

THE ELIZABETH²⁰₂₃HAN



EDITORIAL TEAM



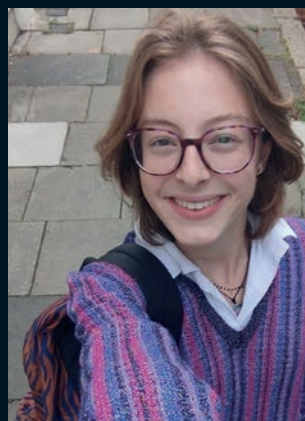
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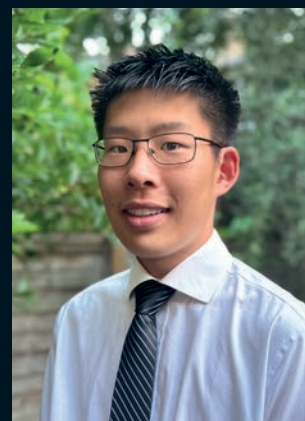
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THE ELIZABETHAN 2023

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One World Week

Abbey address 14 November 2022

by Kaushal Agarwal (RR) and Natalie Ma (BB)



This week is One World Week. A week that seeks to promote and celebrate our one diverse world. Here at Westminster, diversity is promoted as one of our core values, and who could disagree? But have you ever stopped and wondered why diversity really matters? And how talking about our “diversity” makes any difference at all?

The truth is that diversity causes friction, which at times causes hurt. It’s normal that “like-attracts-like”, homogeneous groups feel that much easier. Yet following several studies, *The Harvard Business Review* identified that the real problem with diversity is that “dealing with outsiders causes friction”.¹ The reality of greater diversity is greater discomfort, rougher interactions, and reduced trust. Being around people who look like us, think like us, and speak like us just feels safer and easier. So why bother promoting diversity?

Diversity is the perfect buzzword that seems to appear in every campaign, magazine, and speech because it’s

a popular idea. But reducing diversity to a tick-box for political correctness or a better business strategy distracts us from the fact that it’s actually about who we are.

I feel fortunate to have grown up in a country whose basic essence is its diversity. To be called “Malaysian” might mean that you look Indian, Chinese, or Malay – or a blend of many! It truly is a “melting pot” of cultures. Yet threads of racism remain woven into the country’s social fabric. People still hold prejudice, politicians erode differences, and racial cliques remain in schools, and places of work. Simply using the term “diversity” without knowing the costs, can cause hurt.

Yet, whilst none of us are solely determined by our gender, sex, ethnicity, skin colour or heritage, ignoring where we come from or who we are for the sake of “just getting along” seems to miss the point of what diversity might really mean.

Because here at Westminster we’re an inclusive community, comprised of differences that deserve to be celebrated. But being inclusive does not automatically mean we engage with our diversity. In the name of inclusion, we might think that glossing over our differences builds harmony, helping us get along. But when we ignore our difference when we fail to celebrate our difference, we all miss out on something quite special.

Celebrating our diversity is what really promotes our harmony and shared values of inclusivity and respect. Exposure to someone else’s traditions and experience of the world can broaden our own worldview, connecting us as a community. While this may seem like a lofty ideal, diversity is something that impacts our grounded, everyday interactions within a richly multicultural society.

Personally, as an international student from Hong Kong, who has been studying in the UK since the age of 11, I feel a strong attachment to both cultures. Whilst I may have (inevitably) lost touch with certain aspects of my heritage, sharing my experience and learning that of others has enriched my appreciation of my own heritage and its difference. It is through these small interactions that we can begin to realise that true diversity is only achieved when we embrace one another, confident that what we share as a community of difference helps everyone feel safe to learn who they truly are.

Each of us can be proud of our differences, whatever they may be because, ultimately, through the friction of our difference we have the potential to discover our most creative and most profound realisation: we are all equally valued members of one, diverse, world.

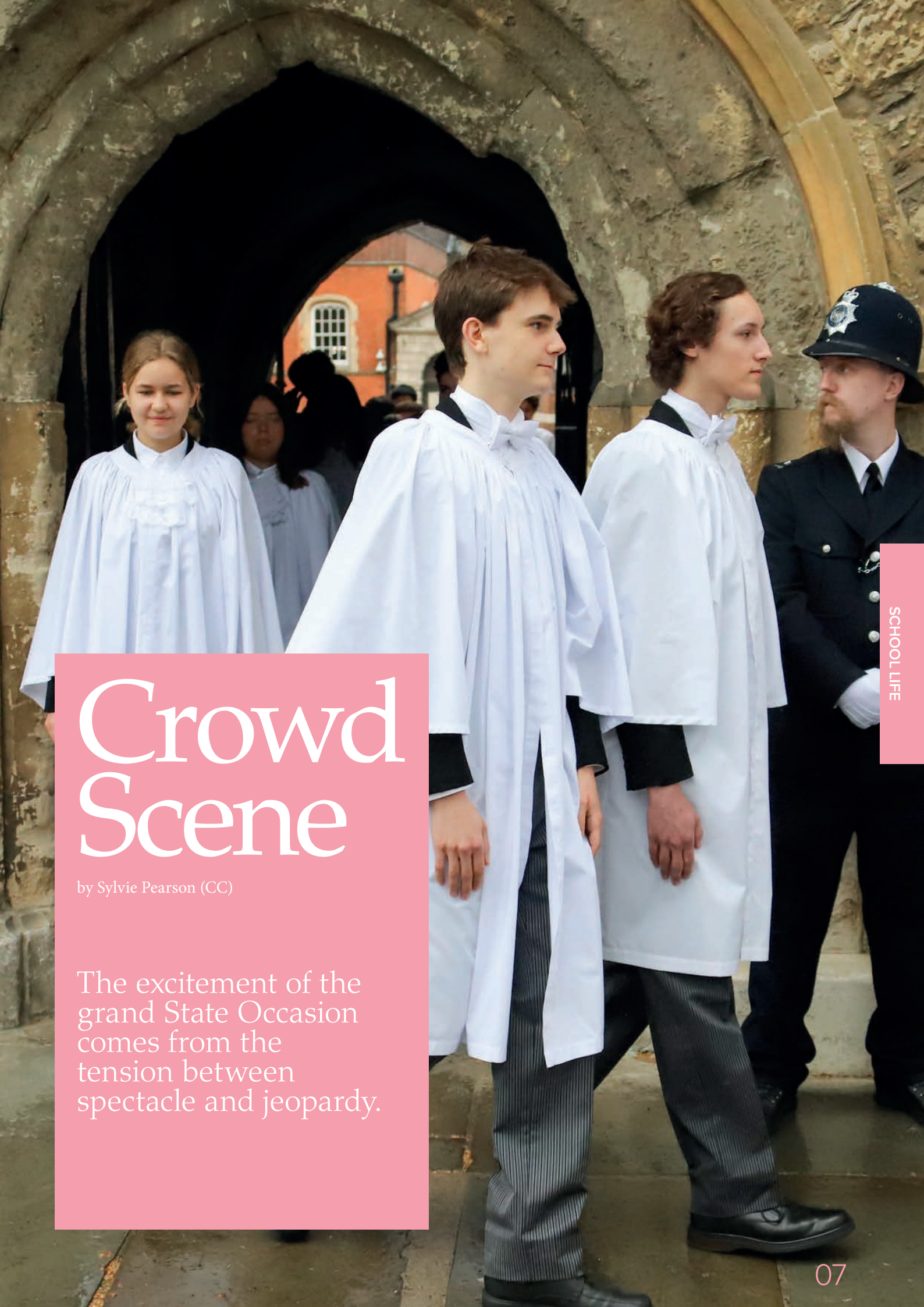
¹ <https://hbr.org/2016/09/diverse-teams-feel-less-comfortable-and-thats-why-they-perform-better> [accessed 12/11/2022]

The inaugural Girls' Greaze

by Chelsea Cresswell (LL)

The Pancake Greaze is a unique and time-honoured Westminster tradition which had finally been reinstated after three years of Covid, and girls were allowed to participate for the first time. I had volunteered to represent Liddell's and I was determined to make my House proud. There was lots of excitement up School. The Chef stepped forward to take his position besides the Greaze bar. The reinforced pancake was in his pan. Luckily, I caught the pancake. But grabbing it was the easy part. Keeping hold of it was much more difficult. However, when the whistle blew, I was still holding it and I was very proud to be the first girl to win the Greaze.





Crowd Scene

by Sylvie Pearson (CC)

The excitement of the grand State Occasion comes from the tension between spectacle and jeopardy.

Crowd Scene

continued

The line between perfection and calamity can be a fine one: what could go wrong in choreography and timing is manifold; what does go obviously wrong is usually nothing at all. Perhaps it was with this requirement for tension in mind that the brave decision was made to allow the massed KSS of 2023 a role at the Coronation. The presence of Scholars to acclaim the Vivat is one rooted in tradition: in a similarly bold if less well-documented move, a portaloo was to be winched into the vaulting arches of the Abbey on account of the length of the build-up to our big moment on 6 May. A risky manoeuvre executed with confidence, in the finest traditions of the State Occasion and, some would say, of College too.

The sense of the surreal required in order to shift seamlessly from school timetable to ancient ritual is all in a day's work for a 21st Century King's Scholar. Slotted neatly between CIE Biology A Level Papers 2 and 4, and directly following IGCSE History (20th Century), the scheduling of the event was considerate, and perhaps a little ironic. At such times as the proclamation of a new King there is contemplation on matters of dynasty, something in fact highly relevant to the A Level Biology syllabus with its sections on genes, natural selection, and inheritance. Such things also incite discussion of probability, and the good fortune of being a Westminster Scholar at the key moment: 17 Coronations

since the founding of the school, 2,856 scholars in total... whatever the odds they are longish, and we were very fortunate to be here at this moment in history.

While the time spent waiting for the historic event to begin gave plenty of time for such intellectual musing, rehearsals for the big day, however, did not. These were conducted in urgent, bite-sized chunks with a level of security that would impress MI5.

Dr Savage did not exactly stand sniper guard, but entrances to the MMC were ferociously Manned, by Mr Mann. As far as the singing of what became colloquially known as "the vivats" went, we toiled: and we feel great sympathy for Mr Garrard, provided with another fabulous opportunity to showcase Westminster Music on another grand stage – and to have KSS as his rude clay. We can only acclaim his generosity in describing the preparations to visiting journalists as "fascinating" and "enjoyable" and (with more ambiguous emphasis) "fun", and accept his judgment that we are (to paraphrase) "not a professional choir...more crowd scene" (Reuters, 28 April 2023).

Of course, there are talented singers among us: sadly, they are not in the majority, but again, all narrative arcs require jeopardy before absolution. Would we pull it off when the big

moment came? Should we position the real singers closest to the microphone?

If the Coronation resembles a wedding in parts, then we had both the Old (take your pick) and the New (box fresh surplices of suitably billowing marshmallow majesty, guarded night and day by Matron, and as if we were Victorian children causing concerns about jammy fingers, only released to us by her at the last minute on the proviso that we did not even consider sitting down). The dress rehearsal with its glimpses behind the scenes, its compère and its stand-in dressed-up "king" was in many ways the most interesting part: some metaphor for School and Real Life there, perhaps. School on the day before was ghostly, summoning memories of that other, far less joyful, "time-of-our-lives", though it is certainly true we preferred being locked in to locked out. In school alone, we stockpiled supplies, we had breakfast in isolation. All 44 of us were ready to begin.

We were willing when it came to it, subdued, serious, as we felt the hands of if not history then generations of previous scholars on our shoulders. Living locally, the final leg of our quest was thankfully short: we nipped round to the Great West Door in the drizzle at 9.50am, though many others had been in their seats for hours. The Abbey looked glorious: did we rise to the challenge when the cameras moved



SCHOOL LIFE

off the entering monarchs and panned upwards to us for the critical 12 secs? Of course. We were good, I think, in loud voice and the right level of jubilant, some said the best since film records began. We saw the act of the two crowns being placed first-hand, and milling afterwards, we were congratulated and photographed by more than one departing Head of State. It was over, we had done it for King Charles, for the glory of Westminster, but most of all to make Mr Mann proud, and I think we did.

There is a rumour, probably apocryphal, that when filling in a survey on uses of chapels at school, an (unnamed) previous Head Master of Westminster answered "assemblies, carol services, Coronations, etc". I suppose for a month or two this happens to be true. For me, the night before the Big Day was the last one ever that I would spend drifting off to sleep as Big Ben chimed (and then again, and then again, like... clockwork). I wondered if King Charles felt the end of things and the beginning of other things in the same way. I expect beforehand we both felt nostalgia and nerves in equal measure. Biology A level permitting I will embark on new life come October. Things are changing, and there is nothing either of us can do to hold them.





Wellbeing Reworked

by Emma Blakemore, Head of RSHE & Wellbeing

I took this role on in February 2021, in the midst of lockdown number three, and how times have changed all around since then.

My vision was a simple one: to bring Wellbeing to the heart of Westminster School. Think a cohesive programme of study and events, aligned to developmental age, with staff and pupils alike jumping for joy at the prospect of learning some life lessons beyond my Geography classroom walls (“kindness isn’t a character flaw” – a favourite phrase procured from Mr Coward, procured from his own Housemaster at Eton). A simple goal, which, two years on, is slowly starting to take shape.

Turns out that changing the culture and ethos of a 1,000-year-old school takes more than just lofty and optimistic ambition. At only two weeks into what should have been six months of gentle thinking and crafting time to create a proactive through-school programme to prepare our Westminsters for any 21st Century issue before it arises, Everyone’s Invited tipped us all sideways, requiring immediate reaction to be taken. I suddenly became what felt like one of the most wanted members of the Common Room, being asked to attend everything from Child Services to Governing Body meetings to showcase what I was going to do to transform the culture of misogyny and rape-culture in the school. And so, the Relationship, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) and Wellbeing Spiral-Curriculum was born. Fast forward a year, and the Governing Body agreed that every pupil in the school should have a dedicated weekly lesson of RSHE & Wellbeing, giving the breathing space needed to really cover such crucial topics in more depth and breadth. The Common Room also got on board, with now 50 members of staff delivering lessons carefully curated by me, Mr Lutton and Mr Massey, designed to meet the needs of our pupils by going beyond the DfE statutory guidelines and adapting our lessons based on

feedback taken from monitor meetings, Head of School meetings, Year Forums and the much loved (!) half termly RSHE & Wellbeing Reflection Forms. They truly help us to tailor the lessons according to each year group’s requirements ahead of the next term, creating a bespoke dynamic curriculum.

It now feels like the subject is starting to really bed-in to the fabric of the school. The aforementioned forms also showcase pupils’ increasingly positive response to the programme – many pupils across all year groups would actually welcome more than one period a week! However there is still much work to be done. As well as honing the curriculum and fine-tuning the external speaker programme for both pupils and parents, I also have my eyes set on the wider Wellbeing context. I speak a lot about the need for spending time in nature (“Go look at a tree!!”), but all too quickly such messages fall flat given our lack of such things within easy reach of our Westminster environment, which is something to improve in the medium term. So too is nutrition: the power of healthy food and drink is substantial, having a real impact on our mood and mental health and so my next venture is to work with our catering company to ensure that food on offer is as healthy and nutritious as it can be.

Sustainability at school

by Chloe Huang (PP)

From global leaders gathering in Egypt to discuss climate change, to the numerous climate protests happening at the doorstep of our school (involving the occasional papier-mâché octopus), the past year has seen sustainability gain top priority on the global front.

Within school, efforts made on sustainability have equally burgeoned, as the society instigated a broad range of school-wide initiatives promoting environmental awareness. Right at the beginning of Play Term, heads of society Clare Jin (PP) and Elodie Yip (LL) announced during Latin Prayers that the school was working alongside First Mile, a waste and recycling company, to ensure that bins for different categories of waste were available across the school premises.

In addition to recycling, a key priority of the society in the past academic year has been to improve the school's catering services, making school lunches more accommodating and less wasteful. A highlight of the society's efforts is the Stir system, an eco-friendly upgrade from the

school's previous Grab and Go featuring hot meals served in reusable Vegware containers. On the other hand, regarding existing dining services, the society teamed up with College Hall to monitor the percentage of food waste recycled per month. This fed into members of the society actively arranging a series of meetings with the Head Chef in College Hall discussing how lunch options can be tailored to pupils' tastes, so as to reduce food waste.

Despite the plethora of exciting initiatives, members of the Society would agree that the highlight of the year has been the House Representatives system, a legacy project offering leadership roles to a diverse group of pupils from different houses and year groups, encouraging vertical integration. On a smaller scale, the society further established a bimonthly Sustainability Newsletter containing sustainability news, tips and glimpses of action across the pupil and staff body. A well-known fact about sustainability is that it depends on commitment, and looking towards the future we are certain that the projects handed down to the representatives and new heads of society will continue to flourish in years to come.

Finally, Sustainability Society would like to end this piece on a big thank you to Mr Lynch and Marina Ribarska, Head of Housekeeping: without your consistent support, none of the amazing projects that took place this year would have been possible!



HOUSE REPORTS

College

by Sylvie Pearson

Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose

Like Batman, or the quantum electron, to be a member of College is to adopt to a dual identity. Scholars transmute between the mundanities of maths, football and removing the common room door by day, and gowned Compline in a candlelit Abbey, or chanting Latin over the tomb of a dead Queen by night. This flexibility to move in space-time was never more required when we woke on 8 September as QS (for the last time as it turned out, perhaps the last for several generations), had lessons, ate chicken drumsticks, played hockey/netball/table tennis – and were regenerated as KS (some of us the first female KSS ever) by the end

of Station. By February it was Vivats after lunch, and on 6 May some of us squeezed in attendance at the Coronation between two Biology A levels or a History IGCSE.

In other news, College continued its strong sporting tradition, winning House Chess, placing 3rd in House Netball and, despite scoring zero points in both Junior and Senior House Football, somehow managing not to be listed as last. Other high points included 1st place in MUN, 2nd in House Debating, and far fewer accidental fire alarms than in the 2021/22 season. The musical talents of College endured and the House Concert was the triumph that it always is.

As this momentous year comes to an end, we must give our innumerable thanks to Matron, without whom (and whose baking) the rehabilitation of the Fifth Form – or anything else – would not be possible; and to Master of Scholars of all varieties, Mr Mann, for his unwavering support (to quote, when faced with yet another triviality regarding a friction pen / coursework crisis / 24hr football quandary: “if it matters to you, then it matters to me”). A term-time Coronation. Who would have thought? Such an honour; such a story.



HOUSE
REPORTS

Grant's

by Alexander Weiss

Standing astride Yard like the colossus it is, Grant's has cast a long shadow this year, in every sense. From the moment we returned to marvel in shock at the fresh paint, to welcoming our newest Grantite this spring, there has been hardly a quiet moment in this, the oldest boarding house in the world.

The year got off to a cracking start under Kelvin's eagle eye and assiduous spreadsheets, with our golden generation of athletes doing us proud. We have seen impressive results throughout the year and across the years; in particular November's unprecedented domination of the Towpath Cup, where we won the Junior, Inter and Senior competitions on the trot.

Another highlight of the Play Term was the House Concert, in which

Tarund put Eric Clapton to shame, Bowen demonstrated the full virtuosic range of a piano using exactly two notes, and the Remove unlocked their inner Swiftie to devastating effect. A poignant reminder, indeed, that our time at Westminster is something we're all never getting back together. Like, ever.

In other news, Grant's has been upholding its sterling reputation as the pizza capital of SW1, as Jou-Myu's battle scars attest. After getting the year off to a good start with a phenomenal September Saturday that looked more like a military operation than a fundraiser at points, the House has gone from strength to strength on the culinary front. With strong representation throughout the House, I anticipate many more years of GG supremacy. Long live the stuffed crust.

However, as we reach the end of this school year, some of us must bid our fond farewells to this our alma mater. While I can only hope that you will remember the Remove fondly, I can be sure that we will all dearly miss our glorious Matron, Mrs Wright. Her no-nonsense approach to managing 40-odd boarders sparks awe and affection in equal measure – we wish her all the best!

Naturally, though, as one contingent of glorious GG alumni strides forth into the world, another rushes through the door, bright-eyed and bushy-tailed. Be it next year's Fifth Form, or Callum Grant-Fair, we are sure that the future of our dear House is just as bright as its illustrious present.

Rigaud's

by Sohan Vohra and Felix Adler

Rigaud's has had a strong year with a wide array of successes – equally notable for their size and diversity. We have enjoyed myriad athletic victories, achieving 1st place in the Senior Bringsty and Senior House Swimming, 2nd in House climbing, 3rd in the Senior Towpath, and, most recently, 2nd in House Athletic Sports. In the latter, our very own Matthew Kemball beat the school 100m record, previously held by an Olympic medallist (albeit in bobsleigh). Another Rigaud's record breaker was Megan Sng, surpassing two school swimming records this year previously set by none other than Megan Sng, as well as a borough-level record.

Intellectual pursuits have been similarly fruitful for us: the House came 4th in House Chess, captained by the legendary Brian Morris, took home numerous Olympiad medals and attained a House Mock Trials win. Members of the House have also shared their knowledge with others, through society talks on topics ranging from Ethiopian Judaism to moss to the logistics of Santa Claus.

Rigaud's has excelled in the arts this year. The school musical, *Made in Dagenham*, featured numerous Rigaudites, including Sonny MacDonald, the only Fifth Former in the production. Several Removes have had exhibitions of their art recently,

while the Sixth Formers held their own in taking three of the top four places in the school ARTiculation qualifiers. Eliza Ruffle won the EPTA piano competition, along with other Rigaudites having written several articles, plays, and compositions.

The House's greatest feat, however, is bringing all its high achievers together with excellent House spirit and a superior House chant. This has been reinforced through regular House lunches, our recent Fifth Form quiz night and not-so-recent Rigaud's Quiz, and the upcoming House Concert. Well done everyone – Ipsu Razu!



HOUSE REPORTS

Busby's

by Christopher Yang

In Westminster there is a saying: "Those who cannot, and Busbites". Year after year, Busby's efforts to "can" never cease to flummox the other "Houses" by asserting co-curricular dominance in all fields. Our seven year reign over athletic sports leaves Housemasters in awe as pupils and teachers alike ask "how do they keep winning?"

[Insert other House] claims to have the most "House Spirit" in lieu of winning House events. Here in Busby's we say: "why not have both?" And so our sporting accolades continue, fuelled by the Busby zeal, by triumphing in House Football, Tennis and Rounders, all in the last academic year.

However, Busby's prowess does not end with sport as the House Concert showcased the musical flair Busbites

have to offer. From Debussy's *Piano and Violin Sonata* to the Remove rendition of *Baggy Trousers* by Madness, the House just keeps on giving. The concert's explosive finale of Katy Perry's *Fireworks* which was performed by the entire House really demonstrated the passion and fervour that Busbites possess. Katy herself said that it "went hard" as somehow, the performance did not appear to have only been prepared the night before.

Over the past year, Busby's has seen a number of enhancing additions: from the kitchen renovation, to the spanking new paintwork, to the number of Bradshaws in House, Busby's continues to evolve and thrive in the Westminster ecosystem. Furthermore, Barry the Busby's Bear made his first appearance during Sports Day this year, spurring on

athletes such as Ardavan Pesendorfer, Pietro Greco and the entire House to victory.

As my tenure at Westminster draws to a close, I feel honoured to have had the privilege of being fully immersed in the effervescent Busby's community and to have had the opportunity to forge lifelong bonds with my fellow Busbites. The House is flourishing more than ever, in the capable hands of Miss Loosemore and the House tutors, all of whom are conducted by our brilliant unwavering maestro, Mr Bradshaw. I simply cannot thank them enough for making the last five years at Westminster so enjoyable and memorable. Busby's has not just been a House but the most amazing home away from home. We have a baby, a dog and a giant bear! Who could want more?





Liddell's

by Anisha Sawhney

This year, Liddell's has gone from strength to strength. Whilst Liddellites continue to show up in their masses for every House event, we are no longer the House that must fall back on "it's the taking part that counts" as consolation for disappointing outcomes (although rest assured that our House spirit is no less remarkable than before). What began last summer with a triumph in House Cricket (our first win in seven years!), has spiralled into something that would undoubtedly flabbergast last year's Remove. A decisive 10-3 victory in the final of House Netball paved a new path for girls' events, that saw us go on to win House Football, the Greaze, the Bringsty Relay and Girls' Sports Day, an impressive feat that is the first of its kind, and not just because this was the first ever Girls' Greaze!

The boys have also done us proud this year, with a Junior Boys victory in House Swimming (and overall win!) and a podium finish for the Senior Boys football team. Perhaps the most impressive victory of all, however, came to us on Sports Day, where Liddellites of all ages pulled us to triumph in the first ever inter-House Tug-of-War.

Whilst the endless victories the past year has brought are an enviable source of honour, Liddell's will never be a House that revolves around winning, but a House that prides itself on its pizza, karaoke and movie nights, table tennis tournaments, weekly poems in House meetings, brand-new air fryer and air hockey table, and our newfound ability to sing Pompeii by Bastille whilst

clapping on beat, as demonstrated by our performance at the annual House Concert, where we sang with vigour, enthusiasm, and our usual House spirit.

Whether it be the 9.00pm football matches, the group trips to Tesco, or the somewhat dubious high jump practice on Sunday night in the common room, the Liddell's family and inter-year community has never been stronger, and is something all the Removes will miss next year. Thank you to our Housemaster Dr A-K, resident tutor Dr Jones, and Matron Mrs Northcott, as well as the rest of the Liddell's tutors, whose endless passion and enthusiasm for the House make up the core of a place that anyone would be proud to call their home.

HOUSE REPORTS



Purcell's

by Jasmine Harding

This year in Purcell's has been absolutely amazing! We opened with a bang at September Saturday where we had a whopping three stalls which raised money for Phab while simultaneously improving the general fitness of Westminster's with our plank and rowing challenge.

In other sporting success PP has always been known for our great off the pitch support, and true to form we showed up in the greatest numbers for our Girls' Football tournament. But to defy expectations we've brought back numerous successes this year coming 3rd in the Bringsty relay, 3rd in House Golf, 3rd in House Debating, 3rd in House

Chess, 2nd in House Netball and two of our Lower Shell won the Richard Stone Innovation Competition – and we took the title for best House poster for Black History Month 2022!

We held movie nights for the Upper School, with a special Christmas edition accompanying House Secret Santa. We celebrated Guy Fawkes night with sausages and sparklers on the roof terrace, as well as hosting a mocktail evening for the Sixth Form. Many of the other Houses looked on covetously at the addition of a new hot plate in the upstairs kitchen which has got culinary creativity flowing in all the boarders, and the retro *Street Fighter* console in the common room.

Most of all this year I want to celebrate the kindness in Purcell's. From the Fifth Formers writing a beautiful postcard to Ms Joyce on their trip at Alston to the fantastic wellbeing board that has been put up by our thoughtful peer supporter, Clare Jin. Topped off of course by the inspirational culture set by Ms Joyce and Matron in all that they do for us, curating a wall of female fame and giving us the space to grow.

Ashburnham

by Aditya Gupta

It's been quite a year for Ashburnham, under the watchful leadership of Ms Franco during her first full year as Housemaster. The redecoration and reinvigoration of the House has been a sight to behold, with the Remove kitchen finally registering multiple visitors a day – though nothing can seem to convince the Remove to linger for longer than registration takes! The physical transformation of the Upper School common room was also accompanied by a social transformation, as Ashburnham organised several afternoon House events throughout the year, with pupils taking the reins. One standout highlight was the eagerly anticipated (and hopefully the first of many) gingerbread-house-making competition, leaving a lasting impression as the delightful creations were enjoyed for days after the event was over. The return of pizza-making afternoons was enjoyed especially by the Lower School – so much so that some of them even helped with washing up! Ashburnhamites also

demonstrated their unwavering competitive spirit and burning desire to win at the annual House Quiz, with a tiny cheating mishap thrown in for good measure.

Ashburnham kicked off 2023 in musical style. Pop and classical music both featured at our House Concert, where a passionate (if somewhat musically questionable) custom rendering of *I Vow to Thee Ashburnham*, the House song, closed out the night. Our sporting prowess was on full display with a dominating win in House Shooting, spearheaded by the new Sixth Form girls. The Senior Boys football team put in a valiant effort in House Football, notching up a gritty win against Purcell's, falling short just before making the semi-finals. Ashburnham girls attempted to repeat greatness by securing a second netball title in a row, but ultimately narrowly missed out. Inter-year cooperation was on full display during House Chess, with many a lunchtime spent mulling over the

chessboard with a sandwich from Stir in hand. Seeking redemption from last year's semi-final heartbreak, the House Cricket team will no doubt aim to turn the tables at the end of the Election term.

Most impressively, Ashburnham set the school record for the 16 by 100 metre relay, showing the school that collaboration – and sticking around till the end of Sports Day – is what really matters. Perhaps the most memorable wins, however, were the silliest: tales of Ashburnham's back-to-back victories in the egg and spoon race and the three-legged race, alongside our finalist position in the tug-of-war, will no doubt be relayed to new Ashburnhamites for years to come. At the end of such an action-packed year, Ashburnham's prospects look as bright as ever. With the seamless integration of Ms Franco into the fabric of the House, no doubt future years will be just as fruitful as this one, if not more so.



HOUSE REPORTS

Wren's

by Alexander Feldman

Wren's was filled with an exuberant House spirit throughout this past year. On the sporting front, we experienced some success in a wide variety of events. In House Shooting, led by the experience and skill of the Head of School, Kaden Pradhan, we came 3rd and thanks to a commendable House effort in the Towpath races, we came in 2nd place overall. Additionally, on Athletic Sports day, although we may have struggled on the track, our performance on the field events was formidable. Adanna Ezenwa and Yuxuan Jiang (both in the Remove), won girls' and boys' shotput by

a landslide. Wren's also put up a characteristically strong performance in House Football but, unfortunately, we were denied Senior Boys House Football glory by a penalty shootout heartbreak in the final.

However, it was not just on the sports pitch where Wren's excelled. The year began, as it always does, with the memorable event of Christopher Wren's birthday party. Here, we were treated to an array of performances, ranging from the outstandingly precise piano recitals to a Billy Joel rendition and even a Bruno Mars lip syncing act.

We also heard a number of other excellent musical performances throughout the year – especially at our House Concert.

This all happened thanks to the guidance of our brilliant Housemaster Ms Clarkson; Mr Chapman, our formidable Assistant Housemaster; and the entire tutor team. I, along with the whole Remove, am very grateful for their dedication and commitment to the House and I am sure that they, together with the help of the new monitors, will continue to maintain our status as a true powerhouse within the school community.



Dryden's

by Patrick Moody

The scale of achievement in Dryden's this year has been remarkable, yet nothing out of the ordinary for a House like ours. The strength of Dryden's House spirit was proven by the House's performance in the Bringsty Relays. Despite missing 1st place in every single category, consistency granted the House the overall win: a strong message on the importance of every single member of Dryden's to the overall House. This victory was made sweeter as it was only the second time Dryden's has secured the trophy since Mr Edlin was in Fifth Form. The Sixth Form and Remove girls also achieved success,

only losing in the Girl's Football final. Indoors, Dryden's has seen equal success: the annual Dryden's-Wren's House concert had an amazing range of acts, from pop trios, to Dryden's String Quartet and even a performance on a Japanese Koto. Wren's was thoroughly outclassed by Drydenite enthusiasm. This is on top of a victory in House Bridge during the Play Term. Whilst the official competition has not yet been held at time of writing, I am also predicting a dominant performance from Dryden's in House Bookbinding given victories in every previous iteration of the competition.

The highlight of the year however has been the cakes baked by Matron for Drydenite birthdays: her lemon drizzle being a sight for weary eyes. Such triumphs have only been possible under Mr Edlin's leadership, his wisdom and knowledge brightening both House meetings and the Dryden's day to day.



HOUSE
REPORTS

Hakluyt's

by Konstantinos Haidas

What does it mean to be a Hakluytian? We've proven our talents in multiple school competitions this year, placing 2nd in House Bridge with last minute substitutes of Removes rigorously trained in tutorials and 1st in General Knowledge, a mental battle just as much as one of trivia. Not many other Houses can say that they're trained to operate the fiery intensity of a cotton candy machine but our September Saturday stall raked in the crowds with perfect technique. Just another qualification that our Hakluytians can now add to their long list of skills, right next to an unparalleled ability to wave their torches in sync during our house concert belting *Don't Stop Me Now*. Our girls fared extremely well in House Netball, spurred forwards with occasional Haribos to keep morale (and sugar levels) high. Hakluyt's gained a place on the podium in Sports Day this year, even if another unnamed House began pulling the rope before we could properly plant ourselves, with a special shoutout to our Juniors for placing 1st! The House Relay was a momentous affair, with Removes running in jeans and Lower Shells scrambling to find a House shirt to take part.

In other news, the sink's water pressure has been fixed and Hakluytians will no longer find themselves dodging shots of water whizzing out the tap. Our centre of communication, Wylie's Week, has been immortalised with its very own plaque. The pool table has persisted as our uniting force, be it a sunny day or persistent rainstorms (though, of course, no weather would permit a Hakluytian to sport a hoodie). Nonetheless, as always, House rules apply and the House always wins...

As this year draws to a close, being a Hakluytian has become synonymous with undying House spirit and an extraordinary ability to win gracefully.





Milne's

by Elias Gelain-Sohn

Milne's has had nothing short of a fine year, and despite trials and tribulations, the House in typical Milne's fashion prevailed.

The largest obstacle faced was the temporary absence of our Housemaster, Mr Smith. In the 1999 Elizabethan, a colleague described him as *"the sort of the individualistic teacher who makes Westminster special"*. Almost 25 years on, the words only ring truer. Through his gentle positivity and indefatigable willingness to help those around him, Mr Smith continues to be revered by pupils and staff alike. Hence, when he took leave there was an air of uncertainty around the House. Fortunately, Milne's was in safe hands with the affable Mr Morgan holding the fort as interim Housemaster, flourishing under his cool and composed approach, achieving great success

in House competitions, while maintaining our indomitable House spirit.

This was evident in our endeavours for inter-House glory. We started the year looking to retain our House Chess trophy, and a great run led us all the way to the end, where we faced College in a replay of last year's final. Sadly, we could not repeat that performance and lost an exciting rematch. Our House Bridge team on the other hand did not disappoint, winning the inter-House competition effortlessly. We were also crowned House Golf champions as Alexander Berridge won a thrilling putt-off to bring home the trophy. Our boisterous Lower Shell won Junior House Football for the second year running, helping us on our way to an admirable 2nd place in the Overall House Football Standings. They continued their run of sporting excellence, winning House

Athletics in the Inters section as well. Last but not least, Milne's boys triumphed in that most prestigious event, the Greaze. Sam Mohri proved his physical dominance in an impressive display, making Milne's back to back winners of the event. We hope to end the year well, with Amol Chauhan looking to lead our cricket team to victory.

As we say goodbye to our exceptionally talented Remove, we find peace in the fact that our House will be revitalised with bright and ambitious Fifth Formers and Sixth Formers in the coming year. I have no doubt that Milne's will continue to thrive as a community and wish all current and future Milnites the very best.

UP THE MILNE'S!

SALVETE



Alex Bishop



Jamie Brown



Dewi Eburne



Joseph Boorman

Alex Bishop

Teacher of Theology & Philosophy

Alex was a boarder in Liddell's from 2009-2014. After leaving Westminster, he read Philosophy, Politics & Economics at The Queen's College, Oxford. He subsequently went on to St Anne's College to pursue a Master's degree in Philosophy, during which time his research focussed on meta-ethics, feminism and climate change. Before he became a teacher, he worked as a chef and he still spends a lot of time cooking. He also enjoys hiking, canoeing and wild swimming.

Dewi Eburne

Teacher of Chemistry

Dewi joins Westminster as a Chemistry teacher and Tutor in Busby's. Following his time as a Natural Sciences undergraduate and Choral Scholar at Jesus College Cambridge, he joined PwC's Forensic Services Department. The rapid realisation that investigating financial crime required large amounts of "digitisation of hard-copy data", led him to seek a career in teaching, and he loves exploring the fascinating subject of Chemistry with intellectually curious pupils. He also relishes the opportunities that teaching affords to get involved with co-curricular pursuits and is part of Hockey Station.

Outside the classroom, Dewi enjoys playing tennis, going to church, singing, and playing the piano and clarinet. Before they led to a fractured nose and a broken elbow respectively, he was also a keen rugby-player and mountain-biker. Dewi recently took up surfing and fantasises about riding "gnarly" barrels on Fistral beach when the surf is "pumping".

Jamie Brown

Teacher of Economics
Head of Sixth Form

Jamie is hoping this won't be his "difficult second album", having taught at Westminster previously. Having completed his undergraduate degree in Economics and Management at the University of Oxford, Jamie qualified as a Chartered Accountant over the course of four years at the multinational firm EY. At this juncture, he decided to act on the nagging feeling he should be a teacher and hasn't looked back since. Five very happy years at Westminster were followed by a "use it or lose it" move to Spain a few months before the end of the Brexit transition period. Despite having enjoyed the five-day weeks and Vitamin D, a move back to the UK coincided with an opportunity to return to (surely) the best Economics department in the land and he cannot wait to get going again.

Joseph Boorman

Teacher of Mathematics

Joseph joins the Maths department from the school with the most awkwardly placed apostrophes in the country – Haberdashers' Aske's Boys' School. After graduating from Peterhouse, Cambridge with a degree in Mathematics he spent some time working in restaurants putting his deep knowledge of abstract algebra and topology to good use washing dishes and chopping vegetables. Fearing the Covid induced volatility in the hospitality industry, he chose to pivot his career towards teaching Mathematics and has never looked back. In his spare time, he plays a lot of online chess, cooks and eats a lot of food and listens to a lot of strange unlistenable music.

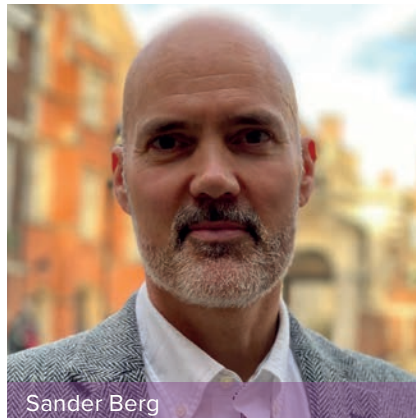
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Andy Bottomley



Michael Davies



Sander Berg



Annie Graham-Brown



Elisa Alaluusua



Alice King



Becky Wait



Peter Chequer



Tom Durno



Charles Baker

Michael Davies

by Kevin Au

Hardly anyone in the Common Room now remembers when Michael Davies came to teach at Westminster, so when he tells me it was in 1985, I take his word for it. In the current Maths Department, only a few teachers were alive at the time, and over half of us were yet to be born when he became Head of Maths a few years later, only stepping down from that role in 2019.

I wish I had observed more of Michael's lessons, since he is truly an exceptional teacher of maths. In his early career, he fought hard against a traditional view which more or less assumed that if you were clever you would get it, and if you were stupid you needn't have bothered. Michael never assumes that mastery is beyond anyone; rather, that our job as teachers is to plot the conceptual path from what the pupil currently knows, to where they need to be, and then lead them along it, however quickly or slowly. When Michael does it, he does so not just meticulously, but also with creative flair.

Although Michael was Head of Department for a long time, he was never tethered to doing something simply because it had been done that way before. He never clung to past ideas proudly, if the world had moved on and required a different approach. Even in the final years of his stewardship, when A Levels underwent a major change, he devoted great energy to preparing us for teaching the new syllabus.

We could always count on Michael, too, to side with us when it mattered. Any new teacher asked to take on too much in their first year would see Michael kicking up a fuss in the right quarters. And after a shaky lesson, in which you had taught everything in the way Michael had specifically proscribed, you'd know that none of it mattered, and you could go for a drink with him and forget all about it. It was only the next lesson which counted.

Although Michael is a stickler for correctness, he earned the respect of the Common Room for his strong

sense of right and wrong. In departmental meetings, sometimes he would say that we ought to take or not take a particular course of action, not because it was or wasn't expeditious, but because there simply are ways in which we should or shouldn't treat other human beings. For those who have worked with Michael pastorally, his kindness and generosity are well known, to both pupils and colleagues. He is also a very social creature. The martinet-caricature belies the fact that he is a warm and loyal friend to many members of the Common Room, with a good memory for their interests and things happening in their lives. At the pub, whilst he's still awake, he makes excellent company, although he is famous for dozing off in the corner after a few glasses of red wine.

Michael is not really retiring, merely pulling his finger out of this particular pie. But there have always been various pies. For many years, he has set the Cambridge STEP papers, and will continue to do so. His outreach work has involved helping both Harris Westminster and King's Maths School, when they were first starting out. More recently he has been involved with Maths Circles, an enrichment programme for gifted pupils in state schools.

On a personal note, I owe Michael a great deal for taking a chance on me 15 years ago by offering me a job. It was well known at the time that he tended to look for new blood amongst fresh Cambridge graduates, so when he found no luck there and had to make do with me, I got my lucky break. Over the years he has offered me wise counsel and mentorship: there are many things that I've learnt in adult life, not just about teaching, that are down to him.

If you look at photographs of the Common Room taken over the last thirty years, you will find Michael entirely unchanged, peering owlishly at the camera through his round spectacle frames. Some years ago, when I was writing Challenge papers, I asked Michael for advice on how I might set a question on a particular idea. He came up, as usual, with

something that fitted the bill exactly, explaining how he imagined the candidates would approach it. "Gosh," I said, "how do you do that, Michael? I can solve Challenge problems but often only with pedestrian methods, using a bit of brute force and hard slog. Whereas you always seem to find the "clever-schoolboy" method." Michael replied: "I expect I never grew up." We'll miss you, MCD.

Elisa Alaluusua

by Jim Allchin

Elisa joined Westminster in the year 2000, fresh from gaining an MA in Art Education from the University of Lapland (1999) and an MA in Art as Environment from Manchester Metropolitan University (1995). Alongside her teaching responsibilities, Elisa also managed the Audio Visual department during her 23 years, and ran a film workshop for Westminster Phab.

For a long time the passwords on our iMacs were set to cabbage, but spelt "Kaali", the Finnish equivalent. This caused a few problems from time to time, so over the years was simplified to an easier combination. Every year during our end of year exhibition, Elisa has organised our "Westminster Shorts" a celebration of film works by our pupils, with an external judge invited to award prizes. This is just one example of going above and beyond to create buzz and energy within the department. Elisa has always been the first member of the team to sign up for an exhibition trip and has warmly invited us to visit her out in Finland.

During her time at school, Elisa not only continued to make work as a practicing artist focusing on drawing and film but studied for her PhD, which focused on analysing the use of sketchbooks by contemporary artists. This saw the creation of Dr A, a snappy name that pupils found easier to pronounce and spell as there can't be many names with so many As, Ls and Us!

During her time at the school, Elisa won second prize in the esteemed Jerwood

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Drawing Prize in 2015 and more recently first prize in the Trinity Buoy Wharf Drawing Prize in 2022. It is also worth noting that Elisa created a 24 hour art installation in 2012, where she drew 200 overlapping circles, 100 with graphite and 100 with a rubber. The blurred marks between circles, none of which were perfectly controlled, were embraced, this kind of open process has always been reflected in her teaching, a willingness to take risks and fall between the gaps in processes. The piece itself was also a demonstration of pushing both physical and mental boundaries.

Outside of her professional life, Elisa is a keen cyclist, and every time she arrived to the department she'd walk her green and red spray painted bike up our 63 steps to store it in our attic, keeping her fit and her bike safe! During the summer term, she takes her classes out sketching along the river and has always loved teaching life class.

Elisa has always been seen in and around school with her quirky glasses, denim apron and oversized mug and would pace between the studio and the Common Room for a teatime cake. Those who have got to know her over the years (it can be hard being part-time) have all spoken of her warmth, interest in them as people, and her love of Lapland!

Although 23 years is a long time – she has worked under four different Head Masters and three different Heads of Art – she has only worked with one technician, Colin, who has been with us since 1989. They have the most wonderful understanding of one another and their nattering and telepathic conversations will be greatly missed.

Elisa leaves Westminster in order to pursue a full-time artistic career. Her decision was fuelled by recent successes and the increasing demands of regular exhibitions both in the UK and Finland. It is a bittersweet pill to swallow: to lose such an experienced and hugely respected colleague, teacher and friend is a huge blow for us, but she'll no doubt be back to

speak to our pupils in due course. I also thank her for donating us some reindeer skulls, all of which come from her parents' reindeer farm.

Peter Chequer

by Guy St J Hopkins

Pete was an outstanding colleague who led the Drama Department at Westminster with verve and originality for many years while bringing the very highest professional standards, both in terms of acting and production values, to the huge range of plays, devised pieces and musicals that were put on. His success lay in his ability to transform the pupils into Actors. He spent many hours taking them through their parts, who they were playing, how they would be feeling, and why.

I had the privilege of working with him as Musical Director on several major musical productions up School including *Oliver!*, *My Fair Lady*, *Oklahoma!*, and *Guys and Dolls*. He always put in huge numbers of extra hours with rehearsals, including at weekends, and he marshalled the vast range of logistical and technical elements, as well as the large casts and crews that these productions always require, with great skill and a clear view of the goal. Great acting was enhanced with amazing choreography and superb set designs which often stretched budget and effort to the limit. A colleague in the Drama Department said "Whenever I have professionals in from the theatre world, they are hugely impressed by our production standards. I heard a member of the audience stand up after the end of one of the shows up School saying, 'well that's where our fees go'". *For Oh What a Lovely War* a six-foot hole was sunk in the Millicent Fawcett Hall to create a trench.

Pete had worked in the department for several years before taking the reins as Head of Drama in 2014. As an actor who was also a movement specialist, he always paid special attention to how pupils moved and communicated as truthfully as possible on stage. As well as the great set-piece

productions Pete was always innovating, and he was keen for as many pupils to be involved in Drama at Westminster as possible. Along with all the curriculum work there were regular Fifth Form and Sixth Form Drama Festivals, and in 2022 a unique collaboration with the Royal Court Theatre, Sloane Square.

It was our great pleasure to have Pete as a colleague and we wish him well in the future.

Sander Berg

by John Witney

As Sander and I strolled up to Covent Garden for lunch on the day before the start of term back in August 2008, I knew straightaway that Modern Languages at Westminster would be transformed by Sander's arrival, not just in terms of provision (he has taught French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, and Linguistics at various points over the past 15 years), but also in raising the Spanish Department's profile in particular: within a few weeks, both pupils and staff were signing up together for dance partners ahead of a night of Argentine passion (no Tango Policy in those days of course), and plans were soon afoot for a new Upper Shell trip to Cádiz and a Sixth Form trip to Cuba, both of which remain today.

Above all, Sander is passionate about language in all its shapes and forms. In the classroom, he was always keen to ease pupils gently (mostly) out of their comfort zone, never afraid to try out new approaches, introduce a quirky text or draw on his doctoral research to provide academically stimulating and thoughtfully prepared lessons; he set high standards for himself, and this was equally reflected in his expectations of pupil commitment and engagement. He was "woke" before any of us knew what the word meant, and embraced inclusion, equity, and diversity long before any policy document existed on OneDrive – all these things came as a matter of course for Sander in the classroom, as he shared his knowledge of and enthusiasm for a truly eclectic taste in world cultures. Indeed, he was

once found wandering the streets of Hackney on a Sunday afternoon, listening in on Yiddish speakers to prepare for his next Cultural Perspectives class, having exhausted his resources on Maoist China and Japanese anime.

Despite finding himself running the French Department at short notice for a year, his commitment to Spanish remained without compromise, and it was thus natural that he was appointed Head of Spanish in 2014. This was a wonderful period for Sander, full of energy and drive: he hosted debating competitions at Westminster, established an exchange programme with a school in Madrid, organised numerous cultural outings and encouraged pupils to set up their own platform for visiting speakers; he was instrumental in the appointment of a second language assistant that remains today, reducing the pupil-assistant ratio in the Upper School, which very soon resulted in improved oral scores. By now, public examination results in Spanish were among the very best in the School and I know that Sander was extremely proud of a department that was thriving under his leadership.

In 2019, with Westminster Spanish now firmly on the map, Sander was invited to join the editorial team of the *Bulletin of Advanced Spanish*. As well as contributing to the journal himself, typical of Sander's desire to increase his pupils' engagement with the subject, he encouraged Westminster Hispanists to submit their own papers too, and to great acclaim.

Outside teaching, Sander is a prolific published literary translator of Spanish, French, and Dutch works of fiction, most recently a fresh version of *Candide* for Alma Books; he is currently working on a new translation of Céline's *Guerre*, to be published in summer 2024.

Sander has been appointed Head of Modern Languages at Harrow from September 2023, a role that I know he will embrace with characteristic enthusiasm. We wish him well as he climbs that Hill. *Cultive bien ton jardin là-haut!*

Alice King

by Katie Stone

Alice came to Westminster as a fresh graduate from the University of London Institute in Paris in January 2013, intending to stay for a couple of years, and left in December 2022, missing out on her ten year long-service award by a hair.

She learned quickly and the job grew as she did, taking on more tasks each year. The pupils always remarked on how friendly and approachable she made the library – except when they got on her bad side and they realised she wasn't to be messed with. She helped us modernise the place, taking the lead on the social media presence, and creating a newsletter filled with book reviews that the school mums love to read. I like to think I moulded her in my image but really, we know that she didn't need much moulding. While working here she completed her Masters (with Distinction) in Library and Information Studies at UCL, thus educating herself out of her role, and breaking our hearts.

She had her fingers in many pies around the school, helping run the admin side of Phab for the last few years, and co-editing this very magazine. She was also involved in a select number of outdoorsy trips, particularly the Lyke Wake Walk and the annual geography field trip to Eastbourne/Cuckmere Haven, where she watched several generations of Lower Shell pupils get their ice creams stolen by seagulls. These outdoor trips also allowed her to indulge in one of her great loves: bird watching. Thanks to her I can now identify upwards of seven birds by sight, and try to remember to look out for the peregrines around the Abbey, one of her favourite sights at school. Alice takes great pleasure in her immediate surroundings, noticing birds, nature, and urban elements that the rest of us might miss, attached as we are to our screens and headphones.

In her last year here she chose the relaxing route of: getting married to Lauren, buying their first home, and getting a new job, all in six months,

while still finding the time to take on some big library projects.

She leaves us to take up the Assistant Librarian post at KCS Wimbledon. She is enjoying the job so far but has reported that the KCS salad bar isn't as good as Westminster's. Please remain assured that I will still answer to either name.

Tom Durno

by Sam Clarkson

Tom arrived up English in January of 2017 to become our resident expert in all things Romantic and, perhaps, the member of department most devoted to the art of poetry. Whilst his three-year reign as Head of English included some mandatory teaching of Wordsworth's *Prelude*, he also led the department in expanding its canon, introducing texts full of fresh, diverse perspectives, including Claudia Rankine's *Citizen* and the poetry of Terrance Hayes (amongst many, many others). In many literary circles, the past, present and future jostle uncomfortably beside one another; at Westminster, under Tom's guidance, we have learned to engage fully and confidently with the entanglements of these many various narratives and the complexity of their contexts.

Tom's vision for the department was always founded in reflective pedagogy, and it is no wonder Dr Durno was a favourite of the pupils, so warm, generous, and intellectually demanding are his lessons. I suspect I was not the only member of the department to lean on Tom for a last-minute lesson, knowing he could provide one that was at once creative, stretching, and pithy. Tom was also hugely supportive of the pupils' independent literary endeavours, and under his benevolent rule, there flourished an array of pupil-run publications, including *Yard*, *Wefit*, *Voce* and the latest, *Geraldine Junkyard*. The second floor of Weston's is a lively, friendly, entirely happy place to be, and much of this is due to Tom.

Tom was certainly a pastoral presence in his teaching and Head

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of Department roles, but he honed some of his skills as a tutor and Assistant Housemaster up Wren's. His two years as Assistant HoM were not always the easiest, accompanied as they were by a particularly inventive (read: naughty) year group, but his gentle care and genuine interest in the Wrenites has never faltered. I have regularly sought out his guidance and appreciated his eagle-eyed observations of his tutees; so often, he would spot a low mood or a niggling worry even before the pupil themselves had consciously engaged with it. But who would expect anything less of such a close reader of literature and human nature?

Tom has also been generous with his many non-literary talents here at Westminster, running the Cycling Station and a cycle repair club, showing off his surfing chops on expeditions to St Davids, and (a true highlight), giving a talk during Latin Prayers on his deep, abiding love for country music. As a final and very important point, in the online quiz "Which character are you in *Little Women*", Tom came out as Beth – sweet, endearing, bookish, and beloved by all!

Tom is heading to Alleyn's as their new Deputy Head Academic. Westminster will miss him, but we can find comfort in a way Tom himself might – by indulging in some country music wisdom. The following lines by Hoyt Axton seem particularly Wordsworthian, and might remind us why, in the end, Tom leaves us: *The roads keep sayin' "Friend, come and see what's 'round the bend" So is it any wonder that I roam? We wish him the very best of luck with his roaming: he cannot miss his way.*

Andy Bottomley

by Ezra Lutton

Andy "Botto" Bottomley joined Westminster with the class of 2018. I'm glad to have had the opportunity to share many moments with him during his five years at the school. His kind nature, generosity and near-constant smile will be missed by many staff and pupils alike.

There is an impressive thoughtfulness to the way Andy carries out his teaching and he often has something insightful to say in a discussion about recent educational ideas and research. He came to Westminster from our feeder school, Highgate, where he had worked as second in charge of the maths department. This clearly set him up well for his time here and he has inspired many Westminsters year after year to put in that little bit of extra effort.

Having been a tutor in Purcell's since he started at the school he will leave as their longest standing member of the team and has made a lasting impact over this time. He always played an active role on prep duty and his "panic sessions", as one boarder termed them, became a fairly common occurrence particularly around exam season. The gratitude of his tutees for all of his support, particularly through the Covid years, and the way they talk about him with such fondness, show the appreciation they have for his hard work and I am sure this will be a significant part of any recollections later in life on their time at Westminster.

Andy has also made a significant contribution to school sport. He has been a member of the tennis coaching team during every summer term since he joined the school and most recently was in charge of tennis fitness sessions. Andy is also an experienced amateur footballer and was able to put this into practice in the winter months on Football Station. As anyone at the school knows, this is a significant time commitment and his enthusiasm never waned, whatever the weather or the result! On top of this, Andy has been a regular extra pair of hands at Chess LSA sessions and is one of the few people to have beaten the scholar on September Saturday.

Returning to his northern roots, Andy leaves us to join Lancaster University School of Mathematics. As a school that only opened its doors to pupils a year ago this will be an exciting opportunity for him to have a role in the development of a maths school from the outset. His wealth of experience will put him in a great position to do this

and I am glad to know that our loss is bound to be their gain.

Annie Graham-Brown

by Paul Tully

Drama sometimes seems hidden away in the dark recesses of the Millicent Fawcett Hall, but there has been a true light shining from that little cupboard at the top of the stairs, and that is Annie Graham-Brown. Annie taught at Westminster for five years, fitting into that time meeting the man of her dreams (a fellow teacher) and having twin girls.

Annie has approached both motherhood and teaching with tremendous gusto and has always been ready to help, or sing the department compositions that truly confounded us with their lyricism and accompanying dance moves. She is a great fan of a coffee, and this was the first thing that brought us close together, meeting at Joselyn's coffee machine at least five times a day, Annie also picking up a banana or six.

Before Westminster, Annie studied at RADA and taught at Marylebone School, and she called on both to teach the pupils, combining academic and creative, professional, practical experience. This was another connection between us, and we loved to team teach, write schemes of work together and share ideas – all things I will truly miss. Her positive, can-do attitude rubs off on others and Annie is your go-to person if you need cheering up. The pupils love her flair and passion for drama and her dance warmups at the start of a lesson are legendary, bringing humour and camaraderie and engaging the class, energising them for the work that follows. She has tirelessly worked on ensuring the best learning experience to help the pupils to achieve their best. She is constantly marking, planning, and looking for new ways to teach, utilising theatrical practitioners and new pedagogy and in doing so upskilling her own knowledge. She is a teacher who loves to learn, and this passion is mirrored by her pupils who generate so much from her lessons.

We will all miss her in the department, and on a personal note I will miss her terribly not only as a great colleague, but also a great friend. She will not be forgotten and will always be welcome. We wish her every success in her new post at St Paul's, though we will be secretly hoping she comes back. Best of luck Ms Graham-Brown.

Becky Wait

by Sam Clarkson

Becky joined Westminster in 2018 with another career in full flow having just completed her third novel, *Our Fathers*. On paper, Becky was taking up a part-time post in the English department, but to her colleagues and to the pupils her presence and utter dedication to teaching meant her three days a week resonated throughout all six.

Becky, a keen medievalist, delighted her pupils by embracing some Chaucerian fun and (at least on one occasion) teaching a lesson on *The Nun's Priest's Tale* in full habit, complete with wimple. Underpinning her exuberant approach to texts is a deep literary knowledge and a commitment to pedagogy. Pupils taught by Becky could expect expertly planned lessons as well as formative questioning and detailed feedback, all delivered to them with clarity and her characteristic nimble wit. There are few teachers who devote so much one-on-one time to pupils—she spent countless lunches, free periods, and after school sessions with individual pupils, displaying a patience that spoke not only to her commitment to their learning, but also to their pastoral care. As a colleague, it is impossible to feel envy when pupils say – often wistfully – that she is their favourite English teacher because, in fact, she is mine too.

Becky was also an integral part of the co-curricular life up English, leading on our university preparation classes, delivering creative writing lessons for Westminster's Platform programme, and supporting pupils with many a literary magazine. To do this in her mere three days a week speaks not

only to her impressive efficiency, but also to her animating and jubilant enthusiasm for literature and teaching. All this, whilst balancing parenthood of two sorts—her (very smiley) daughter Iris and her latest novel, *I'm Sorry You Feel That Way*. We may never know where she gets the energy, but the English department will have to try dressing up as nuns when, nearing the end of a term, our spirits begin to flag.

Becky is moving on from teaching to focus on her already-successful writing career and is in the midst of working on her fifth novel. Her writing has achieved wide acclaim—her 2020 novel *Our Fathers* was a Guardian book of the year and Waterstones' thriller of the month. Her most recent novel *I'm Sorry You Feel That Way* made both the Times' and Guardian's best novels of 2022. It is no surprise to those that teach with her that Becky's novels are superb, unafraid as they are of tackling fraught relationships and harrowing situations with gentleness and often great humour. Our loss, then, is also our gain as we await her next book.

It can be difficult to find a way to send Becky fan mail, elegantly restrained as her internet presence is, but if you are so inclined (and having been taught by her or read her novels means you will be), please send it to her literary agent or, preferably, to the Westminster English Department. There is no doubt we will be elegising her years here, and any additional content would be gratefully received (and eventually passed on).

We will miss her intellect, her humour and wit, and having three days a week of her wonderful friendship. But, of course, we wish her all the best, as she retreats full-time into her writerly nest in Amersham!

Charles Baker

by Duncan McCombie

Charles Baker arrived in the Classics Department in September 2021, having left New College, Oxford with an M.Phil. after six years of study

specialised latterly in Greek palaeography, textual criticism and Homeric scholia. A natural teacher, he immediately made a strong impression upon his pupils, blending considerable linguistic and other technical expertise with patient calm, generous good humour, and constant projection of his relish for the fascination of intellectual engagement.

His most significant contributions were perhaps to the Upper School. He devised three new seminars for the Sixth's Latin literature course, on Livy's comparative historiography, Tacitus's transmission from papyrus to folio, and a brilliant oratorical parlour game which simulates the interior rivalries and competing private interests of the late Republican Senate against the backdrop of the vicissitudes of events. Drawing on his fresh experience of undergraduate teaching, he had a large hand in the department's university preparation programme – not least in the October study trip to Nenthead, where he matched his incisive pedagogy with a spirit-leavening repertoire of delicious daily breads.

Charles threw himself into the wider life of the School with gusto. He spoke memorably in Abbey on the numismatic detail of what was necessary to render unto Caesar; gave the Sixth Form a popular Cultural Perspective on the co-option of the Classics by neo-Fascism; and instituted a weekly tabletop gaming session for the Lower School which produced many hours of noisy delight. Swapping the tranquil pootling on the Cherwell of his school days for the forbidding rigours of the Tideway at Putney, he also cheerfully and enthusiastically assisted the J14 programme at Water, playing an important part in its recent strong development.

After these two excellent years with us, Charles returns to Oxford, this time to Corpus Christi, to continue his research towards a doctorate, focusing on the textual establishment, translation and commentary on previously untackled ancient Homeric scholars. He leaves with our sincere thanks and very best wishes.

African Caribbean Society (ACS)

by Morola Oduntan (BB)

Running the African Caribbean Society has been one of the most memorable aspects of my time at Westminster.

From the first event we put on in October 2021, where we shared some of our favourite food and music, to Kadija Dumbuya's (AHH) most recent talk on *The Harlem Renaissance*, highlighting the historical importance and legacy of Black art, ACS has been an incredible way to engage with and share our cultures with the wider school community. Doing the research for and putting together talks gave us the opportunity not only to discuss topics we are passionate about, such as the paradigm of binary race theory and the revolutionary influence of female artists, with our peers, but also to cultivate greater depths of knowledge about ourselves and our history. As there are so many cultures to be celebrated at Westminster, we particularly enjoyed participating in the food fair and cultural dress day during One World Week. Putting our stall together for the food fair gave us the chance to introduce our peers to African and Caribbean food while raising money for *UK Black Pride*. Cultural dress day was a thoroughly enjoyed opportunity to wear our traditional clothes, including Ankara dresses and kaftans. Participating in a society whose primary purpose is to celebrate and enlighten people about the various cultures and ethnicities that are integral to the fabric of the community was an experience that Kadija and I will always carry with us. We are looking forward to hearing about what Temi Aladejuyigbe (LL), Matthew Kemball (RR) and Charlotte Morton (DD) will get up to next year.





ARTiculation: *Misty and Jimmy Paulette*

by Lucy Semark-Masters (RR)

Misty and Jimmy Paulette in a Taxi, NYC photographed by Nan Goldin is a piece I hold close to my heart. I discovered this piece accidentally through my own research into drag culture, similarly to Goldin this complete rebellion of gender norms inciting a deep fascination in me.

What first struck me about it was the beauty of the drag queens. I believe there is a complete honesty in their portrayal. Nan Goldin always aimed to champion honesty in her piece, and it is most interesting to view her works as these intimate snapshots. She left art school claiming that it had been pointless, quoted stating “We sat in the parking lot with the teachers and drank. Basically I learned to drink really well in art school” and found herself becoming fascinated with drag culture, seeing the twisting of gender norms as revolutionary, rejecting the binary and slotting into what she called the “third gender”. Whilst she held great reverence for these drag queens she also wanted to show them as they were, seeing their grit and roughness as beautiful. This was something she admitted to, seeing drug addiction as as something she craved in her youth “They say nobody wants to grow up and be a junkie. I did. And did.”

When you return to look at this piece as an honest celebration of these two drag queens, instead of attempting to deeply analyse it you begin to understand the power of the piece. Goldin selected an unsmiling photo but with their colour and metallics and innate glamour their power comes through, the background of a bustling New York contrasting with their unmoving expressions and postures. They are defiant and powerful, a columnar position, highlighting Goldin’s view of this ‘third gender’ as true rebellion against society and the resilience of the queer community. The connection of colour throughout the piece; the lip shades, the metallic fabric, all highlight this defiant community. Both acting as intercessors, providing a powerful sense of defiant community – in a post-AIDS America – that I find extremely emotive. The cramped pictorial plane, with a shadowed cab and realistic natural light illustrates this aforementioned intimate snapshot.

This piece was the original cover of Goldin’s *The Other Side*, a book of her photography from 1972 to 1992, which she describes as a manual of gender euphoria. This picture being the cover highlights it perfectly, encapsulating Goldin’s aim in her work; her infatuation with this rejection of gender in a society, which still to this day places the mundane concept of sex in rigid, strict boxes.

I think the work is about the human condition; the pain, the ability to survive, through the lens of the post-AIDS queer community. Not highlighting the deep sadness of the event but instead the unchanging defiance of the queer community which, in my opinion, is perfectly illustrated in this photo.



Chinese Society

by Jasmine Harding (PP)

This year marked the inauguration of Chinese Society and it's been a resounding success! We had our first meeting to celebrate mid-autumn festival in Purcell's, with traditional Chinese snacks and sweets.

In November the school celebrated One World Week, in which Chinese Society hosted a stand selling dumplings, noodles, baozi and more, made possible by the support of both pupils and parents. As a result, the society was able to raise £112 for Give Directly, a microfinance programme that helps people in the developing world start up their own enterprises. We found this particularly pertinent to Chinese Society because

of the very recent memory of mass poverty in China and hence the importance of small local businesses around the world.

Chinese New Year marks the single most important celebration in our calendar, and we went all out with a dumpling making session and hot pot night for the boarding community. As well as a lunchtime society meeting to play board games and karaoke, the most important part of the Lunar New Year is to spend time with friends and family. For many of the boarders who were not able to make it home this new year's, it was heart-warming to celebrate the festival enjoying food with our friends!

Across this academic year, Chinese Society has been proud to represent the culture of such a beautiful country. I'd also like to thank Ms Wang for her help and support in getting our society going as well as the Sixth Form who have taken on the responsibility of carrying the society forward!





Christianity Society

by Anjola Adesina (RR), Yovana Konrad (DD), Isabelle Qian (PP), and Sharon Segaye (RR)

We are extremely privileged as a school to sit within the precincts of Westminster Abbey, and Christianity Society hopes to generously and hospitably share the Christian faith, drawn from its people, cultures, and churches.

- 1 To explore the changing relationship between Christianity and other faiths throughout history.
- 2 To learn about the content of the Holy Scripture, The Bible, and how it was created and developed.
- 3 To seek to understand the contemporary relevance of Christianity and its role in public life.

Most importantly, we strive to be open and kind in all that we say and do. During our weekly Chaplaincy's breakfast, pupils join in with our School Chaplain, Fr. Dan, in fostering an objective, interactive, and generous environment where discussions facilitate all views and beliefs to be shared respectfully. From annual Confirmation sessions to the newly launched Youth Alpha series, Christianity Society hopes to nurture the curiosity to learn more about the manifold dimensions of Christianity.

Economics Society

by Maddie Brown and Chloe Huang (PP)

Against the backdrop of a turbulent time for the UK economy, the Economics Society has enjoyed yet another lively year, packed with high-quality talks delivered by Westminster and external speakers alike.

The year kicked off with a talk by Manon Graham (HH) and Anisha Sawhney (LL) on the subject of *Is Britain the world's laziest nation?* and was swiftly followed by a variety of others, including *The House always wins* – the economics of gambling and casinos by Mattias Shuper (BB) and *The Physiocrats: land equals power* by Yovana Konrad (DD). With regard to external speakers, Flor Kassai from Inflexion led an insightful lunch event for girls interested in private equity firms, and Tanja Salem from BT discussed the intricacies of regulation in the telecoms industry. The society was also fortunate to receive a visit from Syon Bhanot of Swarthmore College who discussed his research with pupils prior to delivering his lecture on *Economic Transitions* at the Horizons Conference.

As well as the weekly talks, two more editions of the *Westminster Economist* were published, featuring Westminster's very own inflation index and doughnut model. Additionally, great emphasis has been placed on Lower School involvement this year, with a Lower School Quiz, talks on themes ranging from China's economic growth model to Kwasi Kwarteng's mini budget, and a new video competition called *Patching Up Wezzie*, where pupils provided cost-efficient solutions to the school's biggest problems via video.

We look forward to the continued growth of the society and an array of talks over the next academic year.



ACADEMIC



FemSoc

by Jessica Macfarlane (PP)



In a year which has seen the rise (and rapid fall) of the UK's third female prime minister, a Taliban ban on Afghan women attending university, continued discourse around reproductive rights in the US, and the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic (which has been found to have disproportionately impacted women in the world), feminism remains just as crucial, and the Feminist Society at Westminster has continued to thrive.

We have enjoyed a lively range of talks this year, on topics including diversity in fashion (Alexander Newman, LL; Celeste Baroudel, LL), pornography (Max Rozenfeld, GG; Hannah Lee, RR; Rita Wu, PP), forgotten female scientists (Max Rozenfeld, GG), and abortion (Ingrid Berg, CC), as well as several debates and discussions. There have also been plenty of joint societies talks: deputy FemSoc Captain Kadija Dumbuya (AHH) spoke for a joint FemSoc x ACS (African-Caribbean Society) on *The Harlem Renaissance*, Beatrice Ambrose (LL) spoke for joint FemSoc x History Society on *Theatre in Restoration England: an unsung step towards female emancipation?*, and Alice Gelosi (MM) spoke for joint FemSoc x History of Art Society on *Yayoi Kusama: obliterating the self to reaffirm it*.

This year's International Women's Day on 8 March saw an enlightening lunchtime panel discussion led by four Remove pupils, as well as a personal and engaging Abbey address by Nishka Mathur (AHH).

The second edition of Westminster's Feminist Society publication, *Not Pink*, has been a work in progress over the last two terms and is due for publication during the Election Term. We can't wait for everybody to read it!

Film Society

by Wylie Brunman (HH)

At a party this year, some pupils who weren't all that close came together for a few moments to compare their favourite films on Letterboxd. We all quickly got back to dancing, but for a moment we were encapsulated in film – not watching, but discussing.

This year at FilmSoc, we have done much of both. In the first half term we teamed up with Economics Society for a showing of *Wall Street* (no, not that one). Pizza and doughnuts were rife, too rife, and the film gave a particularly pertinent reminder to a room which likely included several future stockbrokers – that greed, for lack of a better word, is not good.

Pizza was also flowing – though through the donation of a generous pupil, rather than a teacher – at a showing of *Mean Girls* in the Lent Term. Despite it being shown on a Wednesday, much to my chagrin, I was the only one wearing anything pink! It was a fascinating watch, and hopefully watchers in the years below

took notes on how to break up toxic, autocratic clans (of course there's none of those at Westminster).

We followed that up with a discussion of *Twee in Film* by Maddie Limpenny (LL), which taught many, including myself, both what twee is, and what it signifies. It was remarkably fascinating, as all our events have been.

I've had a great time running FilmSoc with Alexander Trautman (WW) and Catherine Williams-Boyle (PP) this year, and we can't wait to hear about all the wonderful activities next year's committee will provide. And remember, download Letterboxd: next time you can join that group of half-strangers connecting over their love of film.

French Society

by Siân Tilbury (RR)

French Society is Westminster's cultural, political, and musical space for promoting francophone culture. It is a forum where students with a common interest in anything French can enjoy a wide range of events including talks by pupils, guest speakers, and famous lunchtime recitals by the school's very own Giles Hayter.

Theo Maidment (BB) and Cara Beckwith-Aubry (BB) looked at *L'Académie française: its role and its recent evolution*. This prestigious institution, founded in 1635 by Cardinal Richelieu, promotes a framework to the French language; a key instrument in both political and linguistic centralisation. Some 40 members ordained *Les Immortels* meet regularly and decide on what words will enter the French dictionary. This in-depth talk probed many questions: should there be stringent rules for new lexicon? Should there be any? A particular note was put upon the shift of francophonie from Europe to Africa. The Q&A provoked discussion on anglicisms, Francophone writers: Algerian-born Assia Djebar, Haitian-born Dany Laferrière, now entering the *Académie*.

Siân Tilbury spoke about the life and writing of Marguerite Duras, with a focus on Duras' critique of colonial shame in the autobiographical work *L'Amant*. Born in French colonial Indochina Duras grew up in a family suffering in excruciating poverty; their destitution exacerbated by colonial class and race tensions. The young girl in the novel is condemned for her affair with a wealthy Chinese man, but this message too is rooted in colonial and racist ideologies. The talk explored how through this autobiographical work Duras is able to evoke her mature self in a deliberate way through the shifting narrative perspective and can confront the shame she suffered as a young girl. Questions led to the discussion of the scandal surrounding the relations in the novel and the ultimate question: is it a romance?



Gaming Society

by Serene Liu (PP)

Gaming Society is a relatively new addition to the Westminster culture, founded by Ayad Mohammad (DD, 2020-22). This year, the society has taken a creative approach to incorporate video games with other academic disciplines, such as art, literature, and physics.

One of the society's recent talks, led by Serene Liu, delved into the thought-provoking topic of *Simulation Theory*. Serene drew upon ideas from video games, such as the optimisation techniques from the Decima Game Engine, the inner workings of massively multiplayer games like *World of Warcraft*, and the exponential progression of computer graphics to achieve a photorealistic game world. Coupled with challenging concepts from theoretical physics, the talk provided a convincing argument that our reality is likely a simulation.

On a lighter note, Blake Morris (HH) gave an entertaining talk on the *Yakuza* Game Series, which drew parallels between Aeneas in the *Aeneid* and Kazuma Kiryu in *Yakuza*, two characters who seek a place in a world that seems against them. Blake also highlighted that Western game developers can learn from Sega's focus on how the open world design philosophy aligns with the protagonist's philosophy, eliminating ludo-narrative dissonance.

Gaming Society is continually exploring new and innovative ways to appreciate the power of video games. After a lively round of *Smash Bros* at the Societies Fair, we plan on holding an official *Smash Bros* tournament in the future. We would like to extend our thanks to Mr Coward for his support in establishing and maintaining this society from its inception.

German Society

by Charlotte Yan (CC)

This year has been an exciting one for us, kicking off with the Societies Fair where we introduced ourselves as the new Committee to pupils in all year groups, ranging from the Fifth Form to the Remove.

To round off One World Week, we set up a food stall where we introduced pupils and teachers to a variety of German snacks like Trolli Gummiwürmer, Butterbrezel, Berliners, Leibniz-kekse, Softi, Katjes, and more. We were delighted to see the curiosity and willingness evident on the faces of everyone who dropped by to try something new from a culture that they may not have previously encountered. Their enthusiasm meant that we had to close up shop early, as we had sold everything out much sooner than expected! All proceeds from our stall have since been donated to charity.

One of the most exciting events that we have held as of yet was our first ever *Mittags-Filmpause* (Lunch-Time-Film-Break!), where we put on a showing of *Kleo*, a German espionage thriller about an assassin working for East Germany. Having completed our Pre-U curriculum in class, in which we conducted comparative studies of a historical film and television show, we believe in the importance of digital media in the development of a more vivid and well-rounded understanding of German culture and history. Through the use of English subtitles, we aimed to increase accessibility for all learners throughout the school, regardless of whether they spoke German or not.

There are still so many more exciting things to come in the Election Term: we hope to bring back the *Deutsche Redewendungen Spiel*, a German Idioms Game that we created when the Society was passed down to us exactly a year ago, and bring in speakers who have been in Germany for a gap year. We are looking forward to meeting the new Society committee, and trust they will do a brilliant job!

History Society

by Amelia Ross (CC)

At History Society we're all about the past, but this year we have proven that there's no time like the *present* to get involved in society activities.

Pupils shared their passions for an ever-increasing plethora of historical topics, ranging from the Meiji Restoration (Rafael Leon-Villapalos, GG) and the Indian highway bandits *Thuggee* (Rishik Vishwanathan, MM), to the California Gold Rush (Yovana Konrad, DD) and the effects of the Cold War on Holocaust historiography (Kristina Akova, PP).

External speakers also came to share their historical interests. We had *Coffee with Hitler* when we welcomed Dr Charles Spicer, who described the attempts of the amateur diplomats who tried to "civilise" the Nazis in an exciting new retelling of the Anglo-German fellowship. We were even able to showcase some of Westminster's own archive material to Dr Spicer, such as that relating to Rudolf von Ribbentrop, son of Nazi German politician Joachim von Ribbentrop and pupil at Westminster School. Other talks from historians included, *The Scramble for America: how the United States conquered a continent* by Clement Knox, *The English Castle* by John Goodall, and *The Partition of India 1947* by Roderick Matthews, following the 75th anniversary of Indian independence. Black History Month was celebrated in October with a House competition to make poster boards about influential historical figures, which saw Purcell's win with their board on Maya Angelou. Later in the year to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day, we had a screening of the fascinating BBC documentary, *Storyville, Three Minutes: a Lengthening*, taking a three minute home movie shot in Nasielsk, Poland (1938) as its starting point. We would like to thank the History department and Dr Huscroft for their support in organising events over the past year, and especially to all of the amazing pupils who have attended or given talks.



History of Art Society

by Rose Cameron (DD)

From Yayoi Kusama and her polka dots, to classical antiquity, History of Art Society has seen a plethora of subject matters presented in a series of compelling and intriguing talks.

Alexander Newman (LL) and Celeste Baroudel's (LL) talk on *Racism and Feminism in Fashion* kicked the year off, enlightening their audience on the prevalence of racism and misogyny in the problematic realm of the fashion industry, but also the way in which clothes can empower the individual – particularly exploring this through the remarkable experiences of models like Alek Wek. Continuing the thread of feminism in History of Art Society, we had the privilege of hearing Katy Hessel, an Old Westminster and author of the best seller, *The Story of Art Without Men*, speak on the canon of art history and the way in which the male narrative has for centuries dominated our books. Rewriting this, Hessel spoke with charisma on artists such as Artemisia Gentileschi and Lee Krasner, proving the deserved place of women in every walk of art, from the dramatic baroque to the gestural works of abstract expressionism. As the society has shown, art has a voice. This capability for expression, of socio-political themes or otherwise, was front and centre in Alexander and Celeste's second talk which explored the close ties of art and propaganda, showing how art has, since its conception, commanded attention and acted as a catalyst in the portrayal of an ideological abundance. If any artist has made feeling paramount in their art, it is Yayoi Kusama, who as Alice Gelosi (MM) said in her recent talk, "battled deep personal trauma" through her works. Delving deep into the Harlem Renaissance in Kadija Dumbuya's (AHH) talk, the power, pride and possibility for change that art can facilitate was again forcefully expressed. We look forward to the many more exciting things to come!

Huxley Society

by Julie Jung (PP)

As ever, Huxley Society has had a terrific year full of exciting pupil-led talks. A wide scope of topics was explored, ranging from quantum physics and medical history to biodiversity and conservation.

With many pupils eager to share their knowledge and passion, the Lecture Room and Bentham Room were frequently filled throughout the year. Most notably, talks from Serene Liu (PP) on *Simulation Theory: Video Games Meet Quantum Physics*, and Max Rozenfeld (GG) and Cryus Tahbaz (HH) on *Music in Medicine: How a Tune can Save a Life*, were well-attended by pupils and teachers, both scientists, and non-scientists alike. This year in particular, quantum and astronomy sparked an interest in many pupils, with talks from Cheryl Luo (CC) on *Quantum Biology: the Weirdness at the Heart of Life* and George Zhou (CC) and Alessandro D'Attanasio (CC) on *A Fine-Tuned Universe*.

The theme of astronomy was continued in the Tizard Lecture by external speaker Professor Katherine Blundell on *Christopher Wren's Cosmos*. This was an incredible opportunity to hear about worldwide

network of observatories that collect data on black holes and nova explosions in our Galaxy. We also welcomed back Dr Karan Rangarajan (LL 2003-2008, OW) who spoke about his journey from *Grant's basement to the operating table*. His stories about his days as a pupil, a medical student and an accomplished NHS surgeon were inspiring and insightful for many aspiring medics. Alongside talks, Huxley Society has been publishing weekly newsletters on recent scientific news and fun problem-solving quizzes for the first time in the society's history!

It has been a pleasure to lead this year's Huxley Society. We hope that our efforts to share the enthusiasm for science has made an impact to the school community. Finally, we give our greatest thanks to Mr Ullathorne, who made this all possible, and to all the inspired pupils who contributed by giving talks.



JSGS goes global (ish)

by Thea McMenammin (HH)

Though we may be small, we certainly are mighty. Often a very underestimated society, the John Stace Geography Society (JSGS) members outdid themselves this year.

Most credit goes to the compulsory Sixth Form talks which helped fill up our calendar, delivering them (eagerly for the most part) at a rate of at least one per week throughout the Lent Term – a streak we can only hope continues into next year. It was lovely walking into Room 62 every Monday and Friday lunch, seeing the regulars and then spotting Pedro hunched between two chairs to get the ultimate cinematic shot, and many there were.

The year started off strong with perhaps the longest mailing list the JSGS has had in the past few years, all owed to some expert coercion, heckling and a few false promises at the lively societies fair. With Ms Hughes as our Captain, we were under expert supervision. As a society we managed

to figure out how to use Canva very comprehensively by Christmas, and with that we began our reign of never-ending emails to Leah at the Almanack and the exhaustion of the display board in Room 62. Though you never could guess what the next would be on, with topics ranging from *How many nuclear bombs would it take to erase human life?* to *Is gentrification a new form of colonisation?*, we really were kept on our toes.

After a very successful year it was with great sadness that we said goodbye to Ms Hughes (temporarily!), and now to the society; so, with that Lila Bilboul (WW) and I hang up our glorious compass embroidered ties and hand on the JSGS to the next.





Law Society

by Isabelle Qian (PP)
and Charlotte Yan (CC)

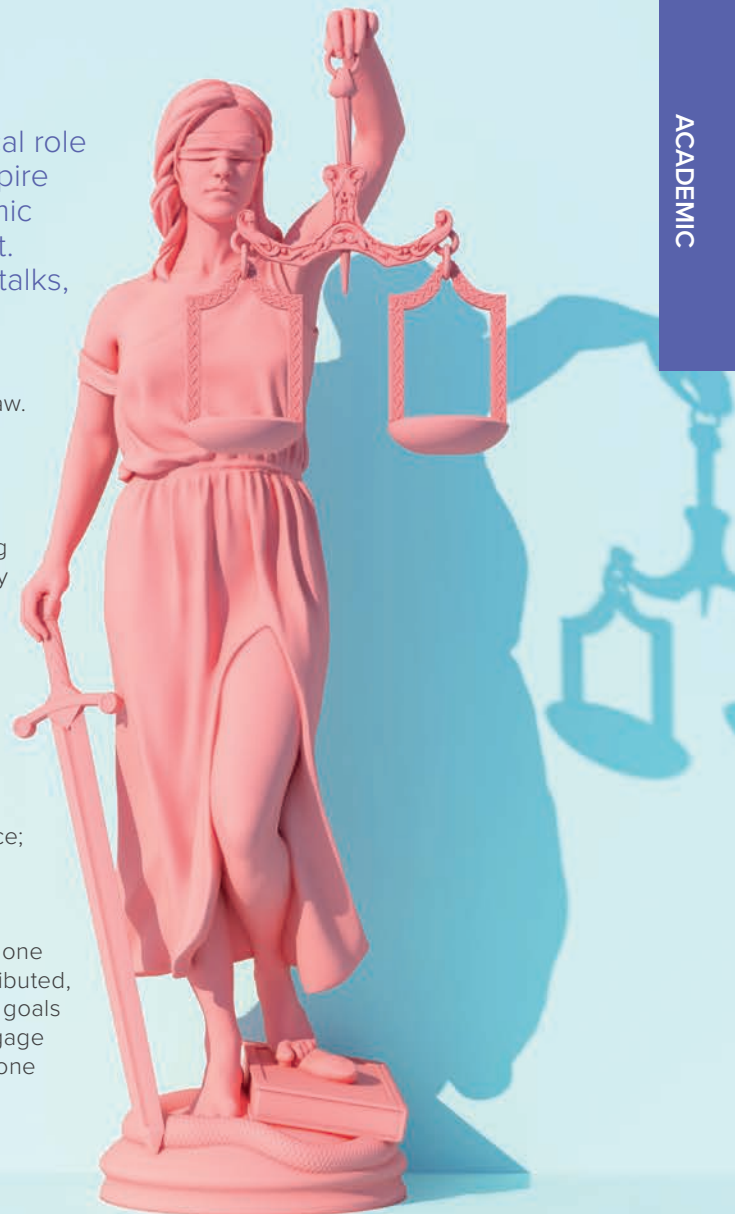
Since its conception, Law Society has played a critical role in the school life of all Westminster students who aspire to pursue a career in law – and the 2022-23 academic year is shaping up to be one of the most exciting yet. With a range of prestigious speakers and engaging talks, there has never been a better time to get involved.

One of the highlights of this academic year was a talk chaired by Avril Martindale, an expert in commercial and intellectual property law. She proffered valuable insights into the legal profession, provoking numerous questions from the eager audience members.

Beyond inviting external speakers, the Law Society has hosted a series of exciting pupil-led talks and discussions, on topics ranging from ancient legal issues to modern-day controversies. A particularly memorable talk addressed the subject of *Law and Justice in Ancient Mesopotamia*, a fascinating glimpse into a unique legal system in antiquity.

And it is not just the talks that have been impressive. Pupils have also been conducting their own research throughout the year, all of which has now been published on Law101, an online platform set up by Isabelle Qian with the aim of empowering students to share their thoughts, personal investigations and passions with a wider audience; this has enabled us to foster a greater sense of community and collaboration within the society.

Overall, the 2022-23 academic year has been an incredibly fulfilling one for the Law Society. We would like to thank everyone who has contributed, as the Committee would not otherwise have been able to reach our goals for the year: to not only bring in compelling speakers but also to engage pupils from all year groups in lively discussions and debate. For anyone with an interest in law, the Law Society is the place to be.





LitSoc

by Blake Morris (HH)

With a snazzy new flag, a fearless new committee, a penchant for clashing colours, fonts and typefaces, and contributors who over-analyse everything, LitSoc has been operating on all cylinders.

This year it served up a delicious smorgasbord of sufficiently zesty and exciting topics, presenting a talk almost every week. This year, our speakers transported attendees across the world.

It started with a visit to Edinburgh in the 90s from yours truly with a look at *Trainspotting's* importance in Scottish culture. Sophie Shen (PP) followed with a trip to Latin America, taking a deep dive into the fantastical world of magical realism as rendered by Gabriel García Márquez. Travelling north, Yovana Konrad (DD) led us down the Mississippi as she explored Mark Twain and the idyllic lives of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn. Jumping across the ocean, LitSoc joined forces with KorSoc and analysed what made K-Drama such an elegant form of storytelling. Alongside this scrumptious buffet of world-wide storytelling, Lachlan Gray (MM) delighted listeners with a discussion of Dreamworks' masterpiece *Puss in Boots: The Last Wish* whilst the dynamic duo of Cheryl Luo (CC) and Chloe Huang (PP) led a dialogue on why we read. Beyond talks, LitSoc has been infiltrating every nook and cranny in Weston's with its new cultural magazine Footnotes, an eclectic compendium of the finest discourse on music, film, books, poetry that LitSoc can offer, with articles ranging from debates on The Smiths to meditations on John Steinbeck. On top of that, be on the lookout for our upcoming Instagram account, from which LitSoc can finally achieve its goal of societal domination. All in all, a fantastic year from LitSoc! A big thank you to "Big Boss" Solly Hardwick and to the committee, who did what they had to do!

Philosophy Society

by Musashi Schad (MM), Sissi Chen (GG), Akarsh Shankar (GG) and Isabella Jain (GG)

Yet again the Philosophy Society has had a wonderful year, with enthusiastic pupils and teachers giving talks on a broad range of topics in philosophy; especially engaging were the joint society talks, where we have seen a wide variety of ways through which philosophy becomes relevant to other subjects.

We started the year with a joint mathematics and philosophy talk given by Sissi, discussing the ontology of numbers and of mathematical knowledge. During One World Week, the Philosophy Committee put together the talk *Exploring philosophies from across the world*, in which philosophies from Latin America, India, Japan, and China were all introduced, exploring, and celebrating the immense diversity in philosophical thought. During the Lent term, the theme of philosophies around the world continued, with Sissi discussing more extensively about Ancient Chinese philosophy, and Alice Gelosi (MM) bringing a triple-joint society talk about the self-expression of the Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama. We have also had other exceptional talks from enthusiastic Sixth Formers, such as Chloe Huang (PP) who gave a joint Philosophy and Politics society talk titled *Post-Truth*, in which she astutely outlined a very relevant modern philosophical phenomenon. Our very own Mr Bishop also gave the very interesting talk *The Metaphysics of the Self*, where the question of self-identity is explored to a deeper level, challenging the Western philosophical consensus on the supremacy of the individual.

We give particular thanks to the extremely supportive and excellent teachers of the Philosophy Department, without whom none of these amazing things could have been possible. It has been a joy to see the Philosophy Society being so active for the past year, and we hope that it will continue to be so for many years to come. Long live philosophy!



Poetry Society

by Felix Adler (RR)

PoetrySoc has had a relaxed yet purposeful year.

From September, we morphed with LitSoc to create a timetable in which we alternate on a week-by-week basis, giving a solid structure for both societies to adhere to, and it has done wonders for increasing both the number of sessions per term and the turnout – this way there is no literary conflict of interest. We started off the year strong with a collaborative session in which poets chose their favourite lines to glue together, inspired by a poster of various poetic images (retrieved mostly from Pinterest!). The result was a coherent poem, surprisingly profound given the process, that was read out at Latin Prayers. Over the next few months, we had several show-and-tell sessions in which people writing for competitions such as Tower Poetry got the chance to share their work with others for feedback. Sophie Shen (PP) also organised an excellent talk on WB Yeats, giving readings of some of his most poignant work, and Mathias Adler (AHH) collected some content for a discussion of ‘Ars Poetica’ – an intriguingly meta-poetical form.

A great year for poetry, and may our successors make the next one stronger!



Politics Society

by Wylie Brunman (HH)

I've often wondered why we, as a school, don't offer Politics at GCSE or A Level. The answer I've always got is that there's no need – we Westminster talk about it enough out of lessons anyway!

Politics Society has been at the centre of this in the last year, as always. After the short-lived American Politics Society left our minds (was it ever really there?) when its OW founder departed, PolSoc subsumed it and we remain the sole international, bipartisan political society. We've certainly done justice to this position: filling up your inboxes and Mr Mikdadi's dedicated classroom with talks on Brazil's recent election, UK foreign policy, and much more.

In October, Head Boy Kaden Pradhan (WW) gave a PolSoc talk on *The International Criminal Court: A Powerful Tool of Justice or an Affront to Democracy?* Most of us decided it's the former, and their recent arrest warrant for President Putin has largely vindicated these feelings. What many of us, including myself, didn't feel vindicated about was the US Midterm results, which were largely predicted incorrectly and which I gave a talk on, attended by the esteemed Dr Savage. Incoming PolSoc leader Benjamin Harley (PP) also gave a talk, speaking about Franco and modern Spain.

We were also fortunate enough to host some external speakers. Dr Edward Howell from Oxford gave a talk on North Korea, and Will Tanner, then the leader of the thinktank Onward, talked about British political trends. Will Tanner is now the Prime Minister's Deputy Chief of Staff, which Downing Street sources tell us was directly a result of his visit to Westminster School.

It's been a pleasure to run the PolSoc Committee with Isabella Jain (GG), Konstantinos Haidas, (HH), Thea McMenamain (HH), Benjamin, and Kaushal Agarwal (RR), and I'm sure Benjamin will have as diverse a smorgasbord of talks to pester your emails about next year.

The Sir Richard Stone Innovation Competition

by Mikhail Gribov (PP) and Edward Shevyrev (PP)

Nobody could have predicted the length that the competition spanned when we first started in the January of Fifth Form. The journey leading up to the finals, although difficult, was enjoyable and interesting: though I doubted our possibilities of winning this prize, the lessons learned in participating in this event would have been more than enough reward.



From the lunchtime talks and check ups with our Sixth Form team aide (many thanks to Aryan Daga (HH)), to the time spent after school and on weekends, the process of thinking through and watching as our project coming together was rewarding and exciting. This allowed us to learn in more depth the world of entrepreneurship, business and economy, as well as the theoretical and technical aspects of starting a business, but, also, the most important part – the skill of presenting in front of a small but pressurising audience.

Most importantly, I would like to thank the economics department – Mrs Newton and Ms Wagstaff, as well as our (now Remove) advisory team for organising this opportunity to learn how to present properly in front of such esteemed judges. The lessons and tips gained from participating in the finals, as well as the previous round with members of the economics department, have allowed me and Edward to improve performance under pressure and deal better with presenting in front of audiences in the Lower Shell. However I must admit I didn't quite listen to the advice given at many of the preparatory meetings before I faced the problems during the final.

Personally, I tried to view this not only as a competition, and I certainly didn't expect to win the Prize at the end – but I hope that everyone participating enjoyed and learnt as much as I did from such an amazing experience.



Sustainability Society

by Clare Jin (PP)

The 2022-23 school year has seen some great things happen for sustainability at Westminster. Perhaps the biggest change has been the introduction of recyclable lunch boxes in the new *Stir* system – thanks to Mr Lynch, we had the opportunity to offer pupil feedback on *Stir* at its early planning stage.

Sustainability Society marked its first event of the year on September Saturday, where we introduced Westminster's newest sustainability initiatives to the school. This included *Stir*, as well as the introduction of the new waste systems, hygiene products, and the pilot sustainability accreditation scheme that Westminster has undertaken with Beyond Bamboo. Thus, a major focus for us this year has been to encourage the Westminster community to take full advantage of our new sustainable products and recycling services.

Lent Term saw the creation of Sustainability Society's first ever House Representatives system. We used our first meeting to discuss ways in which sustainability could be further promoted at Westminster, and it was really great to see pupils from every House bring their ideas to the table.

One such idea was a Sustainability Newsletter, something which could inform pupils about the school's waste statistics, environmental news, and general sustainable living. This project was swiftly taken on by some of our House Reps, who published the first edition in March. Currently in the works for Sustainability Society is a menu options survey, an idea that arose after talking to the Head Chef, who expressed great interest in getting pupil feedback to cater better to their interests and minimise food waste.

All in all, it has been a great year for Sustainability Society. We are really grateful to Mr Lynch and Marina Ribarska, Head of Housekeeping, who have facilitated many of our initiatives, as well as Ms Stone and Dr Jones, our supervising teachers. We can't wait to see what is next for Sustainability Society!



The state of the Westminster Symposium Society

by Lida Zhu (DD)

Set up to promote and preserve critical thinking and intellectual discourse, the Westminster Symposium gives members the opportunity to discuss any topics from history, politics, economics or philosophy they are interested in, with other like-minded and intelligent people.

Our only guiding principle is that no opinions should be suppressed or arbitrarily dismissed, and that discussion is the only way to improve rational thinking.

Our small group meets regularly for lunch to discuss important issues, which might usually be taken for granted, such as “what makes people equal?”. We model ourselves on Franklin’s Junto, and encourage the Socratic method – especially argument to think about issues rather than for its own sake.

Whilst we are a new society, we simply continue the school tradition of open-minded inquiry, which produced Bentham, Locke, and Nick Clegg.

Recently we have also begun holding “interrogations”, where students come with their own ideas, which they might not normally share, and try to explain and defend them in front of a panel. During our last “interrogation”, two of our members tried to justify why London should become independent, which was a fun as well as informative debate.

It is not a coincidence that universities look for similar critical thinking and debating skills, especially during interviews. The ability to decide for oneself and not be swayed by flawed or emotional arguments is becoming ever more important with the rise in disinformation. The Symposium Society aims to both encourage clear thinking, and also help members develop their argument skills which will no doubt be crucial in the future.

We warmly welcome new members. If you would like to join the Society next year, please do arrange a meeting with me.

A year in Music

by Tim Garrard



At the beginning of the Play Term 2022, the Music Department welcomed new staff members Emily Hoh (Accompanist-in-Residence), Rebecca McNaught (Music Partnerships Coordinator), Lucy Mullin (Music Assistant), and Jo Baillie Stark (Bassoon Teacher).

This year, Concert Band has blossomed under the direction of Mr Price with its now regular Monday after-school slot. Another new initiative has been the creation of a bespoke curriculum for our pianists. Mr Wray, Head of Piano, has hosted collaborative piano classes on a weekly basis throughout the term, allowing our pianists to perform in front of each other, analyse aspects of pianistic technique, and try their hand(s) on different keyboard instruments including the harpsichord and clavichord. On the topic of harpsichords, in addition to our own one-manual Goble (1996) harpsichord we have been blessed these past two years with a two-manual Kirkman (1745) harpsichord, on loan to us from the Handel Hendrix House Museum. As Kirkman was known to Handel, it is entirely possible that Handel could have played this very instrument.

With Miss Hoh's appointment, MusSoc has been a huge success this year with weekly recitals on a Thursday lunchtime allowing any member of the school the opportunity to perform in an informal setting, typically in the Chapel. This ties in well with our striving this year to incorporate the wellbeing of our musicians even more comprehensively into all that we do. Central to this aim has been finding an appropriate balance between the volume of rehearsals, opportunities to perform, and the need for both practice and, crucially, downtime. A series of music and wellbeing online webinars, in partnership with the Wellbeing Department, has seen the school community tap into the wealth of knowledge of some experts in the field.

As always, a series of masterclasses have given both active participants and audience members the opportunity to learn from world-class musicians including Peter Holder (Organ), Benny King (Strings), Aaron Liddard (Jazz), Marie Lloyd (Woodwind), Pete Moore (Brass), Sarah Tynan (Voice), and Roger Vignoles (Piano).

Our choirs were busy from the get-go, with a residency at Ripon Cathedral before the new school year began and the service in Westminster Abbey for the parents of new pupils on the day before the new academic year started. Throughout 2022-23, the Chapel Choir has processed around the local area singing evensong at churches including St Matthew's Westminster, St Steven's Rochester Row, St Saviour's Pimlico, and The Guards' Chapel in which they were joined by the professional choir of The Guards' in a special Remembrance Service.

Our music award holders and other selected musicians performed as soloists in the Lower School Soloists', Upper School Soloists', and New Soloists' concerts. Meanwhile, a series of Piano Forums allowed a large number of Westminsters to perform to each other as soloists. This year, Eliza Ruffle (RR) won first prize in the European Piano Teachers' Association Competition. Ethan Wu (DD) won the Junior Royal Academy of Music Piano Competition (and also gave a recital at the Steinway Hall). And Shutian Cheng (WW) won a prestigious scholarship to study the piano at undergraduate level at the Royal Academy of Music. These three pianists gave an outstanding recital at the end of the year in July at the National Liberal Club as part of the Kettner Concert Series.

Shutian and School Music Captain, violinist Rhys Evans (MM), progressed through to the second round of the BBC Young Musician of the Year

Competition, for which huge congratulations. And Rhys, alongside Eliza Ruffle, was selected to play in the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain.

Miss McNaught's impact as Music Partnerships Coordinator has been a significant one. The headline news has unsurprisingly been the massed choir concerts in which we have been involved. In January, 500 pupils from across London and beyond performed in a concert at Westminster Cathedral organised by Gabrielli Roar and conducted by Paul McCreesh in celebration of the life of early-17th-century composer Michael Praetorius. Our own chamber choir was joined on stage by Westminster Under School, Grey Coat Hospital School, and pupils from various local primary schools under the auspices of the Pimlico Musical Foundation, and School Music Captain Jess Macfarlane (PP), Charlotte Moore (HH), and Arran Syed-Raja (MM) were three of five pupil soloists. Between the rehearsal and the concert, all 500 performers and their teachers came back to Little Dean's Yard for a supper of hot dogs and potato wedges for which huge thanks to the school catering team!

Then, in March, 200 pupils from local primary and secondary schools performed Benjamin Britten's *Rejoice in the Lamb* at our annual Barbican concert. This was an immensely rewarding occasion, having previously been thwarted the day before the equivalent concert by the Covid pandemic in 2020. And in June, both our singers and volunteers acting as backstage runners joined a massed force of 1000 young people at the Tri-borough Music Hub's "Music Makes Me" extravaganza at the Royal Albert Hall, in which songs written by young people were incorporated into a narrative depicting a day in the life of a neurodiverse teenage girl.

However, lots of our most rewarding music partnership work has been away from the concert platform. The weeks and months preceding the Barbican concert were filled with rehearsals alongside other schools and this was such a rewarding process for all involved. Meanwhile, Miss McNaught organised a series of training sessions for our pupils from specialists in the worlds of Music Education, SEND, and Music Therapy. She has also forged new relationships with schools further afield in North Westminster, and developed links with organisations such as Macmillan Cancer and the Evelina Hospital at Saint Thomas' Hospital. We have also been able to welcome various organisations to Westminster to rehearse, including the National Orchestra For All, the Kaleidoscope Chamber Collective (with Hilary Hahn, violinist), British Youth Opera, Gabrielli Roar, and the Monteverdi Choir and English Baroque Soloists to name but a few.

Our composition teacher, Mr Thornton, has organised a series of Composer Forums in which our pupil composers have workshopped various pieces. Additionally, Christian Mason (OW) and his Octandre Ensemble gave a fabulous workshop and masterclass in which our composers were able to listen to their music being performed by professional musicians. Jessica Macfarlane composed a *Westminster Magnificat* which the choir premiered at St Saviour's Pimlico, whilst Joshua Bornstein-Sturge (MM) was the winner of the Westminster School Carol Competition with his carol, *Jesus Christ the Apple Tree*. In addition to Joshua's piece, the choir also sang a carol by Mr Thornton, *I saw a sweet and seemly sight*. Louis Pike (AHH) and Sohan Vohra (RR) composed orchestral works which were premiered on our orchestral tour to Bonn and the Rhineland at the end of the school year in July.

In November, we gave our annual concert at St John's Smith Square. The Lower School Orchestra performed excerpts from Shostakovich's *Gadfly Suite* conducted by Mr Price, whilst the symphony orchestra performed both Rachmaninov's *Piano Concerto No. 3* with soloist Shutian Cheng and Vaughan Williams' *A London Symphony*, conducted by Messrs Hopkins and Heighway respectively. The choir sang at the biennial Service for the Commemoration of Benefactors in the Abbey, before a whole array of groups and ensembles performed at the Autumn Concert up School. With Christmas fast approaching, the choir sang at the Elizabethan Carol Service in a packed St Margaret's Church, at the Christmas Fayre at the Palace of Westminster in the Houses of Parliament, at the WSPC Christmas Party (with festive brass to boot), and at the Carol Service in Westminster Abbey.

In January, shortly after the Gabrielli Roar Praetorius concert, seven Remove pupils (Yiran Ma RR), Louis Pike, Eva Main (DD), Elena Zheng (HH), Bowen Zhu (GG), Theo Budgen (BB), and Serene Liu (PP) performed concerto movements at the Concerto Concert up School with the Symphony Orchestra. Meanwhile, the Chamber Concert allowed our chamber groups to perform a few days before many of them played in the qualifying round of the Pro Corda Chamber Music Festival. The Piano Trio of Rhys Evans, Naoki Aso (PP), and Shutian Cheng progressed through to the final of this festival and are to be congratulated.

The Chamber Choir sang at the Schools' Confirmation Service, joining forces as ever with the choirs of Grey Coat Hospital School and Westminster City School. A few days later, Mercutio Silmon-Clyde (PP) played Bloch's *Prayer: From Jewish Life* on the trombone at the Prep School Heads'

dinner, which had been rescheduled due to the funeral of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Mr Swana was the Musical Director of the school musical, *Made in Dagenham*, in the Millicent Fawcett Hall, whilst our singer-songwriters and pop musicians showcased their work at the Pop Concert. Throughout the academic year, as ever, a number of our small jazz ensembles played at functions including the Shrove Tuesday Dinner and the WSPC Summer Party.

A vocal concert and the Spring Concert made for a rich and rewarding end of the Lent Term, along with our Barbican concert, featuring Rhys Evans performing Dvořák's *Violin Concerto in A Minor* under the baton of Mr Heighway, the Westminster Choral Society performing Maurice Duruflé's *Requiem*, and the aforementioned Britten's *Rejoice in the Lamb* performed by a massed schools' chorus. In order to achieve this, throughout the Lent Term we were hugely grateful to be able to use the Under School Theatre for choral society rehearsals on Saturday mornings.

At the start of the Election Term, the Chamber Choir were honoured to perform at the Harvey Parker Trust launch concert at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, sharing the stage with Clean Bandit (featuring Grace Chatto OW) and Chineke! Junior Orchestra. Other performers included Sheku Kanneh-Mason, Sir Mark Rylance, Yolanda Brown, Robert Rinder, Olly Alexander and Years & Years. Just a week later, the King's Scholars of Westminster School acclaimed the new monarch, His Majesty King Charles III, at the Coronation in Westminster Abbey with the Vivat acclamations set to music by Charles Hubert Hastings Parry in his coronation anthem, *I was glad*.

Trips to concerts and operas this year included Stravinsky and Berlioz at the Royal Festival Hall with the London Philharmonic Orchestra and the Philharmonia, and Saariaho's new opera *Innocence* at the Royal Opera House.

The Summer Concert, the Women Composers' Concert, the Leavers' Concert, the Leavers' Service, the Election Dinner, and our orchestral tour to Germany rounded off another action-packed academic year.





A year in Drama

by Paul Tully

It has been a prolific and vibrant year for Drama. A wide variety of productions, highlighting the immense talent of Westminster pupils, have enabled performers from Fifth Form to Remove to enjoy Drama and all the opportunities it can offer.



The role of Drama has always been to bring people together, entertain, build confidence but most importantly to foster a sense of teamwork – anyone who saw a production this year will certainly agree camaraderie and passion for theatre has been fully on display. Alongside the pupils, the dedicated Drama department with the technical wizardry of Paul McLeish, the stage management and ingenuity of Imamul Ameen, and directorial input from visiting professionals and companies, has led to a genuinely exciting and dynamic series of performances this year.

We started the year with the Sixth Form Festival – a lively and creative project that enables all Sixth Form pupils to take part in a collaborative piece of theatre. This year we performed a festive staging of Charles Dickens' classic *A Christmas Carol* adapted by our own Dr Horsfield and directed by our Drama graduate assistant, Nicholas Limm. With live music performed by the cast, lavish costumes from the National Theatre, and a bespoke set, the cast promenaded audiences through a Christmas market – complete with a cameo from Father Christmas himself – in Dean's Yard

before a haunting and poignant rendition of the play in the MFH with period dances and an atmospheric set design from the art department. This was performed for visiting local primary Millbank School, parents, and other pupils. The feedback was wonderfully positive, with one audience member saying,

“The imagination, and accents were brilliant, and I am sure there will be a few West End stars amongst the cast!”

A special mention to Seb Foster (BB) as Scrooge, who led the company as a stalwart and dedicated actor and, as always, to Blake Morris (HH) for assisting with the whole production.

Next up was the ever-popular Elizabethan Festival, giving a unique introduction to Shakespeare for every Fifth Former, and the chance to act Shakespeare onstage. Visiting company *Turn of Phrase* worked with every pupil in small groups, to produce a medley of some of Shakespeare's most famous plays. The theme this year was Shakespeare and the Climate and with extracts

from *The Tempest*, *King Lear*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Romeo and Juliet*, the topical dilemma of climate change was given stark reality through the pupils' commitment to their roles and the contemporary settings of the plays.

Leaping from Dickens to Dagenham, in the Lent Term we launched into something totally different with the big-hearted musical *Made in Dagenham*, overseen by the very talented Dan Swana, telling the true story of the women of the Ford Motor Co. in Dagenham who went on strike for equal pay in 1968. The pupils relished the chance to perform this colourful and uplifting musical, with several standout performances that prompted a standing ovation.

As one audience member raved **“That was as near to a professional production as you could imagine!”**

Samara Benjamin (HH) gave a star turn as the lead Rita, while Elias Gelain-Sohn (MM) provided comic relief as her hapless husband. Felix Adler (RR) and Orla Wyatt (DD) gave sterling support in their roles as Harold Wilson and Barbara Castle.



Throughout the year the Drama pupils engage in a multitude of practical performances for examination. First off, the Upper Shell delivered a range of scenes from classical and modern playwrights from the dark comedy *Zoo Story* to the harrowing WWI drama *Journey's End*. The Sixth Form pupils independently devised several pieces focusing on an array of hard hitting, challenging topics such as immigration, exploitation of communities for drugs, war and its effects and social judgement. Once again, a confronting and entertaining evening for all who saw it. The Lower Shell followed with another display of inventiveness, performing devised pieces on an even broader scope of themes: AI, domestic abuse, corruption and personality disorders among them. Finally, the Remove pupils grappled with some challenging texts including the infamously tricky Pinter play *The Homecoming*, the madcap and hilarious *Bald Prima Donna*, the modern love story *Lemons Lemons Lemons Lemons Lemons* and the comedy *Rabbit*. These received a warm and appreciative audience. Another standing ovation and enjoyment all round!

A wonderful opportunity for pupils to hone their creative skills was a Scratch Night with the Drama Options class at the beginning of the Election Term.

With a programme of brand-new plays and songs entirely written, directed, and performed by the pupils, audiences were treated to tales of devilry, political satire, strained friendships, and murder most foul. The most useful skill in Drama is the ability to generate work from scratch and give inventiveness free reign. The evening certainly demonstrated the outstanding results that can happen when pupils are enabled to put their works in progress before a crowd. Hopefully, some of these plays will be developed and go on to have another life, perhaps even in the West End...

The Election Term continued to be busy and thriving in Drama. Although exams loomed there was still time to consign a dozen Fifth Formers to a deserted island with no adults or rules and see what happened – the result was a lot of pig hunting, bloodshed, and mayhem. Thankfully only within a performance of William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* directed again by Nicholas Limm. For many Fifth Formers, their first big school production and certainly their first experience of working in a close-knit ensemble. With plentiful smoke and slick lighting provided by Mr McLeish, and the brutal pig carcass and props from Mr Ameen, an intense and creepy atmosphere pervaded the MFH as the

audience saw the boys' fragile democracy collapse in the face of their darker instincts. The Fifth Formers all gave strong commitment to the piece. Maxi Brooke (LL) as Piggy, Moahnishan Wignakumar (CC) as Ralph and Louis Petit (HH) as Jack were standout performances. A less festive and more bloody evening than the previous school plays perhaps, but certainly a triumph for the young cast.

We also had a play reading with our Sixth Form actors who brought to life Blake Morris' translation of the Czech play, *Svejk*. This was a wonderful evening where pupils were able to help Blake with his first hearing of the play with thoughts to stage it later next year.

As well as the public productions and projects, Drama pupils have been to see a huge wealth of plays this year through theatre trips. Pupils have seen *Sus* at Finsbury Park, *Trainspotting* at the Riverside Studios, *Iphigenia in Splott* at Lyric Hammersmith as well as many others. Even up to the last-minute pupils will soon be seeing *The Crucible* at The Gielgud. An enriching year for Drama, the pupils of Westminster continue to cultivate a sense of creativity, enjoyment in the arts, and an appreciation of what theatre can do. We look forward to what next year will bring.



Lord of the Flies Review

by Henry Tamlyn (LL) and Emir Aksoy (CC)



THE ARTS

The Fifth Form Play, held in the Millicent Fawcett Hall, was based on the 1954 novel by William Golding, recipient of the prestigious Nobel Prize in Literature. In the midst of a fictional World War, a group of evacuee schoolboys are left marooned on a tropical island in the Pacific Ocean following a plane crash. With no adults to care for them, the impulsive children are left to form a short-lived society. Ralph, the charismatic protagonist – Moahnishan Wignakumar (CC) – is elected leader of the unruly group. However, this does not last long, and chaos reigns amid a cruel battle for power between two emerging factions: one led by the ruthless Jack Merridew – Louis Petit (HH) – and the other led by Ralph. Jack leads a bloodthirsty gang, chasing after pigs and covering themselves in blood. Meanwhile, Ralph opts for a more democratic and accommodating approach. These rifts later grow into war, fortunately cut short, before events turn truly violent,

by an admiral who saves the group at last. The story is exciting, quick, and intense – great for a play!

From Milo Thompson's (DD) portrayal of the timid and ignorant Percival, to Alex Swann's (GG) unique take on the mysterious and intimidating character of Roger, each personality contributes to the overall atmosphere in the play and to the experience of the audience. Throughout the generally dark play, the twins Sam and Eric – Charlie Whitfield (BB) and Nicky Greco (GG) respectively – were able to offer moments of comic relief. However, a great play is not only crafted by expert actors. The sound and lighting team (including Jeremy Adu-Poku (CC)) performed excellently, and was instrumental in the immersion of the audience. The cast also employed a masterful use of staging, with Jack Merridew leading a menacing cohort down the aisle, which really transported the

audience into the world of the play. During the performance, we even forgot that we were watching our classmates act.

It wasn't just the audience who had a good time: "It was an enjoyable event for both me and everyone involved."
– Moahnishan Wignakumar (CC).

In all, the Fifth Form play was incredible to watch – a truly professional show! The acting was brilliant, the sound and lighting immersive and the staging brought everything together to create a well-rounded, fantastic performance. A wonderful way to round off the year and show off the amazing skills and talent of the Fifth Form actors!

Made in Dagenham the Musical

by Harold Greenfields (WW)





In February, the school's annual musical *Made in Dagenham* ran for three consecutive nights in the school theatre. Based on the feature film of the same name, *Made in Dagenham* follows the real-life struggles of women working in Ford's Dagenham factory in the 1960s as they go on strike for equal pay. This movement played a decisive part in the wider struggle for equal pay between men and women. Fittingly, the production was performed in a theatre named after another pioneer of women's rights, Millicent Fawcett.

I played the Latin teacher Mr Buckton, a Ford worker and a paparazzo. I was initially reluctant to audition, having been kicked out of the school choir at age seven. A few years after that I was dared on a rugby tour to sing a song in front of the entire squad, which went surprisingly well, so I auditioned using the same song. The audition went much better than I expected and I am very glad that I stepped out of my comfort zone to give it a try.

The show was accompanied by a live band led by Mr Swana, including the drummer from the original West End

production. One parent I spoke to after the show said that the music was so tight that they didn't realise it had been performed live until Mr Swana took a bow at the end! The fantastic music was a wonderful complement to the fantastic singing performances, from the heartfelt solo songs to the rousing ensemble numbers.

The production was very well-received, with laughs throughout and on the final night a standing ovation from the entire audience before the final song had even finished! This was a lovely tribute not just to the cast and musicians but also to the dedicated stage crew, the dynamic choreography and the visionary direction of Mr Chequer. My father, who used to work with the producers of the original film, said that they would have been very proud, the story lent itself very well to a musical, with excellent songs and performances, and that the show was highly entertaining. Hopefully, in addition to providing entertainment, we also provided some food for thought and, as the final song (*Stand Up*) says, helped encourage the audience to *Stand Up* for women's rights.

The whole process was really fun, if a little stressful at times, and I feel like we all came together to make something that every single cast and crew member should be proud of. I feel very lucky to have been a part of this great production and am very excited to find out what productions the future holds.



Art life

by Jim Allchin



On a bright June evening, we flung the doors open once again to welcome pupils, friends and family to our end of year exhibition that celebrated the work of our GCSE and A Level artists. Lining the walls of our five studios, stairwells and auxiliary spaces was thrilling. Philo Earle's (GG) series of Pear paintings showed how even the simplest of observations can offer rich compositional and colour balance while Susanna Fillipi's (RR) large canvas works paid ode to past masters, painted with supreme technical understanding. Upstairs in Studio 2, Alexei Sandmann's (LL) towering sculpture, a geometric form wrapped in cloth was the centrepiece of a room filled with paintings that explored local architecture from Louis Summers' (CC) canvas paintings of Westminster Abbey, to a view out of Billy Jai Campbell's (BB) window into yard. A large drawing machine stood proud in Studio 3, made by Tom

Meldrum (BB), who himself goes on to study Fine Art next year, to a show reel of films by GCSE Artists that were projected up in Studio 5.

The exhibition was our biggest in four years, what with pupils completing the exam component of the course this year. Having only eight school weeks to develop and refine both concept and approach to art making is a difficult feat that all pupils fully committed to. We couldn't be prouder of what they produced, with a whole host of artworks being selected by the Head Master and Staff to be loaned to stairwells and Houses. Special mention goes to Zoe Zouridaki (WW) for having her paintings selected for the Westminster collection, featuring a portrait of our very own Dr AK.

The Funaki Prize has run for over 20 years and attracts entries from pupils across each year group. This year we

received over 50 submissions, all of which responded to the theme of drawing. Hilde spent 75 minutes viewing the work in both the gallery and studios and spoke about our pupils' deep commitment to observation. This year we created a new format where Hilde awarded not only a winner, but a runner up and a highly commended. This year's winner was Ardavan Pesendorfer (BB) whose concertina sketchbook comprised of over 30 pen drawings all of which were made en plein air across London. Next year's theme will be colour.

We again awarded a pupil with the Oli Bennett exhibition prize, a prize awarded to a Remove pupil who showed originality and curatorial ambition when mounting an exhibition in our gallery space. With so many to choose from, Mr and Mrs Bennett had a difficult decision to make, but chose

Jed Cohen's (HH) installation that explored weather through draped cloth hanging from the ceiling into trays of ink which during the exhibition absorbed the colour and transformed the pale cloth.

In November, John Woodman treated us to an exhibition of new paintings in the Chapter House at Westminster Abbey. Entitled *Lands of Unknown Warriors*, the exhibition was intended to mark the centenary of the Grave of the Unknown Warrior in November 2020, but was delayed due to Covid-19 lockdowns. The following extract accompanied the exhibition:

The Unknown Warrior was chosen for Westminster Abbey in 1920, from four unknown warriors who fought for Britain during the First World War, and who died in four different battle areas. In the summer of 2017 the artist spent time in the four locations (the Aisne, the Somme, Arras and Ypres), making studies of the landscapes as they are now. The oil paintings on show stem from these studies and use vivid colours which seek to distil the individual character experienced in each location. Each painting has been made across four separate canvases, one for each unknown warrior and each canvas is the same size as a

Commonwealth War Grave (2 ft 6 in. in height and 1 ft 3 in. in width). Once completed, the canvases were taken to the battle areas in Belgium and France which inspired the paintings; photographs of this are also included in the exhibition.

During the two weeks, pupils from each year group visited the exhibition during their lessons to spend time with the work. Mr Woodman kindly gave an artist talk on the project in our art studios, with those in attendance treated to biscuits too. The school has since purchased one of John's paintings; we look forward to seeing it hanging somewhere around the school.



One of the strengths of our department is that alongside teaching we are all practicing artists. This brings me to the bittersweet news that Dr Alalusua will be leaving the Westminster Art Department this summer having first arrived in the year 2000! Elisa, herself an award-winning artist, will be undertaking a three-year project in her homeland of Finland and during the next few years will visit the department to keep us up to date with her project, which will involve film and local people. During November 2022, Elisa won first prize in the Trinity Buoy Wharf Drawing prize and with it collected a winner's cheque for £8000. We took a large group of Sixth Form and Remove artists one Saturday afternoon and spent over an hour discussing the ways in which drawing can be explored. Three of our pupils were inspired by the space and subsequently applied and successfully gained a place at The Prince's Foundation Diploma Year in Art and Design.

We make a habit of visiting exhibitions and galleries on a Saturday afternoon or a late opening during the week, highlights this year include a Whitechapel gallery visit to see *Action, Gesture, Paint*, an exhibition that explored women artists and global abstraction between 1940-70. Following the exhibition, we took a walk down Brick Lane and spent a couple of hours eating curry and talking art. Another fine afternoon



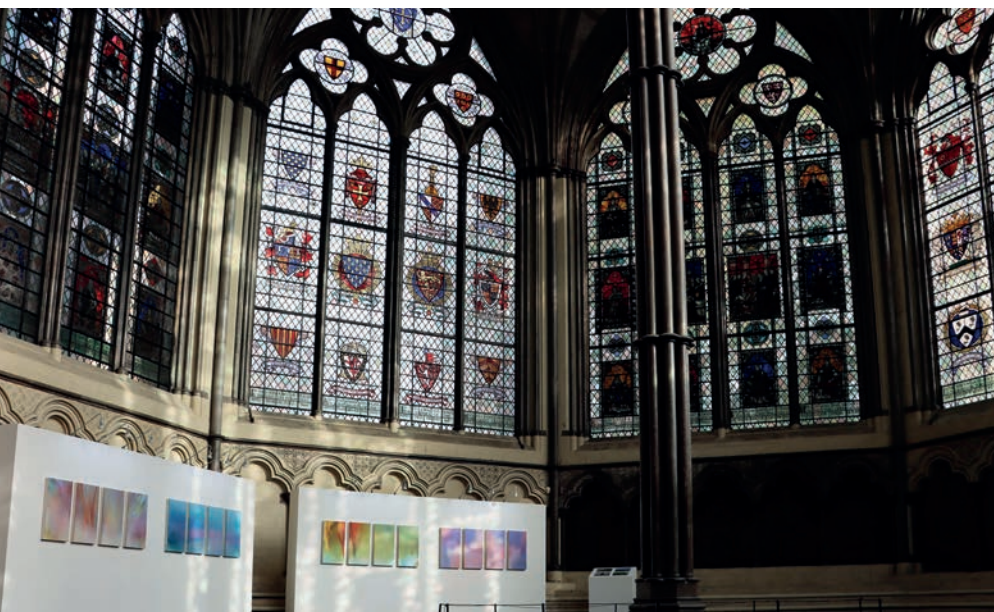
was spent learning a gallery route from Green Park through to Oxford Circus while taking in eight galleries! We look forward next year to taking pupils a little further afield with a trip to New York in the pipeline.

Our ARTISTALK program offered our pupils much to ponder this year, we hosted Faye Wong (OW) whose artist name is Faye Wei Wei, Art Critic Eddie who is not only the art editor for Time Out but also curator of and founder of OOF, a Gallery and Magazine connected to Tottenham Hotspur that explores art and football. Painter Alexis Harding, who I heard speak almost 20 years ago, spoke about the process of painting and embracing accidents.

For a third year running, pupils from the Remove made the short trek over to the Under School to judge their model competition: this year's judges were Arthur Boyce-Rodgers (RR), who himself was a competition winner in Year 3 back in 2013, and Alexei Sandmann, both of whom go on to study Architecture next year. Other pupils this year go on to study Fine Art and foundations, all knowing that they'll get the call in the next few years to return to Sutcliff's to speak about their experiences to the current crop of Westminster's.

With plans to add a new Mac suite during the next academic year, I look forward to speaking about this next year.

With art comes great creativity and this year was no exception.









September Saturday



Music can heal the wounds that medicine cannot touch.

by Shriyaa Arunachalam (AHH)

Music is powerful. I realised its ameliorating capabilities when I volunteered to play violin as a member of The Royal Free Hospital Charity. What is music worth without the vivid memories it creates when you hear or play them to an audience? I consider myself immensely fortunate to perform music to patients and visitors of The Royal Free and Whittington Hospitals in North London.

My musical journey as a volunteer began with a Christmas repertoire at The Royal Free Hospital in December 2022 along with Ms Parfitt (VMT). What better way to relieve stress and energise the minds of healthcare staff at the beginning of the winter season in a busy, acute hospital. The ambience of the violin instantaneously replaced the din of visitors and staff, uplifted their spirits, and created a reposeful hospital environment. By sharing our musical talents, we brought joy and emotional relief to patients and families amid their trials and tribulations. Our musical remedy spread from radiology to the staff cafeteria and elderly care ward, breaking the monotony of the clinical environment and offering a brief respite from medical routines. The positive impact of music earned universal gratitude and appreciation which was incredibly rewarding and inspired me to make a regular contribution to my local community.

Live music in hospital is not just for Christmas! So, The Whittington Hospital was where we played next, under the imposing glass dome in the main entrance. This time, our musical troop morphed to include a variety of musicians including violinists, violists, cellists, and oboists; with a common sense of purpose and fulfilment to contribute to the wellbeing of patients and enhance their hospital

experience. Playing in the Intensive Care Unit for critically ill patients recovering from distressing illness and staff working tirelessly in the midst of monitors, our Westminster ensemble provided a source of much needed solace and relief.

Having played alongside Ms Parfitt, OWs and renowned musicians over the past six months, I profoundly enjoyed performing to diverse audiences in the hospital. It has bolstered my musical skills and broadened my repertoire. Volunteering in hospitals has exposed me to the complexities of illness, pain, and healing. I also realised playing music in hospitals requires sensitivity and professionalism. This inimitable

experience not only created a positive and lasting impact on the patients and healthcare professionals, but also enabled me to foster a sense of belonging and contribute to the well-being of the wider community.

As a musician and aspiring medic, I understood that one of the most powerful attributes of music is the unparalleled ability to heal the body and soul in a way that medicine cannot.



The Pullen Centre

by Chloe Huang (PP)

As a pupil volunteer at the Pullen Centre, an elderly care home nestled in the heart of Pimlico, I have cherished every second of being with this tight-knit community. The elders here are incredible people with fascinating stories to tell, and since I started volunteering I've met drama directors, ODEON staff – even a former midwife of the late Queen Elizabeth. Moreover, the staff are friendly and readily involve Pullen volunteers in upcoming events. For instance, during December one of the carers, Bissy, approached me and asked if I could organise an art and crafts session in anticipation of Christmas.

My time at the Pullen Centre has further inspired me to read *Ageism unmasked*, a book about combatting both explicit and implicit bias based on age, to better understand the amazing people I have bonded with. I look forward to volunteering at the Pullen Centre next year.

Phab 2023 – Phairy Tales

by Samara Benjamin (HH)

This year, Westminster Phab finally returned in full swing! Westminster Phab is a residential the school hosts every year for disabled people with us as their full-time carers.

The guests board with Sixth Form hosts and embark on a week of extraordinary adventure and drama (and that was just getting everyone into pyjamas at night!). After three years of Covid-related cancelled or reduced Phabs, we launched back into the wonderful week, delving into the magical world of Phairy Tales 2023. Following a day of prep, the whole school was transformed, full of hanging vines and glitter, as well as mattresses and pillows lining Wren's and Dryden's – revamping the previously slightly musty Houses into cosy bedrooms ready for a weeklong slumber party.

For us, as hosts, the week was hectic; even simple things like helping guests move around the school for meals or showers proved a challenge, and it took time adjusting to the different paths needed to take when pushing a wheelchair for example, or just helping someone who struggled walking. However, the most eye-opening realisation was that, even though living inside the school changed with our guests, going outside was even harder. Many of our Phab guests travel into Westminster from outside of London, coming from all across England for this one week of holiday, and a week of rest for their carers. Naturally, being in one of oldest and most famous cities globally, much of our week was

spent showing the guests around London, and taking them on trips to popular landmarks like the South Bank, Oxford Street and Battersea Power Station. But, as we travelled across the city, it didn't take long to realise how NOT disability friendly our city is. From small wheelchair spaces to an astounding lack of lifts in both shops and tube stations, it was a real eye-opener to realise how much we take for granted, just when walking around every day.

Even so, despite these setbacks, in a swarm of matching blue hoodies, we were determined to take on London and went on many memorable trips throughout the week, visiting the London Wetlands (it was raining heavily that day, so very wet indeed), going to many parks and even seeing West End shows like *Matilda*, *Grease* and *The Lion King* – complete with a word-by-word dialogue sing-a-long from some of our guests! A highlight of the week was the annual Phab disco on Saturday night, where guests and hosts alike got dressed up for the formal dinner and dance. Copious amount of glitter and hairspray combined with balloons and banners to make Phairy Tale heaven as we danced the night away. Overall, the week was an incredible experience, and one I know I will never forget. I can only hope the guests who we grew so close with feel the same.



OUTREACH





TRIPS

- 1 UK
NORTH YORK MOORS
EDINBURGH
CUMBRIA
NORTH PENNINES
BOX HILL
CARDIGAN BAY
CHILTERN
MANCHESTER
STUDLAND BAY
- 2 AACHEN
- 3 BERLIN
- 4 CATALUNYA
- 5 ICELAND
- 6 MUNICH
- 7 NORMANDY
- 8 FINLAND
- 9 FLORENCE
- 10 PARIS
- 11 PRAGUE
- 12 RIGA
- 13 VENICE
- 14 NYC

The Lyke Wake Walk: Men vs Map

by Felix Adler (RR)

We started off as a hopeful band of six, leaving the church headstrong at 10.30pm, before Mr Ullathorne informed us that we had in fact missed the first turn, after which we embarrassedly rushed off in the right direction. We then arrived at the starting point and were told to head off, but remained stationary while Aidan Abraham (AHH) fumbled with his gear and Arya Salukhe (MM) learned how to look at a map. The obscene folding of this tricky device would prove a consistent theme.

Roughly three hours in, things started to turn sour. Climbing up almost vertical ground in a hailstorm, it was an event of drastic proportions. Arya tragically rolled his ankle and he valiantly used two walking sticks to propel himself to the next checkpoint, where he bowed out along with Jamie Tse (RR) and his excruciating cramps. Two noble sacrifices. Sandro Levi (MM), Aidan, Musashi Schad (MM) and I were soon walking at a rapid pace, making excellent time with Tommy D the English G (Dr Durno) and Mikey Heigh the Music Guy (Mr Heighway) close behind. As skies cleared and sunshine approached, Musashi's case of hypothermia was narrowly avoided – 'How is this a windbreaker? It feels like the wind is breaking me.'

Our next obstacle was the deep, featureless bog. We started strong, 'I'm so happy now! I was so sad before. I love the bog. I'm Bogman!' exclaimed Musashi. Unfortunately, after 90 minutes, we reached a cliff, realising that we were walking in the opposite of the correct direction. We sat for ten minutes in despair before going back the way we came across the notorious bog.

There was simply no way we could finish by night-time. We made our way to the next checkpoint with the help of Mr Gravell, but he warned us that if we did not complete the next stint in two and a half hours, we would have to can it. We were determined – this was an easy-to-follow path, no navigational errors could be made. Musashi was on his last legs but soon realised that his pain was a mindset and pressed on with blistering speed, as we reached lunch an hour earlier than expected.

We were on the final quarter. Giving up on the unreliable map, which we had spent a total of 40 minutes folding and unfolding due to its pernicky nature, we scrunched it up and shoved it in Aidan's bag, a satisfying dismissal of a devilish gizmo.

Fast forward through four exhausting hours and we had reached the bottom of the hill atop which we had seen the radio mast, the end point. I ran up the

stairs, saw Mr Gravell wave, and ran even faster. Musashi arrived and asked Benny G, 'How long left?' and my hope was shattered. We weren't at the end?

'2.6k.'

My heart sank.

At our pace, that was at least two more hours – into the night.

Our lives were merely those of wanderers of purgatory, pilgrims of Helheim, a Sisyphean cycle of timeless, sightless plodding. Durno, Heighway and Gravell for some confounded reason discussed sebaceous fluid and oozing pus as I began to see rocks as jellyfish and hallucinate telephone poles across the horizon – mirages of hope in the abyssal sea of depression.

But, of course, we made it – at 8.45pm. We saw the mast. We smiled with relief. We all placed our hands upon the Lyke Wake monument to signify the end of our trip, our pre-walk group of eight unprecedentedly halved, the elite four sticking together through thick and thin to achieve what only seven hours ago was deemed impossible. We had finished the Lyke Wake Walk. Sleeping in the vans on our way back, we were left with both satisfaction in our hearts and pain in our feet.



Westminster School Society Travel Award

by Isabelle Qian (PP)

During the Lent Term 2022, I was awarded a Westminster School Society Travel Award to travel to Munich to immerse myself into the German lifestyle, as well as tracing my grandfather's footsteps. Having studied German for four years, it was very exciting to choose Germany as the destination for my first self-planned trip!

Weniger ist mehr

After arriving in Munich, I visited Professor Ryssel, who was my grandfather's colleague during his time in Munich. More than 50 years ago, my grandfather flew to Munich as a visiting scholar and learned German (his second foreign language) during three months of study at the Goethe-Institut. "Effective" was the first word that Prof. Ryssel thought of when thinking of my grandfather. In fact, he was the most productive guest researcher he had ever hosted – publishing around ten publications over two years. Through our conversation, another side of my grandfather was vividly painted: a man who courageously left his home country, had a deep passion for research, and wanted to make the world a better place. There in Prof. Ryssel's photo album, my grandfather was still in his middle age and received his farewell presents from his colleagues with a broad smile. I was also taken to the original location of Fraunhofer Institute – where my grandfather spent all his time. Although the area had undergone urbanisation and the Institute had long moved to a new address, the interior of the building had not changed greatly. As Prof. Ryssel pointed at the two rooms in which my grandfather had worked, I pictured the countless hours he spent there as he enthusiastically delved into the sea of wonders. Persistence and dedication in making more of what we have – whether it was becoming more productive in quantity or quality – were what the city had taught me.

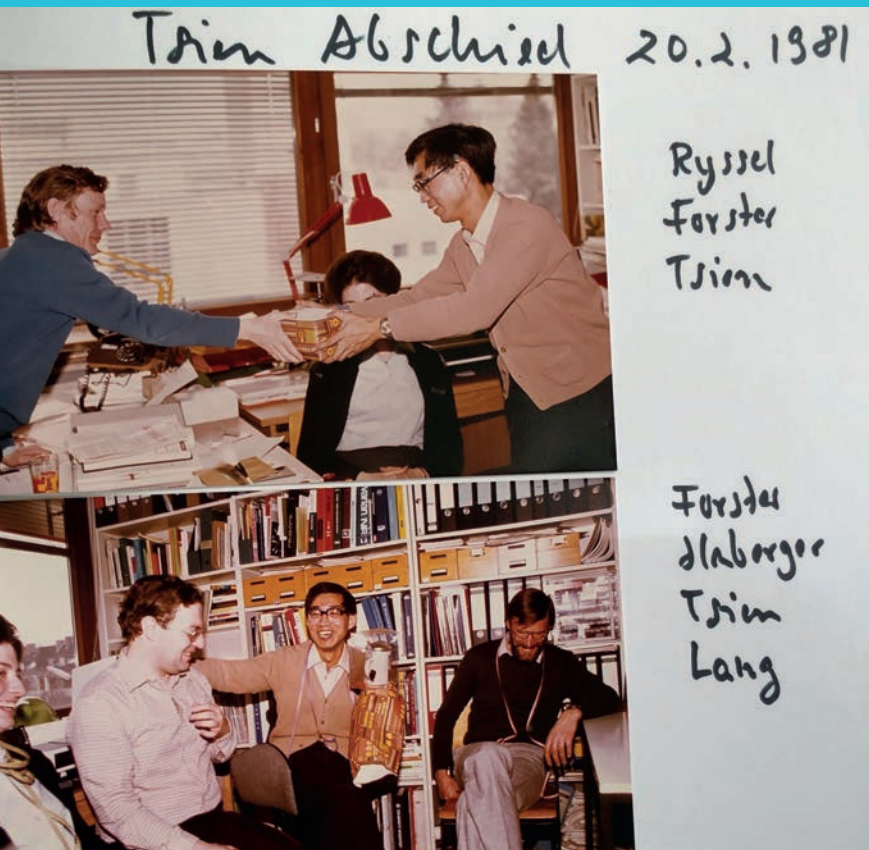
das Lebendigsein

Art in Munich breathed and prospered as it always had: an integral part of the city's past, present, and future. Munich has overseen countless breakthroughs as artists boldly challenge themselves or create important artworks that are signs of the times.

Living in Munich was just like being in a painting. The fluidity of art embodied "Erwartungslos" (serendipity). We never knew where we would be in the next second: we could be hopping on a bus to chase after the whimsical sunset, strolling along the street observing others, and even chatting with the locals while watching the sun set behind the Schloss Nymphenburg!

Herzlich Willkommen

At 5.00am, I rose as the sun peeked its head from the east. Per Munich's tradition, *Kocherlball* is an annual festival that begins at dawn in memory of Sunday balls for domestic staff. Whilst sitting on the bus, you would see couples, young and old, all wearing lederhosen or dirndl and going to the *Chinesischer Turm* in the *Englischer Garten*. From the bus stop, you could hear the cheerful Bavarian music playing from afar. Amid swirls, laughter, and "Prost!", families and friends reunited on that Sunday morning. Immersing myself into these local festive celebrations reminded me of what an old lady had said to me a few days before as we watched the sun dipping below the horizon, "You are very welcome here."



A Brutal(ist) trip

by Thea McMenamain (HH)

I have always loved the Brutalist style. I grew to learn this was not a shared opinion. I felt that the style had found a home within London; such a large city, influenced by so many different cultural and architectural styles; any style could find a home. So, I decided to explore Scottish Brutalism.



The journey started a little rockily as I (bleary-eyed) turned up to Kings Cross at 7.00am to find out, due to the extreme high temperatures we experienced in the summer, there had been an issue with track between Kings Cross and Peterborough and so trains to Edinburgh wouldn't run from Kings Cross until at least 12.00pm. But I persevered, with some help from the WhatsApp family group chat and a lot of luck, I was able to find an alternative route to Edinburgh that meant I was only delayed by an hour.

The first building I visited was the University of Edinburgh Library. Almost all of Edinburgh utilises the Georgian style and building in Edinburgh is very heavily restricted in order to preserve the historic centre of the city. The library is located upon the George Garden Square, tucked off a woodland path that all of Edinburgh seemed to be walking along, leading to 'the

meadows'. 'The meadows', an area of green expanse located directly behind the library, was a dynamic and lively place. After a long day of travelling, we set ourselves down and listened to the calls from the travelling fun fair metres ahead. The square itself was a charming Georgian-house-lined, cobbled street square; the southern-most stretch dominated by the Library. Though the library juxtaposes its surroundings (verdant landscapes), as the environment is mirrored on either side it helps to reduce how imposing the library is, the height of trees compete with the height of the building. The modularity of the Brutalist style mimics the regularity of the Georgian brick work, finding a middle ground between the styles. You couldn't help but fall in love with the area.

After our short stint in Edinburgh and a nice full meal, we made our way to

the Scottish countryside where we stayed with a friend's family. Our travels continued up to St Andrews. On the bus ride from Leuchars to the town centre, the verdant and quiet countryside transformed into small, tightly packed rows of beige stone housing. The St Andrew Melville Hall was striking in its appearance. Its use of modular triangular units is incredibly interesting as it rests within plain fields. It felt like a very functional building, it had a purpose and it served it. The main University Library on the other hand was much more seamlessly integrated. It once again played off the regularity of the surrounding brick work and beige tones of the typical Victorian gothic style found within the town, camouflaging itself into its surroundings.

Short but sweet would be the perfect way to describe my trip to Scotland. We came, we saw, we conquered and then took the six hour train home.



Our bite out of the Big Apple couldn't have been NYCer

by Kristina Akova (PP) and Oliver Davis (CC)

Greeted by mammoth M&M biscuits – our first indication of the culinary landscape awaiting us – and a pun-loving tour guide, many failed to fight off jet lag as we drove from JFK to the centre of the city that never sleeps, napping away while the bus leaped gracefully over (and into) NYC potholes.



Our first attractions included Central Park, neon-lit Times Square and a Bubba Gump restaurant (our knowledge of *Forrest Gump* trivia left much to be desired).

The educational side of the trip kicked off the next morning with the Federal Reserve, whose representative discussed current monetary policy and its impacts on the banking crisis. Its museum narrated the story of the bank's origins and how it became the world's largest store of gold, which, despite much inquiry (and scheming), we were unable to gain access to.

Having ascended to the 72nd floor of the World Trade Centre (in less than 40 seconds), DAZN CEO Joe Markowski explained how the event-based business turned Covid difficulties into an opportunity to strategise a dramatic expansion in 2021. He expertly met our questions and proudly transformed us into brand ambassadors (we sported DAZN baseball caps for the remainder of the trip).

The next day saw us at Barclays Capital where a wide range of industry experts, from inflation analysts to FX traders, spoke about their day-to-day activities and the impact of fiscal and monetary policy on their work.

The Statue of Liberty made for a monumental transition into the cultural side of the trip, her museums taught us the politics behind her construction and the values she symbolised to those immigrating via Ellis Island. If we weren't already blown away by the wind, Ben Bloy (WW) certainly blew us away with his photography skills: when asked to take a photo of the Economics Department, he managed to miss the towering green statue behind them! As the city drifted into darkness, we drifted to Chicago – a musical satire set in the 1920s featuring crime, corruption, celebrity criminality and of course jazz. Nothing like awe-inspiring singing and dancing to end a brilliant day!

Following an early (and for some, courtesy of subway delays, brief) lunch, our visit to the UN coincided with the delegates' own lunch break, giving us the privilege of accessing the General Assembly meeting hall. We ended our time there with a talk from Hamid Rashid about development economics - his views on the need for a refocus on redistribution of resources as opposed to economic growth were particularly insightful.

The evening brought the most anticipated activity: watching a basketball game at Madison Square Garden while devouring two-litre soda cups and free-flow popcorn.

A second visit to the World Trade Center concluded our trip, this time with a historical focus: the Ground Zero walking tour and the 9/11 Museum were informative and moving. The delays at JFK were the only deviation from Mr Mikdadi's minute-by-minute itinerary (our resident navigator Oliver Davis (CC) was the only reason we were able to stick to it otherwise). We would like to thank the Economics Department, especially our trip leader Mr Mikdadi, for all their time and efforts in organising and accompanying us on such a multi-faceted, inspiring and above all "fun-ducational" trip.





Crossing the Finnish line

by Olivia Wright (RR),
 Millie Lall (HH),
 Emma Grant-Diaz (WW)
 and Constance Arkell (GG)

The 39th Annual Finnish Ice Marathon was held on the vast Lake Kallavesi. It attracts some of the world’s best skaters along with 11 Westminster pupils, accompanied by Ms French and Mr CD Riches. On 24 February, whilst everyone else was enjoying Friday and Saturday school, we embarked on our three day adventure. After two flights and a hectic connection (when we unfortunately did not have time to stop and buy “I Heart Finland” t-shirts), we touched down in Kuopio, Finland. We threw on our skates and headed straight for the ice. Despite the sub-zero temperatures, which shockingly were actually cold, we got accustomed to our cross-country skates and enjoyed a late night preparation session, anticipating the long race ahead.

The next morning, well rested and fed, Lucy Hang (LL) and Lillie Hu (LL) were off for an early start of 7.30 and braved the 50k, seven laps around the 7.5k course. The rest of us set off two hours later for the 25k, clad in our ski trousers and jackets. This wasn’t like the Queensway and Somerset House ice rinks we were used to. The ice was rough and cracks in it became our enemy during the long four hours. All it took was a small one to send us tumbling (and many of us did, repeatedly).

Despite emerging from the race with many bruised knees, one haematoma, and sore backs all round, there was an overall rewarding feeling of achievement. We made celebratory snow angels before heading to the sauna. That night we feasted like never before and snacked on unprecedented amounts of Finnish chocolate. The following morning, we went for a final skate on the ice (some of us more traumatised than others), and finally we flew back to London proudly sporting medals.

Particular congratulations to Connie for coming 1st out of the GB women in the 25k, to Lillie for completing the 50k in three hours and ten minutes and Lucy in four hours. In addition, CD competed in, and won, his 25k potkukelkka race; an inspiring feat.

We would like to say a huge thank you to Ms French, CD and everyone involved for the skate of a lifetime.

History trip to Normandy

by Benjamin Harley (PP)

The inaugural History trip to Normandy provided fourteen lucky Remove and Sixth Form students with a truly holistic cultural experience.

Day One was spent mainly in transit. We boarded our coach, bleary-eyed, at 6.00am and set out to Dover, where we crossed the channel to Calais by ferry. Here we discovered to our great delight that we had a free meal voucher included! (Cue much excitement and huge portions of food consumed.) We landed soon after, a disembarkation rivalled only perhaps by 6 June 1944. At this point, I must introduce a certain special someone, the one and only Barry, a quite literally world-class coach driver (his next passengers were the Brazilian female football side) who guided us with immense skill and panache to our various destinations. The first of these was the beautiful city of Rouen, William I's Norman capital, where we saw the magnificent Gothic cathedral, and wandered through the cobbled streets, seeing the square where Joan of Arc was burned at the stake. We then journeyed onwards to our accommodation – the Château du Molay. Built in 1758 by the young

Jacques-Jean le Coultoux du Molay, an equerry to King Louis XV, the château now serves the far higher purpose of housing huge groups of minute French schoolchildren... and the finest of Westminster's History department.

The following days were similarly enlightening. In keeping with the trip's focus on providing context to our studies on the period of William the Conqueror, we saw the awe-inspiring Bayeux Tapestry, and went to Mont St Michel on Day Two. Day Three was centred around visits in and around the city of Caen – often considered the archetype of Normandy. We explored Caen castle, and the Abbaye aux Hommes and the Abbaye aux Dames, built by William and his wife Matilda, respectively, as symbols of the might of Normandy and as places fitting for their tombs. A more modern twist was then added to the programme, and we fast-forwarded a millennium, walking around the

extremely informative Memorial Museum of the Battle of Normandy.

Days Two and Three were also marked by less intellectual, but no less important events. The History cohort bravely put down their scholarly works to take on the combined might of the French primary education system in a series of football matches for the ages. After a narrow defeat on Day Two, the squad then rebounded to win a glorious victory, with Jonah Hawksley (BB) banging in two penalties to seal the deal, in a recovery reminiscent of the great British comebacks – Crécy, Agincourt, Waterloo – I could go on...

After a return journey marred only by a ferry crossing in gale force nine winds, we arrived safe and sound up Sanctuary. A huge thanks is in order to Dr Huscroft for organising such a fabulous trip, to Ms Barton for putting up with us, and of course, to the big man Barry.



A Trip Back in Time to Renaissance Florence

by Molly Hunt (MM)

Despite having only stayed in Florence for four days, I can categorically say that this trip has been one of the few occasions where I've left a city both satisfied with my grip on its culture, architecture and practices, whilst also being desperate for more.



Pulsing with engineering feats, the city centre was overwhelming to say the least. Every time we craned our necks there was always something which was met with a collective gasp, ranging from an ornately decorated facade to the green window shutters on almost every building. Each day was packed with back-to-back visits to churches, galleries and palaces and since everything was reached by foot, we really gained a sense of Florence as a whole, before even entering any buildings.

The sightseeing began almost immediately after we landed in Pisa airport, as the train to Florence was possibly one of the most picturesque journeys I've ever been on. Once we arrived, it was very difficult to miss the Cathedral and Baptistery, located opposite each other just a couple of minutes away from our hotel. I was struck by their size as standing there, beneath such colossal buildings, really brought the photos of them shown in class to life.

Sunday began with Michelangelo's *David* as well as the Convent of San Marco – whose peaceful corridors and fresco covered walls set the bar for the rest of the trip extremely high. In between visits, we had a lot of free time, which we filled with food, shopping and sunbathing in the most inconvenient of places. It has been truly wonderful to see the art history course come to life from familial rivalries of the Medici and Strozzi, to humanist ideas and proportions. I struggle to think of a more thriving city in both landscape and man-made endeavours. We managed to experience both in tandem when we walked to San Miniato al Monte (situated at the top of a rather large hill) on which there stands a beautiful Tuscan Romanesque church and a complete view of Florence. This was set to the backdrop of our group singing of *Ave Maria*, which naturally enhanced the experience despite the fact that, by this point, it felt as though we'd been walking for three days straight and had the blisters to prove it!

I think the most surprising part about our visit was how the case studies, which had often been overlooked in class, turned out to be the most impressive when seen in person. For example the pair of Cantorias or Donatello's *Magdalene* were perhaps the highlight of the trip for both me and many of my friends. Regardless, there was something for everyone, whether that was early morning mass or simply the food we ate at dinner. That is what made the trip special, because no matter what our expectations of it were when we set off in the plane from Gatwick, we all returned with completely different mindsets and a newfound interest in something we'd least expected. It is impossible not to feel the history of this incredible place – in the stones of the pavements you walk on, in the way a set of steps dip from where those have sat before and, perhaps most notably, in the people themselves and the language they speak.



Sixth Form Geography Field Trip to Cumbria

by Joshua Reiniger (MM) and Elizabeth Appleby (HH)

An 8.30am start at King's Cross proved no issue for all bar one of the Sixth Form Geographers, ready and raring to catch the 9.00am to Darlington for an intense weekend of land use surveys, wetted perimeters, and other assorted fieldwork activities. With a baker's dozen of Westminster's finest, armed with clipboards and colouring pencils on board, the three hour train journey passed by quickly due to hotly-contested rounds of "guess the population of the town outside the window."

Awaiting us in Darlington was the mainstay vehicle of choice for Geography field trips since the invention of the wheel, our minibus. First stop: Durham. More specifically, the Sherburn Road estate to conduct various surveys on the area. Following a few niceties with the locals, we made it progressively further into the centre of town, where we enjoyed a hot Starbucks and explored all areas of

what we were reliably informed was a prime example of a defensive site, before heading further west to what was deemed a particularly nice part of town (by Mr Wurr, outside his old uni house). A stop at Durham's best pizzeria and a night-time drive to the school's accommodation wrapped up a day well spent.

We awoke bright and early the next day for a day of exploring the finest of the Eden Valley's rural villages, but with a filling breakfast courtesy of the Geography Department we felt ready to face anything the fells had in store. Day two saw further visits to coffee shops and chats with locals in the interests of truly experiencing the rural settlements where we conducted our fieldwork. Having concluded that whilst the noticeboard said buses came on the hour, the last was seen three days ago, we decided that service provision was on occasion lacking, but it was made up for in local events for all ages, plastered

on leaflets all around the villages. An exam paper awaited us back at the house but in truth, all were relieved to be out of the rain.

That said, the sun shone on day three of the voyage. A short walk up the edge of Blencathra led us to the Glenderterra Beck, the river in which we would be wading (or a bit deeper for some of us) for the morning. Our guides from the Blencathra Field Study Centre had us experts on all things drainage basins in preparation for another paper awaiting us back at the Centre. Following the paper, it was time for the fittingly labelled "Three Amigos" to depart for further academic enrichment with the History department, leaving their peers devastated but quickly rejuvenated by a visit to Keswick's Flood Defences and a portion of fish and chips.

A final night at the school's brilliant house in Nenthead and journey home wrapped up an informative, fascinating and entertaining Geography Field Trip. As much as the weather played a key part in the success of the trip, thanks must be given to Mr Wurr and Miss Blakemore for organising such a great time!

French Exchange

After a four-year hiatus due to the pandemic and the subsequent lockdowns, the French exchange resumed this year: now in its tenth year, it is testament to the strong links forged between Westminster and Lycée Janson de Sailly, situated in the leafy XVIth arrondissement in Paris.

Felix Nielsen (RR) writes:

Arriving at the Gard du Nord on a Friday evening, after a hectic term, the 15 pupils on the French Exchange were apprehensive. The immersion would be scary; our partners would be scary; Paris would be scary. However, slumped on the Eurostar on the way back after a week in Paris, the consensus among the worn-out pupils was that it was great, and they would have loved to stay longer.

There were many things that would fill up our days in the French capital, but perhaps the most impactful was spending time with our exchange partners and their families. This was the most daunting part to many people, but everyone got on extremely well. I spent most of my time just with my partner, walking around Paris, visiting the Arc de Triomphe, and the Natural History Museum with her and her family. Additionally, when I was with the family, my French was really tested and I felt myself making massive improvements.

Most mornings, we went to lessons with our exchange partners in a vast school called Janson de Sailly. This was perhaps the most challenging part of the trip, but also very rewarding. We discovered lots about the French educational system, met people outside the group, and crushed some French students in "babyfoot" (table football). I found the experience of doing Physics for instance, or French literature, in a French school, fascinating.

Thanks to Dr Blache and Dr Witney, we visited many famous sites and did great things around Paris. These included visiting colossal, gorgeous churches like the Panthéon (now a secular temple to luminaries such

as Voltaire or Marie Curie) and Les Invalides (Napoleon's tomb), taking a boat along the Seine (Bateau-mouche), and just walking around the beautiful Marais district. My personal favourite, however, was Le Musée Rodin, which was the old house of the famous sculptor Rodin. I loved walking through the tranquil house and gardens, on a sunny day, just looking at all the sculptures.

Finally, we also spent time as a group of 30 pupils (15 English and 15 French), just wandering around Paris in the afternoons. At the end of the trip, this was the part about which everyone felt the saddest – leaving the others behind – because we got on so well, and so everybody cannot wait for them

to come to London in June. Our partners were wonderful, and they thought of many things for us to do. We visited Le Musée d'Orsay, played "cache-cache" (hide and seek) in parks, played lots of football as a group, and just walked around Parisian streets in a hubbub of French and English. However, my favourite memory was a picnic that we had in the Trocadéro Gardens at dusk, looking at the Eiffel Tower. That just felt impossibly Parisian to me!

This trip was unique, and I don't think any of us will ever forget it. Although it was indubitably useful for my French exams, it was so much more than that. Maybe the real French GCSE was the friends we made along the way...





Our Mirthful Board

by Henry Hu (GG)

A surprisingly eventful cooking expedition in the North Pennines

Having selected *Our Mirthful Board* as one of my backup choices for expeditions, with no clue what it had to offer, I kept my expectations low. But once I was on the platform of Euston Station, in our group of 11 soon-to-be chefs led by Mr Au and Mr Tolley, I was more optimistic.

Our amateur kitchen was split into two groups, alternating between preparing meals and doing field activities, with the teachers taking charge of field activities and our head chef, David Atherton, leading our kitchen efforts.

Our first day began with trips to the Bowlees Visitor Centre, where we were shown around the dense woodland, identifying trees by their subtly varying leaves, as well as their tree nursery, and helped to weed a garden. We did some light bird spotting, returning to a fresh meal made by the other group.

The second day was spent on a foraging and bushcraft course with Andy Hall, who taught us the uses and edibility of various foliage. Wood sorrel, which tasted like apple skin, was collected for our lunch salad. Cleavers, a laxative, were not (although certain pupils joked about feeding it to the kitchen group). We were shown Andy's DIY shelter, made of thick branches, where he fried some herb bennet after lighting a fire.

Back in the kitchen, a sharp-eyed Jemil Khairov (GG) picked out six pieces of enchanter's nightshade from the salad, after noticing subtle differences in the inedible and potentially toxic plant's leaf structure.

Our last day was on Cannerheugh Farm, learning about regenerative farming from Nic and Paul Renison. One of the first things we were shown

was "how to get rid of a body", otherwise known as the pig pen. We were told about the healthier and relatively stress-free lives of organically farmed pigs, and the effect on taste and quality. We walked past a herd of similarly organic and curious cattle, approaching us at barely arm's length. We were given a taste of the results of organic farming in the form of a ribeye steak that we shared.

Having learned not only about cooking but also woodland preservation, foraging, and regenerative farming, while capturing our experiences with my camera, I returned to Euston Station having enjoyed each moment of the expedition, which I would highly recommend to any potential participants next year.



Lower School Expeditions





TRIPS



STATION



ATHLETIC SPORTS DAY

Jogging Sports Day 2023 Memories

Frigid, windy, and damp conditions on Sports Day seem to be another school tradition, with April 2023 being no exception. Despite this (and the fact that people remain unsure whether Sports Day better serves as a celebration of physical prowess, or as a reminder that exams are on the horizon), this year's competition was certainly one for the archives.

Congratulations are in order to Busby's, who proved they are indeed deserving of the (otherwise ostentatious) "sportiest house" banner hanging in their yard. Rigaud's just beat Hakluyt's for 2nd, while College and Purcell's propped up the bottom of the table. If not for the fact they had front row tickets to the Coronation, College may have garnered sympathy for their inaugural loss as they only had two non-injured girls not sitting exams able to participate. Purcell's confirmed their purple-obsessed status with matching lilac bandanas, violet face paint and lavender flags: initially mocked for winning their self-established House Spirit competition, the laughs quickly turned to envy when the doughnut prize was revealed.

Individual honourable mentions include Toby Postlewhite (HH), winning the 200m in 27.4s, Maxwell Booth (LL), clinching gold with his clearing of the high jump at 1.55m, victorious Lillie Hu (LL), outspringing gazelles with a long jump of 4.06m, and Matthew Kembal (RR), who set a new 100m record of 11.3s.

Similarly, the 2022-23 monitorial body will be remembered as the legends who, throughout the Alternative Events programme, added "physical activity" to the connotations of "Sports Day" for the half of the school usually exempt. They did very well not to "detract from the seriousness of traditional sports": only a negligible few missed their official events because they were too busy watching the staff tug-of-war team crush various Houses in the field. The addition of the nostalgic egg and spoon, sack, and three-legged races was highly successful and is sure to return next year. No time like the present to boil an egg and start practising!

Our gratitude extends to Mr Wurr, his staff helpers and House Officials for organising the event, Mr Edlin for timing, Mr Chapman, whose excellent spreadsheet skills afforded us live updates of the results, and Debashish Biswas (AHH 1996-2001), who gave up his afternoon to start all the races. I'd like to give a final well done to all participants and spectators who showed up with an umbrella – you were undoubtedly the real winners, and don't forget them next year!

Kristina Akova (PP)

BRIDGE

We're back, baby! Last year's success continues, with several tables playing most weeks and a range of competitions entered over the year. Arya Salukhe (MM) has done an incredible job rallying the troops and spreading the word.

The EBU's Inter-Schools League was established as an online way for schools to compete head-to-head. After starting in division 2 last summer, our A team has worked its way up to champions of division 1B and will hopefully compete for the Lord's Trophy next year. We started entering a B team in the Lent term which comfortably beat every opponent in division 2C.

The Richard Challoner School hosted the Surrey Schools Cup this year and we brought two teams for the main Cup and one for the Salver. At the halfway stage our C team looked like they might defend our Salver title, but things slipped away later in the event. As is Westminster tradition, the B team beat the A team by one place.

Loughborough Grammar School welcomed us in March for the greatest event in the calendar – the Young Bridge Challenge. Five pairs travelled, with two full Westminster teams and another pair joining forces with two pupils from other schools. Our teams got off to a blistering start, with all three in the top six teams (of 18) after the first round.

Our A team beat the best team in the country in round two but sadly things turned against them, and they found themselves dropping outside the top four just as the cut-off for the semi-finals was made. The remaining two rounds also went against them and they finished in 5th place. Of course, the B team finished 4th.

The C team (Lida Zhu (DD) and Joshua Bornstein-Sturge (MM)) enjoyed a mixed bag of results but finished as the highest placed team not from a single school, winning the Harry Scully Trophy. This is the first time Westminster has won that trophy as it is typically taken home by the England Youth Bridge Team players – a rare treat!

Internally we have been able to return to the normal House Bridge format, with one event each term. Toby McConnell (MM) and Jed Cohen (HH) won the first two events, driving their Houses firmly into the lead before Lida Zhu and Joshua Bornstein-Sturge finished things off in April to claim the trophy for Milne's.

Bridge ties were awarded to Annant Khullar (PP), Eva Main (DD), George Zhou (CC), Jed Cohen, Toby McConnell, Lida Zhu, and Joshua Bornstein-Sturge for their efforts in representing the School competitively.

Rob Wagner

CHESS

Westminster certainly appears to be a microcosm of the greater chess boom which is taking the global community by storm. Regardless of how positive this newfound fanaticism may be (it is definitely superior to Clash Royale, at least), I am certain, on the back of the school's first ever title at the National Schools' Chess Championships – etched until the end of time onto the noble history books of Wikipedia – that we have capitalised on this explosion of enthusiasm. One only needs to look to the breadth of chess involvement at Westminster: just last year, the Westminster B team was dispatched dismally in the qualifiers; now, we have a B and C team which both made it through, and the B team kept winning until they were knocked out in the very last match before Nationals. The development is meteoric. The school A team, which cruised to the 2022-23 National Finals, has progressed too. Our very own captain Remy Rushbrooke (PP) is knocking emphatically on the door of a FIDE (the International Chess Federation) title. I myself, in similar robust spirit, have somehow managed to become twice the player I once was, and, as I like to hyperbolise, am eating Candidate Masters for breakfast at rapidplay events now. The whole team regularly sweeps up victories against 2000's [Experts].

If we won the National title last year, this year our chess is only stronger. While that may also be true for our opposition, I know we will welcome the challenge and fight to the end to defend our title. So, slowly but surely with the might of new pupil-led training programs for the Lower School, a self-sufficient dynasty is burgeoning, built on a simple shared recreational enjoyment – but with limitless aspirations.

Han-Sen Choong (CC)

THE DESERT SPRINGS CRICKET TOUR (ALMERÍA, SPAIN)

Four intense, thrilling days of fast-paced, high-octane cricket in the Spanish heat is exactly what our 1st XI needed, after the pandemic robbed us of multiple touring opportunities. “A chance to live and breathe cricket” is what it was advertised as, and rightly so – five 100-ball matches, daily practice sessions in and out of the nets, and routine meetings to discuss bowling plans, batting strategy and fielding positions meant that our bodies and minds were given entirely to cricket. What more could a squad of 13 cricket-enthusiasts ask for?

Captained by Dhruv Gupta (AHH) and under the guidance of Master i/c, Mr Kershner and 1st XI coach, K. Ranasinghe, the team embarked on a four-team round-robin competition, with 20 five-ball overs in each innings. After a shaky start, losing to Shenfield High School narrowly and The Canterbury Academy less narrowly despite runs from Aidan Hincks (PP),

the 1st XI rebounded powerfully to a 21-run win over the Rajasthan Royals Academy, in which economical bowling from Rohil Bhattad (AHH) and four wickets for D. Gupta (contributing to his ten wickets overall – the highest in the tournament) helped seal the victory, after runs from Arran Duguid (HH) and Aryan Bagade (AHH) got us off to a good start.

Finishing in 3rd place after the group stages meant we had to play Shenfield again in the semi-finals. After Ayaan Diddee (HH) got their star batsman out cheaply, we restricted them to a lower total than the first game, but despite this, and runs from Hincks again, we fell just short of our target. We did manage to beat the Rajasthan Royals again, in the 3rd place play-off, helped by four wickets from Jai Gupta (LL) – earning him the nickname “The Caught-and-Bowled Machine” – and a calm cut for four by Prakrith Rao (CC) to take us home and end on a high.

Outside of the cricket, there were many additional activities and experiences on offer. Desert Springs is built on a huge golf course, which piqued the interest of some of the team. A chance to take an ice bath under the guidance of Mr Ireland after strenuous work during the day was a new experience, as was playing Kabaddi, a sport popular in the Indian subcontinent, on the beach volleyball sand. More classically, playing card games like poker and watching *Brooklyn-99* proved to be a popular pastime between matches or training.

The highlight of the tour for me was the fact that all the matches were live-streamed in a professional fashion with live score updates and full scorecards at the end of the matches, for family and friends to watch – it truly made us feel like an international team!

Dhruv Gupta (AHH)





CRICKET 1ST XI

1st XI Record 2023

Played: 12

Won: 5 / Drawn: 1 / Lost: 6

LSCA U19 Cup

Alley's 131-6, 1st XI 116

100 Ball Tournament (Desert Springs)

Shenfield HS 138-5, 1st XI 97-6

Canterbury College 175-4, 1st XI 66-7

1st XI 99-7, Rajasthan Royals Academy 78

Shenfield HS 124-6, 1st XI 101

Rajasthan Royals Academy 67, 1st XI 70-8

Other matches

Aldenham 88-8, 1st XI 90-1

Chigwell 42, 1st XI 43-2

1st XI 116, John Lyon 117-1

St Benedict's, Ealing 154-9, 1st XI 158-5

MCC 228-5, 1st XI 160-7

Charterhouse 133, 1st XI 70

After a season of delightful normality in 2022, following hard on the heels of Covid disruption, it was a case of absolute abnormality for Westminster cricket in 2023. Major works carried out to Vincent Square meant no middle practices, no home ground for fixtures and every game – of a truncated season – had to be played away. Whilst nets could be used up Fields, that was all, which meant much-limited training facilities with drastic reductions to fielding practice options.

In such circumstances, any pre-season would have to be conducted elsewhere. Consequently, a worthwhile and successful tour to Desert Springs in Almería, Spain was arranged, details of which are to be found elsewhere in this magazine.

Upon return to the UK, the earlier beginning of Public Examinations allowed for just one match before at least half of the team became unavailable due to revision commitments. That match was a thumping nine wicket win away

to Aldenham, where a polished bowling and fielding performance restricted the opposition and allowed Aidan Hincks (PP, 48* & 2-16) to maintain his good all-round form from the tour.

It was two wins from two as Chigwell were next dispatched unceremoniously on their home turf. Once again, wickets were shared around as the opposition were dismissed cheaply, allowing the captain, Sachin Lavender (AHH, 31*) to finish the match in double-quick time. So quickly in fact that, with Chigwell's permission, we were able to grab some invaluable fielding practice time whilst awaiting the conclusion of the other matches.

This meant revenge had been taken upon two schools that had beaten us emphatically in 2022. However, we proceeded then to lose to two schools whom we had beaten conclusively last year. Firstly, we travelled to Alley's in a match which doubled up as the London Schools' U19 Cup quarter-final. Having had the opposition on the ropes, thanks to an excellent spell by Dhruv Gupta



(AHH, 3-15), we let them off the hook and allowed a fightback which posted a total that was to prove beyond us, in spite of the best efforts of Hincks (35) and Aryan Bagade (AHH, 28). This was very disappointing as we were going for three LSCA U19 Cup wins in a row.

After a three-week hiatus, defeat was even more resounding for a weakened line-up away to John Lyon and one wondered if the season was about to go off the rails. However, that great word “bouncebackability” reared its head again away to St. Benedict’s a fortnight later when a fit again Jamie Feldman (WW, 4-14) ripped the heart out of the opposition’s batting. He was supported ably by spin from Nirvan Ramesh (MM, 2-20) and pace from Rohil Bhattad (AHH, 2-32), and then Jai Gupta (LL, 67*), helped by Lavender (30) and Bagade (22), was up to the task with the bat.

The last two matches saw a shift away from short formats to declaration cricket against traditionally our two toughest opponents, the MCC and Charterhouse. In both games, we worked hard and played very well to get into winning positions and in both we then played with trepidation and our victory chances disappeared in a puff of hesitancy.

Against a super-strong MCC batting line-up at Barnes CC, excellent first session bowling prevented them getting away from us, and then a superb partnership between the “two Aidans”, Brooke (LL, 70) and Hincks (49) set up

an exciting chase only to falter in the last hour and end up blocking out for a draw.

To win away at Charterhouse is a rarity, not achieved by a Westminster 1st XI since 1986, but it looked as if the ghost would be laid to rest as the Carthusians were bowled out thanks to top efforts from Hincks (3-24), Ramesh (2-38) and U14, Ayaan Diddee (HH, 3-7). At 35-1, just before tea, Westminster were in control but were then derailed by tentative batting and an excellent opposition fightback, and the opportunity was missed.

A disappointing way then to end what had been undoubtedly a promising season with a very young side that will all return for at least another year, barring the captain, Lavender, who finishes his four years – five but for Covid – in the 1st XI with much of which to be proud. Hincks was the Player of the Year, contributing significantly with bat (243 runs @ 22.09) and ball (13 wickets @ 18.23), closely followed in the all-rounder stakes by J. Gupta (153 runs @ 17 and 9 wickets @ 19.33) who was Most Improved Player. The bowling department was indubitably stronger than the batting and was led by D. Gupta (17 wickets @ 11.82) with important contributions from Diddee (11 wickets @ 16.09), Ramesh (7 wickets @ 21.29), Bhattad (7 wickets @ 22.43) & Feldman (7 wickets @ 15). For the team to kick on next year, the batsmen will need to learn to convert cameo innings into significant contributions. There are several capable of doing this, including Bagade, Brooke and the talented U14, Arran Duguid (HH), who showed great skill also with the wicketkeeping gloves alongside Aryaman Gupta (PP).

Finally, I would like to thank all the staff and coaches connected with Cricket Station for their efforts throughout a challenging year, and especially, Keerthi Ranasinghe for his expertise and enthusiasm as 1st XI coach. Thank you too, for their devoted support, to the parents who were most welcome spectators and supporters on our travels.

Roll on 2024 and the return to our spiritual home up Fields!

James Kershen
Master i/c Cricket

CRICKET 2ND XI

With the grass of Vincent Square out of action, the 2nd XI spent every Tuesday and Thursday pounding the concrete of the nets under clear skies and suffocating plane trees. Hours well spent as the seam attack took 17 of the 20 available wickets in matches, led ably by Aditya Gupta (AAH) and Seb Kershen (RR). In contrast, batting in the nets allows a freedom denied once fielders are present – many fell, caught or bowled, trying to heave the ball into next Wednesday. A returning Fayz Khan (HH), unaffected by the net-dominated training, achieved the high score of 40. Despite few regular attendees and fewer matches this was a thoroughly enjoyable season, my thanks to all pupils who played their part.

Matthew Perrins

CRICKET U15

U15 Record 2023

Played: 9

Won: 5 / Lost: 4

The season began with a comfortable win over Alveley's in the ESCA cup, by eight wickets, including notable performances from Arran Duguid (HH) from the U14s alongside Nirvan Ramesh (MM), both back from 1st XI duty, each knocking accomplished 30 plus scores. There followed an unexpected loss to Chigwell, who bowled out the Westminster team for just 74 – only promising batter Aayan Malik (MM) standing tall with a gritty 30. The true highlight of the season came with a fine team performance to beat a very strong Dulwich College side – Aayan Diddee (HH) from the U14s and Duguid again bolstering the team to record a famous victory by seven wickets and spoil their party – as they were due to host the semi-finals and final, and often feature. The Westminster team couldn't quite replicate the outstanding feat in the semi, and lost to a UCS team that simply played better on the day, ending up with the cup that Westminster won last season. The defence of the LSCA cup was also a step too far, as a "home" match on Clapham Common went the way of Ilford County High School despite further runs for Duguid.

A beautiful late May afternoon saw a fine victory on the road at Charterhouse, with Bhuvan Jumani (WW) seeing the team home in style (aided by some of fast bowler Hugo Canning-Jones' (RR) brutal slogging). An equally gorgeous Saturday in June saw a remarkable all-round team effort to chase down 154 in 20 overs at John Lyon, with Jumani again, Gobind Kohli (BB) and newcomer Rohan Varsani (AHH) all excelling with the bat. Wetherby were no match for the spin of Sam Menton (BB) and captain Yadhav Birundhapan (MM) in the penultimate game, before Prakrith Rao's (CC) fine innings of 41 wasn't quite enough to see them home against St Benedict's.

In truth the lack of the Vincent Square grass didn't help preparations, but huge credit to the players for mustering a winning season despite that obstacle, and in particular to the leadership of the captain, Player of the Season Yadhav Birundhapan. His non-stop energy in the field, stylish runs and potent offspin were hugely influential in getting the team results, and when he wasn't running people out he had quite the time of it!

Massive thanks to the other coaches, Marks Mason and Parry, perhaps the more right-leaning political thinkers to contrast my "woke" liberalism off the field(!), but all of us committed to a common goal on it of making sure the cricket was enjoyable and that players had opportunities to develop.

Charlie Ullathorne





CRICKET U14A

Dreaming of Vincent Square

U14A Record 2023

Played: 8
 Won: 4 / Lost: 2
 Walk-over: 1
 Abandoned: 1

Exiled from Vincent Square for the whole season, the intrepid U14 cricketers packed their bags, boarded the bus and, with unfailing enthusiasm, soaked up every ball of a hot and sultry cricket season.

Skipper Toby Postlewhite (HH) led from the front, scoring 290 runs and deservedly winning the Player of the Season award. Albert Sparks (MM) gave all-round support with the bat and behind the stumps. Number three was Arnav Sinha (WW), whose knock of 54 at John Lyon was a fine innings. The talented middle-order of Krishna Agrawal (HH), Jai Khowala (BB) and Gabriel Erasmus (PP) could dig the team out of trouble or hit out as the situation required.

No fewer than four spinners added variety to the attack. Khowala's unique skill of tossing the ball from hand to hand in his run up infuriated coach Buddy Mason, but he proved

remarkably effective, especially at John Lyon (3-10). Shaurya Surana's (AHH) mixture of leg-spin and off-spin bamboozled Charterhouse (3-13), although all were affected that day by a nasty accident when the Charterhouse opening bowler had to go to hospital with a broken arm.

Vivaan Jajodia's (LL) left-arm spin offered control and bite, especially against Chigwell where he took 3-19 and almost achieved a hat-trick. Leo Chatterjee (PP) is potentially the best of them all, with his classical action and control of flight and spin. Alleyn's found this out when he took five wickets against them, two in the As game and, as if by magic, three in the Bs fixture being played on an adjacent pitch.

A strong seam attack was led by Sinha and supported by Agrawal, with his inswinging yorkers. When Ayaan Diddee (HH) was available and Lucian Walker (LL) had recovered from his back injury they could defend most totals. Good fielding, especially by Henry Tamlyn (LL) and Felix Brod (LL) and the class of Arran Duguid (HH) gave the boys an exciting run in the LSCA U14 Cup.

In the first round at Colfe's, Postlewhite's 90 would ultimately be decisive, especially when Sinha's spell of 3-1-4-0

pushed the target even further away. Two good catches by Chatterjee secured a 14-run victory. At Alleyn's the boys were able to avenge a defeat earlier in the season thanks to Duguid's miserly bowling (4-1-6-2) and powerful batting (76). When Agrawal hit the winning boundary, the celebrations could be heard a mile away at a nervous Dulwich College. There, a chanceless 111 not out from Duguid gave Westminster a foot in the final, but a hot day, a fast scoring ground, a magnificent tea and a talented pair of opposition opening batsmen consigned Westminster's hopes to the box marked "What Might Have Been." In a ten-wicket defeat, the only blemish on the Dulwich scorecard was a dead fly, not required to bat at number eight but crushed there between the pages of the scorebook.

Happily, Westminster earned a walk-over against Wetherby to secure a winning season. They had heard of the boys' reputation and were clearly terrified at the prospect of facing them. As kit bags are packed away for the winter, it is right to say well done to all who played for their sportsmanship, skill and team spirit. Thanks also to Mr Anderson and Buddy Mason for their coaching.

Joseph Ireland

CROSS COUNTRY

It's a nonchalantly chilly November afternoon, and the clocks have struck fourteen half an hour ago. You're in St James' Park, just a brief trot from Westminster School, but the land is neither green nor pleasant. Pondwater laps with low sounds by the shore while cars stream down Pall Mall. Tourists fan around Buckingham Palace, jostling each other with selfie-sticks and pricey soft-serve ice cream cones.

Footsteps. Or thunderclaps? Getting louder and louder and LOUDER. Suddenly you see them. Us. Awestruck tourists to the left of us, panting joggers to the right of us, the Westminster brigade charges down the path.

This is the Cross Country team, and I am honoured to be a part of it. Essentially, cross country is running through blistering wind and rain, with merely a skimpy athletics vest and shorts for warmth. It is an endeavour of blood, toil, tears and sweat, engineered for those who delight in self-torture. Given the cornucopia of sports offered at Westminster, including ones unique to private schools like Fives, it is difficult to believe that Cross Country would be anyone's first choice. Yet in Autumn 2019, I made that unlikely decision, convincing myself that I needed better stamina... One week later, I was struggling up the "Hill of Doom" (a mildly steep slope in Green Park).

Despite possibly being the thriftiest Station in the Westminster roster, the staff who run it are incredibly dedicated to the sport and strive to urge all participants towards their fullest potential, with only a dash of tough love on the way. And there are other less obvious benefits to doing cross country in addition to experiencing meteoric improvement in rep times, like receiving morale-boosting high fives from passers-by and acquiring an acute knowledge of the Royal Parks (including optimised routes for tourist photobombing opportunities...).

But cross country has much more than quirky charms – our battalion can be a competitive school team! And, I must say, we have achieved our fair share of decent results. Unlike other sports such as rowing, the number of fixtures is not so taxing upon schoolwork, with about half a dozen spread out across two terms. However, the lower frequency of inter-school races cannot be equated to a lower standard of performance. In the London Schools Cross Country Championship, not only did our Senior Girls and Inter Boys teams finish 2nd and 3rd overall respectively, but three of our runners also qualified for the county team – certainly a barrage of achievements to be proud of!

So, in case you're running out of options when picking your Station, I highly recommend joining our motley crew, or at least putting Cross Country down as a choice. It's truly not as torturous as your peers may pretend, and the feeling of fulfilment billowing in your heart and racing through your veins after a good 50-minute session is incomparable.

It really is.

Mathias Adler (AHH)

CYCLING

It has been another successful and enjoyable year for Westminster Cycling. Under the expert oversight of Mr Botton and help from Dr Durno, (both absolute machines on the bike), Cycling has flourished, moving well beyond its previous niche status as a home for retired/broken rowers, and has gained real traction among those looking for a great workout and great fun, across many year groups.

As ever, the wonderful Mrs Kershen continues to give expert training guidance, cooking up ever more ingenious ways to make even the most sloth-like among us into fine-tuned racing units. This magic is achieved year-round, but with a heavier emphasis during the more inclement winter months, through customised indoor sessions with deceptively innocent names – "A Little Sugar and Spice" for the most lung-busting, quad-blasting 45 minutes of your life, anyone? A wise man on the internet once said, "When your legs get tired, cycle with your heart". This man never experienced a true Mandy H2 session – your legs are tired within the first five minutes, and there's not enough heart in the world to last you the next 40. Nevertheless, the gains from these revered workouts are

undeniable, and Westminster cyclists emerge from the basement of doom, lungs busted and quads blasted, with real aerobic and power improvements that can translate onto the road.

This real-world riding takes place in various places and disciplines, the most common being regular trips to the Stratford and Herne Hill Velodromes. Here, we have an opportunity to hone our bike handling skills in a closed-track environment, with qualified British Cycling coaches always leading the training. These frequent velodrome visits are a great opportunity to ride with friends, and as a collective, and to see exactly how much faster the fitness training has made you. In addition to the velodrome, cyclists have mountain biking and BMX sessions at the Lee Valley VeloPark, which are just flat-out fun. The squad also has several races to train towards, including the Dulwich Inter-School Competition, and a potential upcoming fixture in September. Hugely excitingly, Cycling now has freshly designed go-faster team kit to match our speedy performance!

Finally, a huge thanks to Mr Botton for all the work he does to make Cycling so great, and a shout-out to Dr Durno, Fr Dan and the H2 gym staff for putting up with a group of sweaty teenagers in Lycra so often!

Benjamin Harley (PP)



DANCEFIT

Shut up and Dance!

Dread. This was my feeling towards Station during my first terms at Westminster after I'd obliviously opted to take part in numbingly cold, anaesthetisingly sore Putney River outings ... more commonly known as Water. Come three years later, and Station no longer meant impending doom; it became a word which promised joy. This was thanks to DanceFit.

Whether you are a dedicated DanceFitter (as we have since been for the past two years), or just want to drop in when you feel like letting off some steam after a busy day, there is never a Tuesday or Thursday afternoon when the eager Dancefit attendees in our midst *Don't Feel Like Dancin'*. Our very own *Dancing Queen* Mrs Kershen will not only *Take you Dancing* but manages to combine brilliant choreography with aerobic exercise that enlivens your whole body. The routines are undoubtedly endless fun, but don't be fooled: the fitness element is challenging and will certainly get your heart rate up. In the middle of each session, ten minutes are dedicated to a Pilates-style workout, specifically aimed at training the core and back. Warning: the next morning, you may feel its effects, but in the long term, this is invaluable for pupils who are slouched over desks all day, making the class even more rewarding.

The great music also never fails to get us *In the Mood for Dancing*: from disco classics to samba, K-pop to musicals, you will end up humming along to the infectious tunes all the way back to Yard. You can even request your own songs!

So do you, in the words of Whitney Houston, *Wanna Dance with Somebody? Whether this be Dancing...on the Ceiling...in the dark...or in the moonlight...You should be dancing (yeah!) in DanceFit!*

Baruch MacGregor and Amelia Ross (CC)

FENCING

Fencing at Westminster has flourished this year, with so many pupils eager to take up arms that we've had to install two more pistes to accommodate the hordes. It's been wonderful to see this station imbued with new life after Covid left us depleted for a few years. There is nothing quite like the allure of tactical thinking, agility, physical fitness and, of course, swashbuckling, to draw new Fifth Formers to this art form of a sport, and they've leapt at the opportunity whole-heartedly.

What is particularly great is the mixture of expert coaching, friendly bouts with one's peers and, of course, hard-fought competition with all of our most ancient rivals. Starting the season with a nail-bitingly close defeat against Winchester failed to dampen our spirits, though our next losses to first Harrow, then Eton, did their very best. The season continued with more "learning experiences" against St Paul's and St Benedict's, but, as we were constantly reassured by our ever-optimistic Master-in-Charge, Mr Kennedy – at least we had fun! Our final match of the year came against Charterhouse: this was our opportunity to put into practice all that we had learned and prove ourselves, and our fencers did not disappoint. A decisive 3-0 victory redeemed our school pride, and put us in excellent stead

for the Public Schools' Fencing Championships. This event takes place annually at the Lee Valley Athletics Centre, and offers the chance for pupils to compete individually, a change from being part of a school team. Oliver Downing (PP) made it to the last 16 of the Boys Junior Foil, and Maxime Charbonnier (MM) came 7th in the Boys Mount-Hayes Foil – both tremendously impressive results. However, the main story has to be Alec Brooke (LL), who, for the second year running, won the Boys Senior Épée, in triumphant defiance of the fierce competition.

Although we will miss this year's Remove, the lower years have shown great promise, and I rest assured that the future success of fencing at Westminster is in good hands. This is mainly due to the excellent coaching of Tomek and Leo, who have offered their unceasing support in all matters (whether it be moral, technical, or even nutritional on a long coach journey). They deserve our utmost thanks, as always, for everything they do for us. We are also extremely grateful to Mr Kennedy for his determination to provide us with a rigorous timetable of fixtures, however tough they may have been!

Sebastian Eatwell (CC)





FIVES

An excellent year of Eton Fives

With another chapter in the history of Westminster's Eton Fives squad coming to a close, I'd like to reflect on a great year. Every year group has had some success on the courts, and trips to play against other schools have seen a great number of fun and exciting matches. At St. Olave's, Harrow, Aldenham, and of course Eton, Westminster pairs had some excellent wins, with an U14/15 team winning 3-0 at Mill Hill, a brilliant result! At home, the Abbey club hosted some great games, giving us the chance to compete against adults in a competitive league and to play alongside Old Westminsters. The fact that we finished in the lower half of the table with two wins and five losses does not reflect the quality of our team or the fun we had playing late into dark Thursday nights. Sacha Hunter (CC) deserves mention for dropping his prep and rushing to help the team at very short notice, crucial to our win over the Newbury Club. We competed at tournaments too, sending a team to the Richard Barber Cup at Eton, of Sacha, Kieran Saujani-Lee, and Alex Weiss (GG), who secured the only point we won on that cold January day. Pranav Shah (RR) and Freddie Cowling (MM) went to the National Schools' Championships and played brilliantly to progress through the qualifying round.

Of course, match results and tournament performances are only one part of the Westminster Fives experience and the true joy of Fives at this school is the relaxing fun of spending an afternoon with your friends on the courts by Ashburnham Garden. With the coaching and assistance of Mr Charles and Mr Wiseman, experienced Removes and talented Fifth Formers alike have developed skills, learned new shots and marvelled at the glorious unpredictability of the Eton Fives ball. Indeed it always seems like the new cohort of Fifth Formers is the most talented yet, seeming to quickly find their rhythm in a new sport with ease, and this year is no exception. Credit should be given to Seb Miyake (HH) for giving extra time to help train the younger players. Ask anyone who's seen the team playing and they'll tell you that the future of Westminster Fives can only be great, with the team growing every year and finding strength and enjoyment through our unique sport. I for one can't wait to get back on court and see what next year brings for Westminster's excellent Eton Fives team.

Kieran Saujani-Lee (HH)

FOOTBALL BOYS 1ST XI

If you were to sit down and concoct the most challenging set of circumstances for a school team to endure, then you would probably come up with those the Westminster 1st XI faced during the 2022-23 season. With Vincent Square out of action for the whole year, they had to play every single fixture – 18 in total – away from home, as well as travelling considerable distances for training on sub-standard grass pitches at Tooting and Clapham Commons. All of this while taking on some of the best school football teams in the country. If that wasn't enough, the death of Her Majesty The Queen forced the school back online for a week, giving the season an even more disjointed start.

The season began with an excellent pre-season Tour to Bath offering the squad their best training facilities of the year, and they responded with complete commitment, enthusiasm and endeavour – and no little skill. This was reflected in two fine matches against local club youth teams, the first against Radstock FC in a full-blooded encounter which ended in a 2-0 win thanks to opportunist goals from Sachin Lavender (AHH) and Felix Johnson (MM). The next game at Bath University against Imperial JFC was even more exciting, yo-yoing back and forth before the opposition clinched a thrilling 3-2 win in the last minute – although Westminster deserved better.

The team approached the schools' season with optimism and enthusiasm although gradually this was dimmed by the enormity of the obstacles faced. Nevertheless, they remained competitive in all but two of their matches – against Charterhouse and Harrow, both excellent sides. There were encouraging wins against Harris

FOOTBALL BOYS 1ST XI CONTINUED

Westminster Sixth Form and the 2nd XIs of Winchester and Eton, but all too often home advantage worked in the opposition's favour. The highlight of the season came in the Lent Term match away to local rivals, Latymer Upper: 2-0 down in under 15 minutes, the worst was feared, but Westminster showed their finest qualities to get back into the match before clinching an exhilarating and deserved 3-2 win, courtesy of a brace from Diego Danese (WW).

Looking at the line-up, Billy Jai Campbell (BB) was a reliable ever-present in goal, making numerous fine saves – plus the occasional gaffe. Chris Yang (BB) made the right-back position his own, using his considerable pace to great effect. Mattia Bertone (GG) matured into a capable and competent defender; Kaled Haram (BB) tried hard but wasn't quite able to match his performance levels from the previous year; and U16 Jamie Feldman (WW) showed great promise at both left-back and centre-back despite interruption by injury. Vice-captain Sam Lui (RR) was in perpetual motion as ever, adapting well (and without complaint) to playing out of position at full-back. In midfield, Joaquin Segal (AHH) was a combative and determined holding player, whilst Ralph Renfrew (PP) had a more roving, but still combative, role in front of him. The player of the season and leader from the front was the captain, Alexander Feldman (WW), who matured physically



and mentally into the central midfield berth. Johnson showed great promise as an U16. In the attacking third, Danese, Lavender, Nat Lansing (PP) and Luca van der Lubbe (DD) filled the three front positions with aplomb and endeavour, Danese finishing as top-scorer for the second season running. Ivan Matsnev (RR) forced his way into the starting line-up as a no-nonsense centre-back, whilst Alex Knight (PP) and Elias Gelain-Sohn (LL) both had their contributions cruelly limited by injuries.

It was a difficult and testing season and not at all the way we would have chosen for a large number of the team to complete their school football careers. It is to the squad's undying credit that they bore it all with the

minimum of fuss, staying committed to the cause throughout.

Thanks as ever go to all the parents for their support on our travels, and to all the Football Station staff and coaches for their commitment, help, and support.

Finally, it is farewell and thank you to the 1st XI coach, James Lewis, who is leaving us for Highgate School after 12 years' service to Westminster Football. James has made a significant contribution to raising the standards of the overall Football programme and he will be missed by staff and pupils alike. We thank him for all his efforts, and look forward to seeing him on the circuit.

James Kersten

FOOTBALL BOYS 2ND XI CHAMPIONS!!!!

The team didn't get off to the best start losing their first three games by quite large margins as they had to adjust to a new coach, a new philosophy and no home facilities. However, throughout these games, the quality shone through in glimpses with debutant Owen Stevenson (LL) clearly an excellent new addition, finishing off a lovely team move against Brentwood. Captain Zachary Romeo (RR) helped the team develop a closer understanding and belief, which led to some majestic performances. As confidence increased, the team, spurred on by the form of Michael Chong (DD) and his two crucial goals, managed to win their first two league games of the season with Luca Bavasso (DD) and Matthew Kemball (RR) both scoring late winners.

Returning from the Christmas break the squad had work to do, with a packed schedule as we competed in both the league and cup. The first game back from the break was a cup game against Forest. In what was a tight affair with very little to separate the two teams,

our defence led by Alexei Sandman (LL) and Elliot Bowden (WW) managed to hold out and a late Bavasso penalty won us the game. In the next round of the cup, we drew a strong Mill Hill team, the first half was a back-and-forth affair with both teams scoring three, the highlights being a long-range effort from Thomas Jolly (MM) and a lob from the edge of the box from Amol Chauhan (MM). Mill Hill scored once just after half time and going into the final minutes it looked like the game was over, but Westminster kept seeking out an equaliser, with Romeo winning a late penalty, which Bavasso converted with aplomb. In the final minute, Romeo won another penalty and the usually consistent Bavasso stepped up with a chance to continue the cup run only to blaze his effort over the bar, resulting in a dreaded penalty shootout, which we lost.

Although we were out of the cup, the team still had a chance to win the league having picked up crucial points throughout our league games. It all came down to a final game against

Lancing College where we would win the league with a win. It did not start the way the team wanted, conceding two early goals but this team had shown all season that even when they were down, they were going to keep pushing. Inspired by the addition of Hector Shore (HH), we managed to pull level with ten minutes remaining. As we kept pushing for the winner the ball fell to Marc Lowth (HH) in the box and he forced it home to give Westminster the lead. With very little time left Lancing kept pushing and would have scored but for the heroics of Miles Hitchcock (BB) who had shown his quality time and time again. As the final whistle went it was official that this team was the first senior team to ever win their League in Westminster's history.

Hitchcock was awarded the Players' Player of the Season, as well as the Golden Glove, while Romeo won the Golden Boot for his eight goals.

Zachary Romeo (RR) and Marwan Mikdadi



FOOTBALL BOYS 3RD XI

This season has been a mixed bag for the 3rd XI, filled with moments of elation and despair. Despite some skilful dribbling from the mini-machine Isaac Jung (HH), we suffered a close 0-1 defeat at Brentwood. If only he'd look up for a pass every once in a while. Encouraged by our previous performance, hopes were high for the Charterhouse game, which saw Francesco Enserro (WW) score from an outstanding free kick. The game was fiercely contested, and we showed a persistent drive for the edge over Charterhouse, but sadly went home empty-handed as they managed to settle the score at 2-3 in the dying moments of the game.

Searching for a win, we trekked over to Winchester with hopeful anticipation – a dream that was shortly crushed after a 0-3 loss, but not without a glorious strike from Mattias Shuper (BB) sending the ball from the halfway line, narrowly missing the Winchester net. Despite this loss, Giovanni Miele-Norton (LL) showed composure throughout, saving countless shots from the Winchester offence – this display of bravery extended into the Eton game, where he stomached a powerful shot to the lower quadrant, enduring the pain in a professional manner.

Harrow's brawny players dwarfed even the Herculean Maathavan Tharumarasa (WW) – not that it mattered, however, as he confidently threw his body across the net to make a heroic goal-line clearance. Tate Ford (LL) similarly appeared unfazed by the epic proportions of the opposition, frequently seen dancing through the midfield to produce a plethora of hopeful moments. Despite the 2-4 loss, however, nobody could have foreseen what Ishaan Sheridan (WW) was cooking up ahead of the Latymer game. Fired up by Mr Smith's intense afternoon training sessions for the dedicated 3rd XI, the semi-professional athlete managed to secure a hat-trick against a powerless Latymer defence, his appetite supplemented by Max Rozenfeld's (GG) relentless passes upfield. Will Wickham (DD) must have also capitalised fully on Mr Smith's nuggets of wisdom, scoring himself a hat trick too. Self-proclaimed captain Philo Earle (GG) was deserving of such a title for this game – acting not only as the glue between the offence and defence but ensuring a seamless onslaught of strikes past the Latymer keeper. Meanwhile, the nimble and light-footed Remy Rushbrooke (PP) made numerous clearances, ensuring that a Latymer victory was far out of reach. Ultimately, our win appeared to us in a stunning 9-2 victory: something which I doubt many will forget.

Highgate acted as the final hurdle in this roller-coaster of a season. Adam Hepburne-Scott (DD) and Louis Spaargaren (RR) made some fantastic efforts on the right side, but Highgate were able to capitalise on a tired midfield later in the game. The ever-charismatic Noaki Aso (PP) rallied multiple offensive attempts, but these could not be converted into goals, resulting in an 0-2 defeat. As an outgoing Remove pupil, it has been a pleasure playing for the 3rd XI this year and I wish the best of luck to them in the next season.

Alex Macklin (WW)

FOOTBALL BOYS U16A

The U16a's season this year was a rollercoaster, balanced with ups and downs, victories and losses, but was ultimately a season to be proud of.

We began the year with an unsatisfying draw at Brentwood where the pinks were unlucky to only salvage a single point from 80 minutes in which Hector Shore (HH) scored our first goal of the season, calmly converting a penalty from the spot.

We went on to endure a period of sporadic performances yet despite suffering heavy defeats from Winchester and Harrow and numerous injuries to key members of our squad, we only grew stronger and through the guidance of our skipper Shore who glued the team together, we were able to secure valuable results against strong teams such as Latymer and Aldenham. Although we suffered a cruel defeat at Eton in a harsh 3-1 loss, we continued to progress as a team and soon were into our stride.

Our battle against Charterhouse was one of grit, endurance and determination and was likely our best performance of the season. Despite being 2-0 down at half time, we were able to fight back and by the 70th minute we were locked in a 2-2 stalemate. Yet Julius Wentrup (WW) changed this dynamic and gave Westminster a well-deserved win, boosted by songs and chants on the hour-long coach journey back home. Our team ended the season on a high as we came from behind and triumphed against Highgate in a 2-1 victory, perhaps sealing our legacy in the Westminster hall of fame!

Ultimately, this gratifying season was only made possible due to the genius of our coach Rui who, using his formation flashcards and unique drills, was able to grow our squad into a formidable force. Special thanks also goes to Mr Brown who supported us tirelessly and led us through this turbulent season.

Alexander Ross (LL)
and Kieran Kwa (LL)



U16A



U15 V BRENTWOOD

FOOTBALL BOYS U15A

Our football doesn't speak, it talks. With Mr Jaemie Gale and Mr Dyfan Coles at the helm, our season promised to be an exciting one.

Matches came in thick and fast. First was an exciting ISFA cup tie against a fierce Kew House side with an almost unassailable defence. Both sides fought relentlessly and the match was finely poised going into extra time, thanks to goals from Lakshikan Hemashabeshan (DD) and Adam Galal (AHH). With two minutes to go, the "General" Alfred Jewell (MM) slotted the ball in on the volley, from a delectable cross given by Rohan Varsani (AHH). This marked the start of a memorable adventure. What followed was a string of mixed results, but the morale sustained itself regardless. Our performances were epitomised by our notable win against the Latymer School, a narrow 2-1 victory which saw a free-flowing attack with a disciplined defence, led by Aayan Malik (MM). Plagues of injuries swept through our team and new faces were introduced, whilst others said goodbye.

Although results weren't in our favour, we travelled away and caused upsets on several occasions; in fact, we thrived under the label of being the "underdogs". High intensity football, with moments of magic from the front four, dragged us across the line in some instances. Our talismanic centre-forward Hemashabeshan led the line, firing goal after goal across the season, netting 13 in 11 appearances, but this is not to ignore the dynamic duo of Galal and Varsani, who wove tapestries of finesse as they broke down seemingly impenetrable defences. Our midfield remained consistent throughout the season, characterised by the grit and energy of Bruno Zheng (CC), our regista Nobuki Smolders (AHH) and crucially the maestro-like performances of our trequartista Jewell. Our defence was marshalled by our mainstays, Malik and Marc Bavasso (DD). Fullbacks Fergus Farrell (BB) and Sid Gujrani (AHH) provided defensive stability and acted as attacking outlooks. Special mentions have to be given to Ludovic de la Mare (GG), Giacomo Fillipi (RR), and Eddie Kelsey (AHH) who dutifully stepped in when needed.

In all seriousness, this might just be the season of seasons. Sure, the score lines and defeats don't seem to reflect our unwavering fight, but we still managed to maintain a morale reminiscent of Sir Alex Ferguson's Manchester United.

An ever-changing squad but a philosophy engrained into the minds of each and every single player.

Heart. Sacrifice. Virtue. The Golden Age of Westminster football.

Alfred Jewell (MM) and Lakshikan Hemashabeshan (DD)

FOOTBALL BOYS U14A

This year in trainings, we focused on drills to improve different aspects of our game, such as counter attacking, and defending a counter attack. These were enjoyable, and we implemented them in our games. We had the misfortune of having to travel to Tooting every week for training, and not having the size to compete with other teams. Nevertheless, we still prevailed against the odds on numerous occasions.

For our first game of the season, we were up against a team in the year above. We were unfortunate not to score in the first half, and an unlucky deflection off Pietro Greco (BB) in the beginning of the second half put us down. However, we did not give up, and a through ball from George Jolly (MM) found Max Lui who slotted it away, ending the game in a draw. On another occasion, we travelled to Highgate for a game we were told was unwinnable. We fought from kick off, scoring goal after goal. The game finished 8-1, with Pietro, Toby Postlewhite (HH), Anton Vlasev (WW) and Nicky Greco (GG) scoring.

Whitgift was another seemingly impossible game, as pictures of Jamal Musiala overlooked our pitch, but we created chances and converted enough to get the win, with Toby, Pietro and Anton all getting on the score sheet. Our last win came against UCS, who thought they had us on the ropes because we had a completely pink kit. However, after Jolly drew a penalty, which Toby scored, they were rattled. The tables had turned and they began to understand what we had been struggling with the whole season. We quickly doubled our lead, after a through ball from Max found Toby in the box. This was cut down to one goal after we gave away an unnecessary penalty. We kept up the pressure and our hard work paid off. We ended the game winning 3-1, with Toby scoring a hattrick.

Of course, we had unlucky losses against the likes of Eton, where we should have scored multiple times in the first half, and Harrow, where we struggled against the speed of their winger. We finished the season on a high, with two of our wins coming in our last two fixtures. Our top scorer was Toby, with ten goals, and our top assister was Max, with six.

Max Lui (RR)



GIRLS' FOOTBALL

You haven't known the triumphs and defeats, the epic highs and lows, of (girls') high school football.

The Girls' 1st XI Football season began with a mix of apprehension and excitement. Fresh-faced newcomers from the Sixth Form and a few doddering Removes, worn down from a string of losses last year, gathered to face our first match. Despite only having had one practice together, the team worked together like we had been playing with each other for years, and a realisation passed through the team that victory was not a distant goal but the one right in front of us. This was the spirit that permeated the entire season, and that first match finished 1-1; a promising result of what was to come.

The doe-eyed optimism of the Sixth Form immediately brought the team back to life: the Remove were sprung back into action, made young again, and Adanna Ezenwa (WW), a star player from last season, was inspired to re-join the team. As the season progressed, each match brought to light new talent displayed all throughout attack, midfield and defence, which came together in various victories, the greatest being a 5-0 win over Harris Westminster, with Tara Mottahedan (MM), scoring a hat trick. But perhaps the biggest proof of our improvement is the fact that upon our return to Charterhouse (our centuries' old rival) for a tournament in the spring, we easily placed higher than them despite having lost to them in the autumn.

Truly what was special about this team was the unwavering support that the girls displayed for each other on and off the pitch. Our constant enthusiasm meant that we had a penchant for last minute goals, once securing a tie by scoring two goals in the last three minutes of a 40-minute game. We were louder and more supportive of each other than any other team we came across, with each goal celebrated with screaming, hugging, jumping up and down – even the games we lost everyone would be smiling, just happy to have been playing football, with copious amounts of early 2000s music played in the locker room and on the bus back with, of course, lots of singing. In the end we proved that a successful season is not about always winning but having a team that believes in and are friends with each other. I, for one, believe that the girls' football team has only great things to come.

Ava Winter (AHH)

GOLF

Throughout the Play and Lent terms, we were very lucky to be able to go to Dulwich & Sydenham Golf Club every Tuesday and Thursday for Golf station. It is a fantastic facility, which offers us the opportunity to use the putting green outside the clubhouse, the simulator, with a coach always on hand to help us improve our swings, and even play a few holes when the weather permits. This gives us a great chance to spend two hours a week getting outside and practicing all of the various facets of golf that make it such an enjoyable, and difficult, game.

This year we had a good turnout for Golf station, with Donnacha Doyle (GG) and Rohan Dasgupta (GG) in the Upper Shell joining us, as well as Kamran Ivayoo (LL), Alexander Lee (PP), Nicholas Egstrand (AHH) in the Lower Shell. We were also lucky enough to play some fixtures, allowing us to meet new golfers from other schools and play some great courses in London. Jamie Feldman (WW), Charlie Bach (BB), Jijith Thukaram (WW), Alfie Jewell (MM) and Andreas Metzger (DD) all took part. Perhaps the highlight of these was the match against the Old Westminsters, in which we emerged victorious in a tight match, where two of the three matches ended up all square. Fortunately, Andreas and Mr Ullathorne were able to clinch their match to bring home the win.

Another high point of the season was House Golf, in which we play off scratch for the smallest, but most prestigious trophy in the school! Xander Berridge won in dramatic fashion, after a putt-off against Andreas Metzger on the practice green outside the clubhouse at Dulwich, after being tied at +4 through six holes – a first in House Golf history.

A big thank you must go to Mr Ullathorne for running the station as well as taking us to and organising the various fixtures throughout the year, Dr Witney for taking us on Thursdays, and the coaches at Dulwich, Adam and Ben, for helping us improve our games throughout the year.

Jai Gupta (LL) and Xander Berridge (MM)



HOCKEY 1ST XI

Westminster, despite all of its success as an academic school has, as some might say, struggled in the department of sporting success. Yet the 2022-23 hockey season has been a triumph, with the 1st XI beating the best 3rd and 4th XIs that public schools across the country could provide.

A win is a win though! Both U16s and the 1st XIs have gone from strength to strength through rigorous training twice a week, guided by the fantastic coaching of Mr Anderson, Ms Wagstaff, Mr Collier and Mr Eburne. A key focus of training has been increasing communication and making sure we spread out across the pitch. Whilst there is always still room for improvement, the progress we made this season was certainly notable and I'm sure the rest of the team would agree that we have developed skills which were absent in the beginning.

These sessions take place on Battersea Park's cutting edge astroturf, however every fixture we've played has included some form of exceptionally long bus ride to the outskirts of London. Having lost last year's world-class Remove, it was a challenge to see who would step up to the plate, yet this year's 1st XI has been peppered with generational talents such as top passer Nikhil Sarath Kumar (DD) and top scorer Andrei Piterbarg (DD). With such outstanding players and brilliant teamwork, which has been developed through the season, the 1st XI have achieved some



great results on the road against Eton (3-0), Merchant Taylors' 3rd XI (3-0) and Merchant Taylors' 2nd XI (3-0). Which way the game against UCS went can remain a puzzle for the reader to solve. While teamwork is extremely important as to the direction games can go, the link between players and coaches is also a big factor, with the likes of Alex Kolushev (PP) being exemplary in this aspect – having helped to create a positive atmosphere in training sessions.

Hockey station appeared rather daunting at first due to the fact that our fixtures were always away and often against some intimidating players. However, over the year we have grown to enjoy hockey very much and would

encourage anyone thinking of joining to just go for it! There's only one team for Sixth Form, which is useful since now we get to claim that we were in the Westminster 1st XI for hockey despite the fact our skills are somewhat dubious. The training provides an excellent opportunity for exercise and the matches themselves are always done in good spirit.

Hopefully next season will prove even more promising, and it would be wonderful to see some new faces. As we say, everyone is welcome even if you've not picked up a hockey stick in your life!

**Molly Hunt (MM)
and Laurence Hartnell (GG)**

HOCKEY U16

U16 Westminster Hockey had an eventful year with new faces joining the team. Despite some defeats, the group has showed determination and learned from their mistakes. The greatest victory of the year was undoubtedly the arrival of new Westminster hockey shirts, which brought a sense of focus and determination to the team as each player donned the striking colours of the school.

Training is the perfect blend of entertainment and exercise. Mr Edlin's Double-L warmup, the backstory of which is unbeknownst to all (presumably even Mr Edlin himself) with metaphorical polystyrene and ping-pong balls, never failed to warm sluggish joints that struggled against the freezing cold. Preparing for matches, the squad improved with the help of many a training match, but crucially it helped to uncover the power of working as a team.

The season started with a defeat to UCS and a nail-biting match against Merchant Taylors', a close rival to the school. The team showed some promise throughout the year with rock-solid defence and standout performances from players like Arnav Sinha (WW) and Daniel Yu, with steadfast support from goalkeepers Alexander Pang and Ivan Rakity (DD).

Knocked down by losses to Eton and Harrow, the team showed significant mental resilience, and Prakrith Rao (CC) scored the team's first goal of the season. The team's performance improved in subsequent matches against John Lyon and Merchant Taylors', with players like Alexandre Campant (CC), Sacha Hunter (CC) and Prakrith making significant contributions.

Kitai Hadaway-Andrae (DD) and Timo Birke (GG) also made resounding improvements throughout the year, with Kitai even scoring the winning penalty in the shootout in a training game at the end of the season with a dazzling reverse-stick flick that left the goalkeeper in awe.

Needless to say, this season has been eventful, each team member evolving into skilful and proficient players. The season ended on an optimistic note, and we look forward to the future of Westminster Hockey.

Alexander Pang (CC) and Daniel Yu (CC)



JUDO

Something magical happens when the judo player steps onto the mat. It transforms the mind – focuses the energy and enables the practitioner to access all their inner strength. The rallying cry from Paul Ajala, our superb coach, is encouraging and philosophical: “never think or act like a victim” he cries out – “or you will become one”. It’s a truth that permeates all the martial arts – we are our thoughts – through the rituals and practises we grow physically and mentally. Judo at Westminster has never been better – the spirit of camaraderie and team pervade the dojo with exuberance and sweat: effort and celebration entwined. The pupils have passed their gradings; enjoyed battles with each other and against Harrow School, found their way, fought through the fatigue and emerged triumphant in their souls. Their skills are abundant and the commitment unwavering. Sensei Paul has given them the tools, and they have responded with immense resolve. Larry Stevenson has returned for some guest sessions and his phenomenal charismatic presence is always rewarding. Darius Pham (AHH) has led the team as Captain – a nimble and able Judo-ka, who now passes the baton to Jonathan Wynne-Baerwald (MM). It is true to say that for all our Judo team their minds have been made strong, so too their bodies and their instincts have been sharpened. Judo is an education in itself: through its peculiar practises, akin to human origami, the eyes turn inwards to find ‘the way’. A brilliant year. Oos!

Simon Crow



LAWN BOWLS

The WSLBC (Westminster School Lawn Bowls Club) is still in its infancy, this summer marked only its seventh year. I was deputising for Dr Walsh who was on sabbatical and couldn't believe that a sport such as bowls was not a long standing Westminster tradition. Those who attended were serious about the game, even during examination season, Remove stalwarts such as Benjamin Heyes (LL), William Borrie (DD) and Alexandre Guilloteau (HH) regularly attended alongside Sixth Form freshers. We'd tube it down to Putney Bridge and walk along the river to The Winnington Club. Starting at 2.15pm we'd often play until 5.00pm and were treated to cold squash during play and ice cream post play. Often playing in pairs, this meant strategic teamwork was at the centre of game play, although come the final week of term it was time for the end of season singles championship. This year Benjamin Heyes emerged victorious. After a tightly contested semi-final against Victor Broun (GG), Spike McNulty (BB), who clawed back a six love deficit was to be Benjamin's opponent in the final. Six ends were played and Benjamin run out a comfortable winner, using his experience and forehand to tie up the jack. During the off season, we are busy getting a WSLBC shirt readied and there will also be an additional championship next year: OWW vs Westminster.

Jim Allchin

NETBALL

Hopes were high for the 2022-23 season, with exciting new recruits joining the established lethal attack quad of Chelsea Cresswell (LL) / Zoe Zouridaki (WW) / Sylvie Pearson / Laetitia Sanai (DD) and formidable defensive trio Renata Reynolds (MM) / Farrah Gowar (RR) / Thea McMenamin (HH). Early success merited sports bulletin mentions and dreams of tournament glory. We chalked up double figure margins against Harris, Queensgate, Francis Holland and CLSG and scored a huge 253 goals over the season as a whole. While we were almost always a match for opposition on an individual level, when we faltered it was usually because the time we spent playing as a team was measured in months rather than the opposition's six or seven years – and when we made the mistake of choosing to play in pink bibs over black. The crucial importance of netball to Westminster Sport was underlined by it being one of the few sports allowed to carry on training at Vincent Square, and we made the most of the opportunity, building fitness levels to ultra through the running of relentless suicides at each and every training session. At an end-of-season tournament our careful pre-match preparation was derailed by a tube strike and the consequent very long minibus journey to Hammersmith which tested our ability to adjust our gameplan under pressure. House Netball was the usual popular event, with a close final being won (again) by Liddell's, and the outcome in the Remove Girls vs Boys was the customary victory, with 21-9 an unarguable margin.

For the driving, for the training, and for his very competitive playing style when called upon, we heartily thank Mr Perrins, and we are grateful also to Ms Iida and Ms Hewes for their support.

Sylvie Pearson (CC)



SHOOTING

Westminster School Rifle Club has been a hive of activity this year. We competed in several exciting head-to-head matches against university clubs from all over the country including both Oxford University and Imperial College Rifle Clubs. Competitions at Bisley were also very entertaining and invigorating. New and experienced members alike were able to get a taste for participation in the club, including a great number from the Lower School. The importance of younger pupils participating cannot be emphasised enough, as it takes time to build the skills needed for shooting, and the members joining this year will doubtless go on to expand and improve upon the club I am leaving behind. We continue to run our Lower School Expeditions to Bisley in the Election and Play terms, and in the Lent term, we took our first group of Lower School pupils on a full-bore rifle away-day to Bisley as well. Hopefully, we will be able to offer this day-trip experience to Upper School pupils in the near future.

Many new members earned rifle ties this year, with some receiving Pinks ties for participation in matches. The club continues to be a great community that I am so happy to be a part of. Being Captain has been at the very heart of my time in the Remove and I've taken great pride in seeing it grow.

In addition to matches outside of school, we also had a fierce competition for House Shooting this year, with Ashburnham narrowly beating the Busby's team to win the trophy – Mai Noubir and Maria Geynish truly fought for their title as champions. Finally, I owe many thanks to my vice-captain George Wormald (RR) for helping me throughout the year, and to Mr Hendriks for being an amazing coach to all the people who love this sport at Westminster.

Jamie Berry (BB)



STATION



GIRLS' WATER

After what seemed like years of training lost to Covid and whatnot, the Girls' Squad returned to Putney, to face the 2022-23 season. An exceptionally large squad meant that we were able to do what has never been before – race a girls eight! In the freezing cold, nine girls made the trip to Cambridge for the Winter Head Regatta to race university novice crews, and returned with gold medals to top it off!

As the winter season progressed, the squad (almost entirely comprised of novices) moved to small boats to practice the essential skills and develop the finesse needed for sculling. A quiet start to a the Lent Term lead to our most exciting project yet, racing in a mixed eight for Schools' Head! The challenge seemed insurmountable, with only a few weeks to pull it all together; but joined by our new coach Julia Michalska-Plotkowiak, former Olympian, the squad was fired up. On 18 March, an unseasonably cold and wet day, the mixed eight rowed the 7.2 km course to become bronze medallists.

Easter came, and the girls marked the beginning of regatta season with our annual trip to Ghent. A week's worth of training camp left us hobbling, however an endless supply of Belgian waffles and coffee sustained us to regatta weekend. Straight back for our first session in Putney, we set out a training plan for the month leading to National Schools. Albeit slightly nervous at the scale of our ambition, we set to train harder than ever before. Our efforts paid off when we were given the honour of training in Queen Wilhelmina, the prized Filipi boat. After sunset sessions, early mornings and stolen hours, the quad: Ira Dubey (CC), Rujula Pawarova (WW), Ingrid Berg (CC) and Sophie Zirps (DD) shipped up to Eton Dorney for the first time this year. Although a tough crosswind put us in the D final, much racing experience was gained for next year, and the squad had come together to create a feeling of camaraderie that resounded across the boat house in sessions riddled with laughter and warmth.

The occurrence of NSR felt like the end of an era, as often is, when an event so highly anticipated comes to pass. Nevertheless, we had one more race left before we called it a year – Wimbleball Regatta! It seems CD could only pick races in the heart of the English countryside, so after a six-hour plus journey, riddled with engine failure and country roads, we arrived at Lake Exmoor to win both events (4+ and 4x-) and end the season in sufficient style.

This year marked a huge step for Girls' Water at Westminster. A program often glanced over, was the subject of constant development with input from coaches (CD and Julia) and the squad, and we all look to next year to see the fruits of even more training.

Ira Dubey (CC)





STATION

Remove Brunch





GO ODDBYE REMOVE





GO ODDBYE REMOVE

Remove Ball

Coronations

by Elizabeth Wells



Westminster Abbey depicted during James II's coronation

King's Scholars

On 8 September 2022 our Queen's Scholars became King's Scholars once again. They have played a unique part in coronation ceremonies since at least 1685, where their attendance and cries of 'Vivat Rex' were recorded in Francis Sandford's *The History of the Coronation of James II*:

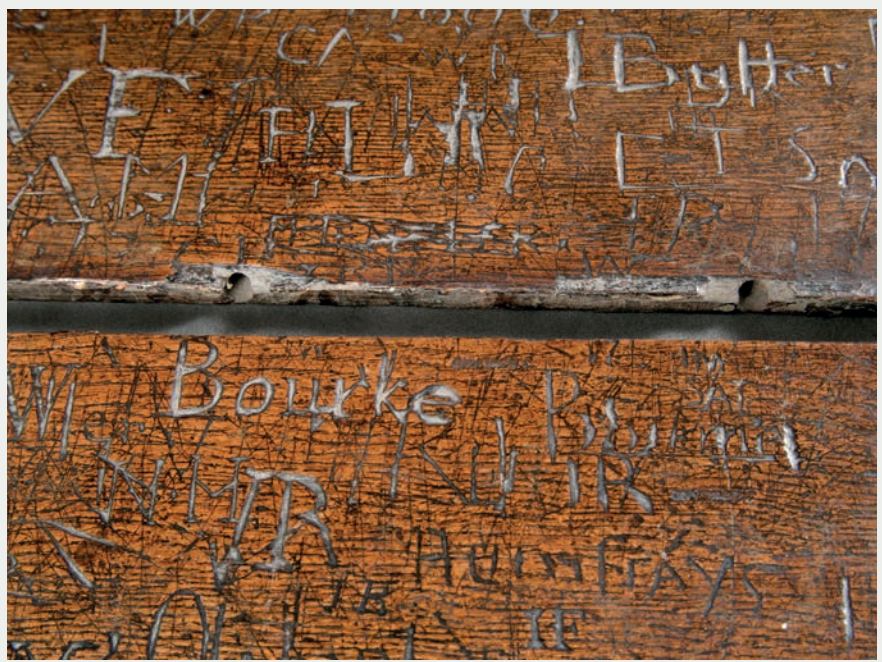
"And it is to be Noted that when the QUEEN entered the Choir, the King's Scholars of Westminster-School, in Number Forty, all in Surplices, being placed in a Gallery adjoining to the Great Organ-Loft, Entertained Her MAJESTY with this short Prayer or Salutation, VIVAT REGINA MARIA; which they continued to Sing until His MAJESTY entered the Choir, whom they entertained in like manner with this Prayer or Salutation, VIVAT JACOBUS REX, which they continued to sing until His MAJESTY ascended the Theatre."

In 1902, at the coronation of Edward VII, the scholars' role as the first to acclaim the new monarch was formalised by the incorporation of the shouts of 'Vivat' into Parry's coronation anthem, *I was glad*. At this year's coronation, our female scholars who have been part of College since 2017, will get to join their male peers in the Abbey's triforium.

The Coronation Chair

This May the spotlight will once again shine on the Coronation Chair. It is a remarkable object which has formed the centre piece of coronation services since 1308. However, it has had a chequered history, with brief periods of attention punctuating years when the chair becomes quite literally 'part of the furniture'.

Originally known as 'St Edward's Chair' the piece was commissioned by Edward I and constructed from oak in 1300-1301 before being decorated by 'Master Walter' with a gilt foliate pattern including birds, animals and even a green man. It was once ornamented with coloured glass stones, but none of these now survive, having been pried away by generations of pilgrims and tourists to the Abbey looking for souvenirs of their visit.



Above: The Stone of Scone
Top right: The Coronation Chair
Bottom right: A close up reveals some of the many names inscribed

Edward I had a specific role in mind for the chair – he wanted it to house the Stone of Scone which he had captured from the Abbey of the same name during his invasion of Scotland in 1296. He had brought the 152kg stone back to Westminster Abbey and the chair was constructed with a special enclosure underneath the seat to both display and secure the stone. Also known as the ‘Stone of Destiny’, the Stone of Scone had been used for centuries in the inauguration of Scotland’s kings. It has mythical connections with the fifth century figure of Fergus, the first King of the Scots, who purportedly transported the stone from Ireland, and yet earlier religious associations with the biblical figures of Jacob and Jeremiah. Geologists have convincingly shown that the stone, which is ‘lower Old Red Sandstone’ was quarried near

to Scone. Nevertheless, its sacred importance as a symbol of Scotland remains undiminished. The chair has been employed in 38 coronation ceremonies for reigning Kings and Queens in Westminster Abbey. In fact, the only monarchs not to have used the chair were Edward V and Edward VIII, neither of whom were crowned. Oliver Cromwell borrowed the chair, moving it to Westminster Hall, to use for his own installation as Lord Protector in 1657. For the joint coronation of William and Mary in 1689 a replica was constructed for Mary so that husband and wife could be crowned side by side.

The chair’s life has been characterised by periods of neglect, followed by sudden flurries of activity during preparations for an imminent coronation. From the later Middle

Ages, the chair was beginning to show signs of wear and tear, and there was an unfortunate tendency to look for quick solutions to the problem. The chair is now littered with marks where covers of velvet or cloth of gold was nailed and tacked into place. This unintentional vandalism reached its peak in 1887, when the chair was overpainted in preparation for a thanksgiving service to mark Queen Victoria’s Gold Jubilee. A thick brown varnish was applied to the chair to give its surface an even appearance, masking the remaining original gold decoration and damaging it further. This clumsy intervention did not go unnoticed, and questions were asked in the House of Commons.

Misguided though these attempts at beautifying the chair were, greater damage was performed, with intent,

Queen’s Scholars photographed just before Elizabeth II’s coronation



during the twentieth century. In 1914 an anonymous suffragette hooked a home-made bomb on the left pinnacle of the chair's back and in the subsequent explosion it was entirely blown off. Further destruction took place in 1950, when a group of Scottish Nationalists, largely consisting of students, successfully managed to steal the Stone of Scone in the early hours of Christmas morning. In order to extract it they broke the seat of the chair and prised away the front rail. They were unprepared for the weight of the stone and managed to drop it out of its enclosure, breaking a corner off in the process. In 1996 it was decided that the stone should be returned to Scotland where it is on display at Edinburgh Castle. It did, however, make the return trip for Charles III's coronation in May.

Whilst the history of such an ancient artefact is undoubtedly fascinating, you may wonder what connection the chair has with Westminster School? Those who examine the chair closely will observe that its surface is littered with graffiti in the form of carved initials, names and dates. Dean Edward Carpenter's history of the Abbey *House of Kings* recorded that "in the eighteenth century and later [the chair] stood unguarded in the Confessor's Chapel and anyone who would, could sit in it on payment of a small fee to the vergers." Others have aimed the blame more squarely at Westminster pupils, who it is said would often dare themselves or their peers to spend the night in the chair, carving their names in the early hours of the morning to record their achievement. A terminus post quem for the graffiti is impossible to calculate, but in common with other parts of the school and the Abbey, most seems to date from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. However, there are at least two inscriptions from the twentieth century: SUSAN 12-12-64 and S MAY 1959 – thankfully neither attributable to Westminster pupils. My predecessor as Archivist, Eddie Smith, completed the impressive feat of recording the identifiable names and initials on both the Coronation Chair and its replica and researching which could be positively identified as Westminster pupils.

His full research can be found in *The Coronation Chair and Stone of Scone: History, Archaeology and Conservation* edited by Warwick Rodwell, which has been of invaluable assistance in preparing this article. His investigation revealed that Westminster pupils did not deserve all of the blame for the chair's graffiti, but they were behind a significant proportion. Of 130 initials or names gathered from the Coronation Chair, only 30 provide enough information to enable a confident identification. Of these 21 were Old Westminsters but the remaining nine were not.

One Old Westminster, James Hook, managed to carve his name on both chairs and also the shield of Edward III which was stored nearby in Westminster Abbey's shrine. A year added to the shield '1788' enables us to match the name with a pupil at the school in the late eighteenth century who was a notorious caricaturist and mischief maker. He once dressed as an old woman and begged the Head Master, Dr William Vincent, for charity in Dean's Yard. A 'W VINCENT' also features, carved into Mary II's chair and Eddie Smith speculates that this might have been a further prank by Hook. However, plenty of Old Westminsters who were later pillars of the establishment appear to have indulged in school boy vandalism, including the future Prime Minister and Duke of Newcastle, Thomas Pelham.

As (un)fortunately the majority of inscriptions consist merely of initials, in many cases we will never be able to confirm the true number of pupils involved in defacing this ancient artefact. As another historian of Westminster Abbey has noted, amongst Westminster pupils "enthusiasm for the Abbey is traditional, though it has sometimes manifested itself in unorthodox ways and at inappropriate times." Now, when not in use for coronation ceremonies, the chair is safely enclosed in St George's Chapel, where visitors to the Abbey can admire it at a safe distance.



Thomas Pelham, an unlikely miscreant!

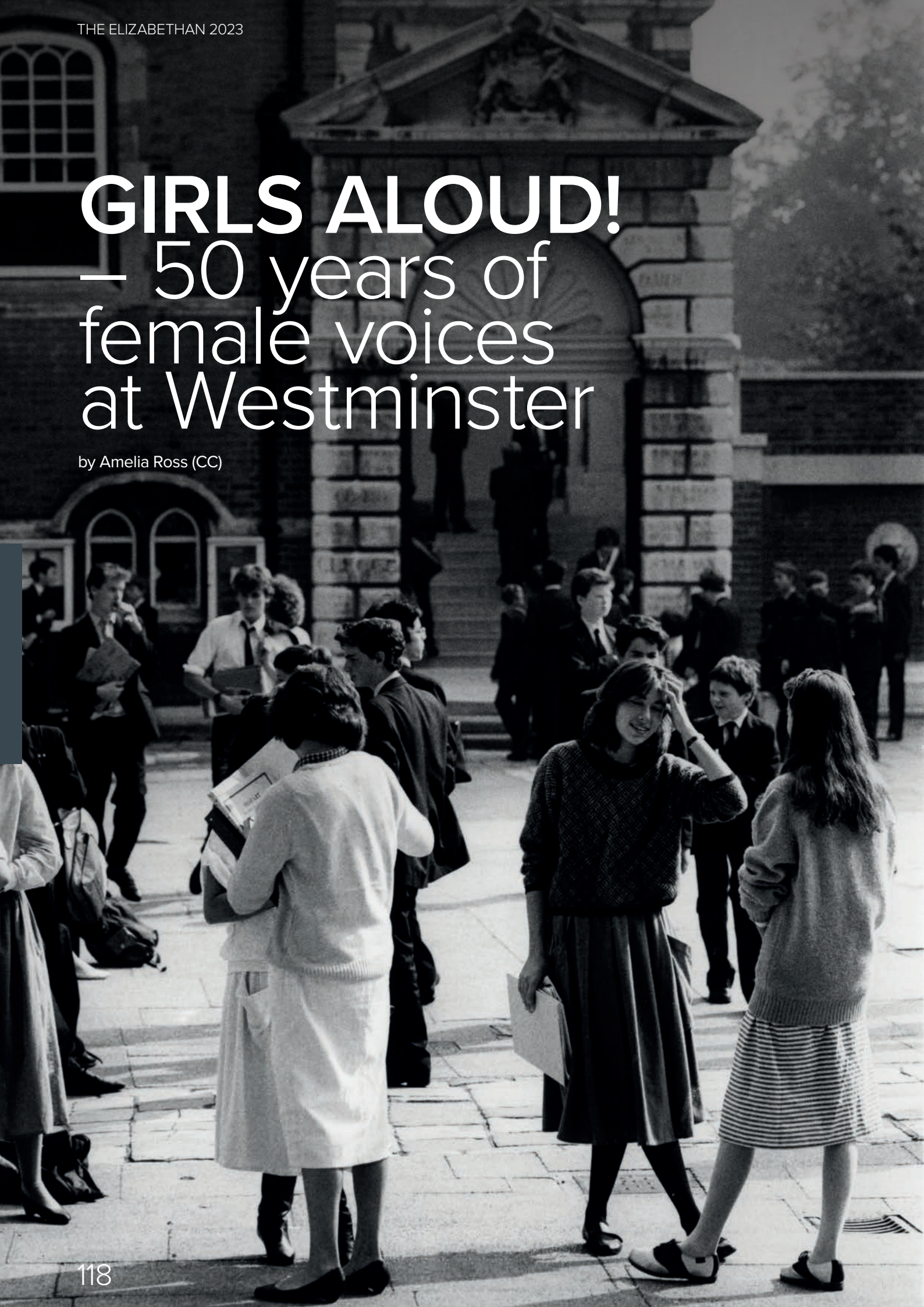
Thanks

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have donated time, money towards conservation, reminiscences and archival material to the school over the past year. We love adding new things to our collections, which are widely used both within and outside of the school. Please keep the donations coming!

GIRLS ALOUD!

– 50 years of
female voices
at Westminster

by Amelia Ross (CC)



In the July 1972 edition of *The Elizabethan*, Head Master John Rae speculates on Westminster's future as a school with regard to contemporary political concerns. One of the topics he touches on is co-education, a subject which he claims "inspires insincerity" as many Public Schools have turned towards partial co-education, introducing small numbers of girls to fill empty spaces and present the move as evidence of progressive thinking.

Rae suggests that whilst "A single sex intellectual elite may seem to be an unattractive, even unpopular, role to play", he thinks it is "unlikely that Westminster will change this role in the near future". The logistics of introducing girls fully to the school appear too impractical, although Rae does note that, "Westminster would have much to gain from co-education", keen for his own daughters to benefit from attending the school. Despite doubts, a mere year later in 1973, girls would formally be introduced to Westminster. It seemed that this formalised development, if done successfully, had great potential to generate genuine, positive change in the school.

The integration of girls into Westminster has been gradual to put it lightly... a 50-year process in the making! Although girls first became formal pupils in 1973, the size of their intake would increase from a mere handful, bit by bit, over the years. The selection process initially consisted of an informal interview, admitting only day girls who often had siblings at Westminster, or who were keen to study the sciences and lacked the necessary facilities at their own schools. Gradually Westminster's academic system became more streamlined making it easier to integrate girls, and more female members of the Common Room were also introduced. There is still a long way to go now, but even in the last decade we have taken necessary steps on the road towards equality and eventually full co-education, with the first female scholars elected in 2017, and the first girls' Greaze taking place this year. But what can we learn from the varied experiences of girls at





Westminster over the past half-century, and can we shed light on the present changing values of the school by reflecting on the past?

In the Archives over the past two years, I have been taking part in the school's Oral History Project with our School Archivist and Records Manager, Ms Elizabeth Wells. This project involves interviewing selected Old Westminsters about their lives and experiences at the school and afterwards, so that these can be recorded for future generations. Oral history has enhanced my understanding of recording history more generally, not only revealing hidden nuances not captured by the written word such as the subtleties of sarcasm, wit and irony, but also highlighting the value of being able to listen to and engage with these raw and genuine first-hand accounts. What has been perhaps most interesting to grasp is how individuals' experiences have shaped their memories of the school, and their current perceptions of it. As the 50-year anniversary of

girls being admitted to Westminster approaches, we have turned our recent focus to contacting and interviewing some of our most inspirational Westminster alumnae.

From such a plethora of accomplished and inspiring women to interview, it was difficult to narrow our list down. This year, the four women we have been lucky enough to speak with have shared their stories, each one strikingly unique, and in conversation raised a variety of thought-provoking speculations about Westminster School in both the past and the present. Imogen Stubbs (CC, 1977-79) recalled her memories of being one of few girls in a house of scholars, and reminisced on the academic pressures on pupils and how they have changed in recent years. Beyond the classroom, we also heard about her exploits in music and drama, evidently preceding her fame as a star of stage and screen. Her contemporary, the accomplished screenwriter, TV producer and novelist Daisy Goodwin (AHH, 1977-79), spoke

further about the social environment of Westminster and its pressures on girls in particular, considering what it takes to thrive at Westminster, and how the legacy of the school has impacted her later life. We also heard from Polly Arnold (BB, 1988-90) – outnumbered as a girl studying STEM on her daily trepidatious journey to the classrooms of Hooke, (I admire her for not being put off by the stairs, as I was!), and also a keen mountain climber and craftswoman: later, she would continue to fight for diversity and gender equality in the field of science, as a world-renowned chemist. Finally, Kate Arnold-Foster (WW, 1973-75) was one of the very first girls to attend the school, and she shared her experiences of intimidating yet enlightening History lessons in Ashburnham House, a subject which she would go on to pursue in her impressive career as a curator. This allowed us important space for reflection on the ethics of a Westminster education, and the school's privileged reputation.

Not only has hearing these eminent women speak been extremely inspiring, it has also revealed more personal stories about what went on at Westminster for girls in the past. There have of course been universal changes in the school's social attitudes that have been picked up in many of the interviews, concerning uniform, station choices, and how girls were treated in the classroom. Yet the alumnae also shared small, funny anecdotes that from their memories of Westminster. These range from extravagant Valentine's Days, badly organised school trips, and using hymn books as ping pong bats, to sneaking out of school past 17 Dean's Yard to walk around London at night, and even climbing up the scaffolding on the side of Westminster Abbey!

It seems that whilst all the interviews have differed, with our alumnae painting their unique recollections of the school in their own shades, what remained universal was an appreciative sentiment from being able to benefit from a Westminster education, something perhaps only fully understood with hindsight. Girls

have only been at Westminster for a mere 10% of its time as a school, yet already they have become a vital part of its history. Not only has the addition of girls positively enhanced the school's community, it has helped the school to adapt in a healthier, forward-thinking society. Sharing memories of the school in the Oral History Project has shown me how girls have both been shaped by Westminster, but more importantly how they have contributed to its legacy.

Westminster has undoubtedly changed for the better since Rae first introduced girls, and his observation in *The Elizabethan* in 1972 has certainly rung true: Westminster has had much to gain from co-education. However, we must strike a balance between maintaining traditions and enacting necessary further change, to develop the fundamental ethos of the school. As we progress into the next 50 years, we should continue to share more stories from the numerous influential female role models that make up our Westminster alumnae, and inspire further generations who will, undoubtedly, soon join their ranks.

You can listen to the Oral History interviews on the online catalogue for Westminster School's Archive & Collections, which can be accessed via the school website.

<http://collections.westminster.org.uk/index.php/gb-2014-ws-02-ora>









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