



by the pupils, for the pupils

Year 11s

Having a Ball!



Interest • Interviews • Current Affairs • Debates • Reviews • Music

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With thanks to Mr Kidd, Mr Hunt and Mrs Kendall

Editors' Notes



With GCSEs and A-Levels around the corner, we're sure it's going to be incredibly hard to relax this Easter Holiday, but we do hope you take the time out to relax and enjoy yourselves; why not take a break and and read the Peacock?

As well as the inevitable 'big tests' next term, we have 'Mad Week' to look forward to, Sports Day, concerts, theatre trips, Duke of Edinburgh Bronze and Gold expeditions and the various OL reunions.

Have an egg-cellent Easter everybody!

If it is important to
you, you will find a
way.

If not, you will find
an excuse.

Unknown

Freedom of Speech: where exactly do you draw the line?

Following the horrific events of these past few weeks, which left 17 French people dead at the hands of Islamic Militants, the name 'Charlie Hebdo' has become a part of our daily lives. Admittedly, like the vast majority of the non-French population, I had never heard of the weekly 'journal irresponsable' before it became breaking news. Known for its satire, mainly cartoons that criticised aspects of political and religious beliefs, Charlie Hebdo took 'freedom of speech' to a whole new level.

So, whilst after the shootings, 'Je Suis Charlie' became one of Twitter's most used hashtags ever, and people took to the streets all over Europe in protest, perhaps it's time we all took a step back and actually looked at what the little newspaper was publishing. There is no way one can condone the barbaric acts by the men who stormed the head office on Wednesday 7th January, but maybe, just maybe, the comic itself went a little too far. It's all well and good preaching the concept of freedom of speech, but there are certain boundaries to which we should adhere. The question is: where to draw those lines?



Je Suis
Charlie

Where does one draw the line between making a joke, and racism?

Between questioning the beliefs of a faith, and blasphemy?

A seemingly harmless joke may provoke a few laughs from the people who aren't at the receiving end, but may also be interpreted as an insult. 'Freedom of Speech' is a term we are all acquainted with, and we often use it to our best advantage.

However, does 'Freedom of Speech' imply that one can make fun of - or be verbally abusive to - someone or something purely because they have a 'right' to do so? If we want a peaceful society, we have to have set boundaries for what we say and do.

You can be as free with your speech as you want to be, but that doesn't mean you should do it at the expense of others. There needs to be a sense of mutual respect, to quote the headmaster from his assembly last week. There should be respect between the media and the public and between faiths. No one said you couldn't comment on something you find perhaps peculiar, but you shouldn't make fun of something that is incredibly important to others.

Unfortunately, that's what Charlie Hebdo had done, and continues to do.

I had the opportunity to read the latest issue of Charlie Hebdo, published a week after the shootings. I was shocked at the graphic content it had, and although my French isn't the greatest, I got the general gist of what the newspaper was trying to say. It was blasphemous, and even though my faith wasn't one of the ones victimised, I still felt somewhat insulted by the comics. If that was 'Freedom of Speech', I'm not surprised many felt angered by it. This is where the term mutual respect comes into play. The world needs to learn and to understand that we cannot thrive whilst one party is constantly attacking another, and peace can only be achieved with respect.

Kaneeka Kapur

To ban, or not to ban: that is the question.

Lance Armstrong is 43 years old.

Lance Armstrong won seven successive Tours de France.

Lance Armstrong is a self-confessed drug cheat.

Lance Armstrong has a LIFE-LONG BAN from competing in any sporting event which follows the World Anti-Doping Agency ('WADA') code.

The question is: is this punishment proportional to the crime, or has Lance Armstrong been made a scapegoat?

At the time of Armstrong's success, doping was pervasive within the pro-peloton; he was not alone in making the decision to dope, and did so alongside a number of his teammates. However, even though the majority were cheating in this way, it is still not acceptable. Christophe Bassons, 'Mr Clean', was one of the few who didn't dope; he also didn't achieve the success that many thought he was capable of, and can therefore be seen as a victim of the endemic doping culture. Because of people like Bassons suffering as a result of this culture, there is no doubt that those using drugs to enhance their performance should be punished, but how severely?

Lance Armstrong was not treated fairly or equally when compared with other riders, who seemingly committed an identical crime. Whilst he was the leader of his team, and he may have been instrumental in persuading his teammates to take drugs, there is no evidence to suggest Armstrong should've been dealt with so much more severely than anyone else. Alexandre Vinokourov received only a two-year ban for doping during the 2007 Tour de France, and later went on to achieve Olympic gold in the men's road race in 2012 and is now the 'Directeur Sportif' of Astana, a pro-cycling team. Surely it can't be fair for Vinokourov to be allowed to pursue such opportunities as the Olympic Games, and to be allowed to hold a position of responsibility within cycling, whilst Lance Armstrong will never again be able to compete even in a friendly swimming meet, let alone the Olympics.

One thing, however, that did set Armstrong apart from other cheats was his behaviour. Throughout his career, the way he acted towards others was appalling; even Armstrong himself conceded that it was "unacceptable and inexcusable". One example

of his poor conduct was his treatment of Christophe Bassons, who was bullied off the 1999 Tour de France for bringing up the subject of doping. He also responded with legal threats when a soigneur in his US Postal team provided details of his doping. There is no question that Armstrong's behaviour was wrong and was deserving of a punishment, but is a life-long ban from ALL sporting events following the WADA code just? I don't think it can ever be just, particularly when Armstrong has now admitted and accepted that his actions were wrong; he regrets the way he behaved and has spent the past two years trying to amend the relationships he tore apart. If this isn't considered as a form of repentance, then what on earth does he need to do in order to repent? Furthermore, the fact that he has to serve a life-long ban could be seen as a breach of human rights, as there is no mechanism for rehabilitation, and no chance for him to win back the opportunities he has lost.

Despite this, his actions not only impacted individuals, but also large companies. Trek Bicycles could argue that they paid millions of pounds under false pretences, as they paid Armstrong to compete and win on their bikes, and contributed to Armstrong's net worth (which is now reputed to be 125 million dollars!). However, they may find it difficult to argue financial loss, because Armstrong's success in the Tour de France led to them growing revenues ten-fold. Similarly, Armstrong's success also served to increase the awareness of his own charity foundation, Livestrong, helping to raise 500 million dollars, which was used to help 3 million people. Whilst this doesn't make his actions justifiable, Armstrong himself summarised the 'issue' perfectly, saying: "Do we want to take it away? I don't think anybody says 'yes'".

The big question remains: is the punishment of a life-long ban proportional to his crime, or has Lance Armstrong been made a scapegoat?

Sarah Turner



Life Stories

The new 'Friends of LGS' committee came up with the 'Life Stories' concept as a way of parents and friends of the School sharing their life experiences. The events, which will occur intermittently yet frequently over the terms ahead, aim to bring together pupils, staff and parents and have been organised in conjunction with Mr Longson and Mr Allen in a way that compliments the current Careers Education programme offered by LGS. The evenings are aimed at pupils of all ages and each event aims to inspire the audience by relaying the stories and experiences of three successful people in a given field. The inaugural event featured professional sportspeople. Future Life Stories events will cover, amongst others, Entrepreneurism, Architecture, Law, Finance, The Media and Business.



On Tuesday 20th January 7:30, we saw the first in a series of talks focusing on the life stories of inspirational figures for students, parents and staff. This week's event focused on sports figures and the audience heard from Ben Kay, Sonia Odedra and Clive Platt. The event was compered by Mr Rich and he gave a brief explanation of the respective interviewee's different backgrounds.

The fifteen minute interviews followed by questions from the audience provided a great insight into the worlds of professional cricket, rugby and football. First to be interviewed was Clive Platt and he gave a great insight into the world of professional football which he left last year as a result of persistent injury problems. Mr Platt is now a financial adviser for other sports men and women and he stressed the importance of a "life plan" for those considering a career in sport. He talked about how he is concerned when players are being taken from schools at ever younger ages to be inducted into youth academies without the necessary skills they will need after their career in sport inevitably ends.

Sonja Odedra, the youngest of the interviewees, was interviewed after Mr Platt and provided a helpful contrast as she is at the beginning of her cricket career with England and Notts country. She detailed the rise to her current position from bowling for her older brother in the garden as a child through to her time in university and her more recent career.



Having originally been quite daunted by the prospect of interviewing Ben Kay - an ex-international and lions rugby player, I found myself shift into the interview surprisingly comfortably, almost forgetting the existence of the audience as the bright stage lighting shone on us.

As the person with the least interviewing experience on the stage, I tried to make it light and conversational whilst still finding out the career path that Ben took, how he ended up as playing professionally and what advice he would give to young people considering playing sport for a living. As the most experienced interviewee, Ben's story of his career was fascinating. He explained how he had started out playing sports for fun when he was younger with his Dad who, from his repeated references throughout the interview, it became clear was his greatest role model. The advice his father gave to him was the advice that he shared with the aspiring athletes present in the audience; "No matter how long it takes you to find your passion, do what you love, because you will succeed most doing something that you enjoy."

I thoroughly enjoyed the experience of interviewing such a highly successful person, who has 2 British Lions Caps, 62 England Caps and 281 Tigers Caps to his name, and would recommend to all pupils to come to any other 'Life Stories' careers event arranged by the Friends of Leicester Grammar. The information and advice you can gain from industry experts is priceless, and you may just find something within their interview that inspires you.

Gabriella Potts

Women In Hollywood

People have a tendency to think that Hollywood doesn't discriminate against women. There are very few films with no women in the cast at all, and so, people presume this means that Hollywood shows women to be equal. Unfortunately, this is not always the case.

The "Bechdel Test" reviews whether or not a film is sexist. It has three simple rules: there have to be at least two women, these women have to talk to each other at some point in the film and the conversation has to be about something other than men. This sounds like a simple test that should be easy to pass, but you'd be surprised by how few films do. Some famous failures include 'Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part Two', 'Avatar' and the original 'Star Wars Trilogy', although the prequel series passes.

In fact this year, only two of eight Oscar nominated films for best picture pass the test, however all the films in the category are about men. 'American Sniper' is about a Navy SEAL, 'Imitation Game' is about Alan Turing, 'The Theory of Everything' is about Steven Hawking, 'Selma' is about Martin Luther King Jr., 'Birdman' only has women in supporting roles, 'Whiplash' is about a male drummer and his male instructor, 'Grand Budapest Hotel' doesn't focus on women and 'Boyhood', as the name suggests, is about men.

Generally, there aren't many women nominated for gender neutral categories at award shows, but looking at the statistics for women in the TV industry shows us that the reasoning behind this is that there are actually few women in this industry. In America, women make up 26% of lead actors in broadcast reality shows and 27% of lead actors in cable reality shows. Creators of broadcast shows are 29% female and creators of cable shows are 23% female. Writers are 13% female and directors are 6% female. Given that directors make most of the final decisions, this could be interpreted as meaning 94% of what we see is controlled by men, which could be promoting a narrow view point.



You may ask: “Why not make more films with female protagonists?” and that’s a good question. 2013’s highest earning film was ‘Catching Fire’ and this was followed in 2014 by ‘Mockingjay Part 1’ with \$333.2 million (passing ‘Guardians of the Galaxy’ at \$333.17 million). ‘Divergent’ also made a lot of profit and it has become apparent in recent years that films with female protagonists tend to do well at the box office. So, why not make more films with female leads?

There is also a big difference in pay between men and women. Last year’s film, ‘American Hustle’, starred Jennifer Lawrence and Amy Addams. At the time, Amy Addams had four Oscar nominations and Jennifer Lawrence had won an Oscar, however, they were contracted to be paid 28% less than their male co-stars. They’re obviously just as talented, so why weren’t they paid as much? Because they’re women. If you think that sexism isn’t a problem in today’s society, this in itself proves that it is a problem.

Jennifer Lawrence is also famous for standing up against media influence. After winning her Oscar, she was asked not about her inspiration, but about the process of getting ready. She answered: “I got up, tried my dress, took a shower...” Scarlett Johansson made a similar point at an Avengers interview when she was asked a question about her diet, whereas Robert Downey Jr was asked a question about character and motivation. She queried: “How come you get the really interesting existential question and I get the rabbit food question?”

These replies make a serious point about the questions women are asked in interviews, and this has been acknowledged. “Ask Her More” is a campaign that’s been set up encouraging reporters to ask stars questions about more than just diets and dresses, because after all, shouldn’t women, just like men, be recognised for their achievements and hard efforts, rather than this season’s designer clothes? The media controls our lives and in order to stop sexism, we first need to control media influence. Maybe if we can stop sexism in Hollywood, we can stop sexism in the rest of the world too.

Jasmine Parker



Richard III: Changing Leicester

Ever since Richard III's body was found in the Grey Friars car park in the centre of Leicester, the city has changed. The King's body was found in the Social Service's car park next door to the empty, old Leicester Grammar St. Martin's Building, which housed the Art, D.T and Prep Departments. Parts of the Friary were found under the playground, where many Prep students played and teachers parked their cars.

Months after the remains were found the council announced big plans to make Leicester a tourist destination. A new indoor market has been added, and a new café and shops incorporated into the outdoor market. Many buildings (including the old council offices on New Walk) have been knocked down and more modern buildings will replace them in the coming years. The area in and surrounding the cathedral has also been modernised. The road connecting St Martin's Square and the cathedral has been pedestrianised. The Cathedral Gardens now look very inviting, with a sculpture of Richard III just across from the old school building, which has now been turned into a very modern museum. Inside the cathedral, the small chapels have been closed off for refurbishment and a new altar has been placed especially for Richard III's funeral.

As mentioned, the old St Martin's building has been transformed. On walking in, you can see many reproduction paintings, illustrating Richard III's life and the battles he fought. Then there is a short video about Richard's upbringing; this section is called "Dynasty". Then you walk into a new section all about the battles that led up to his death and about his burial in Grey Friars. This is called "Death" (the old Prep Department!).



After a short break in the cafe (the old D.T lab) you can then head upstairs and discover all about the men who have played Shakespeare's Richard III on stage and in film; the people behind his discovery; and also see a map of the Medieval town of Leicester (the old Art rooms). You then go into an interactive area about the science behind the dig. You can see the DNA match; a reconstruction of Richard's skeleton; a model of what his face would have looked like and lots more (in the old Food Technology room).

This final area is known as "Discovery", which means that the new King Richard III centre is called Dynasty, Death and Discovery.

Then as you expect it all to be over, you walk down the stairs and enter a room, this room has a glass floor and underneath there are two small markers. These markers show where Richards's body lay. There are also some tiles from the altar and a few walls and remains of the friary. There are windows in which you can see the direction and placement of where the rest of the friary was.

This is a good time to visit the visitors' centre because on the 26th of March 2015 after the body has toured many villages surrounding Bosworth Battlefield; there will be an internment for Richard. This event is being broadcast on television and will be watched by millions across the world. The week before that there will be many celebrations at the battlefield, including a tour of the likely place where Richard died in 1485, a play about Richard and his life and many talks about the medieval ages and Richard. If you have not been already I would suggest going to see the exhibition and now is the perfect time.

Ella Davies

Geneva Trip

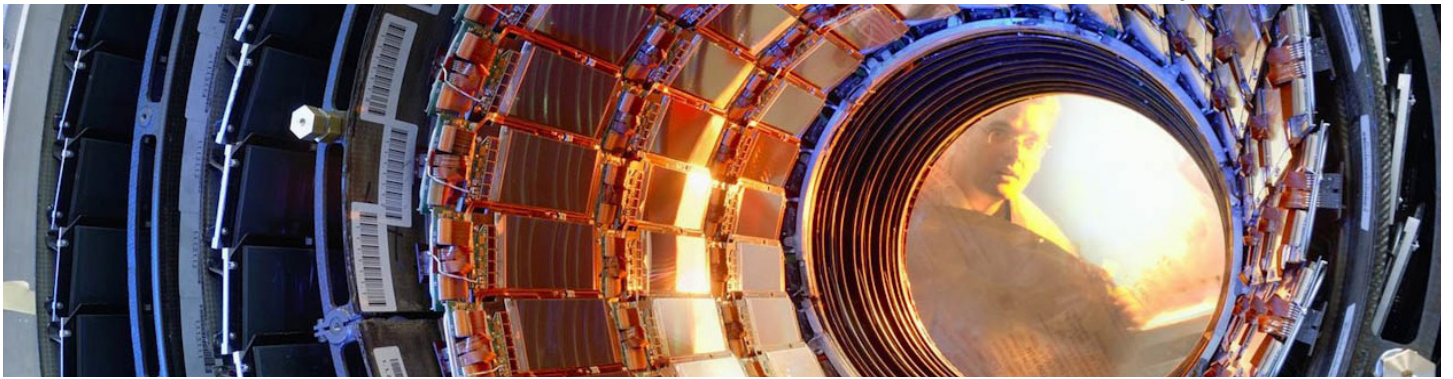
When I first heard there was going to be a trip, there was none of the initial scepticism as to how good it could be: I was as excited as a kid to be going on a Geneva trip! CERN was the main focus of the trip; it is the European organisation for nuclear research, and acts as almost a second home to many of the world's leading physicists. Our excitement was for everything we would see and do.

On the day after we arrived, we visited Bern (rhymes with CERN!). While in Bern, we were allowed to go to the top of the cathedral, where we saw a view of the city. Shortly after that, we split into groups in order to explore the city at our free will (as long as we didn't do anything stupid!). On the final day, we went to CERN and saw the CMS, which was the part of the large hadron collider. We were lucky to go down and view it, as the next day, it was to be closed for the next three years.

That morning, we had also been to the UN building; one of the rooms there had a creative ceiling of stalactites, which had been provided by a French artist. It represented the different viewpoints of people, as there was such variation when looking at them from different angles – wow!

My favourite part of the trip was the banquet on the final day, where we had fondue, and were treated to live music and men (in lederhosen) playing music with spoons. It was a great trip, and I am very happy I had the opportunity to go!

Ryan Patel



German exchange

Seven of Year Ten's German students travelled to Hofheim on the 6th March to do an exchange with the Elisabethenschule there, and I was lucky enough to be among them. I know it's a cliché, but this genuinely was the best residential trip I have been on. The thing about an exchange is that is completely unlike any other experience you will ever have at school; you are thrown together with a teenager whom you have never met and whom speaks a different language to you. Quite honestly, it was terrifying. But, you know, the good kind of terrifying! It is a one-off experience to be completely independent and to test yourself. If I'm honest, I haven't come home with massively improved German (the only bit of vocabulary that has stuck is ein Lüffel, a spoon, which somehow I doubt will be the difference between an A and an A*, but my outlook has been massively increased. It is a challenge that is worth taking.

Mary Osborne



Teenage

UKIP:



or

Socialist

Threat

Farce?

It would be pretty much impossible to have missed UKIP: the beer-drinking, “man of the people” Nigel Farage and his band of Merry Men burst onto our screens in 2010, and haven’t really left it since. There is rarely a day in which UKIP isn’t mentioned in the news, whether it is because of a member complaining about “negroid” features, or because yet another Tory MP has defected to them. But what is UKIP’s deal? Do they have a genuine shot at Westminster? Or are they just, as David Cameron puts it, “fruitcakes and loonies”? Nigel Farage has always painted himself as “the guy next door”; he holds all press conferences in his local pub, and portrays himself as an alternative to the Westminster Etonites. He has gained a rather poor reputation from various unsavoury comments he has made: for example, referring to Chinese people as “chinky”, and blaming immigrants for causing traffic which made him late to a meeting. Farage has gone to such great lengths to try and show himself as “normal”, that I believe he has lost all credibility. He is seen as a joker, a bigot; much as he may pick up votes, I don’t think he will ever convince enough of the country of his trustworthiness for him to get into power.

At the 2010 elections, UKIP had just 3.2% of the vote. In February this year, they peaked at 40,000 members. This party has boomed over the last five years, as its simplistic, possibly brutal policies have appealed to people. When you look at the way our current government has treated the working class over their term, it is little surprise that people are looking for

alternative

parties, outside the Big Three.

Nigel Farage and his party have been portraying themselves as the saviours of the workers, but their manifesto says otherwise. UKIP have said they would “put an end to most legislation regarding matters such as weekly working hours, holidays... overtime, redundancy or sick pay etc. and provide a statutory, standard, very short employment contract template...”. They would sacrifice the workers’ protection of rights. They would remove the “bureaucracy” which protects our workers from exploitation, in order to create their idea of a more streamlined kind of politics. They are getting serious numbers of working class people supporting them because they believe that UKIP have their interests at heart.

That, I believe is the real danger of UKIP. They are stealing members and votes from left wing parties, such as TUSC and Green, who are genuinely trying to help workers, by raising the minimum wage and improving the legislation protecting workers.

I do not think UKIP are a threat, in terms of getting into government. UKIP peaked a few weeks ago, and it’s only downhill from here. They are so bothered about being anti-establishment that they have become inapplicable in government. They are a farce; but they are a farce that some people are falling for, and it is damaging other parties.

Mary Osborne



DESERT ISLAND DISCS

Dr Ainge's Choices

4th Movement of Walton's Symphony No.1

It's uplifting, it's energetic, it's bright, it's rhythmic... And when you're feeling a bit down, or something bad has happened, if you stick that on and play it half a dozen times it makes you feel so much better.

Any of the Bach Cantatas

For me, there's such a certainty in these songs and with all the uncertainties of life, listening to Bach just provides some reassurance. In all his music, he never wrote a bad note.

Prelude and Fugue in D for Organ by J.S. Bach

This was a piece I listened to when I just started to play the organ, at fourteen, and I just thought "I'd love to play that one day" and then probably about seven years later I was just delighted when I finally managed to play. It's such a marvellous feeling when you can recreate that by using my own hands and feet.

Hello all!

The other day I read an article online complaining that ‘All hope is lost for future generations’ because of words such as ‘yolo’ and ‘swag’; how dubstep/techno music isn’t ‘real’ music, and how we are all always attached to our smart phones. This got me thinking- are these teenage cultural aspects really something to judge the next generations’ success by?

The idea of no hope suggests that this generation is not going to achieve anything, possibly because we are so ‘self-involved’ on our various smartphones and tablets. But what are we doing on these devices? To an onlooker it seems like we are absentmindedly texting a friend who we just spent an entire day with, as opposed to actually interacting with people around us. But what right does an onlooker have to make this judgement? These devices enable us to talk to family and friends who we love on the other side of the world; it enables us to check the world’s current affairs within a tap on a screen. We all use smartphones so we should not shame teenagers for the ways they decide to use theirs.

We have all heard comments from our parents or elders saying: ‘I don’t see why you’re so attached to your phone; when I was your age I was reading a book or going outside!’ but also when they were our age there were so many different devices they didn’t have but they use now on a day-to-day basis. The generations are different and, again, we shouldn’t shame teenagers for this.

So yes, maybe we do take our smart phones out of our pockets to check the time, giving ‘pocket watch’ a new meaning. But we should not shame a teenage generation because of their culture.

I hope you all have a great Easter Break!

Soyez Sage.

#Up2Us

#Up2Us was trending all over twitter on the 10th of February in support of this year's Internet safety day message: 'Let's create a better internet together'. With a collaborative effort, it aimed to prompt millions into trying to improve our online community.

So what was meant by this?

Well, it is closely linked to the results of a recent survey carried out by UK Safety Internet Centre called 'Friendship in a Digital Age'. It firstly praised social media for the positive effects children felt it had had on their relationships, saying 60% of those asked said they had grown closer to friends as a result of the internet and 55% saying it enabled them to communicate with friends several times an hour (although some may interpret this last statistic as hindering social development and interaction in the real world).

The survey then also said that 30% of 11-16 year olds have had some experience of someone being mean to them online in the previous year. In connection to this, it highlighted that 75% of the same age group see the younger generation as holding power to create a 'kinder online community'. So, the basic idea was to change peoples' attitudes as to how they behave so that not so many people experience meanness online: 'Let's create a better internet together'.

I feel that this was a good, positive message. The reality of our experience online is that although sinister figures and cyber bullies are still victimising vulnerable individuals, very few people experience extreme maliciousness online. We as a society are now very aware of big threats online and have made massive efforts to respond to them to the point that awareness of how to deal with these problems is very high and all children are now taught about them in school. We have become much better at responding to and eliminating them.

However, it could be argued that for the vast bulk of people there is a large and easily tackled more common issue: people aren't nice online. Mainly, this is a result of the de-sensitizing nature of social media but also the ambiguity of interpreting text on a screen. This means that people behave and act online in a way they often wouldn't in real life.

So the message communicated this year, via events held and educational packs distributed by over 800 organisations involved, was to ask people to 'do something kind online'. Maybe posting something nice, or share something supportive via social media for example. You can find the campaign under #Up2Us: why not try make your own 'kind online' contribution?

Ruth Whiteside



#UP2US

WATCHYOURSPACE.IE

St. Patrick's Day



St Patrick's Day occurs on the 17th March every year in Ireland (and beyond) in remembrance of St Patrick's death. In Ireland, they have festivals and parades throughout the day. They would usually wear a green shamrock, which is a small green trefoil; it is also the symbol of Ireland. Most people know it as a clover (wrongly).

St Patrick was born in Roman Britain; his father was a Deacon and his grandfather was a priest in the Christian Church. He was taken to Gaelic Ireland at the age of 16 and he spent 6 years as a slave, working as a shepherd. People say that God told him to flee to the coast and that he would get home on a ship. When he returned, he became a priest after first hearing about God from people around him.

Daisy Walker

World Book Day

World book day was on Thursday 5th March 2015; it's a day when schools across the country take part in book themed activities. This year the theme was 'Fantasy Worlds'. There were many activities in the library such as the 'Spiderwick Chronicles Games', 'Find the fantasy characters around the school', 'Lord of the Rings top trumps', 'Pin the Tail on Aslan' and 'Guess the Shelfie'. 'Guess the Shelfie' is a game where the teachers took pictures of their book shelves, and then students had to guess who shelf belongs to whom. You could also make Origami bookmarks.

Every student in the UK were given a £1 book tokens to encourage more young people to read. World Book Day offered 10 books which you can exchange your £1 book token, some of these are 'Geek Girl: Geek Drama' by Holly Smale and 'Killing the Dead' by Marcus Sedgwick.

This year, a live programme called 'The Biggest Book Show on Earth' took place. It is a chain of short 10 minute videos featuring many authors supporting World Book Day such a Steven Butler whose video was a virtual workshop.

Maya Patel

Question Time

Groucho Marx once said that politics is ‘the art of looking for trouble’, and for those watching the fifth annual Question Time on Thursday the 26th February, this would seem undisputable! Chaired once again by the inimitable Mr Allen, the panel this year consisted of James Hallwood, Former Chairman of the Young Fabians, Emma McClarkin, Conservative MEP, Nimit Jethwa of the Green Party, Alex Wild, Research Director of The Taxpayers’ Alliance and Professor Michael Hirst of De Montfort University; a veritable feast of political and social activists from both sides of the ideological spectrum. The questions were of course centred mainly on the upcoming general election, with the panellists predicting, in a rare moment of agreement, that UKIP and Nigel Farage would not achieve a high percentage of the vote, but that a hung parliament is highly likely.

With contributions from a large number of both teachers and students, this year’s Question Time was perhaps the most interactive so far, with free and frank discussion which thankfully (though surprisingly) did not come to blows! Serious matters such as the NHS, university and tuition fees were all matters explored, ending with Mr. Allen’s ‘quirky’ question asking what the guests would want in their Oscar goody-bags! The answers (Benedict Cumberbatch and the re-nationalisation of railways to name a few) were a great way to round up what had been a great night of intellectually stimulating discussion.

Rowenna Patten



'The narrative account and description in the telling of the story is strong.

I felt drawn-in at the first page. The characters came alive in my mind, and their stories were vivid and powerful'

Glyn Iliffe, an author who specialises in classical literature, came to Leicester Grammar earlier this term, to lead a workshop with the Year 10 Classics and English students. His novels, based on the adventures of Odysseus, are to educate 'the everyday man on the street' about Greek Classics, in a medium that everyone can enjoy. His workshop started out with a brief summary of the plots of his books, followed by an exercise on character creation, where we learned just how important strong characters are in a story. Once we had completed the sheet, where we designed our own characters based on Greek mythology, he gave us an excerpt of two of his favourite novels, and taught us how to structure an effective first page. Overall, it gave us a great insight on how to plan and execute writing a book, and also an insight into the life of an author. We are very grateful to the English department for organising such a fantastic opportunity for us.

Writing Workshops

Kerry Young, whose novels have been shortlisted for the 'Costa book of the year,' talked about her journey creating 'Pao' and 'Gloria' with a small group of Year 10 English students, on the evening of the 17th of March. Having grown up in Jamaica during the political struggle it faced, she used her experiences as a child to write her novels, wanting the reader to understand why Jamaica has such a violent gun culture. She wanted to convey that Jamaica wasn't all about people shooting each other, and actually that some parts of the island had beautiful, rich areas. Her books follow the story of a young boy, Pao, who grows up within a mob, learning the trade, and ultimately becomes 'the Godfather of Chinatown.' Young cleverly intertwined the country's unstable political structure with his story, giving context to all the riots and shootings that took place. She gave us an extensive history of Jamaica, and said that she wanted people to 'hear Jamaica, see Jamaica, smell Jamaica and even taste it,' through her books. It was absolutely incredible, hearing her talk about her books, with which she has an intense emotional connection. 'Pao,' 'Gloria,' and 'Faye' (Faye is to be released next year) are parallel narratives, and have been given fantastic reviews. 'Pao' and 'Gloria' were nominated for a number of awards, and I'm sure 'Faye' will follow the trend. Thank you so much to Ms Young for coming in and giving us such a fantastic talk.

"Set against the turbulent backdrop of a country on the cusp of a new era, Gloria is an enthralling and illuminating story of love and redemption."



House events



On Wednesday 4th March the first ever house darts competition was on at 1:15. The first match was Masters vs. Dukes- it started off quite equal but towards the end of the match Masters built an unassailable lead, ending in crushing victory. The following match was Judges vs. VCs. The match was very even throughout, until the last dart of the last minute, which gave Judges the upper hand, resulting in their victory. Thanks to everyone who took part in this amazing new house event; we look forward to the final at the end of term.

Edward Patten

