

St Laurence – Term 4

CONNECT



Sustainability

EDITORS' WELCOME

Welcome back to Connect!

This term, we have made sustainability our focus: an issue that affects every one of us, but a topic that is not given as much coverage as it deserves.

Having a sustainable mindset is becoming increasingly important, both within St Laurence and further afield. The climate crisis is a topic at the forefront of today's society and we want to be doing all we can to make our school an environmentally friendly one. This change will happen through the individual actions of students and staff alike, along with actions within school, such as initiatives implemented by the Green Group.

In this issue, you will find many articles along this theme, such as an insight into sustainable fashion with sustainable fashion journalist Deborah Bee and a look into sustainability within the textiles department at our school with Mrs Nicholas. We have a feature from the Wiltshire Climate Change Conference that the Green Group was lucky enough to attend this term, and the real thoughts and opinions of students like you when it comes to sustainability, including the newly introduced Meat-Free Mondays.

Alongside this, you will also find several interviews, including one with our new Head Students, Chloë and Michaela, one with Mr Dutton regarding his recent visit to schools in Palestine, and one with Anthea Simmons, the author of Burning Sunlight. We hope you enjoy this green issue of Connect, and as always, if there is anything more you believe we should be covering, let us know!

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HEADTEACHER'S WELCOME

Welcome to our latest edition of Connect and from me, a Happy Easter.

The Easter story is one full of hope and renewal: the hope that we will defeat death. Whilst this would be seen as the literal and true meaning of Easter, we can use this idea of hope and newness when considering sustainability, the theme of this edition.

Creating hope for the future by ensuring the actions of today improve the world is so important and I am excited by the dedication and commitment of our students to this issue. It seems to me that in this area, it is we who are being called to action by young people which is a healthy reversal of the norm.

I hope we can also build on our wellbeing work and help people recognise the importance of sustaining oneself; when we are the best we can be, our support for others is more effective. So, with a school break now on the horizon, and one in which many students will be working hard on their preparations for the summer, please also encourage students to get outside, meet up and enjoy the sunshine (I am always hopeful!!).

Finally, once again thank you to staff, students and parents for everything you have done and are doing.

Happy Easter



GOVERNORS' WELCOME

David Roberts reflects on the theme of sustainability



There are many definitions of sustainability. For me, it is about the ability of people and communities to be resilient, adapt to change and prosper over the long term. This spans all aspects of society and the environment. Providing students with the tools to support their own resilience and contribute to a more sustainable local community is an important focus for governors and staff.

Examples this term include:

- The first school Mental Health & Wellbeing Fair
- The Collective Worship theme of Benevolence - considering the needs of others and helping those in need
 - Community participation activities including students enjoying the Duke of Edinburgh scheme

My area of focus as a governor is the school campus. Last summer was the first time the school had to shut due to extreme heat. Hikes in energy prices are having a direct impact on school finances. These are just a few examples of how the changing climate can and will impact the provision of education without action.

In February we teamed up with Buro Happold's Young Engineer Forum (15 engineers and design experts across a range of disciplines). The purpose simple – practical ways the school can lower its footprint and embed environmental resilience whilst improving the school estate.

This review has informed a range of potential actions which span increasing on site renewables, biodiversity areas, reducing waste, improving building performance and empowering student participation in improving the school environment. We will now turn our attention to driving change including how the student body can be fully involved. This is just one example of how we are testing ourselves to ensure we put sustainability at the heart of the school.

The very best of luck to all Year 11 and 13 students preparing for their exams.



GREEN-FINGERED STUDENTS SET TO CREATE NEW GARDEN 'SANCTUARY' FOR ALL

Photographs by
Isaac Mageean Yr 13

Plans are underway to restore the St Laurence school garden and make it a place for all to enjoy. A group of Y11 ASDAN students and their teacher Mrs Newton are hoping to develop the area which is next to the Personalised Learning centre, between the two mobile classrooms.

The aim is to tidy, redesign and replant the garden so that any students who want can go there to relax. The students' – who are working towards an ASDAN life skills qualification – will complete the garden renewal as one of the assessed challenges on their course.

Project leader Mrs Newton, teacher of Intervention and ASDAN, told Connect: "Currently, no one uses the garden as it is in such a neglected state. However, it clearly has previously been loved as there are some attractive plants already there, although they need some tender loving care.

"It could be a real sanctuary, a place for calm and relaxation. We are particularly hoping that those who might be feeling anxious or stressed go there and it gives them a feeling of calm."

The students involved are currently in the early stages of planning but have already selected a calming colour scheme of blues and purples. They are also researching suitable, hardy plants for the generally shady area.

As well as providing a calm green space for the whole school community, Mrs Newton is also excited about the real-world work opportunity the garden redevelopment project has for the students running it. She said, "We hope that we might all benefit from working as a team to create a lasting legacy for the school."



Help needed to give garden project a boost

The students are appealing to the wider community for help with the project. Mrs Newton said, "We would very much appreciate any help in the form of advice, plant donations, loan of tools etc.

One of the students is planning to replace the benches which are rotten, so we will also be in need of wood."

TALKING HEADS

Amelia Wallis meets newly elected Head Students Michaela Sillem and Chloë Smith, Y12, to discuss the gruelling appointment process and their plans for the future.

A - What was the process like to become Head Student?

M - It was a vigorous process which involved lots of different phases. The first thing you had to do was write a letter to Mr Blowers, then do a video, which was quite intimidating because most of us don't want to see ourselves on camera! That was then put to student vote and after that was an interview with the Headteacher, the heads of Sixth Form and the current Head Students. That was also quite full-on because you were just sitting in front of all of them whilst you were being asked questions.

C - And while you could prepare for the questions, some of them were quite surprising!

M - It was a really useful process because it prepares you for actual job interviews and it really made you think about why you want to be head student, and why your policies are important.

A - What made you choose to apply for the role of Head Student?

C - I wanted to do it for so long. I remember being in the younger years and the head student was always someone you'd look up to, and they were always doing so many positive things, and really it's just to leave behind that piece of me, that legacy at St Laurence.

M - As much as the school is a good place, I believed there was still a lot of change that needed to happen. The big thing for me is tackling misogynistic language and doing it in a way that does not demonise boys but also makes the school a space safe for everyone, regardless of who you are. I also wanted to ensure that everyone could have something that they were passionate about and to make sure they had the opportunity to express that through some of the policies we want to implement.



A - What are your first ideas for changes you want to make/things you want to do in this role?

C - I think obviously, being two teenage girls, we're very keen on feminism and tackling that everyday misogynistic language that we've both unfortunately experienced, alongside pretty much every girl at St Laurence. But, at the same time, we're very conscious of not alienating the other 50% of our school community who do not identify as female. We're working really strongly with the Men's Mental Health Group to make sure we're including everyone.

M - I completely agree with Chloe and that's something we both talked about before we became head students. But it's not all about women and feminism. I want everyone to have opportunities to express themselves outside of the classroom, which can complement academic learning. So more performance opportunities, workshops, and then also some ideas of how to manage money in younger years, which I feel is currently very much left until 6th form.

C - I think our main focus is just making sure that everyone feels confident, comfortable and included.

A - Do you think you'll work well as a team?

M - When we were both going for the role, we both wanted each other to be Head Student because we know each other and we have very similar policies. Not quite the same, though, because then what would be the point in us both being head students! We complement each other really well and we work well as a team.

C - The things we want are very cohesive, so working together as a team comes very naturally.

M - I think we both build each other up and help each other.

C - We're definitely able to work together, and the late-night facetime calls for planning and speech writing will definitely be continuing!

A - Is there anything Becca and Ned have done that you wish to continue?

C - I think they've brought a lot of structure. I know Becca writes really helpful emails on the minutes of what's happening at the school council and is really good at scheduling things in. I definitely think that's been good and that's something that we should continue. Having that structure and making sure that everything is organised is important.

M - You don't really realise how much organising goes into a single school day, from staff and students alike. It's a lot of work!

C - Once you get involved, you're involved forever!

M - Becca and Ned have really set the foundations for School Council, Collective Workshops etc. to run really smoothly.

A - The theme of Connect this term is sustainability. Do you have any goals for St Laurence relating to this?

M - Whilst the Green Group has done a lot to make St Laurence a more environmentally friendly place, I think that a massive thing that needs to be tackled is paper overuse. I definitely know we're all guilty of this, including teachers, but I do think it's quite an easy thing that can be improved. This can be done by using worksheets one between two, not printing out every single sheet, and accessing things online instead.

C - We can work with Green Group to compliment many of the great things they are already doing.

A - Is there anything else you want to say to Connect?

M - I just hope everyone knows we are friendly and approachable, so if you've got any concerns, please speak to us!

C - You can email us at 17smichlb@st-laurence.com, and 17silmicb@st-laurence.com

Crossing the Divide

Due to his interest in human rights and trade unionism, Deputy Headteacher Mr Dutton spent his February half term holiday on a trip to Palestine, representing the National Education Union. During his time there, he visited numerous schools in Palestine and East Jerusalem and human rights organisations who are promoting peace in the area. He also met some Israelis who have been jailed for refusing to take part in the compulsory military service. Amelia Wallis and Megan Robinson spoke to him to discover more about his trip.

What was your motivation for going?

To find out more about the situation there, as the area has got a lot of issues geopolitically. I was inspired by the talk we had from motivational speaker, Anthony Bennet about that pull backer and the dreamer and how you can always find reasons to not go and do something. There's a million and one reasons why I could have said "Oh, I don't want to do it because...", but actually this is an opportunity where I thought "Why would you turn this down?".

I went to a couple of refugee camps and although the experience was quite harrowing, I think it's important to take ourselves out of our comfort zone. If we allow other people to live like that day in and day out, I could at least put myself in that situation for a week.



by Amelia Wallis and Meg Robinson

What was the experience like?

I think for me there were two aspects. There was visiting key religious sites, such as the Via Dolorosa, where Jesus carried the cross, and the Western Wall where Jewish people were praying. To sit there in the garden of Gethsemane and think that 2,000 years ago, this was the place where Jesus was arrested was quite a powerful experience, even for someone like myself with no faith. The other aspect of it was going to refugee camps where you are seeing generations of people who've lived there since 1948, when the Palestinians had to evacuate their homes. They are trapped in this situation and they have very few rights, like freedom to travel. Visiting these places was quite harrowing, and it made you reflect on your own life and the privileges of living in a place like Britain.

We've all seen news reports about the conflicts in the Middle East. Would you say that they're an accurate representation?

I think we get presented with what our media wants us to see, so I don't think one group of people are to blame. The people who suffer are the individual citizens in both Israel and Palestine, who end up dragged into the issues that the political elite are causing. I think that the situation there is very difficult to solve, and I feel for all the innocent civilians who are living either under the oppression in which the Palestinians are, or as innocent Israeli and Palestinian people who are caught in conflict and losing loved ones.

“Visiting these places was quite harrowing, and it made you reflect on the privileges of living in a place like Britain.”

Did you feel welcomed by the people there?

Extremely welcomed, they were extremely friendly. It's nice to have that connection with people who are effectively doing the same job as you. I'm a teacher, they're teachers. In Palestine, the teachers' union - The General Union of Palestinian teachers - are having a series of strikes due to lack of funding. Some things are universal! To see how English is being taught, and then thinking about how you teach as a Languages teacher yourself, is quite interesting. Experiencing the food was amazing! Being a vegan – more or less - to have falafel and hummus, which I love, for breakfast, for lunch and for dinner, was interesting on day one, but by day 7 you were thinking “I never want to see falafel again in my life!”. It was just a really nice culture to experience.

Was there anything that surprised you?

The weather. It was very cold. In the daytime it was getting up to 10 degrees when I was there and in the evening, it was down to 1 or 2 degrees. As the schools and other places are set up for hot weather in the summer, they don't benefit from heating like we do. The schools were absolutely freezing! This surprised me as I assumed it was going to be a fairly temperate climate. I was mainly struck by the courage that people there have. Three or four generations on, they're still living in these refugee camps, with very limited freedoms. I think I wouldn't have the conviction to stay, and I would have left and sought asylum in a different country. I was struck by how determined people are.

Going forward, do you think awareness needs to be raised?

I think we need to be more aware of general issues connected with oppression, and about why people are living in refugee camps, not just in Palestine but in other places across the world. What are they fleeing? Where are they ending up? Why are they leaving their homeland to live in these refugee camps? Because most people wouldn't want to be living there if they were given a choice. I think you must know both sides of the story, and I would also be interested to hear more from the Israeli perspective. But, from what I saw, there was a lot of oppression that the Palestinians were living under. These people don't have a voice, and I think it's important for me having seen this, to report back in the UK.



“The murals gave a real sense of hope: a time to stand back and reflect.”

You visited the Dividing Wall which separates Palestine and Israel. What was it like to be there?

To put it into perspective, the Berlin Wall, which divided the city for nearly 30 years, was nowhere near as tall and imposing as the Dividing Wall which is found in certain parts of Palestine. Wherever you go, there is a real sense of being monitored from the many watch towers and you are constantly reminded of how restricted life is there. When you are driving around, there are examples of how communities have been cut off and check points installed to allow Palestinians to enter or leave their village.

The historic city of Jerusalem is beautiful, with numerous key religious sites and historic buildings yet the landscape is somewhat ruined by the ugly concrete wall and barbed wire that towers over parts of the city. There are key checkpoints where Palestinians from the West Bank can cross into East Jerusalem (with a permit) and the queues for those either waiting in cars or on foot at the checkpoint can last hours, so much so that there are stories of pregnant women giving birth at the crossings while they try to access medical care in the main hospital in East Jerusalem that provides medical services for those living the West Bank. An interesting fact is the disparity in cancer survival rates between Israeli women and Palestinian women (living in the West Bank) because they often are not given permission to cross into East Jerusalem to access chemotherapy and cancer care.

Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus, was nothing like I imagined due to the presence of a further dividing wall and the Aida refugee camp which is also in the city. There is a gallery on this wall where Banksy has created artwork, raising money for Palestinian causes and since then others have added their murals and paintings. It is a real collection of slogans and key messages in support of freedom.





“DON'T BE PASSIVE. DON'T BE APATHETIC. DON'T THINK THAT YOU CAN'T MAKE A DIFFERENCE.”

Designed and presented by **Ibby O'Neill**
Yr12

'Burning Sunlight' author Anthea Simmons talks to Emma Look about writing and the climate emergency.



We've all been reading **'Burning Sunlight'** during St Laurence Reads tutorial sessions, and it's a powerful reminder of how important climate action is. Anthea Simmons, the novel's author is just as passionate about climate change as the characters in her book. She spoke to me from her home in Devon, where the story is set, about **'Burning Sunlight'**, the climate emergency and her career.

Why did you want to become a writer?

I loved reading as a child. I learned quite early and spent a lot of my childhood with my nose in a book or wrecking my eyes reading with a torch in the night! I wrote a lot of stories as a kid, and I was good at English- I studied it at university.

I love the ability to create characters and send them off on adventures, and the freedom to let my imagination have some fun.

Are there any other books you've written?

I have three picture books out in print – The first (and most successful, having been translated into many different languages) **'Share'**, about a little girl having to share her things with her baby brother. **'The Best, Best Baby'** and **'I'm Big Now'** complete the set. Then there's the novel **'Lightning Mary'**, winner of the STEAM middle grade prize, which imagines the early life of fossil-hunter and proto-feminist Mary Anning. Oh, and a poetry collection called **'Pignuts and Peacocks.'**

What inspired you to write **Burning Sunlight?**

Young climate change activists! Young people are far more politically and environmentally-savvy than many realise. Attending Fridays for Future rallies made me want to write about young campaigners and about political corruption and greenwashing.

Why did you choose the themes of climate change and greenwashing for your book?

It's basically the only thing that matters right now. Governments and fossil fuel companies are destroying the planet... we all need to wake up!

How did you come up with the concept for the story?

Well, I really wanted to show that, a) what we do in the West impacts people in poorer, less-developed parts of the world...it really is **ONE planet** and, b) the climate emergency disproportionately affects women and girls.

I chose Somaliland as it is one of the top five countries hit hardest by the climate crisis, and it's a country that very few people know exists.

Finally, c) I wanted to explore the power of children and young people to change adults' minds.

'Young people are far more politically and environmentally-savvy than many realise.'

What message do you hope to convey through your book?

Don't be passive. Don't be apathetic. Don't think that you can't make a difference. You can! There are more of 'us' (climate warriors) than there are of 'them'...climate deniers and destroyers.

What sustainable actions do you take in your day-to-day life?

The usual...recycle, eat local, ride my electric bike...stop buying new clothes.

How long have you been passionate about climate change?

A few years? I am ashamed to admit I was not so well-informed five years ago.

Do you have any plans for another novel in the future?

Working on one right now! Top secret! Deadline for completion end April 2023...publication August 2024

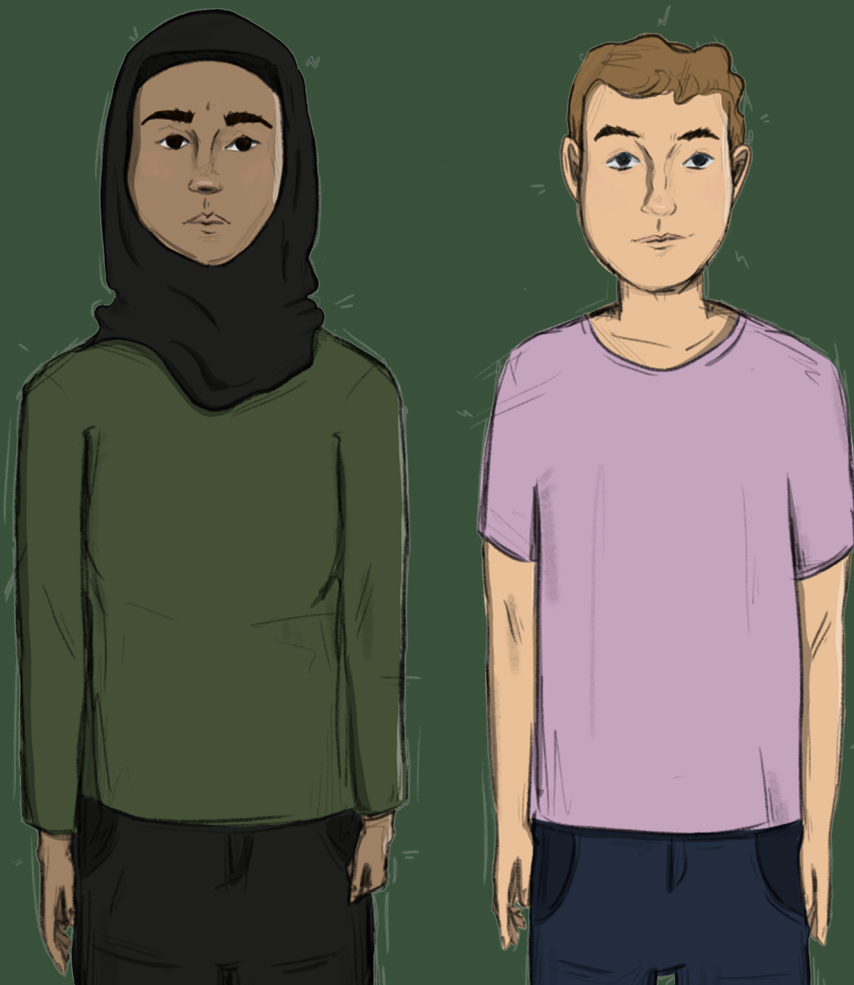
How do you feel about 'Burning Sunlight' being chosen for the whole school to read?

Absolutely THRILLED and honoured! I do hope everyone enjoyed it and got inspired! Who's your Zaynab? Your Lucas? Your Aoife? They'll exist!

What was your process for writing 'Burning Sunlight'?

I always think about my books a lot without writing anything. I think about them while I am doing other stuff: riding my horse, lying in bed... Once they are ready to come out, I sit down and get stuck in. I have a rule that I cannot leave my desk before I have finished 1,000 words. I usually write 5-6,000 at a sitting.

It becomes like a movie playing in my head. I just need to write down what I am seeing in my mind's eye! It took about 9 months to write.



HELEN TAYLOR: MY LIFE AS AN ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVIST

Bethany Nicholas meets Helen Taylor to find out about her drive to bring about a 'Greener Britain'

Helen Taylor is an environmental activist who started her company One Blue Marble in 2018 with a focus on sustainability in many different areas. Helen also does a huge amount of activism work in many different areas and makes sure to live a sustainable life.

What does your daily week look like?

Well, it's varied, to say the least! I look after five different organisations, all focused on environmental sustainability under my business, One Blue Marble, named after the photograph of Earth, taken 18,000 miles from earth by the crew of the Apollo 17 spacecraft on its way to the Moon in 1972. It's a beautiful and powerful image.

-My responsibilities include working with Ecotricity, based in Stroud, 'Britain's greenest energy company' founded by a great guy, Dale Vince, who set the company up way before green energy was a 'thing' in 1996. Dale is at the forefront of eco entrepreneurialism. Together we focus on bringing about a Green Britain. I run events and activities with other organisations and charity partners, sharing the wider benefits of us all tackling the three key areas that together account for 80% of our personal carbon footprint: the energy we use, how we travel and what we eat. Energy alone accounts for 30% of our environmental impact, hence its important people understand the significance of using renewable energy, harnessed from the wind, sun and sea.

-I give talks at conferences about this and support our campaigns and communications teams on other ways to empower people to be greener. This includes working with key people who are passionate about promoting a greener lifestyle, such as the TV presenter, Chris Packham, Jon Snow, from Channel 4, Emma Thompson, the actress and Vivienne Westwood's team.

-As well as Ecotricity's story, I promote the work of Forest Green Rovers, FC (FGR) - 'the greenest football club in the world' (according to FIFA). FGR is owned by Ecotricity. I've even been CEO of the Club. I introduce green initiatives to the club which have included us going totally vegan menu and our pitch being managed without the use of artificial chemicals or animal derivatives (so it's organic and vegan, too). I'm currently trying to a way for our goal nets to be made from discarded fishing nets, which would be super-cool and a great way to re-use items, that are damaging to wildlife and the environment. Recently, I've been working on a new guide for clubs in the English Football League to become greener. Slowly but surely, more and more are which is very exciting.

-Linked to my work with Forest Green Rovers, I also work with Sea Shepherd UK (SSUK) - a marine conservation charity known for its direct action. We work with the most passionate ocean conservationists and volunteers who run our campaigns and investigations into illegal fishing, industrial trawling, and the horrific whaling taking place in the Faroes and Iceland. I help run these campaigns, fundraise to ensure we have the money to do all we need to do and engage politicians and other key influencers with our work.

-FGR flies the Sea Shepherd flag at Forest Green Rovers and the logo is on the FGR Third Shirt, made of coffee granules. Proceeds from the sale of these shirts are donated to SSUK. I make sure this all happens and look after our other SSUK partnerships donating to us. I'm also currently working with the adventure clothing brand, Finisterre who are awesome!



Why did you decide to go into the field of sustainability?

-I also run the Green Britain Foundation; a charity helping people tackle their carbon footprint through informing and educating people about living a greener lifestyle. I project manage the charity's Ministry of Eco Education programme helping over 200 primary schools and 100 secondary schools embed our eco curriculum, comprising easy ways for teachers to weave the best environmental teaching resources created by organisations such as WWF, the RSPB, SSUK and more in to lessons across all subjects taught, linked to the National curriculum. We're also running a Young Green Briton Challenge.

-Last but not least, I sit on the Board of Catalyse Change, a fabulous organisation helping young women aged between 16 - 24 learn about roles in sustainability through attending online workshops and masterclasses and being linked with mentors, to help them carve a career in sustainability. I mentor several young women and ensure we have the funds to run this great programme, working with businesses who partner with us and fund our work.

I was drawn to working in sustainability, after studying Food Technology and then learning about organic production. I've always loved the outdoors and been fascinated by food and farming, and realised quite early on that the conventional food industry wasn't for me; they use too many artificial ingredients and processing aids. I like real food; I like to know where my food has been grown or produced. I believe it's very important to breathe fresh air, not consume industrially produced food, or food involving cruel factory farming. I rarely eat meat now, only eating it if produced by a farm I know. Fish is off the menu since joining SSUK.

After working in the food industry for several years, I joined the Soil Association in Bristol to oversee the organic certification of organic food, beauty, and textiles. This led me to later work in communications and marketing and fundraising for the charity. I loved making a difference in the environmental world and joined Ecotricity to learn about green energy - little did I know I'd be getting involved in green football, too. I've followed my heart and always done what feels right and good! Working in the environmental sector is really 'good' and hugely rewarding.

What projects are you currently doing?

Right now, I'm planning our Ecotricity Green Britain Talks, taking place on our Ecotricity stage at WOMAD Festival in Malmsbury this summer - featuring Dale talking about his vision for Green Britain, to also be recorded for his podcast, Zero Carbonista. Plus, I'm planning to feature the winning projects created by students taking part in the Young Green Briton Challenge.

I'm helping lead the Young Green Briton Challenge. This is where 16 secondary schools around the UK have been invited to come up with ideas, projects or campaigns to help them and their communities tackle climate change. They've already designed their ideas with their classmates and volunteer mentors from business - and are in the process of pitching their ideas to an Eco Dragons Den panel at each school. The winning group from each school is being invited to the Houses of Parliament to our inaugural Young Green Briton Challenge National Awards where four winners will be receiving a £1,000 to help bring their idea or project to life. I'm super excited because both Dale and Lord Bird, MBE (founder of The Big Issue) is presenting these awards.

I'm also working closely with Members of Parliament and food retailers to heighten their awareness of the atrocious and relentless killing of Pilot Whales and White-Sided Dolphins in the Faroes throughout the summer. Residents of the Faroe Islands use their fishing boats and jet skis to drive pods of whales and dolphins to the shoreline and use a lance to spear them, resulting in immense stress and the killing of hundreds of animals, often in calf. People who buy fish from the Faroes are supporting this practice indirectly. We're calling on MPs and supermarkets not to buy from the Faroes until they stop. We understand it's a 'tradition' in the eyes of the locals so I'm hoping to twin one or two UK schools with schools on the Faroes to help them understand we can all play our part in conserving and protecting nature and whaling is a cruel and unnecessary 'sport'. Long ago the whale meat and blubber would have been eaten but there's no demand for this meat anymore.



What has been your greatest achievement?

This is easy, helping others. I love seeing the young women I support end up working in sustainability, when I'm working for Catalyse Change. I also feel very proud to have had the opportunity to: speak at places like No 10 in front of David Cameron (then our Prime Minister); to have travelled the world and spent time in Ghana, meeting the communities producing shea butter for the production of organic beauty products and have played my part in shifting practices around sustainability in sport.



TAKING MEAT OFF THE MENU

St Laurence has taken meat off the menu on Mondays as part of a bid to improve our sustainability. The 'Meat-Free Mondays' initiative has been led by the school's student Green Group. Instead of burgers and other meaty dishes, students can now enjoy a choice of exclusively vegetarian and vegan dishes every Monday. Some of the current menu options include vegetable chow mein, vegetable lasagne served with garlic bread and sweet potato falafel.

Eating less meat and dairy is one way to reduce our carbon impact and demands on precious natural resources. Zac Mazan and Sam Aston asked students what they thought about the change.

Matei Owen, W9

'Meat-Free Mondays' are ok. I sometimes buy food in the restaurant on Mondays but I've been put off by the options on offer. It would be good to see a rocket and tomato salad and more falafel.

Sam Aston, C5

I think 'Meat-Free Mondays' are OK but I feel the restaurant could just have more vegetarian and vegan options every day. It has encouraged me to eat in the restaurant more often. I would like to see more 'fake' meats on the menu such as Quorn or vegan 'chicken'.

Amelia Makin, A5

I think 'Meat-Free Mondays' are good. It's great vegetarians have more options. It has encouraged me to eat in the restaurant more often. I'd love to see vegetarian and vegan sausage rolls on the menu.

Otis Ovens, A9

I don't like 'Meat-Free Mondays' as I don't think the vegetarian and vegan options are the best. It has put me off eating there in the restaurant. I'd like to see pizza options – or go back to having meat!

Olive Thwaites, A7

I think 'Meat-Free Mondays' are ok but it hasn't really encouraged me to eat there more often. I'd like to see veggie burgers on offer.

Archie Wright, A2

I think 'Meat-Free Mondays' are good because meat in school is a bit scary. It has sometimes encouraged me to eat in the restaurant. It would be great to see nicer veggie burgers on the menu.

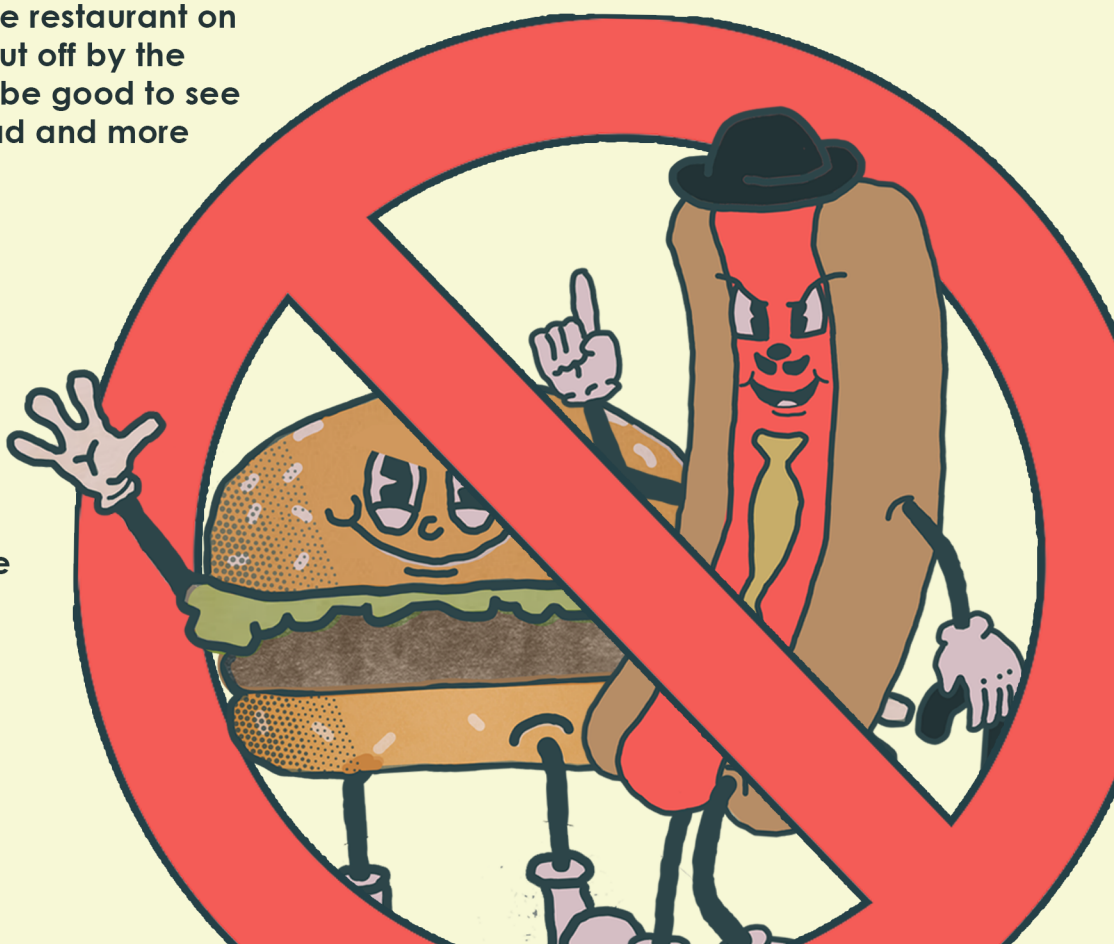


Illustration by
Dylan Kemish Yr 11

THE FUTURE OF SUSTAINABLE FASHION

WITH DEBORAH BEE

Deborah Bee owns a local sustainable fashion business with her sons. She has also written for many of the biggest newspapers and magazines in fashion, having interviewed designers like Oscar de la Renta of Balenciaga, Miuccia Prada and Giorgio Armani. She believes that we should buy less and use more. All her clothes are designed to be unmade.

You have written for some of the biggest names in fashion publishing. What issues about fashion have you most enjoyed covering?

It's most interesting meeting designers so you can understand how their particular creative process works. I did a wonderful book called "Couture in the 21st century" with the photographer Rankin. I interviewed many designers for that, including Oscar de la Renta (who used to work with Balenciaga), Miuccia Prada, Giorgio Armani etc. It was such an honour to meet them and talk about how couture, the very pinnacle of fashion design, has influenced their own signature style.

How do you feel about the fashion industry and how it impacts the environment?

The fashion industry has changed so much over the past twenty years that it's really not the same thing anymore. The shows used to be held in secret, six months ahead of the season, with only the fashion press and the buyers allowed access. The secrecy was in order to prevent high street brands copying. Now everyone knows what's going on and looks can be copied overnight. The fashion press has been usurped by 'influencers' who promote fast and continuous novelty. Nothing is worth waiting for. Everything is immediate.

Along with fast fashion came polyester. As you will know, polyester is a synthetic fibre that's easy to work with, takes dye well, washes easily and takes hundreds of years to biodegrade – shedding microplastics all the way.

We all need to slow down and stop buying polyester. Polyester still sheds even when it's been recycled. Look at the label. If it's got synthetics in, remember that that item of clothing will still exist when you're dead and buried. Just avoid synthetics. Full stop.

When did you start engaging with issues around sustainable fashion?

I wrote my first magazine article about recycling about 20 years ago. Since then, the UK recycles less textile waste. In fact, we hardly recycle any. Some gets mushed up to make mattresses or the insulation for those bags that Deliveroo use for hot food – but mostly our textile waste goes to landfill or incineration. 8% is recycled. 92% isn't.





When did you start having ideas for your business and how did they come about?

During lockdown I started knitting again. I studied fashion design at Central St Martins and part of my degree was knitting. I made a quite hideous jumper, as I remember.

Just as COVID struck, a friend asked me to knit her a jumper from a 1970s picture she had, so I copied it. If we hadn't all been at home bored, I'd probably have given up. I took the sleeves out four times. Someone saw the first one and ordered two more. Suddenly I needed a manufacturer. They are based in Mansfield – around 20 knitters who make my jumpers from my handknit prototypes.

We see your clothes are recyclable. How would someone recycle clothes from your business?

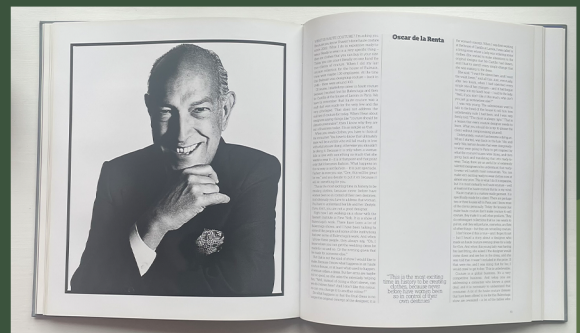
If you give me back your worn-out jumpers, I can get them spun into new yarn. The 'defibering' process tears the jumpers apart and turns them into fluff. No extra dyeing is required because the sweaters are divided first by colour and fibre.

I'm looking at bringing a factory to the UK from India – where the skill set currently lies.

How do you feel about the future of fashion?

Young people are right to be outraged by the state the planet is now in, thanks to fast fashion. We are facing a real catastrophe and while there are people out there doing great things, like rental offerings and resale platforms, the hard fact is we need to consume less. Our best bet is to buy less, love our clothes longer and recycle everything.

By Bethany Nicholas



**Designed by
Benjamin Catcheside
Yr 12**

WHERE THE WILDLINGS ARE



Jocelyn Lucas speaks to former student Jess Hunter who now runs Wildlings, a Forest School-based childcare setting in North Wiltshire

When did you attend St Laurence?

I attended St Laurence in 1989/90 in Yr 7 but only stayed for a year before moving to Somerset.

What did you study?

I always loved Art, Psychology and Sociology.

What are your best memories of our school?

I had a fantastic tutor and Science teacher called Miss Hulme. She had taught in Africa before coming to St Laurence and was so passionate and approachable. I also loved looking after the school goats at break times!

What did you do after leaving?

I took a more vocational route initially and did an HND in Health and Social Care, I then did a degree in Applied Social Studies and eventually a PGCE (teaching qualification) with a specialism in Early Years. For me I really thrived in the workplace and the academic side to my qualifications really benefited from having practical experience.

When did you decide to set up your own business? Why?

After having my third child I made the decision to leave the teaching profession to focus on offering the type of childcare that matched my ethos and ideals. I'm passionate about learning through play, being close to nature and giving children the tools in which to thrive. I set up Wildlings in North Wiltshire, which is a teacher led, outdoor early childhood setting from my large garden



Tell us about your teaching career?

I have over 23 years of experience of working with children in a variety of settings; as an Early Years Teacher in a large Specialist Nursery School in inner city Bristol for 12 years, as a Reception/ Year One Teacher and as a L3 Forest School Leader. During one of my roles on the leadership team I helped develop outdoor learning across the large nursery school and have also been the Forest School leader in a primary school.



Some people believe being 'green' is expensive. How can you make your business work and how could other childcare and educational settings be more sustainably focused?

Our sustainability really focusses on reducing our consumption of 'stuff', this way we reduce our impact on the environment, which in turn is the best way to care for all living things. Many of the resources we have at Wildlings are natural loose parts (pinecones, sticks, old tyres etc) rather than bought plastic toys. These open-ended resources have much more learning potential and are free! We make our own compost, harvest seeds and the children love making their own bread and soups each week using things they have grown themselves. By being out in the elements all year round we can see the changing seasons and are much more in tune with nature.



Sustainability is at the heart of Wildlings. Can you please tell us about what makes your setting different to other childcare? What do children experience of a typical day?

I am passionate about offering a sustainable environment in which nature-based play is delivered through Forest School, so we are outside all year round, in all weathers and the children absolutely love it! We offer a variety of activities and experiences in my large spacious garden which has two large cabins and a composting toilet. The children spend much of their day learning through child-initiated play and a varied rhythm which includes bush crafts, growing fruit and vegetables, food exploration/ cooking sessions, visiting the local area, natural resources, messy play, loose parts play and caring for our animals (guinea pigs, two dogs and soon chickens). Most importantly, wherever we are, the children will have the freedom to explore, run, share stories, splash, sing, climb, dig, jump, think and play their way through the day as I offer lots of opportunities for nature-based play.

Why is it important for our youngest children to experience Forest School and outdoor learning?

We are, after all, in an a 'Climate Emergency' so I feel our role as educators is to help children (and adults) learn about what is happening to our environment and how we can make positive daily changes to help protect it. At Wildlings we hope the setting is more 'sustainable' in a much more practical sense. We all still have so much to learn but I really like the Permaculture movement which really lends itself to the early years.

We strive to engage the children in learning about;

- making compost out of our waste
- growing and caring for native plants from seed
- picking, cooking and eating a vast array of seasonal plants that they have grown themselves
- harvesting seeds from our plants for the cycle to start again
- supporting wildlife and the ecosystems in the garden
- trying to reduce waste by recycling, reusing, refusing and repurposing
- community ethics of people care and fair share



Does the UK approach to education and curriculum take enough account of environmental issues?

Definitely not, there is so much more that needs to be done! There are some wonderful schemes like The Eco Schools programme where pupils are involved in creating sustainable action plans and lots have regular forest school sessions, but it needs to be much more embedded in the school curriculum. I feel the early years with its creative, hands-on approach is a fantastic foundation to start. Through sharing good practice, making sustainability a focus and working together all settings could start their journey to creating a greener environment for all living things.

We have lots of students considering childcare or starting their own business. Can you offer any advice?

Volunteer, get practical experience and explore lots of different businesses! Over the years I have been very lucky to experience working with some brilliant educators and I learnt so much from watching their practice. There are some amazing settings and projects that will welcome volunteers i.e Community farms, forest school after school clubs, outdoor holiday play schemes the list is endless! You gain brilliant ideas, experience and it really adds to your CV.

Some people believe being 'green' is expensive. How can you make your business work and how could other childcare and educational settings be more sustainably focused?

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To find out more visit the Wildlings Facebook page: [wildlingswiltshire](#) or the Instagram page [wildlings_childminding](#)



Designed by
Elodie Macrae Yr 13

TUTOR GROUP TREES UPDATE: TURNING OVER A NEW LEAF?

By Lauren Hobbs

If you've been here since last year, you may remember your tutor room becoming home to a sapling over the summer term. The Tutor Group Trees project was a scheme from the Green Group that gave a little tree to each tutor group in school, in the hopes that they would work together as a group to help it grow!

Whether the project helped you to discover a love for your local natural world, to understand the long-term commitment to climate change or even just taught you how to look after a tree, our school's participation meant that 50 new trees were able to find permanent homes. We have heard from several of our tree-keepers with updates on how their trees are doing in their new environments.



B2's tree has been surviving well and has sprouted a few more leaves and branches than it had before, but has not gotten much taller. It hasn't struggled and has coped well with both the summer heatwave and winter frost.

Nicholas Hayhoe, B2

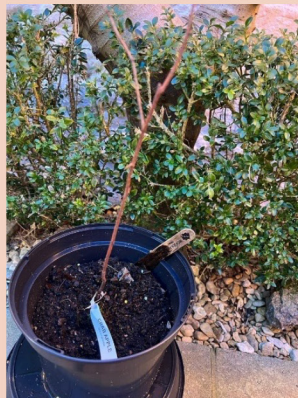
In the photo, W10's tree has no leaves yet because of it being winter. It was planted near the back of my garden under a hazel tree, so it is quite shady but it has grown an extra branch.

Samuel Barker, W10.

Illustration by Daniel Lewis Year 11



Joe Critchley, W9
W9's tree hasn't come into leaf as of yet, but we have hopes for a spring blossom!



Will Bailey, W3

Maddie Long would like to formally apologise on behalf of A2 for the death of 'Mr Leef', who has now been lovingly composted.

If you took home your tutor group's tree – we want to hear from you! Take a photo of your sapling and email it to one of our editors along with a short, written update – no matter how your tree may be doing!

Send your photo and update to Mr Peters and the Green Group leaders at:

marpet@st-laurence.com
16hoblauh@st-laurence.com
16savorlw@st-laurence.com
17walamec@st-laurence.com



FROM RAGS TO RICHES

By Bethany Nicholas

The Textile department work very hard to help us complete all our projects in the subject. But not all the projects can be completed, this could lead to some issues regarding sustainability. However, the teachers put their best efforts into making sure they are being sustainable. I spoke to Mrs Nicholas, one of the Textiles technicians, who told us about how she works on sustainability in the textiles department and in her home life.

What is the textile department doing to help sustainability within the school?

We always encourage students to waste as little as possible when cutting pattern pieces. Although we try hard to limit waste, we do end up with a lot of fabric offcuts. None of this goes into the general waste bins. Any bigger pieces are re-used in other projects. For example, apron and tote bag offcuts are used to make pockets or bucket hats. Hoodie offcuts are also used to make bucket hats. Smaller fabric pieces are used for applique decoration.

Any fabric we cannot re-use goes into a fabric waste tub and are donated to the Mercy in Action charity shop in BoA. The shop sells any pieces they can. The rest is bagged up and collected by a textile recycling company, who pay the charity per fabric weight. These textiles are then recycled to make car seats, sofas, mattresses yarn or industrial cleaning clothes.

What happens to unfinished projects that may have to be thrown away?

Where possible, textiles staff will complete an unfinished project and give it back to the student. If this is not possible will re-use the fabric and any fastenings such as zips - as little as possible gets to the waste bin!

If the projects have not been collected by the student who made them, I will make sure they are wearable and then donate it to the Julian House homeless centre in Bath. It is very rewarding to deliver a big bag of warm hats, hoodies, sweatshirts and gilets.

How do you source fabrics sustainably?

This year I have been researching new suppliers to source sustainable fabrics from. Unfortunately, because I have to order such large amounts and because sustainable fabrics are more expensive. I have not been able to buy them. However, my research has led me to companies who sell sewing thread made from recycled plastic bottles and I will be ordering this in term 6 when I complete my orders for the next academic year. I will also continue to research sustainable alternatives and hope to replace current stock with more environmentally friendly options whenever possible.

We are very lucky to receive regular donations from parents and staff. This can be anything from small offcuts to metres of new fabric to even curtains! These donations are invaluable because not only do they stop more fabric waste, they provide our students with a much wider range of fabrics to choose from. We receive quality fabric that we could not afford to buy. Recently our Y8 and 9 students have made some fantastic aprons and tote bags using donated fabrics.

What recommendations would you give to students to practise sustainability?

Think carefully about buying a new item of clothing – ask yourself how often you are likely to wear it. An estimated £30 billion worth of clothes that have never been worn are hanging in wardrobes across the UK.

- Once bought, wear it a lot! Fast fashion is having a devastating impact on the environment, with 10,000 items of clothing being sent to landfill every five minutes.

- Mountains of clothes washed up on a beach in Ghana show the cost of fast fashion.

· Donate unwanted clothes and shoes to charity shops or place them in Textiles banks.

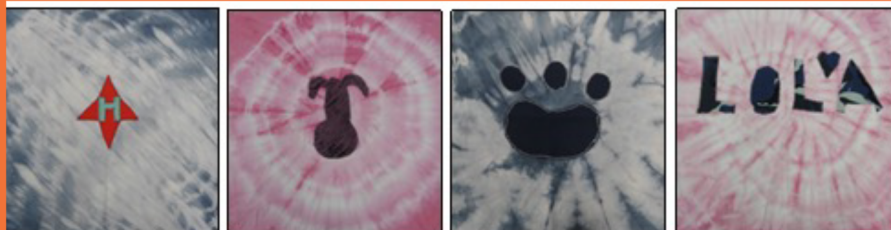
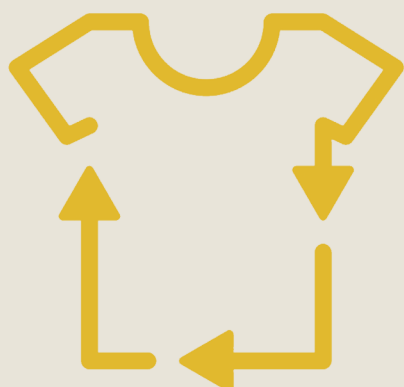
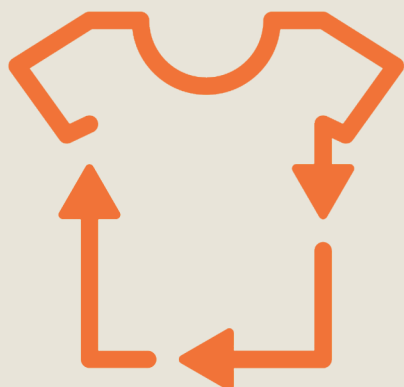
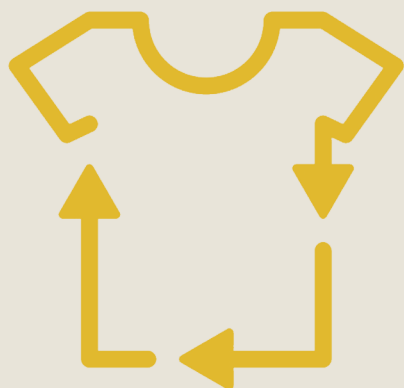
· If your favourite item wears out, repair it. Maybe embellish your repair using the Japanese technique of Sashiko.

· Buying pre-loved clothing is the most sustainable way of updating your wardrobe. There is something very satisfying about getting a bargain from a charity shop or online pre-loved clothing site!

· There are lots of pre-loved clothing shops available online: Vinted, depop, SHPOCK, THRIFT+, Etsy, ebay, Preloved, PREWORN. Oxfam has an online store too.

· If buying new, look out for clothes made from sustainable fabrics. Many high street fashion companies such as H and M are using more sustainable fabrics now. 50% of Adidas products are made from recycled polyester and Adidas have pledged that 9 out of 10 products will contain a sustainable material by 2025.

· Sustainable fabrics to look out for: Recycled and Organic Cotton, Recycled Wool, Linen, Hemp, Bamboo, Recycled polyester (PET) – made from plastic bottles, textile waste and fishing nets!, Recycled Nylon, Monocel, TENCEL Lyocell, TENCEL Modal, LENZING Ecovero Viscose and NAIA acetate.



Left to Right: Cushions by Harry Floch, Heath Kamffer, Sophie Mace and Lola Knight. Applique decoration created using off cuts and donated fabric.



Left to Right: Aprons by Jess Andrews, Veronika Smetiukh, Alfie Cundy (with matching chef's hat) and Robyn Harry. Pockets created from donated fabric and offcuts.



Left to Right: Tote Bags by Emma Look, Tully Foley, James Macrae and Ren Crompton.

THE REPAIR CAFE

By Leila Powell



Repair Cafes are becoming increasingly common in recent years, due to the climate crisis we are facing. Sewing, fixing, and mending to keep sustainability alive. In Bradford on Avon, we have our very own repair café run by several volunteers, including Rachael Hill. It runs on the third Saturday of each month (excluding the months; of April, August, and December) at Wallington Hall from 10am-1pm. The cafe is part of eight local Share and Repair charity cafes in the Bath area. Rachael said, **“It is such an important venture which not only limits landfill, but it also reduces the need to manufacture additional items too”**. This nicely summarises the views people in our community hold on doing our best to fight Climate Change.

Virtuous volunteers warmly greeted us as we entered, along with members of the public. Locals left with a look of relief that their favourite jogging bottoms were fixed and ready to wear on their run later that evening. People attending are of the mature age group, which Rachael believes is because **“they see the importance of having items fixed as it was always the way of doing things in the past”**. Furthermore, I believe young people should be attending the repair café as we are the ones that are more subjected to the replaceable nature of items, and now we need to look back at how our grandparents mended things. I found it heart-warming to learn that many of the regulars attend to just “enjoy the ethos and spirit of the event”, this makes it clear that this community isn't just made up of eco-warriors, but also a place where people can go if they feel lonely.

At the heart of the repair café is the strive to be sustainable, as repairing, and mending items help to reduce the need for landfill and new manufacturing.



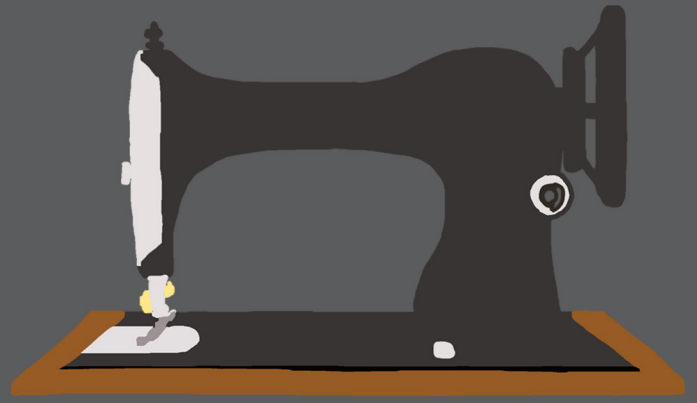
At the heart of the repair café is the strive to be sustainable, as repairing, and mending items help to reduce the need for landfill and new manufacturing. This is very important, as the more we do in our community, the more we can help to reduce global pollution.

‘Bring along your broken stuff with the opportunity to mend it, not end it!’, this quote beautifully summarises the goal of reducing pollution.

During my visit to the repair café, I was greeted with a warm welcome, I was even offered tea and cake. The organizational skills that the volunteers had are what impressed me, I first received a card that read ‘sewing’ and whilst waiting for the sewing station to become free I ate my cake.

When there I looked around noticing various stalls, intended for electrical items, knife sharpening, and even fixing toys.

The woman at the sewing station was so inspiring, she said: **“that she wants to encourage people to fix their own things”**, this is something that I felt I wanted to learn, and I found out that there are courses that you can take to learn these skills. She repaired a tear in my skirt within minutes and gave advice to my mum about how she could fix a dress of hers, we felt grateful to have met this kind woman. Moreover, this one thing that she said has stuck with me **“it’s so good the mindset of not**



throwing things away”. Nowadays I feel that we throw items away that are only minorly damaged, and we must stop doing this. So, hopefully, this has inspired you to think more deeply about how you could be more sustainable. I encourage younger people to take a visit because we’re the ones that must strive for change. I think that it is a warm, welcoming place where people gather to share their skills and to be in the heart of the community. So, why not reflect on Rachael’s inspirational words; **“Hopefully people will start to realize that it is damaging our earth to keep discarding and replacing items”**. So, when you can, why not pop along to the repair café?



STUDENTS IN MIND

Earlier this term, the school held its first Mental Health and Wellbeing Week. Students were able to engage in a range of activities to designed to support their wellbeing. Here, organiser, Mrs Barber, Assistant Head Teacher, and Y7s Sam Aston and Zac Mazan give their views.

Monday saw the arrival of Mind of the Student: university students providing workshops for school students on social media pressure, exam stress, anxiety, and depression. Years nine to thirteen practised breathing techniques and learnt proactive strategies to support them through life's twists and turns.

On the Monday evening, parents and carers attended an online session with NeuroHeadway. The workshop was brilliantly informative with lots of practical tips for talking to our children and supporting them through their teenage years. The facilitator focussed on various mental health topics, including self-harm.

On Wednesday, we opened our doors to local businesses and groups for our first Mental Health and Wellbeing Fair. The objective of the day was to provide students with the opportunity to explore ways they can support their own mental health and wellbeing by creating a sense of belonging to groups, exercise and through nature. We are so grateful to all the businesses that attended who made the event so interactive and enjoyable for our community.

Throughout the week and the following week, the I Can and I Am Bus parked up in Ashley Car Park. I Can and I Am is a charity seeking to inspire confidence in every individual by inflating their balloons of self-belief. Students took part in pizza making and a workshop to delve into the four pillars created by the organisation; belonging, moving forward, we are all uniquely made and hope. Students who visited the bus gave positive feedback and we look forward to welcoming the team back next year.

As a result of all the incredible work done by both students and staff in improving the mental health of our school community, the school has achieved the School Mental Health Priority Award! The award is given to schools "who are taking positive steps to ensure students wellbeing are being addressed and met."



THE I CAN AND I AM BUS

BY SAM ASTON AND ZACK MAZAN

Imagine stepping onto the bus, with the smell of pizza filling the deck and the smiling staff greeting you as soon as you get on. The upstairs of the bus is filled with sofas and chairs, and you get to go on a journey of self-belief! Well, in the first 2 weeks of term, St Laurence students got the chance to experience this, and eat pizza! One student commented that "We got to make our own pizzas, and then we got taken upstairs to talk about our self-belief! I learned that everyone is good at something and that we shouldn't compare ourselves with others."

The Bus works to support young student's mental health and inflate the metaphorical balloons of self-confidence inside us. The bus helps to show us that we can do anything - including making pizza!

THE MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING FAIR

Take a fan powered by a bike and an ice bucket challenge. Not a usual sight in Trinity Hall but all those activities and more happened at the St Laurence Mental Health and Wellbeing Fair.

Students got the chance to engage in hands-on activities, while learning all about mental health. You see, these things aren't just about fun. They teach us about the importance of our wellbeing. The bike and bucket help to test your resilience, and the Essential Oils company shows us the importance of remaining calm. Other stalls included: Pilates, Vitality Day Spa and BOA youth club. One student remarked: "I liked the Essential Oils because they smelt nice, and it was a good way to know how to look after yourself."

We all have different ways of helping our mental health, but at the fair there was something for everyone.

THE INCONVENIENT TRUTH ABOUT ACTIVE TRAVEL

Lauren Hobbs, Indigo Mitchell report on how the school hopes to make travel more sustainable.

In an attempt to transform the current approach to transport at St Laurence, the Green Group have devised an Active Travel Plan – awaiting a formal launch at the beginning of next term. We want to know how many St Laurence students and staff alike are currently travelling to school in an unsustainable way and how many of you would be open to making a change. You can look forward to seeing an introduction of a Bikeability scheme to St Laurence – an opportunity to learn more about road safety, and a chance to get to know your bike. With the construction of a safe cycle path along Winsley road, it is clear to see that the Bradford-on-Avon community is willing to take steps in the right direction: toward a future in active travel. As a school, we want to do the same. Even as home to one of the top five most highly polluted streets in Europe, we are determined to make a change. Starting after Easter, the Green Group is expecting a reform! If you are someone with ideas around the issue of sustainability, you can have your voice heard as a member of our new Green Council and be the one to make the changes that you want to see in your community.

These changes come after the presence of some of our current Green Group members at the Wiltshire Climate Change and Active Travel Conference earlier this term. St Laurence joined representatives from several other schools in Wiltshire – all keen to approach active travel in a new way.

Paul Turner, a member of the sustainable transport organisation Sustrans, spoke at the conference on behalf of the ministry of Eco-Education.

Turner's message was one of reclaiming power – encouraging those of us who may feel helpless in the fight against climate change to have faith that our actions as consumers can, and do, have impact.

Turner set out to expose the tendency of those in power to ignore the world's "inconvenient truths" and emphasised the danger of being dishonest about the origins of the climate crisis.

With one third of our county's current greenhouse gas emissions directly resulting from the usage of unsustainable transport - charities like Sustrans with focus on active travel are crucial to the environmental preservation of our local area. As a school, we have an important part to play. As of this year, only 2% of children cycle to school regularly – but 14% admit that they would like to. As we move into Term 5, the Green Group wants to help you to identify and overcome the barriers that prevent you from being as sustainable as you want to be – starting with how you travel to and from school.

However inconvenient, the truth is simple – the future of our planet does not involve unsustainable transport. Starting now, St Laurence stops ignoring that truth.

Illustration by Mia Browning Yr 12



READING IS A NOVEL IDEA

BY LILLY OAKLEY-GREEN



Reading is particularly important for young people as it allows us to develop stronger vocabulary and has been shown to improve empathy and understanding of self and others. It also helps us to better understand the world around us and the many cultures that are celebrated in literature.

Mental health can be improved by reading and it helps to lower stress levels and increase dopamine as, when we read, we create mental images and simulations of the events taking place in the story.

From my own personal experience visiting the pop-up bookshop, I felt that I could've spent at least an hour there. There were so many books that I wanted to pick up and read. I think it was really great for everyone that visited, as it was an opportunity for us to discover new genres and authors.

To celebrate by World Book Day, St Laurence hosted a pop-up book shop in collaboration with Bath-based bookseller Mr B's.

Hosted by the ILC, the scheme was a massive success with over 200 books to choose from. Students who came were very impressed with the range of titles saying that it was "a great opportunity to find new books" and that there was "books for many ages."

Some top titles like Heartstopper, Six of Crows and Realm Breaker, as well as some of the newest books by Stewart Foster were purchasable.

There were genres stretching from non-fiction to fantasy and sci-fi, including books aimed at KS3, 4 and 5.

There really was something for everyone to enjoy.

Having spoken to my friends about my own experiences, they say they had wished they had gone and seen it themselves.

With it being such a great success, we can't wait to see what the future holds in terms of reading and book-related events at St Laurence.



designed and presented by Ibby O'Neill Yr12

GIRL POWER



The Mighty Girls group was founded by Marsha Mars to empower this generation of young girls. Jocelyn Lucas and Indigo Mitchell spoke to Marsha Mars about the charity and its impacts on the local community.

Who is Mighty Girls for?

Girls aged 8-18 years old who are looking for fun and friendship and want to learn about gender equality and how to challenge traditional gender stereotypes.

What made you want to start Mighty Girls?

I have always taken an active interest in equalities, and after teaching and supporting young people for several years I became frustrated that there were still such big differences in outcomes in education and in the workplace for girls and women. Much of the evidence points to two main factors - gender bias and social stereotypes. I wanted to do something about it locally and started some after school sessions and workshops for Mighty Girls. Now Mighty Girls has 4 part-time staff and 16 volunteers - 6 of whom are under 18.

What kind of topics are discussed in the sessions?

We are always led by the interests of the girls taking part, so it could be anything. We have 4 key pillars which focus on women in work, wellbeing, body image and positive relationships. If we can help girls feel confident in these key areas, then we know their general wellbeing, confidence and mental health will improve.

What has been your favourite thing about running the group?

Without a doubt, working with young people. I am constantly impressed with their ideas and resilience. I enjoy helping create safe spaces, giving young people opportunities to try new fun things for work experience, encouraging them to lead the way and helping them to make positive changes in their own lives and in their communities.

Why is empowering today's generation of girls important?

To help young people continue the fight for gender equality and break down gender stereotypes that are damaging to all members of our community. There is a body of evidence to show how equalities and mental health is closely linked and it is crucial that the voices and experiences of girls and young women are heard. We provide a platform for young women and girls to share their experiences and feelings and we want to help girls have the confidence and tools to stand up for themselves and their friends, working for a more equal future for everyone.



Your website mentions that sessions involve reflecting on the “Mighty Girl of the Week.” Can you tell us more about this? Who is it this week, and why?

Marian Wright Elderman said ‘You cannot be what you cannot see’ and a key part of Mighty Girls is to make sure ‘herstory’ is heard, not just history. So, to share the stories of female pioneers from all walks of life, we celebrate the Mighty Girl of the week each week.

This week we are celebrating Winnie Harlow – a fashion model and public spokesperson for those who have the skin condition vitiligo. She challenges the stereotypes of beauty and highlights the need for differences to be accepted not picked out.

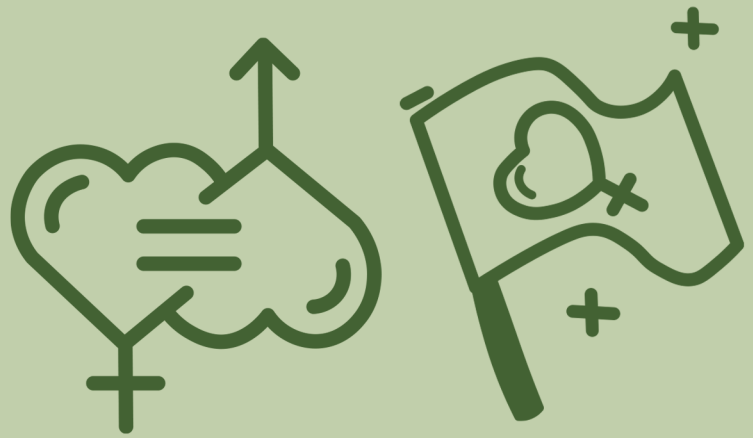
Why have you chosen to start the Positive Relationships project?

One of our core values is equality.

Over recent years we have supported more girls and young women being brave and coming forward to talk about gender-based harassment and violence. Working on these issues in a female only space is not going to solve the issue.

We need advocates and upstanders to challenge and call out these damaging behaviours and attitudes.

The Positive Relationships project is specifically about bringing these issues to everyone in the community, to give everybody a voice so that we can understand the best ways to move forwards and create a safe and equal environment for all.



What positive changes has Mighty Girls caused in members of the group?

Feedback from participants at our sessions and workshops indicates that taking time to have fun, make new friends and having time to reflect on and discuss issues facing those identifying as female helps people’s self-confidence and gives them a sense of purpose.

This term, Connect is focusing upon the theme of sustainability. Have Mighty Girls done anything to make the world a more sustainable place?

All activities we undertake we assess for impact on the environment and strive to keep our carbon footprint as small as possible. We have previously taken part in local initiatives to keep BOA clean and green. We would welcome ideas and contributions from environmentally minded Mighty Girls.

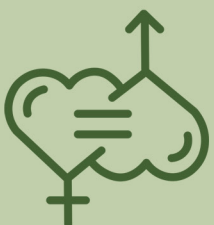
If anyone reading this would like to get involved with Mighty Girls, how can they do this?

Come and try one of our Thursday sessions free of charge, take part in any of our events or holiday workshops. There are always free and reduced-price places available – we don’t want any barriers for people to take part. We have various opportunities to volunteer or gain leadership experience. We are currently looking for volunteers for our steering group, and to help with our social media campaigns and website.

Our website is www.mightygirls.co.uk, Instagram is [mightygirls_2016](https://www.instagram.com/mightygirls_2016) and you could email team@mightygirls.co.uk.

BUILDING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS AT ST LAURENCE

Mighty Girls has launched a positive relationships project here at St Laurence. The project is aiming to tackle misogyny within the school community. We would hope that nowadays this issue wouldn't be prevalent, especially in a school setting, but unfortunately it still is. Some examples of sexism in schools include name calling, belittling of women and harmful gender stereotypes. So far 3 schools have taken part in the project and have seen a positive impact, Mighty girls have plans to complete the project in 9 more schools. The sessions at St Laurence are open students from all years. Come along to one of our sessions if you'd like to be involved.



STUDENTS VIEWS

Here, two members of the project speak about their experiences with the group.

Why did you decide to join the project?

I decided to join the positive relationships project because I felt that there was a need to educate and spread awareness of misogynistic attitudes in St Laurence and I felt that this project was a great opportunity to do so. In addition, I felt that I could personally benefit from the project as it allowed me to express my frustration in a productive way. - **Megan Foster Year 12**

To what extent do you believe that misogyny is a problem within St Laurence?

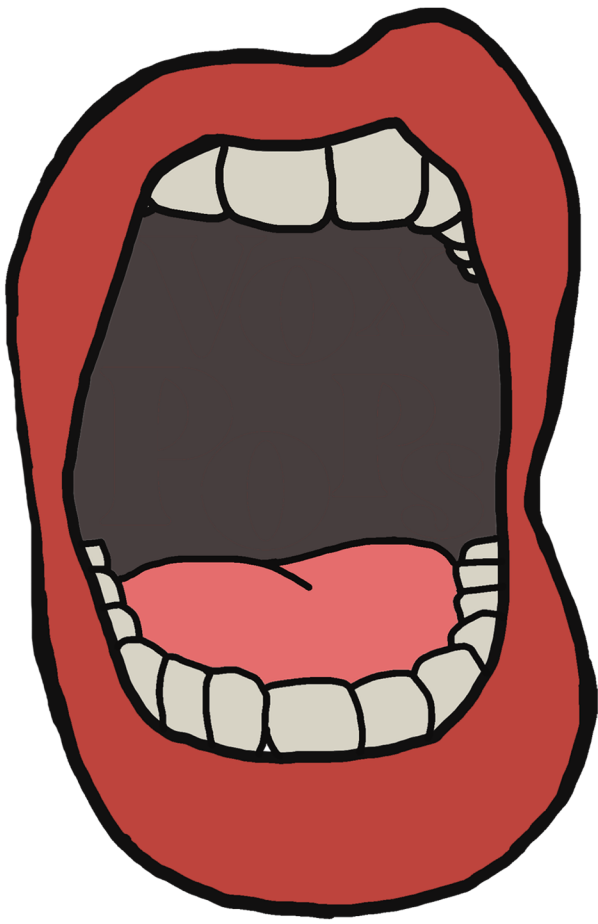
Personally, I believe that, no matter where you are, misogyny is a huge problem. This is most often prevalent in schools because of male students' group mentality, and this is not any different within St Laurence.

I think a lot of people believe that there is no misogyny in St Laurence because of the idea of a school setting being safe and that these issues are solved quite quickly, when this isn't true because often issues such as misogynistic language and behaviour are overlooked by members of staff and seen as 'just boys being boys.'

This is why we should all try and prevent these behaviours from even happening in the first place.

- **Maddison Millar Year 12**

Illustrated and presented by
Elodie Macrae Yr12



STUDENTS

HIT THE RIGHT NOTE

Last Monday, a number of St Laurence singing students went into Bath to brave the nerve-wracking experience of competing at the Mid-Somerset Festival.

The morning started brilliantly with Poppy Foot singing a song from West Side Story followed by George Sullivan-Lane singing Proud of Your Boy from Aladdin. They both received a Commended. Poppy then sang a German Art Song 'Seligkeit' and received another Commended.

This success was continued by Heidi Jakubowski in the Show Song category who performed River Lullaby so beautifully and also received a grade of Commended. Well done all.

Annabelle Grimes took to the stage in the afternoon with My Favourite Things from the Sound of Music. She performed it brilliantly and, yet again, received a commended grade (which is 85%) We then had the Duet and Trios category. Harry Britner and George Sullivan-Lane sang a brilliant two-part harmony version of The Beatles classic 'Blackbird'. This was in the same category as Poppy Foot and Lowri Pugh singing a beautiful arrangement of 'Edelweiss'. To our absolute delight, Harry and George came home with first prize and Poppy and Lowri were one mark behind and won second place. Congratulations to all the participants who demonstrated great bravery and musicianship. Amazing work and a proud day for St Laurence School.

Felicity Courage Singing Teacher

CHARITY WORK

A PIECE OF CAKE FOR ST LAURENCE STUDENT

Meg Robinson

Peter Rowland Jones is a Y10 student who has been making workers at local hospice Dorothy House's day, by making them cakes!

He started baking cakes in July when he had to choose a volunteering task for his DofE. He had the idea of baking cakes for Dorothy House after being inspired by his grandma has been baking cakes for a few years.

He baked the cakes on a Thursday after school and delivered them to reception on a Friday. Over the last months, he has made many cakes, but he particularly enjoyed baking his chocolate cake as it was his family's favourite!

Sometimes he would meet the nurses who were incredibly appreciative, as getting cakes delivered was the highlight of their day!

Dorothy House is a hospice based in Winsley, providing free support for patients when they're nearing the end of their life and their families. The nurses here work very hard to provide 24/7 care for their patients. Peter said: "It feels good to have learned a new skill and to have made a small contribution to the wonderful people at Dorothy House".

The workers seem to feel the same way, on the Dorothy House Facebook page they posted a photo of Peter and a few smiling nurses. According to them he's a "superstar".



FORMER STUDENT PUTS SIXTH FORM THROUGH PACES

A Level PE students were given the chance to take part in some real-life professional sporting challenges during a visit from former St Laurence student, Sam Cook. Sam went on from St Laurence to complete an Applied Sport Science degree at Solent University in Southampton and alongside this, he coached and volunteered at a number of football clubs in the area. A combination of hard work, qualifications and experience have led him down an interesting career path and to, in his own words, his dream job! Sam now works as a Sport Scientist at Bristol City Football Club.



Sam's inspiring and engaging presentation to students included what his day-to-day job involves and about the important role that Sport Science plays in professional sport. Sam also put students through their physical paces out on the astro turf as students had a go at some of the fitness tests he uses, and our students were able to compare their results to the results of the professional footballers Sam works with.



YEAR 5 MYSTERY OF THE RUBY EARRINGS DAY

By Kim Davis

Y5s from primary schools across Bradford on Avon joined St Laurence for an incredibly successful interactive mystery day. The 65 nine and ten-year-olds spent the day at our school, uncovering secrets, schemes and clues to figure out who stole famous singer Krystelle's ruby earrings.

To start the day, the assigned chief inspectors (volunteer year 12s including myself) gave their group of eight detectives a quick tour of St Laurence to introduce them to the school. They especially enjoyed hearing about the science dissections and seeing the Dance and Drama studios.

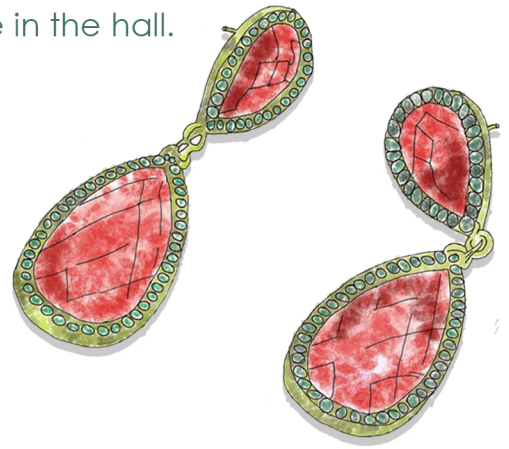
We then returned to Trinity Hall to hear about the day ahead in more detail, and to be introduced to the suspects! The A-level Drama students did a fantastic job portraying the characters all day, with a resentful guitarist; jealous ex-boyfriend and his new girlfriend; rival pop star; the victim of the theft herself; and more, all with funny pun names that the Y5s enjoyed.

First on our itinerary was watching CCTV footage of the suspects in the Lecture Theatre. There was jealousy, threats, debts owed, and old grudges to uncover. Then we discussed each of the character's motives as a group, with everyone getting involved and each taking notes in their detective notebooks.

We then headed to the crime scene. This was set up backstage as Krystelle's personal dressing room. The Y5s had the opportunity to identify fingerprints and match the handwriting of a threatening letter, as well as take photos of important evidence they would later use in a presentation. There was the same lipstick worn by one of the suspects, a feather dropped from the fan of an old school friend and the same pencil always held by the journalist amongst other clues. Then we worked on logistics, to figure out which suspect had the most opportunity to commit the crime.

After lunch, our group had the most highly anticipated part of the day, interviewing each of the suspects. They prepared some questions and sat with each of the possible culprits trying to discern the guiltiest one. Then suspects were escorted from the room by a real police officer.

Our group assembled to analyse and compare responses and possible lies. Then, we made a PowerPoint together presenting all the clues and interview answers that incriminated our chosen suspect. The eight detective inspectors in each group then confidently and independently presented their evidence and final decisions to everyone in the hall.



A massive well done to all the members of group four for having the best overall presentation, each receiving £10 vouchers and bragging rights. A huge thank you to Mr Farrer for devising and planning such an engaging plotline and day, as well as Miss Rhodes and anyone else who tirelessly worked to make this day happen. It was an enjoyable and immersive experience for everyone that attended, and I'm sorry I won't be here to see some of them come back as year 7s in September of 2024.



Illustration by
Nikola Rakowska Yr11



IT HAPPENED ON A TUESDAY...

The recent drama performance was **out of this world** says **Lucy Glynn**

What would you do if a hole ripped in the sky and people - some that looked just like you and some you'd never seen before - started falling through? Well that is just the scenario explored in the play Tuesday by Alison Carr which was performed by Y10 GCSE Drama students and some adventurous Y8s and 9s as part of the National Theatre Connections competition.

The St Laurence production, which was performed at both the Salisbury Playhouse and our own school hall, is one of 299 from schools and companies across the country competing to perform in at the National Theatre, London.

The entire play had an almost sci-fi undertone with the themes of alternate dimensions and blue lighting shining down on the cast. But the production retained some comedy elements as the play is still set in a cliched school full of angsty teenagers.

Erin, Y10, plays Magpie a doppelganger of one of the characters that falls through the sky. She said: "It was a challenging but rewarding experience and an amazing opportunity that brought us closer together." Erin was also full of praise for the staff involved. She said: "They were supportive and encouraging throughout the entire process."

And it wasn't just on stage that St Laurence students excelled; much of the behind the scenes work was also student lead including stage manager, lighting and sound. The cast have been hard at work over the past 6 months perfecting their performance under the watchful eye of Head of Drama Mrs Nash. The stage of the play was also used brilliantly as the entire cast are on stage for the whole performance.

As you can see from the photos below the cast had a lot of fun in the production of Tuesday and something much of the cast would love to do again. The results of the National Theatre Connections competition will be released later this year.

In the meantime, many of the actors behind Tuesday have been auditioning for Buggy Malone, next whole school performance so we hope to showcase their fantastic skills yet again this summer!

Cast member Ezra Ebanks gives his view of the day of workshops and rehearsals at the Salisbury Playhouse before performing on their main house stage.

Salisbury Playhouse was an awesome experience. We got to know some people who worked there, and they were very kind and helpful. We had our own room to practice Tuesday and Laura (one of the staff from the Playhouse) helped us improve our volume, gestures and drama skills in general with a lot of fun games.

After lunch it was tech rehearsal, which is basically the director taking lines from the script where the music starts or there's a sound effect. We did that for 2 hours straight; it was very tiring.

When we finished the tech run, there were 30 minutes left before we could have Domino's pizza so, to our disappointment, we had to run the play again but a speed run where we said our lines extremely fast. It was incredibly funny. Surprisingly we managed to finish a 50-minute play in 25 minutes and finally it was our pizza break! Then it was the moment the whole cast had been waiting and rehearsing for: the play started.

It went really, really well! During the play we got laughs and gasps and it was good to know the audience was engaging. The audience clapped and cheered at the end.

Student lighting technician Leiland Knight gives a behind the scenes peek at the production

Our lighting, sound and technical manager (me, Marko Pierssene and Mr Parker) started off by going to rehearsals. As this was happening, the designers were taking notes on what effects could be used.

As the show started to get closer, the lighting and sound designers started to put their notes into practice. This included things like the lighting designer playing around with lights and how they can be used to create things such as the human chain. At this point it was a case of trial and error: some lighting and sound effects stayed while others were scrapped.

About 2 weeks before the first show, which took place in Trinity Hall, the designers put together a cue sheet for their respective roles. After this we were in school on a Saturday alongside the rest of the cast to practice our cues and see whether our plans worked in reality. We had to face and overcome some challenges!



Finally, after 6 months, it was the first performance. When the show started, all the designers and operators needed to do was press the button when you got the cue. It went incredibly well and there was only a couple of small things that needed to be changed.

A week later we were on the bus to Salisbury. From a lighting point of view, it was all a bit unknown as we had not been there before and did not know what lights they would have.

When we got there we were greeted by the lovely teams from the Salisbury Playhouse and the National Theatre. The day started by us doing a workshop which was to help the actor with spacing. After a break we went to the auditorium for programming the lights and finding the right level for the sound effects. They had all the equipment we needed to put on a absolutely incredible show.

Thank you once again to all the team at Salisbury and the NT for making it possible and also to Mrs Nash, Mrs Warren and Mr Parker. If you have any questions or are interested in having a go, please speak to your Drama teacher.

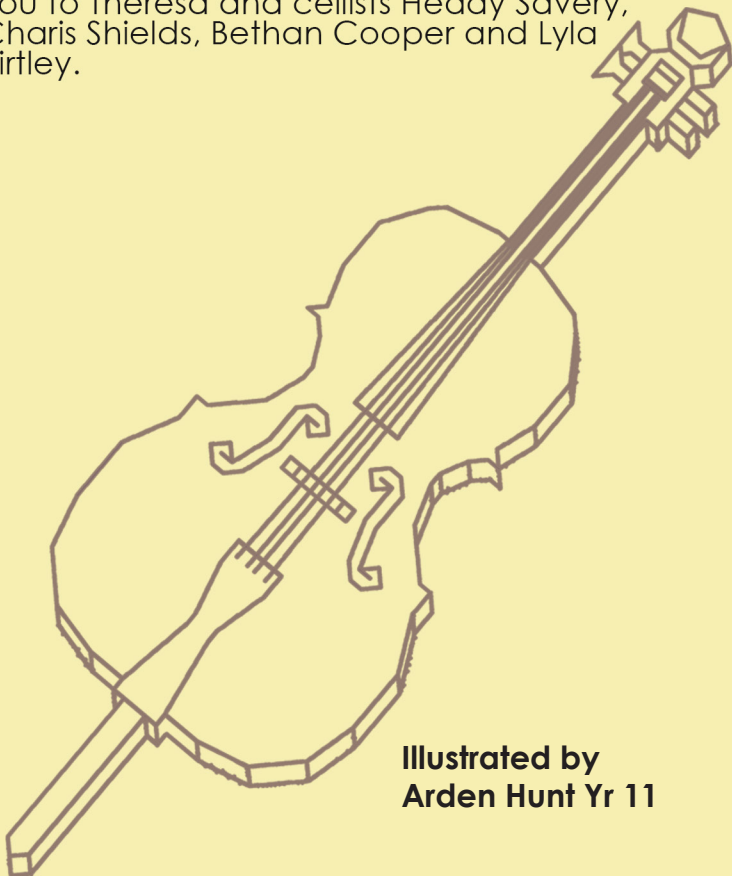


MUSIC NEWS: CELLO ENSEMBLE END OF AN ERA

This term saw the final performance by the St Laurence Cello Ensemble. They performed as part of the pre-concert entertainment in the foyer at the Wiltshire Music Centre for the sell-out concert by Blazing Fiddles.

The group has been running for many years under the direction of Theresa Cole, a member of the peripatetic instrumental staff, and has seen students progress from playing harmony and bass parts in Year 7 through to lead parts as they develop their musicianship.

Sadly, the cello has not been chosen as an instrument by many younger students in recent years, and the current ensemble – who are all in Year 11 and Year 13 – are now leaving. They have given outstanding contributions to all performances in the Music department and will be sadly missed. We wish them all the best – and look forward to building up interest in the cello and re-establishing the group in the future. Thank you to Theresa and cellists Heddy Savery, Charis Shields, Bethan Cooper and Lyla Kirtley.



Illustrated by
Arden Hunt Yr 11



DANCE NEWS

MISS EYLES

Earlier this term 51 KS3 students took part in the annual Bath Forum Showcase, The West Wiltshire Dance Festival. We have taken part in this event for the last five years and this year's stood out as one of the best.

Magic Show

Roll up! Roll up! The year 7 and 8 students met every Wednesday after school to rehearse for the Bath Forum. They have taken the theme of magic and responded with the idea of a magical mystery circus! We saw extraordinary feats of wonder, magical trickery and dancers galore in our performance of the Magical Circus. It really is The Greatest Show!

A massive thank you and shout out to Dance Ambassadors Emily Angel and Daisy Bottomley in year 10 who helped finish the choreography for the Magic Show. They rehearsed this piece every week after school and supported teachers in running the dance company as part of their Duke of Edinburgh Awards. We thank you for your support and dedication every Wednesday after school.

Black Magic

The year 9 and 10 students took the darker side of this theme Magic and created a piece based on Black Magic and the Witching hour. The dancers take you on a spell bounding journey through casting spells, truing on younger witches and being led by the elder witches. They work with Miss Eyles after school every Thursday and have showcased fantastic choreographic skills, well done dancers!



Check out this feedback sent from the leader of the dance festival. This was a message sent from Selwyn Widger from Kingdown School

"I just thought you would like to know ... Rik who does the music and has done 6 Dance Festivals described your Black Magic performance as WOW. He said it was the best performance he had ever seen at a Dance Festival".

Well done year 9 and 10 dance company for receiving this fantastic feedback.

Well done year 7 and 8 dance company for a magical evening of dance.

A massive thanks to Mrs Harford's ongoing support in after school clubs, we really appreciate all you do!



NEW PLAY HOLDS MIRROR UP TO MISOGYNY

Director Michaela Todeva explores the true nature of girlhood

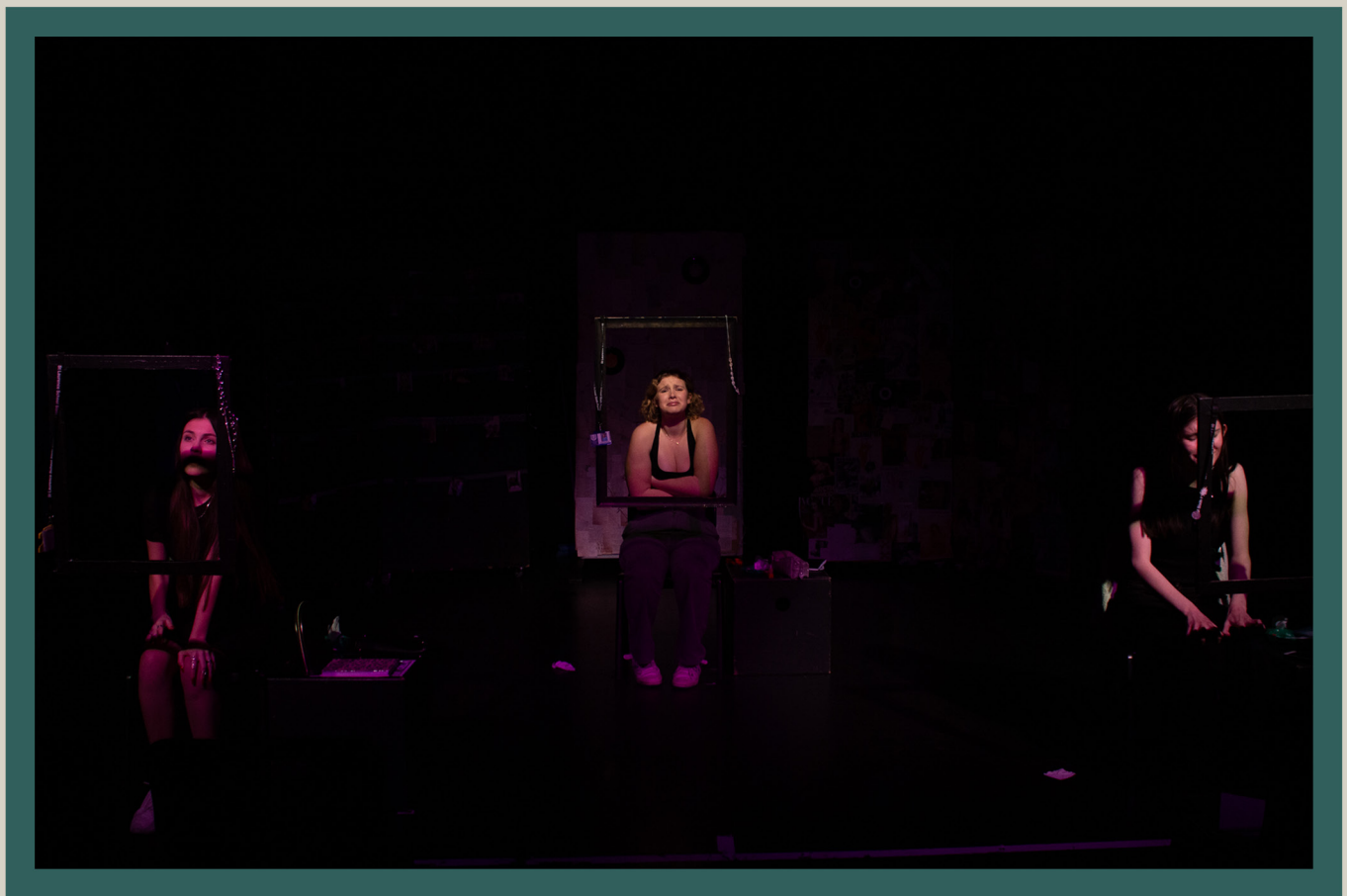
Students in Year 12 taking A-Level Drama have created their examined devised piece around the umbrella theme of girlhood, taking inspiration from esteemed theatre company, the Paper Birds. This, combined with written coursework detailing the creation of the piece, equates to 30% of the total A-Level. Here, Jocelyn Lucas, one of four students involved with the piece, takes Connect behind-the-scenes.

The performance takes the audience on a journey through the highs and lows of what it is like to be a teenage girl today. The beginning shows the stereotype, portraying girls as rather superficial or over-the-top, constantly obsessing over hair, makeup and clothes. But of course, the reality is so much more than this. As the plot progresses, the true struggles are highlighted: a persistent battle to ensure safety. Day in, day out, women of all ages are undermined, catcalled, abused, told to “cover up” to avoid distracting men, afraid to walk home at night, and much more. We wanted to include issues such as these within our piece to show that there is still plenty more work that needs to be done in order to achieve gender equality. However, we also wanted to include positive aspects of girlhood within our piece (such as friendships) to celebrate the wonders of being a girl today. But in order to create a realistic image of girlhood, we knew that we had to discuss the negative side alongside this. We found that the positives and negatives of girlhood are tightly intertwined: they are both such a universal experience amongst women that you cannot have one without the other.

The Paper Birds are a theatre company who create socially and politically themed productions in a verbatim style, meaning that a large proportion of their scripts are derived from testimonies which they collect from interviews conducted around a chosen umbrella theme. By doing so, they hope to “give a voice to the voiceless” and “provoke change” within society. This ties in well with our theme of girlhood, because the treatment of women and girls within society is something that desperately needs to change; even after years of fighting, gender equality is still a far cry from the current state of the world. In order to ensure that our piece was of a similar style to the Paper Birds’, we conducted our own interviews around the theme of girlhood, the answers to which would form part of our script. A question we asked in these interviews which is heavily featured within our performance is: “How do you feel about walking alone at night?”. The consensus amongst those who we asked this question to was that this experience is one of fear, with many expressing worries of being kidnapped, or even murdered.

To support the development of the piece, Kylie Perry, co-director of the Paper Birds, came to St Laurence to run a workshop with us. She was very impressed with the piece so far, feeling that we had used their style of theatre very effectively. However, she also felt that we should include scenes including well-known examples of the dangers of being a woman, to further emphasise the cruel reality of girlhood. After conducting some research on the matter, we decided to involve a scene about Sarah Everard, who was tragically kidnapped from Clapham by police officer Wayne Couzens as she walked home on the night of 3rd March 2021 and was later raped and murdered. In this scene, we use a mannequin to represent Sarah, with articles concerning her horrific story taped to it.





Throughout the piece, we use mirrors as a motif to, metaphorically speaking, “hold a mirror up to society” and show that change needs to come in the way different genders are treated. These mirrors are shown in three different forms: regular, framed mirrors, mirror tiles that form a fractured mirror when stuck next to each other, and a mirror ball. As the mirror tiles are being stuck together on a paper mâché mannequin, we read out short quotes showing real-life examples of sexual harassment, taken from both our interviews and the book “Everyday Sexism” by Laura Bates. In this book, Bates includes anonymous testimonies of people’s experiences of sexism, submitted to her through her website. These tiles are stuck together to form a fractured mirror, showing how these experiences “fracture” those who go through them. The performance finishes with a mirror ball being lit, showing a dual nature of girlhood. It shows the fun side: something sparkly, bright and beautiful. But, like the tiles, the fact that it essentially a broken mirror shows how misogyny has shattered the lives of so many women worldwide. However, is not to say that women cannot overcome this prejudice. We end the piece with a message of empowerment to women: ensuring them that “we shall not be silenced”.





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