LL) made it to the last 16 in the Boys' Senior Foil and Raphael Bertrand the quarter finals in the Mount-Haes edition, while Timur Hursever fought valiantly to place 3rd in the Boys' Mount-Haes Épée. However, most impressive of all were Ethan Li and Sofia Gerhardt (AHH), who offered spectacular performances, eventually coming a narrow 2nd place in the Boys' Mount-Haes Foil and Senior Girls' Épée respectively.

It remains to offer our profuse thanks to coaches Tomek and Leo for training us so effectively, and to Mr Kennedy for devoting so much effort to the organisation of the Station, as well as occasionally getting involved in the fencing itself! I have every confidence that Fencing at Westminster will continue to flourish for many years to come.

Sebastian Eatwell (CC)



FIVES

The combination of both School and League Three Abbey Club fixtures, along with Top Squad training sessions, have all contributed to yet another successful Eton Fives season at Westminster. Some fantastic performances also came from current pupil/joint Old Westminster squads in both the Richard Barber Cup and Graham Turnball Trophy Competitions.

This season we introduced the Shot-Challenge House competition, which sees all Station squad members trying to accumulate as many points as possible for themselves (and their House) over the course of the term, with points being awarded for successful execution of a variety of different shots. The player with the highest total score at the end of the term is awarded by having their name engraved on the Shot-Challenge House Trophy which will be permanently displayed courtside in due course. The winner for 2024 was Jin Lee of Hakluyt's Lower Shell. Many congratulations to Jin!

Invitational top squad training sessions with Fives coaches Mr Wiseman and Mr Charles have added further gravitas to Fives Station, with two hours per session of focussed shot drilling from which pupils have clearly benefitted. Two regular attendees of top squad training, Henry Tamlyn (LL) and Albert Sparks (MM), went on to perform very well at the U15 National Qualifiers along with fellow U15s Louis Petit (HH) and Sai Bhardwaj (BB).

Particular note this season must go to School Fives Captain Kieran Saujani-Lee (HH) and Vice-Captain Sacha Hunter (CC), who have not only tirelessly represented the School this season in terms of squad selection, but who have also done an amazing job in giving up their own time to help encourage a new crop of junior players to the game during Station hours.

Many thanks as usual must go to all assisting staff members, whose continued help with supervising away fixtures and general internal running of Fives Station is hugely appreciated.

Well done all for another excellent season!

Matt Wiseman

FOOTBALL BOYS' 1ST XI

The true highlight of the 2023-24 football season came before even a ball was kicked in anger with the return to our spiritual home Vincent Square, following the completion of the drainage works and the Pavilion redevelopment.

This was a season and a team which delivered far more than had been expected at the outset. The side's overall playing record was:

P23 | W11 | D2 | L10
Goals for 59
Goals against 46



The coaching team and players developed a strategy based upon disciplined, organised, and sound defence combined with swift counterattacking with a cutting edge, all of which could overcome the disadvantages of enjoying the lesser share of possession.

Looking at the line-up, Max Catallo-Bauman (LL) was a key figure in goal, enjoying numerous fine games throughout the season and providing solidity and reliability behind the defence. Matthew Kemball (RR) and Mattias Shuper (BB) shared the right-back position, both blessed with great pace and improving their positional sense as they progressed. Shuper gave attacking impetus also as a wide midfielder who bagged a few useful goals. Jamie Feldman (WW) was the rock at the heart of the defence, strong

in the air and very capable on the ball. He formed a solid central defensive partnership with Elliot Bowden (WW) as they thwarted many opposition attacks. At left-back, Alex Knight (LL) enjoyed a strong, injury-free season, selflessly playing out of position for the team's benefit. In front of the defence, skipper Ivan Matsnev (RR) led from the front perpetually breaking up opposition play and initiating our own attacks, and he was aided and abetted by Thomas Jolly (MM) who grew effectively into the central midfield role. If they were unavailable, Hector Shore (HH) provided excellent cover in the centre, whether holding or attacking. Felix Johnson (MM) enjoyed a new lease of life when he moved out to wide right from CAM but still used his pace and skill well to contribute nice goals. Adam Galal (AHH) posed a genuine threat with similar attributes on the left and learnt to switch

effectively between the demands of winger and wide midfielder. Owen Stevenson (LL) and Alfie Jewell (MM) both played well and scored important goals from the CAM position, although the latter's influence was limited by injury. Up front, Saul De Botton (DD) was the find of the season as a genuine finisher who caused all opposition defences problems on his way to notching 18 goals at a rate of nearly one per match. Lakshikan Hemashabeshan (MM) showed promise up top also with a high work-rate and no little skill which allowed the team to switch effectively from 4-3-3 to 4-4-2 as required. In addition, there was invaluable squad cover provided by Alexander Ross (LL), William Niles (GG) and Rohan Varsani (AHH) with Seb Kershen (RR) also an always willing reserve GK/linesman.

The commitment and work-rate was unfailing throughout as they strived to perfect an effective system of play which enabled them to stay in games longer and thereby increase their chances of victory. When allied to that intangible, golden elixir of confidence, they became a potent force and threat to all oppositions. With many of the squad returning next season, hopes are high for continued success.

Thanks as ever go to all the parents for their support both home and away, and to the Football Station staff and coaches for their commitment, help and support.

Special praise must go to Cecil Nyako who stepped up to 1st XI coach with great success, displaying his customary infectious enthusiasm and passion in abundance. Great thanks also to Franklin Barrett and his team who delivered the Fields in such good condition, in the face of extraordinarily wet weather challenges posed throughout much of the year.

Thoughts have turned already to the 2024-25 season and prior to that the Tenerife tour!

James Kershen



FOOTBALL BOYS' 2ND XI

The boys' 2nds had a season I can only liken to Leicester City's 2016/17 campaign. After our respective underdog triumphs, which saw both Marwan Mikdadi and Cecil Nyako claim silverware, the title defence started off a bit flat against high expectations.

Pre-season had us back on the hallowed turf of Vincent Square, which, since its reopening, has hosted the talents of the likes of Jadon Sancho, Mats Hummels, Niclas Füllkrug and of course, sweeper-keeper Seb Kershen (RR), who stepped into the sticks for us this year. But with the excitement of our return to the Square came the bitter pill of Cecil's departure to coach the 1st XI. Like Ranieri, he couldn't repeat the trick, and he left us coachless for the first three months of the season.

After a couple of losses to open the season, including to a very frustrating last gasp OW winner, we got our first result in the shape of a hard-fought 0-0 draw at John Lyon, thanks to some defensive heroics all round. Then came the arrival of our big-money transfer – Sanchez. His strict Simeone-like training sessions beautifully contrasted and complemented his free-flowing footballing ideology and at the same time made us all much fitter with all the press-ups we had to do for minor infringements.

And under new coaching our season turned around. By February the goals were flying in, and we had two four-goal games in a row, a 4-1 win against Oasis Southbank Academy, followed by a 4-4 thriller against St Dunstan's. And by now the Golden Boot race was heating up. Tate Ford (LL) took the lead with a brace of Ruben Neves-esque thunderbolts against St Dunstan's (one of our only games which wasn't recorded) and a penalty to seal a win against ten-man Forest. But William Wickham (DD) pushed back, with a solo effort against Mill Hill that left three defenders floored, tying things up before our final game against DLD College. Wickham opened, followed quickly by a stunner from William Niles (GG) and then a headed flick by Tate to make it 3-0 and tie the race again. With ten minutes left, though, Wickham picked the ball up in a chaotic 18-yard box after a Tate corner and hammered it home to win himself the Golden Boot and seal a glorious 4-1 win in the sun to end our season on a high.

I want to thank everyone who played any number of minutes in the Seconds this year, Sanchez, and of course, manager Mr Mikdadi, for all your collective contributions to making this year of 2nd XI football so enjoyable.

Max Rozenfeld (GG)



FOOTBALL BOYS' 3RD XI

Forget having seconds,
I want thirds

What a team. Having served in the 3rd XI for the best part of three years, (which is testament only to the kind of unwavering loyalty that is so valued in this team) I can claim, somewhat confidently, that this was a season for the ages. Kicking things off with a 6-3 victory against Haberdashers', it became clear this team had something special – crucially, we had ourselves a goalscorer, Bodie Wetrin-Davis (WW). We carried this momentum forward and took pride in being the only Westminster side to return from Alleyn's with a win under our belt; albeit after a rather close encounter against their 5th XI.

Unfortunately, like all smaller clubs, having displayed some talent we now found ourselves the target of poachers at bigger teams, namely the 2nd XI. However, if our sessions at Vauxhall Powerleague, Kennington, and Battersea Astro (crucially, only once in a blue moon at Vincent's Square) had taught us anything, it was a true passion for the game, and resilience – we maintained our winning streak. Another



hiccup came in the form of a brief change in management, but this did nothing to faze this side nor its winning ways, evidenced by our subsequent 3-0 victory at Aldenham. With three wins from three games, I've been told comparisons were being drawn between us and the Arsenal Invincibles side. Flattered, we remained humble, or perhaps were humbled by our ensuing defeats away at Charterhouse and Eton. Away fixtures were all too familiar for us this season; unfortunately, we were never blessed with a home game at the Square. It seems this privilege is reserved for the Dortmund team, and the U14Bs. Nevertheless, we became accustomed to the routine of shaking off a two hour coach ride with a four minute warm up and we were able to similarly shake off our losses and secure a 6-1 victory against Harrow, with Aiden Brooke (LL) scoring a hattrick.

Despite ending the season with a 3-0 loss to Mill Hill, it would be a waste to recognise this season for anything other than our triumphant start, with not one, not two, but four wins. Needless to say, such a legacy-securing season would not have been possible without the resolute commitment of the players, and the masterful management from Mr Smith, who resurrected, through us, something akin to total football. It has been an absolute honour to captain this side, and I wish the 3rd XI all the best in what looks to be a bright future.

Vincent Muirhead (HH)

FOOTBALL BOYS U16A

“To see the ball, to run after it, makes me the happiest man in the world”
Diego Maradona

Although this was said by the late, great Argentine footballer rather than the 16As own Diego, our Brazilian coach instilled much the same philosophy in his charges this year. Like 1980s Diego, 2020s Diego leads by example and has the same love of attacking flair. The first time Diego performed some ludicrous skill and then instructed the 35 Upper Shell footballers to follow suit, eyebrows were raised, but the squad learned to love the integration of this Joga Bonito with the more practical drills they are accustomed to. And, to everyone's credit, we kept at it. Many a session at Vauxhall, Battersea or the newly-renovated Vincent Square featured a 15-minute spell of stepovers, Cruyff turns and – of course – Maradona turns, amongst the passing and set piece practice.

And so, to the results. The 16As often found themselves up against the 3rd XIs of other schools: literally men against boys. However, our boys were excellent. Wins away at Habs and Harrow were memorable, with Alfie Jewell (MM) and Rohan Varsani (AHH) the driving force behind each of these victories. The team was competitive in every match (all but one of which was away), with Aayan Malik (MM) leading from centre back admirably, the midfield were less physical than many of their rugby-playing opponents but intelligently made use of their superior technical abilities, with Bruno Zheng (CC) and the AHH quartet of Nobuki Smolders, Kian Charania, Parsha Chong and Eddie Kelsey being mainstays. Gareth Southgate recently commented that he didn't want too many strikers in his Euro 2024 squad because “they need a lot of love”; we managed that issue by having only one all year: the ‘bagsman’, Giacomo Filippi (RR).

Although the results were mixed and the journeys often long, this was a close group that was a pleasure to be part of. We were even keeled in victory and defeat, and there was a great maturity in our play by the end of the season. As ever, special thanks must go to our indefatigable and inspirational coach, Diego – scourge of the school's senior teams when playing for the Staff team – and to Mr Ireland, whose time, support, and good humour was invaluable throughout.

Jamie Brown

FOOTBALL BOYS U16B

The Rock, Sword, and Shield of Westminster Football

P5 | W2 | D0 | L3 | Goals for 11 | Goals against 17

Nothing epitomises Westminster quite like an U16Bs football season. Under the watchful eyes of Mr Ireland, there was nothing that we could not do. Except win. Unless the opposition were Dr Parry's 4th XI in a meaningless pre-season kickabout.

After months of hard training, fighting valiantly to avoid relegation to 'the remainders', an impenetrable army assembled atop the luscious turf of Vincent Square, staring down the Highgate 6th XI. Despite goals from inches out by both Hugo Canning Jones (RR) and Martin Rollier (WW) and an impassioned captaincy from Anton Drel (PP), we went down to a 7-2 loss.

Anton, the team's rock, sword, and shield, then spilt a pan of boiling water on his foot and broke his arm, thus narrowly avoiding selection for the game that defined history. The game that had taken place every year since football as we know it was codified: Westminster vs Charterhouse. Unfortunately, Oscar Solomon (WW), the squad's new rock, sword, and shield, had other plans. Despite an unfathomably weak opposition (excepting the referee, a fierce man of 86 years), Oscar made a challenge, and a penalty was given. The ball sauntered across the line and rested just in front of the net. Soon, worried that Westminster had entered his team's own half, the referee awarded a free kick at the other end of the pitch. This quickly became a penalty as the taker's weak shot struck an unfortunate place (Tobias Wynne-Baerwald (MM)'s hand, neatly and legally tucked by his side). Due to a plethora of fantastic scissor-kick clearances from the side's worshipped, reliable skipper and goals from both Martin and Hugo, we were soon level... only to fall apart, losing 4-2.

Up next was a daunting fixture - Eton away. It was -3 Celsius, and the ever-sportsmanlike Eton put us up in a refrigerated changing room. Worst of all, we had to share it with the Lower Shells. Throw in that Tobias was poached by the As (he reportedly "dropped a stinker"... O, the wages of disloyalty...), and our legend of the net, our beastly ball-barricader, our man with the golden gloves, Gobind Kohli (BB), was busy revising. Just as we were losing hope, Nirvan Ramesh (MM) appeared, an angel from the heavens. Some could say that he was 'over-qualified', having been a wicket keeper for many summer seasons, and our opponents were quick to deride his arctic skiing mittens. 'All the gear and no idea' or not, we faced up for another valiant battle: 5-0.

At this point, the squad was disheartened. Paolo van der Lubbe (DD), however, answered the call. He played a hugely significant role, a motivational maestro invigorating the side with calls of "if it's more than an hour away, I can't be asked" and had a huge impact on the squad's aerial presence, bringing the average height to 4'11.

There was still one match left for the Bs to prove what they were made of. Within ten minutes, we had conceded. Five minutes later, we had equalised, in no small part thanks to a spirited performance from Alfie Muirhead (RR). He, with the technical mastery of a football-watching Ben White (ARS) performed a gymnastic overlap into the neat, nimble feet of both Hugo and Josh Vickery (GG), to make it 2-1. The Harrow U18Fs were then dismantled by a perfect FIFA Pro Clubs corner-kick routine and the job was done, 6-1. A fitting end to the season.

Oscar Solomon (WW)

GIRLS' FOOTBALL

This year, Girls' Football was back on Vincent Square. Our track record in 2023-24 may have just been better than any other previous year. Not only did we have a record-breaking number of girls on the team, but we also gained an unmatched enthusiasm for the sport. This was shown in our match performances, where we won five times and also remain unbeaten at penalty shoot outs. Sadly quite a few matches were cancelled due to Britain's temperamental weather conditions, so who knows exactly how many more matches we could have won.

However, in the games that did proceed, we thrived. After last year's defeat we came back with a vengeance against Godolphin & Latymer with two wins and we ended our season with a long-range screamer from Orla Wyatt (DD) that would make Thierry Henry

proud. The referee then proceeded to conclude the game five minutes early, knowing Godolphin wouldn't stand a chance. Moreover, despite a disappointing 3-1 loss against City of London Girls in October, we showed impressive growth with a 2-1 win three months later in January. This was concrete proof of our dedicated training paying off. Our team was strong in numbers with 17 Remove girls, most returning with a zeal for glory, others newly joining the pack, and five Sixth Form recruits who will carry on the legacy of Girls' Football at Westminster.

Other than our (many) wins, we are most renowned for our never-failing passion. Locker rooms before and after matches were filled with the likes of M.I.A., SZA and Nicki Minaj. No matter the scoreline, we would return home with smiles all around.

Of course, none of this could ever be done without the coaching of our

beloved Ollie Yazdi, whose cool, calm and collected approach has led us to flourish. Mr Morgan, Mr Kingcombe and Ms Choraria accompanied us to and from Vauxhall Powerleague, lifted our spirits with chips when we were abandoned in Shoreham-by-Sea and treated us to an end of season dinner at Pizza Express. We couldn't be more grateful.

We all hope the passion and love that we have developed for this incredible sport carries on for all the years to come. Most of the Remove girls have decided to carry on playing football past Westminster, and we all hope that the girls to come after us get to have as amazing of an experience as we did.

**Olivia Wright (RR)
and Emma Grant-Diaz (WW)**



GOLF

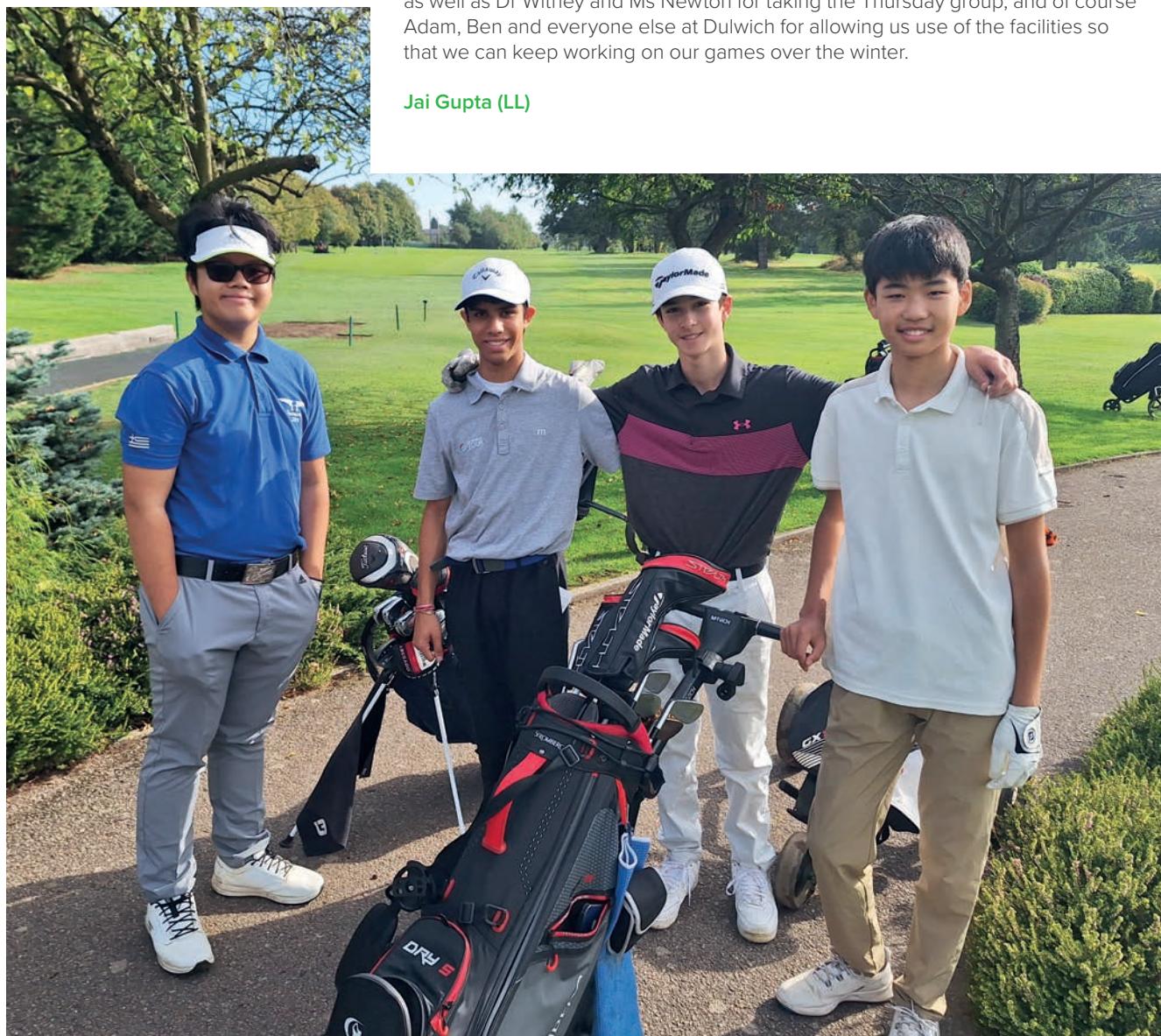
The 2023-24 Golf season is sure to go down as one of the most exciting in Westminster's history. We have once again emerged victorious against the Old Westminsters at the stunning Royal Mid Surrey Golf Club, with moods buoyant on both sides despite heavy rainfall in the days prior forcing us to play an unusual course layout in difficult conditions. The school is also in contention for silverware, in the form of the National Plate final at the end of Election Term!

Without a doubt, the stars of this season's success have been the Fifth Form, with Apollinaire Vandenbroucke (LL), Kabir Kumar (CC), Yanda Xu (AHH) and Thomas McMahon (BB) showing their talent. It was hard-fought victories from this group that led to our first win of the season – a thrilling foursomes match against St Columba's College which was clinched by the former pair on the 20th hole, in the darkness, with an astonishing shot from the trees from Vandenbroucke, followed by a nerveless birdie putt from eight feet by house golf champion Kumar. The future is looking very bright indeed!

On Tuesday and Thursday afternoons during regular Station times, we have been lucky enough once again to use the facilities of Dulwich & Sydenham Golf Club, giving us access to virtually any course on the indoor simulator when vast winter rainfall turned the normally fantastic 18-hole course into 'TPC Bogwater'. This was always great fun and allowed us to work on our games throughout the winter with excellent coaches Adam and Ben.

Overall, a huge congratulations must go to all our players. We had strong depth this year – alongside the Fifth Form we had captain Andreas Metzger (DD), Xander Berridge (MM), Alfie Jewell (MM), Jai Gupta (LL) and Kingsley Yeung (LL). Also, a massive thank you to Mr Ullathorne for organising the Station and fixtures, as well as Dr Witney and Ms Newton for taking the Thursday group, and of course Adam, Ben and everyone else at Dulwich for allowing us use of the facilities so that we can keep working on our games over the winter.

Jai Gupta (LL)





HOCKEY

Sticks and balls will break my bones,
but hockey will never hurt me

A famous Chinese proverb once said: 'The best time to start hockey was 20 years ago; the second best time is now'.

At Westminster, hockey allows pupils to go on both an athletic and individual journey; whether your goal is to make friends, or just simply improve at hockey, Westminster hockey provides both opportunities and inclusivity for all. Whether you are an avid hockey player, or if you are unfamiliar with sticks and balls alike, the Station fosters a welcoming, non-judgemental atmosphere. Despite not being as mainstream as other sports, its popularity has been steadily growing over the last few years. With the help of the Seniors, such as Andrei Piterbarg (DD), Nikil Sarath Kumar (WW) and Alexander Kolushev (PP), amongst others, Westminster hockey has become a formidable unit, full of energy and raring to go in matches, all the while selflessly embodying team spirit.

Training sessions take place on Tuesday and Thursday at Battersea, which sees pupils sharpen their skills through passing drills, dribbling exercises, and shooting practices. After all that has been learnt, pupils are given an opportunity to show off their hard work in a friendly match.

As a great man once said, 'Enduring deepening pain is how man ascends', and we think this true for hockey too. So, if it be the loose swing of a stick, or a flying ball from the half-way line, don't worry – it will only make you stronger!

The hockey team has seen success this year, both in the Senior and Junior departments. It has seen the Senior squad, led by captain Shaylan Roy (HH) beat the likes of Eton and Harrow, and the Junior team also find success with strong performances against a multitude of schools, like John Lyon; special shoutout to Pakrith Rao (CC) for spectacular goal scoring ability, and Tobias Potel (GG) for outstanding senior team performances. Moreover, hockey seems to have no age limit at

Westminster – even seasoned veterans like Mr Edlin, who scored a goal in a fixture between the first team and OWs, envelop themselves in the Station, and so I'd urge all of you, regardless of age, to try it at least once!

They say that you leave hockey, but hockey never truly leaves you, and as we look back over our time playing hockey, a couple key memories stand out – gruesome injuries, spectacular goals, singing victory chants; the list goes on! A huge thank you is in order to all the teaching staff that give their all to Hockey Station; Mr Anderson, Mr Eburne, Ms Wagstaff and Mr Edlin, all of whom allow us to the opportunity to play week in week out. With both of us having played hockey nearly all our tenure at Westminster, it is going to be really sad to leave; however, we are proud of what we have achieved here with this group and are confident that Westminster hockey is in safe hands and will continue to excel for years to come.

Tobias Potel (GG) and Shaylan Roy (HH)

HOCKEY U16

We often tell ourselves that it's the taking part that counts. But this year, we were here to win!

A successful season of enjoyment and improvement was highlighted by three resounding victories over teams that made us shudder in years past. With a new layout to our line-up and an influx of star Fifth Formers, Westminster Hockey was once again marking the beginning of a new era. Throughout Play Term we trained hard, challenging ourselves and each other, preparing for our short but momentous season around the corner, battling through concussions, concussions and guess what? More concussions!

However, we came back after Christmas playing better than ever. With a tense starting fixture against John Lyon at home, our first major challenge was here. Stepping into his role, Kabir Kumar (CC) commanded the defence, complementing the strength of our forward trio, ensuring that our first match ended in a confidence-boosting 3-2 win. Our next challenge was by far the toughest: playing Eton, away, missing four key players. Despite being 1-0 up for a large proportion of the match, we let the game slip away and despite valiant efforts from the new-found sensation of a goalie, Tommaso Committeri (DD), we ended up losing 1-3.

Despite our first loss of the season, our confidence was not lost as our gifted coaches, Mr Eburne and Mr Collier, helped foster our now-renowned team spirit, through drills as well as helping us psychologically and tactically. As a team, we began to gel together, with some quick banter off the field and strong confidence and trust in each other on it.

Playing on the hills of Harrow against a crafty Harrow School, was our next challenge, and armed with our team spirit we soldiered on, intent on increasing our win count. A fierce defence and a formidable midfield allowed a determined striker, captain and resident goal-stealer, Prakrith Rao (CC), to score a double hat-trick, ending on eight goals for the season, contributing to a thrashing 5-0 victory against the Harrovians. This thrilling victory was followed by some Fifth Form magic against Merchant Taylors, with Arjun Bose (AHH) scoring a double and Kabir Kumar scoring off an excellent short corner (as well as the sneaky striker stealing yet another goal), with our most passionate and emotional victory of 4-3 ending the match of our biggest rivalry with huge smiles on our faces.

Through the highs and lows, we would like to thank Mr Eburne and Mr Collier for their massive contributions to our hockey and to us as mentors guiding us through this journey to remember. A huge congratulations to the whole squad, specifically to Kabir Kumar as player of the season, Arjun Bose, who showed brilliant promise for the future, and finally, Haohao Gao (BB), our glue in our darkest times. I am so proud of the whole team and wish you all good luck next year!

Prakrith Rao (CC)

JUDO

This year our numbers and our performance have flourished. We have seen a record number of new pupils from both the Lower and the Upper School giving Judo a go. With plenty of regulars, and a steady stream of newcomers, spirits are running high.

We have even managed to make it out of London and arguably gone 'international', sending a seven-person team of Westminster's finest Judoka to the HMC competition in High Wycombe (deemed international by this year's Co-Captains: Jonathan Wynne-Baerwald (MM) and Darius Pham (AHH)). The usual Westminster grit and determination was shown, not only achieving medals in the Senior Boys division but also walking away with the 'Small Team' Trophy, despite having arrived fashionably late to the competition. A particular shout-out has to go to Harold Greenfields (WW) and Zain Sathe (LL) for winning Silver medals in their respective categories in the face of stiff (Team GB) competition.

Writing as a Remove pupil whose time at Judo Station is coming to a close, I am immensely grateful to have had such great coaching from Paul Ajala and Larry Stevenson, who have each taught me lessons both on and off the Tatami mat that I will carry with me through University and beyond.

Judo at Westminster is continuing to grow and thrive, under the watchful eye of Mr Crow, and hopefully next year even more Westminsters will discover the joys and wonders of Judo Station. The talent I have seen in the younger years assures me that Judo is in good hands and I am certain that we only have bigger and better things to come.

Oos.

Jonathan Wynne-Baerwald (MM)



NETBALL

The year began with the much-awaited reopening of the renovated pavilion on Vincent Square, which we marked with a netball match against the OWs. The OWs proved that both their enthusiasm and their netball skills were undiminished, winning a closely fought match against the current squad.

With only five players returning from the previous year (Maddie Brown (PP), Melissa Ward (MM), Charlotte Moore (GG), Mia Guildford (BB) and Roxanne Lawson (AHH)), we eagerly welcomed the addition of a number of new players (Danica Ling (BB), Katreesa Lam (AHH), Gwyneth Suen (BB), Nelya Kogan (WW), Lola Raghavan (LL) and Natasha Henshaw (HH)).

The most notable feature of the season was the degree of improvement and encouragement within the team. Over the course of the season, we were able to develop a team spirit and a familiarity with each other's playing styles which was rewarded with wins over Francis Holland Regent's Park and Queen's Gate.

It was perhaps not surprising that we initially struggled against some of our more experienced opponents: while they had, in many cases, been playing together for years, we had met only weeks prior. As a small squad, we did, on occasion, also have to rely on bringing in new players from other Stations to make up a team and we were very grateful for those who stepped up to help out. The season culminated in a highly competitive tournament at St Paul's Girls School.

The Inter-House netball tournament was another highlight of the season, with Liddell's defeating Grollege (the combined Grants and College team) 5-3 in the final and Milne's overcoming Busby's 3-2 in the third-place play-off. Finally, in the annual Remove Boys vs Girls match, the girls, once again, scored a convincing victory over the boys in what proved to be a highly entertaining event.

Many thanks to Mr Perrins, Ms Iida and Ms Hewes for all of their input over the last two seasons. We wish next year's squad the best of luck in their endeavours.

Maddie Brown (PP) and Melissa Ward (MM)





SHOOTING

It has been an exciting year for the Westminster School Rifle Club. We started the year with a bang and a victory against Cambridge University.

We also competed against Oxford University and participated in many postal competitions, where our new and experienced shooters were able to refine their technique and skill under pressure. During Lent Term, our very own C team came 2nd in their division in the Spring BSSRA leagues, beating several B teams from other schools. The Westminster A Team are back in division two of the BSSRA this term and we have come in 3rd place. Huge congratulations to Max Barrans (HH) and Lewis Woolf (LL) who qualified to the second stage of the Eley/NSRA individual national competition, and Lila Rose Chung (DD) who has made it to the final!

One of the best parts of Westminster School's Rifle Club is the frequent visits to Bisley. The Sixth Form and Lower Shell attended day trips where they shot Gallery Rifle in the morning and fullbore in the afternoon. Rohan Kapisthalam (PP) and I were lucky enough to practice our coaching and plotting ahead of the Imperial Meeting this summer whilst other members of the club did some shooting.

House Shooting this year was very competitive, with Ashburnham winning the trophy for the second year in a row. In very close second place was Haklyut's, only nine points behind Ashburnham. Watch this space to see if Ashburnham can keep their title as reigning champions!

The shooting range is definitely the place to be and we are all very lucky to be able to participate in such a special and challenging sport. With boys and girls already shooting side by side, I am excited to see how the Station grows in the transition to a co-ed Westminster. The team spirit coupled with the healthy competition to reach the top of the rankings makes going up range the highlight of my week. Finally, a massive thanks to Mr Hendriks who works so hard helping everyone be the best possible shot and for supporting us in everything!

Mai Noubir (AHH)

SWIMMING

Going out with a splash

There is no better way to spend a Tuesday or Thursday afternoon than at the Queen Mother Sports Centre clinging to the side of the pool, gasping for air as Michele (our swim coach) shouts at you to keep going. People are slow to jump in, finding excuses like suddenly needing to adjust their goggles or stretch out a newfound injury, but the satisfaction of swimming is worth braving the first few cold laps of the pool.

With the fun comes a healthy dose of success. This year's Bath Cup was a historic triumph for Westminster as we reached the final for the first time, securing a very respectable seventh place overall in the 4x100m freestyle relay in a national-level competition! The team (Alex Williams (AHH), Aslan Eler (DD), Maxwell Booth (LL), and Luke Pryce-Jones (HH)) put on a performance well worthy of the London Aquatics Centre's stage.

Of course, we had to have our customary humbling with a gala against Harrow. To the surprise of both teams, we won several races, and our indomitable team spirit made up for our overall defeat as no race was left un-cheered for. We more than bounced back with the Westminster Borough Championships, as countless medals were secured from all age groups. Heavy necks across the board from the team of Maxwell Booth, Ardavan Pesendorfer (BB), Arthur Tidbury (BB), Alexandre Paul (PP), Arthur Stevenson (PP), Lucian Brazil (HH), Timur Hursever (WW), and Marc Durantel (WW) due to the plethora of golds and silvers won at our home pool.

TENNIS BOYS FIRST VI

House Swimming is always a lovely event to see people of all ages and levels get excited about. Highlights include the underwater dash won by Maxwell (with Alex a close second), the ever-exciting relays, and the 100m freestyle (won by Aslan with a close second from Ashburnham). It was great to see a few ancient school records get demolished so that a new set of names could be seen on the sheet in the years to come. Best of all was the team spirit shown during the relays. Everyone was screaming at the swimmers, who could barely hear them, like proud football fans shouting at their TVs.

We could not have had this much fun without the help of others. A huge thank you to Michele for putting up with us at training, and an extra special thank you to Dr Prentice for running the Station and the unforgettable House Swimming. Nothing compares to the excitement during the House events, or the humbling feeling as she continually lapped me in training and then gave me technique tips during my next physics lesson!

The atmosphere is like nothing else, especially during the relays and dives at the end of every session. I will miss the humour and joy swimming at Westminster has given me over the past two years, but I am so glad to have been a part of something so great that many others can experience too.

Alex Williams (AHH)

TENNIS GIRLS FIRST VI

Girls' Tennis offers a welcoming community for players of all skill levels, from advanced competitors to those who just want a more relaxed Station afternoon! Last season, the Girls' First XI team (Louisa Hoogewerf (CC), Yuwa Ighodaro (LL), Constance Arkell (GG), Jemima Brod (GG), Zara Mehmood (HH), and captain Lucy Hang (LL)) achieved many successes, securing several high-scoring victories while having lots of fun.

Despite the relatively small size of Girls' Tennis compared Boys' Tennis, the team dedicated itself to training throughout the winter on their own courts. During the summer, they competed in both girls' and mixed doubles matches against other schools, as well as participating in House Tennis events.

When not travelling by coach (or even tube) to fixtures, players enjoy a sociable but competitive Station where people of all skills are able to enjoy the wonderful sport of tennis. Unfortunately for pedestrians walking just outside, you may find a ball flying over your head and into one of the parked cars, but we promise that it wasn't on purpose. For more casual players, tennis is still a great option. Whether it's releasing pent up frustration on yellow tennis balls or admiring the scenery of Vincent Square, Tennis Station allows for everyone to enjoy a much-deserved break from the demanding school week. So even if you really just want to sit around and have a chat, or have never touched a racket before, just come along to Tennis Station and we'll hand you a racket and leave the rest up to you!

Lucy Hang (LL)



WATER – BOYS TOP SQUAD

2023-24 has marked a year of significant change for the Boat Club. With last year's Head Coach leaving for Hampton, Matthew Harris took over the role – and the boys in top squad were eager to help make a big impact in his first year as Head Coach on the schoolboy rowing scene.

The season began in small boats, where the boys took 2nd, 3rd and 4th place results in the J18 doubles category at Pairs Head. Eventually we moved into the eight in preparation for Head season. This year's lineup for the first eight from cox to bow was: Eima Miyasaka (LL), Michael Tzitzikakis (GG), Bryan Chen (DD), Timothy Gutsev (RR), Patrick Garman (CC), Alex Taylor (RR), Florian Offner (BB), Oliver Buxo-Copp (GG) and Thomas Lewis Ward (GG). Winter training meant many early mornings and late nights – but with sights set on the prestigious Schools' Head of the River race, organised by our very own Boat Club, motivation was at a high. The 1st eight came away with 6th place at Schools' Head, in the thick of a very tight pack of the fastest crews in the country.

With Head season behind us, summertime was fast approaching and we shifted our focus onto 2k racing, attending a week-long training camp in Belgium, leading up to the

Ghent International Regatta. There the squad took away 2nd place, losing out in a tight battle against tideway rivals King's College School, Wimbledon, but beating Hampton School. This built confidence, but also showed us the competitive standard of schoolboy rowing was at an all-time high. At the National Schools' Regatta, we came 7th in tough crosswind conditions, but did not let this result dishearten us as we were just two seconds off a medal position so knew the next few races in the build-up to Henley really were anyone's game.

A few weeks later the boys raced the Metropolitan Regatta, winning the J18 eights category. Placing into the A final after a very strong time trial performance, we raced against some of the fastest men's eights in the country, including Cambridge University's Blue Boat, winners of the boat race earlier this year. Being just a few seconds off of St Paul's School, undefeated all year, we left Met Regatta confident that we were in a strong position. At Marlowe Regatta our time trial didn't go as smoothly as we would've hoped, but in our final we put out a faster time than Eton and Latymer. All eyes now turned to Henley Royal Regatta.

Day One of Henley, we drew S.R.V Alter Teichweg – a composite boat



of the best athletes from local rowing clubs in Germany. The nerves were heavy before this race. Not just because it was our first day racing down the course but because we knew little about our opposition. We stuck to our race plan and managed to drop them off the start and lead them down the course – winning the race.

Day Two of Henley, we drew St Paul's School – the crowd favourites to win the race. We gave them our best and they gave us theirs, but in the end they were simply a better crew. They went on to win the entire competition, doing so with class.

Looking back, I cannot fault any of the work and commitment put in by my team and am so proud of how much we have all grown both individually and as a group. I am honoured to be able to call my teammates family and to call the Boat Club home.

With so much potential in the lower years of the Boat Club, I am especially excited to see how it will continue to grow in the next few years under Matthew Harris' leadership.

Michael Tzitzikakis (GG)

WATER – GIRLS

At Putney in September the old hands of the Westminster Boat Club girls' squad took to sculling straight away, reminding themselves of skills learnt last year, while the newbies went to the indoor rowing facility at Barn Elms to learn the basics of rowing.

As Play Term progressed, a case as old as time resurfaced: 'UK Tideway Athletes vs. The River Thames'. We faced weather warnings, yellow flags and race cancellations. Doing what we could, the squad turned indoors to work on strength and endurance, and made the most of our precious time on the water. We started weight training, and spent many mornings like this in the coming months. We hobbled and erged through a training block that lasted longer than expected, but new muscles weren't the only thing forged; the squad grew closer than ever, creating inter-year friendships to be cherished long after our days at Westminster.

Our first lucky break! Despairing at the state of the river, we turned our sights to Monaco, having been invited to race at the Port Hercule Coastal Regatta. The only (unofficial) coastal rowing experience we'd had was bumpy sessions on the Thames so expectations were low, but we secured gold medals for the quad (Adela Garcia-Rodenas (GG), Sophia Saunes (RR), Ira Dubey (CC), Ingrid Berg (CC)), and had a lovely time seeing all Monaco had to offer before being whisked back to London.

Lent Term brought the School's Head of the River Race: a Westminster Special. As the water eased up we were able to take our prized boat, Queen Wilhelmina, out more frequently. The quad raced in a very competitive field, coming away with the slightly disappointing result of 27th place. After some consideration our main takeaway was we needed to train harder than ever.

After the end of term, the quad took the Eurostar over to Belgium for our annual training camp at Ghent. We progressed through the five days of camp: waking up at ungodly hours; delirious van rides; miles of sculling in small boats; pushing our minds and our bodies to their limits, anticipating rewards back in London.

As A Level pressures picked up, the Remove found themselves less present at Putney, leading to the decision to race a Sixth Form double at National School's Regatta. Sophia and Adela surpassed expectations, reaching the B final after a time trial where they knocked out far more experienced crews. The duo went on to the semi-finals of the prestigious Henley Women's Regatta, coming in the top four doubles of over 30 entries. No mean feat for a pair of J17s who'd been rowing for less than a year!

Forget not the rest of the beginners' squad, under the tutelage of Ms Chidgey. With the conditions of the Thames at the start of the year, novice athletes got the short straw.

They were forced indoors until the river was deemed safe enough for them to row on. Regardless they persevered, and after hopping in an eight in the Play Term they were able to showcase their skills at Wimbleball Regatta in smaller boats, taking away a bronze medal for good measure!

The year started in a less-than-ideal manner for all Tideway athletes, but in true Westminster fashion we made the best of it. The girls' squad has undergone remarkable changes once again, most notably integration into the Top Squad, giving us a chance to train with the boys, weight training together and occasionally rowing in mixed boats. Girls' rowing at Westminster has seen exponential growth, and with the school soon going fully co-ed, excitement awaits.

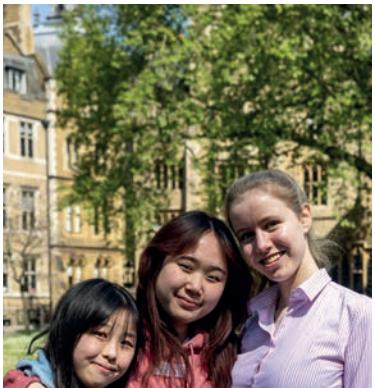
Ira Dubey (CC)





Remove Brunch







Remove Ball



Gaps in the Archive: A Case Study of One Boy's Time at Westminster

by Bethany Duck, Archivist

Some enquirers who find their way into the Archive email inbox do so in the hope that we have a copy of every record the school has ever produced, but our collection is not quite as exhaustive as that.

Some of the gaps are purposeful – we don't have the space to keep everything, and many of the records we produce as an organisation serve an important business purpose at the time but have little in the way of ongoing historical interest.

Other gaps have occurred more organically and are the result of records being disposed of by people who didn't recognise their value at the time, or people who walked off with documents that should have been retained by the school. The last in our series of Town Boy Ledgers, for example, went home with a pupil in 1959 and was only fairly recently returned.

To demonstrate how these gaps impact what the Archive can and cannot reveal about an Old Westminster, it is useful to take one specific OW as an example.

Ewen Montagu was up Rigaud's from 1914 to 1919. When he left school he embarked on a legal career, but the outbreak of the Second World War had him signing up to join the navy. Owing to the potential value of his legal experience, he was co-opted into Naval Intelligence and spent the war working with MI5. During this time, he co-designed Operation Mincemeat, a plan to use a corpse dressed as a British pilot and carrying fake documents to fool the Germans into moving their troops out of Sicily, which the British hoped to invade. By all accounts, it was a success.

Plenty is known of Montagu's military career and work during the war. He wrote two books on the subject himself and the story of Operation Mincemeat has since been made into a film starring Colin Firth, and an Olivier Award-winning West End

musical. But before Montagu became a Naval Intelligence officer, he was a boy at Westminster School. It is possible to track his name through both school and Rigaud's records, revealing details of his time at Westminster that didn't make it onto the pages of his books.

The Record of Old Westminsters is always our first port of call when researching an OW. All known alumni have entries in the printed volumes, with deceased OWs also present on our online catalogue. The level of detail contained in these entries can vary, but Montagu's is relatively comprehensive with regards to his life post-Westminster. Most significantly for the purposes of further researching his time at the school, it contains his dates of admittance and departure, and his House.



Montagu, The Hon. Ewen Edward Samuel, brother of Stuart Albert Samuel Montagu (q.v.), 3rd Baron Swaythling; b. March 29, 1901; adm. Sept. 24, 1914 (R); left July 1919; Harvard Univ. U.S.A. 1919-20; Trin. Coll. Camb., matric. Michaelmas 1920; B.A. and LL.B. 1923; M.A.; called to the bar at the Middle Temple May 14, 1924; K.C. 1939; Recorder of Devizes 1944-51; Bencher of the Middle Temple 1948; Judge Advocate of the Fleet 1945; Deputy Chairman of Quarter Sessions, Hampshire 1948; Recorder of Southampton 1951-61; Chairman of Quarter Sessions, Hampshire, 1951; D.L. Hampshire 1953; Deputy Chairman of Quarter Sessions, Middlesex 1954; Chairman 1956; President, United Synagogue, 1953-62; Lieut.-Commander R.N.V.R. 1939-45; O.B.E. (military) 1944; C.B.E. 1950; Order of the Yugoslav Crown 1945; author of *The Man Who Never Was*; m. June 14, 1923, Iris Rachel, daughter of Solomon Joseph Solomon, R.A., of Hyde Park Gate.



House records, particularly for the older boarding houses, are a particularly strong area of our collection. It is often in House Photographs that we are able to find images of pupils, but unfortunately there is a gap in the run of Rigaud's group photographs in our collection, covering the period Montagu attended Westminster. He is, however, visible in the 1919 whole school photograph, sitting in the front row.

Turning to the written Rigaud's documents, Montagu's name appears several times. In Lent Term 1916 he is noted as having come down with 'German measles' (now known as Rubella) amid a House-wide epidemic. In Lent Term 1918 his involvement in the OTC is recorded, and in Election Term of the same year he earns his House Colours. In Play Term 1918 he is made a monitor. The recording of such detailed accounts of events within Houses is reliant on a fastidious Head of House, as he was responsible for keeping the ledger. Thankfully those who held the position in Montagu's time were fairly attentive to their duties.

The Elizabethan is also a strong source for any pupil at the school from the 1870s onwards, with most names being

145. Montagu was not quite nimble enough behind the wicket, and let pass rather a lot of byes. Otherwise the fielding was good. Berryman, unfortunately, hurt himself half way through the innings, and was unable to continue playing. Wade took four for 44, Berryman two for 14, and Cowan two for 29. It was, on the whole, a very creditable win for T.BB.

TOWN BOYS.

P. V. Wade, c and b H. F. Gorman	22
H. Clare, b H. F. Gorman	14
J. D. Percival, b C. H. Taylor	27
F. D. Berryman, b C. H. Taylor	48
E. G. Buckley, b H. F. Gorman	6
A. P. Main, c Last, b H. F. Gorman	21
E. L. Cowan, c Last, b C. H. Taylor	32
Hon. E. S. Montagu, b H. F. Gorman	0
H. R. Munt, not out	6
R. H. Lowe, b C. H. Taylor	0
D. L. Fevez, b C. H. Taylor	1
Extras	21
Total	168

mentioned at least once. Montagu appears in the Rigaud's House Notes sections most predominantly as a player of cricket. He is congratulated for receiving House Colours in July 1918, although his performance in a Town Boy v. King's Scholars match the same month is reviewed less than favourably, attesting he 'was not quite nimble enough behind the wicket.'

The Rigaud's House Notes articles also mention in November 1919 that Montagu goes to America once he leaves the school. The most interesting appearance of his name, however, concerns a note from December 1918: 'We are glad to see that Montagu, who has recovered from a severe motor bicycle accident, [is] once more among us.' No further detail of this accident is given either in the Elizabethan, or in the Rigaud's house documents.

Although we can learn a lot about Ewen Montagu from the documents held in the Archive, it is clear there are still some pieces of information missing. The particulars of this motorbike crash are some of the most evident omissions from our record, not documented perhaps because it was not deemed to be important, or because the other boys all already knew and dispersed the details orally. It was a question I had for a few years until I made contact with Montagu's great-grandson, who was kind enough to pass the matter on to his mother, Montagu's granddaughter.

I had not been particularly hopeful of the information having survived two generations, so I was pleasantly surprised to learn the full story.

Montagu had been given a motorbike to travel to an American Air Force base where he was doing machine gun training. The route included a road with an s-bend that Montagu took partially by travelling onto the wrong side of the road. In an age of minimal motor traffic, this was not quite as risky as it would be today, but he was unfortunate enough to encounter a car coming in the other direction. Crashing into the bonnet, he flew over his handlebars.

The brief mention of this event in the archive pales in comparison to the full tale, with the details giving both context and colour to the story and to Montagu as a character. This kind of detail that provides real value to the

collection, but it would be impossible to hold every similar piece of information on every OW. Some tales survive as family legends, some in other archives, and some are already lost to history.

The omission of Montagu's motorbike accident from our records was not purposeful, but there is another story from his time at the school that was intentionally removed.

Rigaud's used to keep a 'black book' that recorded punishments within the House. In an unpublished autobiography, Montagu recalls he 'has easily got the record number of tannings in one term' over the whole period that book covered, but also mentions an occasion when he tore out a page. The other punishments he had no objections to, but he believed the 'theft' was an authorised borrowing of an 'OTC cap-badge', which he recalled as being the usual custom when someone had forgotten their own.

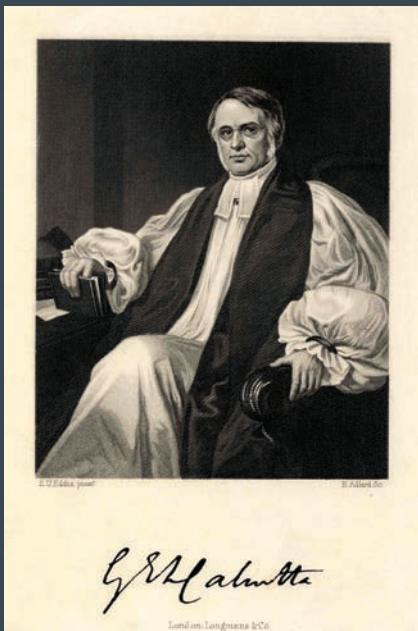
In removing the page, Montagu altered the archival record, creating a very purposeful gap that is only filled with the later context from his memoir, as recorded for his descendants. Without their assistance, the information would have been lost.

Ewen Montagu's archival footprint works as a case study to demonstrate what we can learn from the school's collections. While we are fortunate to have been able to close some of the gaps in our knowledge with the help of his family, we are usually not so fortunate. We hold a significant amount of information, but it is impossible or one collection to hold everything, so, for most Old Westminsters, some gaps will always remain unfilled.

Westminster pupils in India and the significance of eastern linguistic culture

by Zafirah Ali, Archives Assistant

Many aspects of controversy in Westminster School's history have often been vested in its pupils' endeavours in India.



Above: George Edward Cotton
Top right: Gateway engraving
Bottom right: John Bowle's Gandhi drawing



Between the 18th and 19th centuries, hundreds of Westminster pupils served in the East India company, including George Edward Lynch Cotton (1813-1866) who joined the school in 1825.

Cotton began his career in 1837 with 15 years as an assistant master at Rugby School before being appointed Headmaster of Marlborough College. In urgent need of reform, Cotton's mastership here was a turning point in the school's history. Through his remarkable force of character, he improved the teaching, restored the finances, and established a profound influence over pupils and masters alike, leading the college to obtain the high status it maintains today. Throughout his life, Cotton remained earnestly religious, initially following the evangelical school and later developing his own distinctive character and principles. Upon the recommendation of Dr Tait, a former colleague and chaplain from Rugby, Cotton was appointed as bishop of Calcutta in 1858, subsequently retiring from Marlborough. Thus began his journey to India.

Cotton arrived at the port in Madras on 13 November 1858, the same day as the public reading of the royal proclamation for the Queen's assumption of the direct government of India. This event raised numerous questions including the attitude of the government towards Christian missions and the education of the native Indian people. Cotton responded to this complex debate by acquiring an influential position in the official and administrative circles of Indian life to help the missionary cause and aid in greater measures surrounding religion and education in India. Alongside his position as a bishop of the church of England, he also established schools for poorer countrymen in India.

Cotton died tragically on 6 October 1866. His foot slipped while crossing a rough platform of planks on board a steamer boat, causing Cotton to fall into the river Ganges and be swept away by the current. He was never to be seen again.

An unfortunate tale as this was, the death of Britons during their early years in India was surprisingly common.

Egerton Robert Glyn was another pupil who met his demise during his early years in India. Admitted to the school in July 1837, Glyn went on to serve at the East India company as a writer in 1847. However, five years later, he died at the tender age of twenty-five. Glyn's time in the school has been marked through the carving of his name on the Burlington Arch near School. A notable feature of this engraving is that it has been executed in a North Indian Script known as Devanagari. Despite the competent lettering, this engraving is thought to have used the incorrect letters, making it rather difficult to ascertain which pupil it refers to. Upon much research and deliberation, Glyn's name and background appears to be most suited.

Controversially, the school also accommodated a visit from Mohandas Gandhi on Friday 13 November 1931. This was part of the final trip that Gandhi made to London in the 1930s to take part in the second round table conference on Indian affairs. At this stage in his life, Gandhi was a leading figure in Indian national life and was actively pushing for nonviolent protest in opposition to the British rule in India.

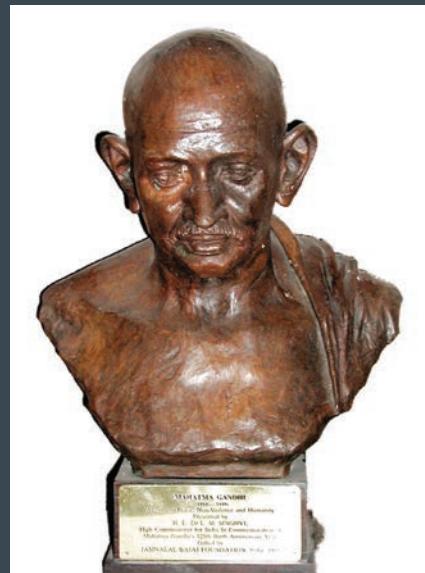
Amongst visiting other educational institutions, he gave a speech at the school meeting with the newly founded Political and Literary Society. This was organised by John Bowle, the Senior History Master at the time. Bowle recounted:

"Gandhi arrived scantily clad, in a November fog, with two white clad attendants in little square caps... It is no exaggeration to say that he hypnotised his audience, assembled in the big front room of the Ashburnham Library, his deep, vibrant voice radiating an extraordinary power."

His speech consisted of his vision for India to be free and united and was described by Bowle as 'deeply

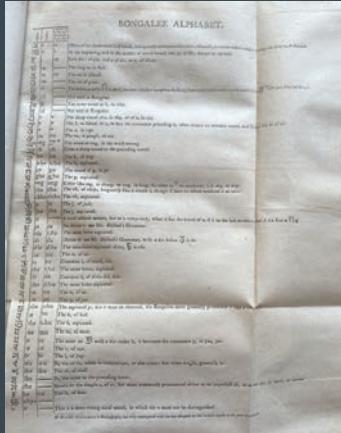
impressive'. A drawing of the visit by Bowle depicts Gandhi settled into an armchair surrounded by various individuals such as the Head Master Dr Costley-White, his wife, Rev Pentreath and the Master of the King's Scholars.

Extending this invitation to a contestable figure like Gandhi during a period of political turmoil may signify the spirit of open-mindedness at Westminster School in the early 20th century. However, this visit did arouse opposition from more conservative members of the Common Room. Figures who were seen as supposedly enlightened such as Lawrence Tanner expressed being 'horrified' by the proposed visit. Nevertheless, this event was commemorated in 1995 when Dr L.M. Singhvi (High Commissioner of India) presented a bust of Gandhi to the School. This brown, bronze bust was gifted from the Jamnalal Bajaj Foundation, to mark the 125th anniversary of Gandhi's birth, and remains on display in the Brock Library in Ashburnham House.

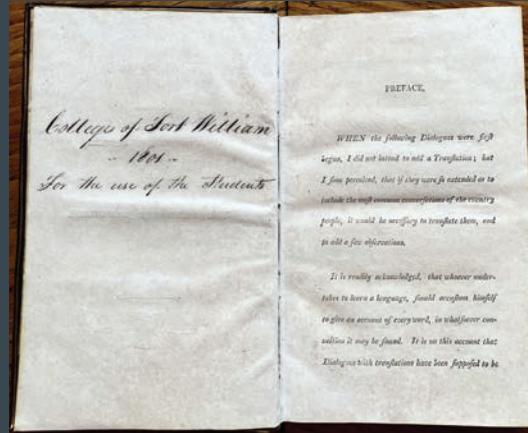


The cultural crossover between the British and the East India Company meant that the significance of language and communication was paramount. Thus, an academy of oriental studies and centre of learning was established on 18 August 1800, known as the Fort William College (also referred to as the College of Fort William).

Westminster pupils in India and the significance of eastern linguistic culture continued



Bengali alphabet



Bengali dialogues

On a Horse and Punting.	On a Horse and Punting.
Chamber.	Chamber.
Hall.	Hall.
Bedchamber.	Bedchamber.
Bed.	Bed.
Hu. Inch.	Hu. Inch.
Dress.	Dress.
Spoon.	Spoon.
Cutting-board.	Cutting-board.
Oven.	Oven.
Cellar.	Cellar.
Stone, or holder.	Stone, or holder.
Sty, or round.	Sty, or round.
Library.	Library.
Sto.	Sto.
Ground-floor.	Ground-floor.
Upper-story.	Upper-story.
Cupola, or Domet.	Cupola, or Domet.
Kitchen.	Kitchen.
Servant.	Servant.
Service.	Service.
Wagon.	Wagon.
Revised.	Revised.
Cook.	Cook.
Foolish.	Foolish.
Roast.	Roast.
Groats.	Groats.
Wife.	Wife.
Taylor.	Taylor.
Sweeper.	Sweeper.
Poster.	Poster.
Bisher.	Bisher.
Gardener.	Gardener.
Labourer.	Labourer.
Hire.	Hire.
It.	It.

Persian vocab

This institution, located in Calcutta within the Fort William complex, was founded by the contemporary governor general of India, Lord Wellesley. Wellesley intended for the College to offer training to British officials in Indian languages, resulting in thousands of books being translated into English from an array of Eastern languages including Sanskrit, Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, Persian and Arabic. This period was considered one of historical importance. Prior to the creation of the Fort William College in 1800, the Calcutta Madrasa was established in 1781 and the Asiatic Society in 1784. Collectively, these institutions symbolised the first phase of the emergence of Calcutta as an intellectual centre.

In the early nineteenth century the College of Fort William sent Westminster School numerous texts written in Bengali, Hindi, Arabic and Persian, now held in the Busby Library. These texts were a means for the pupils of Westminster to become better acquainted with the commonly spoken languages of India. Most likely this would have been a form of training prior to pursuing a role within the Imperial Indian administration after leaving the school. This conveys the varied attitudes towards colonial power and imperial endeavours within the school during this period.

Alongside the alphabet and vocabulary tables, a manuscript containing

Bengali 'dialogues' can be found in the Busby rare books collection. This contains examples of ordinary phrases that British administrators may have used during their day-to-day endeavours in India.

Bengali, Hindi and Urdu were most prominently used amongst the common folk of India, with Arabic and Persian the languages of the elite, advocated to be taught to the British to enable relations with the aristocrats of Mughal India. Despite a lack of institutional support, Persian was deemed by many as a practical necessity to working in the East India Company as this was the administrative language of this region. Warren Hastings, (OW 1743-49) who became governor general of Bengal, also took an interest in the linguistic culture of India. Alongside establishing the Asiatic Society of Calcutta as a centre for Oriental scholarship, he also promoted his interest within Britain. In 1765, Hastings proposed a 'Professorship of the Persian Language' at Oxford University. However, this did not happen, and Arabic and Hebrew remained the key academic oriental languages taught in Britain.

The prevalence of these linguistic texts in the school's collection displays the significance of language in operating within the Imperial Indian regime. The existence of literature around this period is also rather telling of British

attitudes towards the empire in India. George Alfred Henty (OW 1847) was an infamous children's book author in the late 19th century. He initially practiced oral storytelling with his children and began writing his adventure and historical fiction novels in 1870. He became the most popular children's author during his time, writing over 100 books that were largely targeted towards boys. Prior to his career as a novelist, Henty was a war correspondent. Throughout his lifetime, he remained a staunch supporter of the British empire and this perspective has been reflected in his works. For instance, *With Clive in India: the Beginnings of an Empire* depicts an Indian servant who marries a white woman. Alongside creating sympathetic ethnic minority characters of this nature, Henty's work has been described as 'full of racial and class stereotypes' in the Oxford Companion to Childrens Literature. This displays how racial hierarchies were an endorsed theme throughout these works. As a large collection of his novels remain within the school's collection, it is highly likely that these books were widely read amongst pupils at the school. This highlights the varying forms in which attitudes towards empire were disseminated amongst British society in this period. The role of literature and linguistics were significant in determining the future prospect of pupils seeking to work as part of the East India Company.

A History of the Library

by Sophie Currie, Graduate Trainee Librarian



A pupil reading by the fireplace in the Scott Library, before the door leading into the Greene Room was moved (c. 1950).

A History of the Library

continued

'There is something exciting about climbing up to a platform to reach books on the top shelves, especially now, when you are never sure what you will come across while searching for some particular work in the half dark.'

These are the words written by a Westminster pupil in 1946, after their return to the school following evacuation during the Second World War. Despite having worked at Westminster for almost a whole academic year, shelving books every morning, these words still ring true. We are incredibly lucky to be able to work, live, and study in a place with such a rich history – however the library didn't always play such a principal role in the school community.

For many years, what we now know as the Busby Library, collated by former Head Master Richard Busby, was the main source of reading material for the school. It was, as it is now, full of antique volumes in various languages: Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Arabic, and dozens more. Unfortunately, these volumes weren't accessible to many pupils. As the senior form were taught in this room, it was difficult for any boy not in this form to be granted entry – and those who were allowed in found the library to be in a state of neglect, with 'dust laying thick everywhere'. It was also kept uncatalogued, which meant that 'anyone who did desire to make use of a volume experienced the utmost difficulty in finding the one he required', an experience which is recorded in a book from 1933 about the library's contents and history. It was not completely abandoned, however. In 1853, a group of pupils set to work to form a Library Committee, which set down rules controlling the use of the books and fined pupils for any delinquencies.



Flying Officer Maurice O'Sullivan, RAAF, overlooking Ashburnham Garden from the Library

Unfortunately, this didn't last very long, and the library fell into its former state of neglect until 1879, when a strongly worded article appeared in the Elizabethan, putting forward the case for a good school library.

'There is perhaps no subject which has of late years attracted so little notice, or has been so consistently and universally neglected, as the School Library. We publish this month a timely protest from a correspondent, who, with great justice, draws attention to the lamentable fact, that both books and cases are in a disgraceful state of disorder and disrepair. The books, begrimed with the dust of ages, are in many cases scattered about in helpless confusion; the shelves themselves, some half-filled, others containing nothing but dirt and littered paper; the wire that is supposed to adorn the front everywhere rusty and in many places positively dropping to pieces.'

The building where the library still resides today, Ashburnham House, was made available for the school to purchase under the Public Schools Act upon the death of its then resident, Lord John Thynne. The Head Master at the time, Dr Scott, was keen for the school to purchase this building and tried to inspect the interior in advance of the purchase by climbing a ladder to peer through the window.

'unfortunately Lord John, unknown to him, had returned the evening before, and from a window espied Scott's red face and cap and gown slowly emerge over the wall. Boiling with fury, despite the burden of his 80 years, Lord John raced down to the courtyard for all he was worth, and called out in a voice of thunder: 'Well, Dr Scott, I consider the least you could have done was to wait till I am dead!'

When the school finally purchased Ashburnham House, plans were proposed for the first floor to be converted into a library, and, by the end of 1883, the beginnings of a library began to form. Several rooms had been lined with bookshelves, and the inscription over the fireplace in the Scott Room was painted in gold, recording the circumstances in which the library was founded and honouring Dr Scott's twenty-eight years as Head Master:

'in honorem Caroli Brodrick Scott, S.T.P., per octo et viginti annos archididascalii hanc bibliothecam ipsius olim auspiciis incohataam pietatis erga Scholam egregiae memores instruendam curavere alumni fautores amici A.D. MDCCCLXXXIII.'

During the Second World War, Westminster pupils were evacuated to various other schools across the South of England – and their books were evacuated too, sent to Oxford for safekeeping. This was wonderful foresight on the school's part, as in the Blitz of 1941, incendiary bombs destroyed parts of School and College, including the Busby Library.

In the midst of the war, Ashburnham House was used as a cultural centre for

the Churchill Club, a club for Officers of the American Forces. They would spend their recreational leave here, or in one of the many Clubs around London. Stella Bowen, an Australian artist, visited many of these places, and one of her paintings depicts an officer overlooking Ashburnham Garden. After the war, the Churchill Club sold all their furniture to the school, making the library 'furnished, carpeted, [and] curtained in a way worthy of its architectural splendour', as recounted in an Elizabethan article from 1946.

By 1980, the library had a very similar layout to what we know today. John Field, former Librarian, Archivist, and teacher at Westminster, wrote an article recounting a typical day in the library. This article also gives us a good sense of the move towards a digital catalogue:

'There's a terminal in the Library, which will eventually have stock lists, print the card index, monitor borrowing and provide search facilities for users'

'10:15 [pm]: The librarian has managed to stick computerised sticky labels onto six books. Only 14,928 to go now. He offers an inaudible prayer to the computer and [...] calculates that books will all be catalogued by 1993'

Nowadays, the library is used more than ever. As well as a study and research space, it provides a hub for pupils to relax and unwind between lessons or during their study periods. Our online resources are steadily growing and being updated, and one can only wonder about the future of the library and how its existence may develop in the online world, as well as in its physical space.



School, adjacent to the Busby Library, after it had been hit by an incendiary bomb in the Blitz of 1941.







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