

A WADHAM SCHOOL STUDENT PUBLICATION

# THE QUILL



# OH GRANDMAMA, SHE'S ABSOLUTELY FABULOUS!



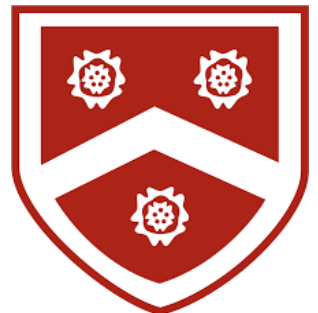
**I SPY WITH MY LITTLE EYE**  
Security correspondent and intelligence expert Gordon Corera



**WELCOME TO OUR WORLD**  
Wadham School Open Evening 2025



**CAMP KENYA 2025**  
Wadham pupils having a global impact



**ACTING LEGEND, BRITISH ICON**  
Actress, activist and star of *Wednesday*  
Dame Joanne Lumley



**COUNTING DOWN TO CHRISTMAS**  
What's worth gifting to a loved one this year?



**Plus Reviews, Previews and Opinions**



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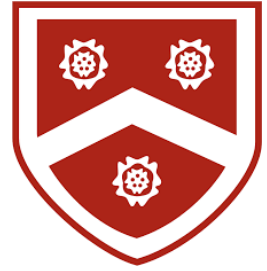


office@wadhamschool.co.uk

Welcome to edition 21 of the Quill and the mid point of the first term of a new school year at Wadham. Like a broken record, I find myself repeating how again I'm amazed at the creative talents of the students here at Wadham, and grateful for the time and energy they have put into what is a bumper issue, possibly the biggest we've ever produced.

In this, our 21st edition you'll find...

- ◆ Interviews with acting legend Dame Joanna Lumley as well as intelligence expert Gordon Corera.
- ◆ A break down of the 2025 Wadham School Open Evening
- ◆ A guide on potential Christmas presents in the forthcoming festive season
- ◆ As well as the usual stories, articles and reviews of what's interested the great and good at Wadham.



**Happy reading!**  
**Peter Hopwood ~ Editor**

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# Wadham School Open Evening - Sept 25th 2025

By Tessa Hayes

Phoebe and I went across the school visiting their departments and interviewing



the staff on hand. I started off with modern foreign languages, which had a range of activities including food from around Europe, fun, engaging games such as 'make an animal from modelling clay and name it in French and German' and books from France and Germany that are published in their own language.

They also stated *"it's so much fun especially when you visit another country and don't speak that language enough to fully understand. It enriches your whole life, so why not just come and learn a different language, come on i know you will benefit!"* - Mr Phelan.



Thanks to Mr Phelan and Miss Whitcombe for bringing MFL to life and for reminding us about the importance of languages in the modern world.



Next, I stepped back in time and ventured to the history department, on the evening being run by Lead Teacher, Mr Cassidy. Running solo on the evening, as Mr Hopwood was busy in A13 with the Quill, he had a variety of cool tasks to venture into, such as 'Guess when the drink was first made?' and the 'Who was the buried skeleton?'.

I asked him a range of questions including 'Why should children learn your subject, what do you have for offer and what

do you think the best part of your subject?'.

After this I ventured over to the PE department which said to us how much physical education affects your physical, mental and social life.



- ◆ Physical: it improves health, fitness and confidence. It boosts your self esteem and makes you feel good about yourself.
- ◆ Mental: helps with communication and teamwork skills. It helps both your inner and outer self.
- ◆ Social: it increase your social life as in most sports you work as a team which is good in later life as when you go to work, you must have some people skills.



There were a range of cool sports on offer to engage with such as challenge parents and fellow students at a speed race, gutter racing and trying out badminton and table tennis. Lastly you could watch some awesome students have some fun on the trampolines and touch the sky. Of course a big thank you to the amazing sports department for making our PE experience the most fun!

Bouncing on from the new sports hall I headed next to science. Science is an important subject as without it none of us would be here right now.

It's everywhere and anywhere, is fun, cool and can help you find answers for everything. On the night they had a range of things to do and see, like seeing a real pig's heart and looking at a model of the inside of a human body.



There was even a experiment called the music of fire when fire made music! Crazy, right? As Miss Ridgley said *"science answers all the questions and questions all the answers... it also has some awesome stick insects!"*

With the end time of 7pm approaching, one of the last departments I visited was art. One of the most eye catching parts of the school, art it allows you to be you in a safe environment and express yourself with freedom.



It also allows you to escape normal life without leaving the classroom! You can see others works and see what different year groups are doing at the moment!

Finally, I visited food which welcomed you with the smell of home baked cookies, a treat made regularly on the night.



It was lovely to see the students engaged in turning these out for the visitors. The look of pride on everyone's faces was quite a sight to end on.



## WHAT WENT ON? - PART 2

By Phoebe Swain

Alongside Tessa, I went around each department and interviewed the staff on hand. Here is what I found out.



Mr Date—Geography Department

**'Why should children learn geography?'** It gives students an awareness of the world outside they live, it helps them understand different people and cultures more, and gives them sympathy.

**'What do you have on offer this evening in this department?'** You can build a favella out of Lego, there is field equipment on display, geography trivia, students work on display and how quickly can you fold an OS map?

**'What do you think is the best part of geography?'** Mr Straker and I have different views on what our favourite part of geography is but I prefer the human side of geography, so different countries and migrations.

Mr Broome—Beliefs and World Views

**'Why should children learn Beliefs and World Views?'** It helps the student understand themselves, others and the universe to be the best person they can be.

**'What do you have on for offer this evening in this department?'** An Indiana jones artifact hunt, tree of life (or tree of sweets), examples of student work and a agree and disagree line.

**'What do you think is the best part of Beliefs and world views?'** The discussions that are relevant to real life.

Mrs Hartley—English

**'Why should children learn English?'** It celebrates creativity, its an essential subject, you discover writing, reading, listening and its empowering to express yourself.

**'What do you have on offer in this department this evening?'** Published work, students work on display, and creative writing for KS3.

**'What do you think is the best part of English?'** My favourite part of English is literature, discovering new genres, poetry and novels.

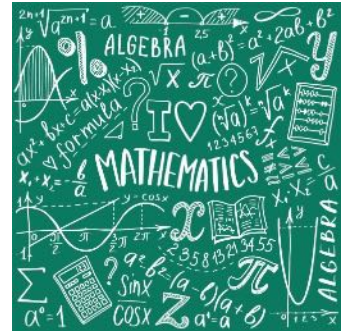


Mrs Isack and Miss Oliver—Maths Department

**'Miss Oliver: Why should children learn maths?'** It's a life skill, problem solving, resilience, core of the universe and when you cross a problem you can't solve you find a solution.

**'Mr Isack: What do you have on offer in this department this evening?'** To which answered; there are games, food and a chance to meet the brilliant teachers.

**'Mr Isack: What do you think is the best part of maths?'** It's just a fun subject and everything is related to maths.

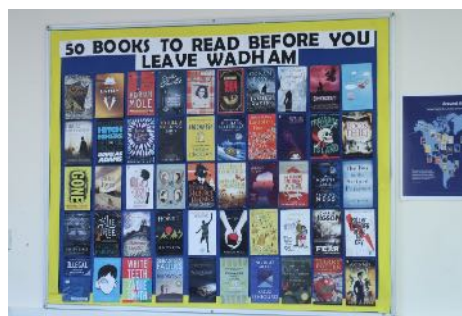
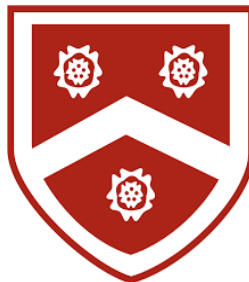


Mrs Lemon—Design and Technology Department

**'Why should children learn DT?'** Because it's versatile, you're introduced to loads of different things, materials and equipment.

**'What do you have on offer in this department this evening?'** There is a pineapple design challenge and you can make your own leather bookmarks.

**'What do you think is your favourite part of DT?'** Textiles, fabrics, clothing and sewing.



# VOX POP:

WHAT DID THE YEAR 6S

THINK?

Interviews by Jack Wood

# Y6 ON WADHAM

Name - *Aola*  
 Age - *10*  
 Which school have you come from? - *St Barts*  
 What departments have you enjoyed visiting this evening? Why? - *History because it's great learning about the past.*  
 What are you excited most about

Name - *Milo*  
 Age - *10*  
 Which school have you come from? - *Herne View*  
 What departments have you enjoyed visiting this evening? Why? - *Food, all the food looks great*  
 What are you excited most about

Name - *Hazel*  
 Age - *11*  
 Which school have you come from? - *Ashlands*  
 What departments have you enjoyed visiting this evening? Why? - *Science because it's so interesting*  
 What are you excited most about coming to Wadham? -

Name - *Fin*  
 Age - *10*  
 Which school have you come from? - *Ashlands*  
 What departments have you enjoyed visiting this evening? Why? - *The history department, it was lots of fun*  
 What are you excited most about

Name - *Robin*  
 Age - *11*  
 What departments have you enjoyed visiting this evening? Why? - *The Quillllllll*  
 What are you excited most about coming to

Name - *Kez*  
 Age - *10*  
 Which school have you come from? - *Herne View*  
 What departments have you enjoyed visiting this evening? Why? - *Science, it's so different to what*

Name - *Helissa*  
 Age - *10*  
 Which school have you come from? - *Herne View*  
 What departments have you enjoyed visiting this evening? Why? - *The art and geography departments. They were lots of fun*  
 What are you excited most about coming

# WADHAM SCHOOL OPEN EVENING 2025



# OUR PRESENT, YOUR FUTURE!

# WADHAM SCHOOL OPEN EVENING 2025



# OUR PRESENT, YOUR FUTURE!

# Christmas Card Competition

Design Wadham's Christmas card for  
2025

- Designs must have a Christian connection e.g. the nativity story, lighting of the candles, Christmas carols etc.
- Can be produced in any medium: painting, drawing, collage etc.
- Must be A5 or A4 in size
- Hand your design to your art teacher by:

**FRIDAY 7TH  
NOVEMBER**

## INTERVIEW

**ACTING LEGEND, BRITISH  
ICON. CHATTING WITH  
ACTRESS, ACTIVIST AND  
STAR OF WEDNESDAY  
DAME JOANNE LUMLEY**

Foreword and interview by Josie Bulmer

From model to actress, campaigner to presenter, Joanna Lumley is a woman who has made herself known for a great deal of things. Her acting, modelling, producing, activism, and much more work over the course of her career has made her a staple of all she's done. I've had the privilege to get in touch and ask her about what she's enjoyed, and how she's achieved so much in so many fields.

**1. What does your daily routine look like?**

I like getting up early: breakfast is a cup of coffee and I always walk to the corner shop to get the daily papers as I am addicted to crossword puzzles.

**2. What was school like for you, and did you have any particular subjects which you enjoyed the most?**

My Anglican convent school was out of the ordinary because it was a rambling building, very cold, gas lighting in long dark corridors, grim food and yet the happiest atmosphere you could ever imagine. There was no bullying: we all looked pretty ghastly and didn't care: we wrote letters home once a week and played lacrosse and had midnight feasts and the odd crafty cigarette in the shrubbery.

Only complete brainboxes went to university. I acted in all the school plays and got my colours for tennis, lacrosse and netball. I was nearly expelled but the nuns relented because they liked me and I did A level Latin.

**3. Before you got into acting, you started off with a modelling career. What was it like in the industry at that time?**

It was hard work and we did all our own make up and hair, styling and accessorising, and if you were one minute late your pay was docked by half.

I learnt so much about cameras and lighting and patience and endurance which has stood me in good stead, in general life and in acting in particular.



**4. What motivated your move into acting and what made you realise you enjoyed it?**

I was always going to be an actress: joining the circus in a way.



**5. Across your varied careers, has anyone ever been a particular inspiration to you? If so, who and why?**

Apart from admiring actors and watching them like hawks and stealing ideas from them I never had a particular lodestar.



**6. Was there anyone who wasn't initially an inspiration, but you very much enjoyed working with? If so why?**

I adore working with actors as they are usually good fun and kind and generous and love having a moan about how badly life is treating them.

**7. As a long-time actor, what was your favourite film or show to work on, and what made it the most enjoyable?**

*Absolutely Fabulous* comes out on top every time. We laughed until we cried in rehearsals but when Friday night came and we performed live in front of an audience we all tried our hardest to be good and accurate and entertaining and it worked.



**8. What do you think draws you to the roles you take on?**

I try to choose things that are different from what I have just done. You can get type-cast very swiftly and anyway we all want to stretch ourselves and be someone else. Acting is just pretending to be someone else with varying degrees of success.

**9. Has there been a role you turned down which later regretted? If so why?**

Non: je ne regrette rien.



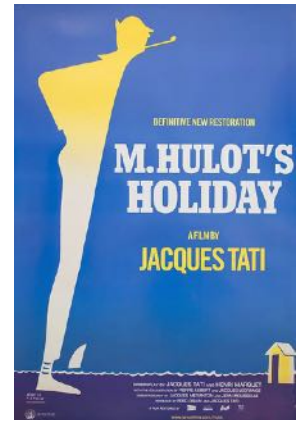
**10. Audiences will have most recently seen you as Grandmama in the American Netflix series Wednesday. What drew you to the role and why do you think the Addams Family, and its unique set of characters, remains a popular subject for TV and film?**

Tim Burton asked me to do it and I was flattered and delighted although I had never heard of the show Wednesday although of course I had seen Addams family films in the past. Wicked old grandmama! What could be nicer!



**11. If you were stuck in a hotel for one night, what three films would you watch to pass the time and why?**

*Shakespeare in Love, Local Hero and Monsieur Hulot's Holiday.* They are the best and I never tire of them.



**12. As someone interested in acting myself, it looks to be a very hard career to break into. What advice would you give to someone trying to start acting?**

Only become an actor if you will die if you don't. You will never be famous or rich or fully employed: but if it is the only life you could bear to lead, do it and never give up.

**13. Outside of acting, is there a piece of general life advice which has been passed down to you and which you quote often to others?**

Just be kind. Oh, and be polite and punctual and helpful: offer to do things, put others before yourself, be brave, never whine, never harbour ill feelings towards others. Don't be jealous and don't be mean. To die rich is to die disgraced.

**14. What have you most enjoyed about your career as a whole, out of all the roles and projects you've worked on?**

I love the changeability of the life it offers: never knowing what you will do next or even if you will ever work again: always striving to be better and revelling in the company of co-workers.

**15. Outside of acting, your work as an activist on different social issue is well known. In 2008 you became the public face of the Gurkha Justice Campaign. What motivated you to join this movement?**

My father was a Gurkha officer and I followed him and his regiment across the world.

**16. Why did you think this was a situation which required action on your part?**

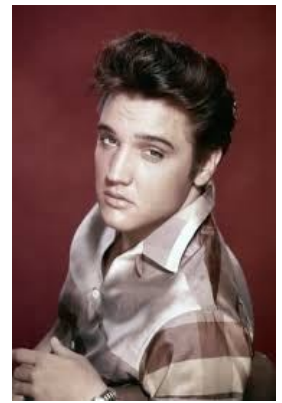
No-one knew what a raw deal the Gurks soldier faced after a long tour of duty with the British Army: to be deported like a criminal the day after your 20 years of service just because Nepal isn't in the Commonwealth was shameful and had to be addressed.

**17. What other issues do you feel strongly about and why?**

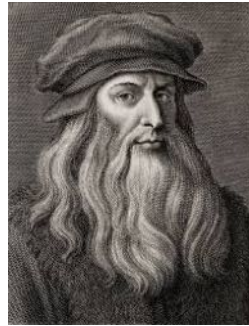
Too many to list here but cruelty to anyone or any living thing makes my blood boil. Charity is just trying to help whenever you can: and you always can.



18. If you could have a dinner party and invite anyone from history who would be on the guest list and why?



Shakespeare and Beethoven, Elvis Presley and Tiepolo the great painter. I adore and admire them equally.



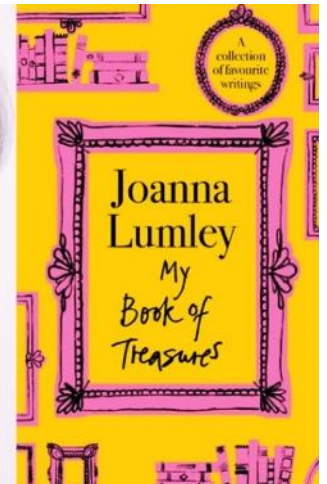
And Leonardo Da Vinci: and Rossini who loved parties and Hedy Lamarr who was as smart as a whip and very lovely.

19. What 5 words describe 'Joanna Lumley'?

Tall, kind, hopeful, happy, grateful.

20. And finally, what's next for 'Joanna Lumley'?

More *Wednesday*, more *Amandaland*, more travel, more writing. I have *My Book of Treasures* coming out in October, which is an anthology of all the things I love best.



Fondest thoughts to you all, dear people, and lots of love... and as Patsy would say: " Cheers, sweeties!"



## Getting into journalism

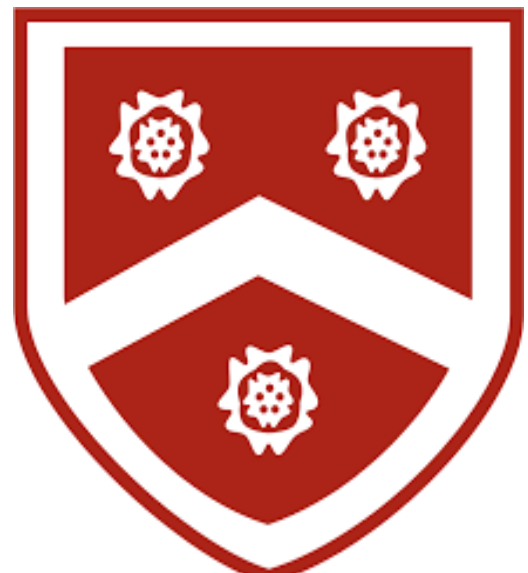
Have you thought about writing for a living, being a reporter, working on a newspaper or magazine?

Would you like to be the next host of 'Match of the Day', 'Newsnight' or 'The One Show'?

Journalism is the key to all of these.

If you want to get involved in the next edition of the Quill:

- Message Mr Hopwood on Teams
- Come and see Mr Hopwood in B23
- Email Mr Hopwood – [Phopwood@wadhamschool.co.uk](mailto:Phopwood@wadhamschool.co.uk)



**THE WIDE  
WORLD OF  
WADHAM  
SPORTS**

**DRAG BIKE RACING**

EUROPEAN FINALS RUNNER UP

By Harry Isaacs

What a weekend at Santa Pod Raceway for the FIM European Finals! Awesome memories made and what an event! Tens of thousands of spectators over the weekend and the place was rammed which was so cool to do our thing and put on a show!

After a rainy start to Thursday we managed to get one run in on Thursday just a test pass. Onto Friday and blue skies, sunshine and two qualifying sessions later, a 9.74 on a 9.70 dial was enough to end day 1 as number 1 qualifier.

Saturday beautiful weather again and another two qualifying sessions. No improvement from us meant we dropped to number 2 as we were pipped by Maggie Smallman well done Maggie. We gave it our best shot in the last session nearly hitting our number running a 9.725 on a 9.73 dial meant we ended qualifying 2nd.

Sunday and eliminations day saw us matched up against a very tough opponent Sophie pollen in round 1. With a start line advantage we won on a holeshot, but with Sophie closer to her dial but a 0.003 reaction time got the job done! Well done to her as she also ran her PB. Into round 2 and we had a bye run to book ourselves straight into the semis to face good friend Jaxon King. A great race with Jaxon saw me chase him down and pass to take the win and into the finals! My first ever final at Santa pod! We faced Hollie King, the defending European champion and wow what an awesome race! We had a slight startline advantage and Hollie was in chase mode, closing and just pipping up to the line she hit her dial in bang on and can only applaud Hollie and her team well done guys. So yeah left us runner up of the event and 5th in the FIM European championship after a nightmare round at Hockenheim!

I just want to say a massive thank you to everyone who came to support me and watch me at the track and on the stream from home

A massive thank you to Mum Marie Isaacs, dad Jim Isaacs , Charlotte Woodland and little Eddie for making it all possible! And my crew chief Matt Nib Isaacs for his hard work. A Huge thank you to the Santa pod track crew and staff for a awesome event and for all your hard work and efforts. And a huge thanks to my sponsors Nibsport Racing and PWR Motors.



**THE WIDE  
 WORLD OF  
 WADHAM  
 SPORTS**

**By Emma Charles**

On October 6th, Ms Panter and myself had the honour of presenting Archie with his new basketball wheelchair, which has been part funded through Wadham. We were joined by Archie's basketball coach from Exeter and his parents. A very happy and grateful Archie, who now can't wait for his fingers to heal so he can get back to practice. He will love telling you about it, so please ask.



**By Archie Blunn**

I first started playing wheelchair basketball three years ago. My primary school Headteacher found a local club in Yeovil, where I was introduced to Emma – who is now my junior coach.

Emma later introduced me to Jack, a coach at the Exeter Otters basketball club. I now train there every Saturday for three hours. I'm part of the junior's team, and we play in around five tournaments a year. Most recently, we finished third at the Junior Nationals in Worcester, narrowly losing out to Scotland.

I also play for the adult second team, which travels to Surrey once a month over a six-month season to compete in the EWB tournaments. PE lessons have sometimes been challenging because of my disability, so discovering an accessible sport like wheelchair basketball has been really positive for me. I've just received a brand new Allstar basketball chair, and I'm really excited to play this season in it.



**RUGBY** **By Laura Manning**

Massive thanks to Crewkerne RFC coaches Adam, Andy and Martin. All three generously gave up their time to come into school last week. The coaches trained over 50 of our year 7 and 8 boys and shared their love of all things rugby.

We genuinely couldn't think of better role models for the youth of Crewkerne and surrounding areas.



All Wadham students should seriously consider popping down to the club and getting involved!

The first 3 sessions are completely FREE! Friday evening training and Sunday morning matches as well as training.

# Camp Kenya 2025: Wadham Students Making A Difference!

By Lily Madgin

Hello! My name is Lily and I as well as others from Wadham (Emily, Ruby, Alfred, Charlie) participated in the trip to Kenya in the summer of 2025, and this article that I have written details what I and my team got up to on our four-week adventure!

We started by meeting the other schools that formed our team, "Team Sungura" (Sungura is Rabbit in Swahili)



and travelling to Rwanda to catch a connecting flight from Rwanda to Kenya. After a day in

Rwanda due to a delayed flight, we arrived in Kenya. Our first camp was called Camp Muhaka, in a small rural town hours away from the nearest city. Our main project for this camp was to



help to build a house for a widowed mother who needed a place to live after her husband unfortunately passed away. We tied sticks,



made mud bricks, carried countless wheelbarrows and used shovels to build the house. We learned countless skills here and even the kids living in the area helped us out! We also visited the local forest, cooked traditional Kenyan dishes, visited the tailors in the village, played football with the local team and took Swahili lessons! We stayed at this camp for a week and we all made friends in our team!



The next camp was the Diani Beach Camp, a camp by the coast of Kenya. This was a more calm and less physically



demanding than the previous camp, but we still had work to do! We began by collecting microplastics on the beach and then doing a survey about what types of plastic they were and how commonly we found them. We then learnt about the turtles living in the Indian Ocean and why our survey results



contribute to the saving of the wildlife at Diani. We spent some time at the beach and at the market, and ate in a lovely restaurant in town. We then made cute keyrings out of discarded flipflops on the beach, which is a brilliant way to protect the environment and have fun whilst doing it!

Our next camp was Camp Firefly, where Team Sungura all completed their PADI Open Water Dive Course. This consisted of 4 confined water dives and 4 open water dives that we had to complete as well as a written test. This was a really fun experience as we got to dive in the Indian Ocean, and we saw dolphins, turtles, pufferfish and plenty more! Despite the bad weather, this was the highlight of many people's trip!



The next place we arrived at was Camp Ndoto, which was our biggest and most packed camp out of the whole trip! First, we worked at Itinyi School, where we made bricks and a foundation for a crumbling school building, repainted the inside and outside of a new classroom. We also put a



new floor down in one new classroom, ready for the kids to come back from their summer holidays. We then de-wormed the local's goats for free as it is incredibly expensive for the farmers to pay for the medicine to de-worm their goats. Then, we created an



elephant deterrent fence from shiny metals to protect a farm in the area. We continued to do a survey on the animals in the area to be sent to the park rangers to analyse and protect the area. We then went on a safari where we saw elephants, giraffes, zebras,



lions, plenty of vultures and other birds, hippos, monkeys, buffalo, antelopes, impalas and lizards. On the same day, we went to visit the Maasai tribe to learn about their culture and to take part in some of their traditions! Finally, we took a hike up the mountain

behind our camp and also met the Tumaini Women's Group, a group of empowering women who have found a way to bring money to their households despite cultural restrictions in their area. Such a jam packed and fun camp!

The final camp we went to was The Wildlife Foundation, a wildlife park where we had lots of fun! We set up camera traps for the entirety of our stay here, where we captured plenty of animals as well as the White Rhino, which is incredibly rare to see! We also planted trees in the area, went on a nature walk where we got really close to a group of giraffes and created a lion deterrent fence for a local grandmother's farm. We also created a gabion to protect the local landscape from water erosion. Finally, we had a cultural talk and a party with the Maasai, before we made our way back to Rwanda (where the flight was moved again!) and then finally returned home!



To conclude, this was a truly enlightening trip jam-packed with fun and interesting experiences that will stay with me and I'm sure all of my team too! As well as learning plenty of physical skills such as using many tools, I also learnt a bunch of teamwork and leaderships skills during project work, too. My favourite part of the trip was speaking to the local people from all of the different places that we went to, as learning about how different my life is to theirs was really interesting and definitely made me appreciate everything that I am lucky enough to have back home. What a brilliant experience!

## CAMP KENYA 2025 – TEAM SUNGURA (RABBIT)

By Millie Webster

When signing up to this trip, I was excited to experience the different cultures, wildlife and environment in Kenya compared to England. However, as the trip got closer, I got more apprehensive and anxious. I remember asking Mum if I could pull out because I didn't want to go. I am so thankful that I didn't withdraw because this trip was the most amazing experience of my life. I wish I could back and re-live it again with my team.

Team Sungura had a routine every evening where we did sticker nominations, hat nominations and our team journal. Stickers were nominated by peers for random acts of kindness. Hat nominations for the Silly Simba hat were awarded to those who had done something stupid and made a fool of themselves. It was very entertaining! The group journal was written each day by a different member of the team. So, each night, the next person would be elected to write the next day's journal entry.

Our first camp in Kenya was Camp Muhaka and this ended up being my favourite camp! The accommodation was bunk style rooms which had electricity and fans. The toilets were normal, the showers were cold, monkeys ran around camp and there was a campfire. Our project on this camp was building Mama's house. The structure of the building had been put together by a previous team. Our task was to build the walls of the building by the end of our stay. We completed this and managed to start the flooring within the 3.5 days we had. To build the walls, we dug red soil up from the ground, collected water and mixed them together to create a muddy mixture! With this mixture, we formed balls which we carefully placed on the structure. Stones were placed between layers to provide support. After these walls dried, we created a looser consistency of the muddy mixture which we splatted to the walls to cover the stick structure. Other



activities we did at this camp were climbing a coconut tree, trying coconut and coconut milk, making coconut rice and chapattis, visiting markets and visiting a tailor's and playing football with the local community.

Our second camp in Kenya was Diani Beach Camp. The accommodation was bunk style rooms, which had electricity, fans and wifi. The toilets were normal, the showers were hot, monkeys ran around camp and there was a pool. Our projects on this camp involved a beach clean up, a turtle talk, a microplastic survey and a flip flop craft activity. This weekend was less intense than other camps as we had to rest ready for scuba diving the following week. We had a rest day at the beach where we played team games in the pool, sunbathed, saw camels walking on the beach, went to the markets and even out for lunch.

Scuba diving was next, at Camp Firefly. For some people this was a highlight while for others it was a challenge and took a lot of perseverance. We slept in tents but they were big enough for us to stand in. Once again, monkeys roamed freely around camp. The PADI team were patient, kind and reassuring. Personally, I really struggled training in a group so after conversations with my team teacher, leader and the PADI team, adjustments were made so I could work in a smaller group. I loved relaxing around the firepit and on the sofas with my team.

The fourth camp was Camp Ndoto, next door to Camp Tsavo. We stayed here for a week. The accommodation was bunk style rooms which had electricity. The toilets were long drop, the showers were cold, there was a firepit and the dining area was inside. Our projects on this camp involved working on a school, livestock deworming, elephant deterrent fences, Rukinga Wildlife Conservation, safari and a trek. At the local school we worked on flooring, building/laying bricks and painting. School had finished so there weren't many kids (thereto my disappointment) but the children who were there were very friendly and keen to get involve and interact with us. Goat deworming was my favourite project, everybody was working collaboratively, and we managed to deworm 94 goats but 6 ran away! We also danced with the local children and camp staff. Elephant deterrent fencing was interesting and required the use of multiple skills. At Rukinga Wildlife Conservation we did two game drives, one which included a survey and talk from the staff. It was exciting and interesting to learn about the wildlife and the laws in place to protect them. The safari at Tsavo East National Park was amazing! We saw towers of giraffes, dazzles of zebras, elephants, impalas, giraffe gazelles, different species of birds, lions and a hippo! We then visited the Maasai Tribe afterwards, which highlighted the differences in our cultures. I found the trek fun, despite the mini workout it was, and loved



the views. We saw giraffes from the top of the hill!

Our final camp was at The Wildlife Foundation. We stayed here for 4 nights. The accommodation was bunk style rooms and there was a firepit, volleyball pitch, outdoor seating and an indoor dining area. Monkeys and baboons could be spotted on camp! There was only student access to electricity between 7 and 9pm, and there was no signal. Projects on this camp included a nature walk and camera trap installation, tree planting, gabion making, a culture talk, lion bomas, camera trap retrieval and a market visit. The nature walk and camera trap installation and retrieval were so interesting. We learnt so many facts about the local area and Nairobi National Park. For example, Nairobi National Park homes 4 out of 5 of the big 5 since the elephant's migration route got disrupted by humans. Gabion making and lion bomas required lots of skills which had yet to be used on camp. My favourite project at this camp was the culture talk since it highlighted the huge differences between our lives and the local people's lives. It made me feel privileged for the luxuries I have. The final night at camp we had a campfire and sang songs and danced with the local staff. It was the best ending to the most amazing expedition.



## KENYA 2025 – CAMPS INTERNATIONAL TRIP

**By Harriet Kelly**

During the summer holidays I had the privilege of taking eight Wadham students to Kenya on a Camps International trip for four weeks. We joined up with students from two other schools to make one team. The students had spent the last two years putting an enormous amount of effort into fundraising the trip.

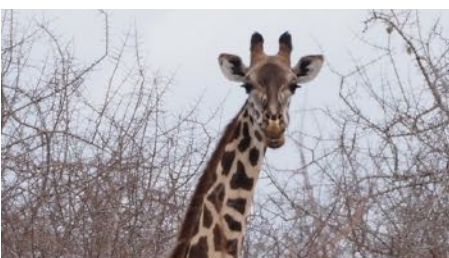


Over the four weeks we stayed in five different camps and undertook project work in the community, scuba diving, safari and much more! We had an amazing time, and it gave us all memories to last a lifetime.



I would like to thank everyone who supported the students' fundraising efforts over the last two years and Mr Isack for organising such a brilliant trip. Look out

for the launch of our next trip for Borneo 2027 coming soon!



*Time to  
think about...*

## A STUDENTS OPINION ON THE CURRENT HOMEWORK APPS

By Eliza Hodgson

Sparx maths + reader:

Brilliant apps. Both offer support for misunderstandings and fonts and filters that



Sparx  
Learning

make it accessible to every child that uses it. Sparx maths has been a brilliant homework app and has genuinely helped my education, despite the few issues I've had with work we haven't done being set. Sparx reader doesn't work so well for me, but there are ways I've found around it.

Both are incredible learning resources and are made with care and attention to the students education at heart.



Seneca Learning

Seneca:

On the other hand there's Seneca. An Ai powered app that is far from good enough to use at this stage. It makes up nonsensical questions, doesn't let you redo a question if you get it incorrect, (often because the question was phrased in a weird manner or the answer you put in Wasn't correct) , which results in you having to redo the entire homework if you want 100% like some teachers demand. And on top of that it is extremely laggy.

I ended up having to do my beliefs and worldviews homework thrice because it deleted it every time. In my opinion this app is effectively sponsoring the school to use it. This infuriates me to no amends seeing as school should prioritize a students education rather than "what's the least amount of money we can spend on it". Seneca gives misinformation, constantly asks you to pay money for help, and often wants answers that aren't available in the text.

I understand that many teachers have combatted that by putting the information on teams, but if you leave Seneca to check the slide it often deletes your progress as well. This app is utter rubbish at this stage and it seems like a cheap way of meeting government and Ofsted requirements without any care for the actual content or the students education.

Active learn:

Another bad egg. This homework app is similar to Seneca In the fact that it doesn't let you redo one question you got wrong due to a typo or such, but instead makes you redo everything. I also don't think it's a decent app as it requires a laptop or computer to work, as on a phone it is far too small.

Yes, the school offers in school clubs, but is it really fair that some kids are forced to give up a portion of free time to slave over a piece of work that every other child can do with a parent on a weekend?? Not much to say aside another poor choice. Has potential though.



Active  
Learn



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Teams:

A new learning resource this year but it's already coming along. I'd appreciate a description of the required task along with it, as sometimes we haven't done the topic yet. But I can see a lot of potential, as teachers are able to adjust how it's set out to fit their topic. This does require more teacher work, in terms of the fact they have to set it and create it, but it's whether they value 800+ kids

education or a lazy afternoon every week, just feeding them false information through Seneca and active learn. Besides that downside, it works well for a good amount of students.

In conclusion, Wadham has recently seemed to prioritize the cheapest way they can avoid Ofsted requirements for a good education is to set lazy ai powered apps which are still in a beta stage. These apps are not reliable for our futures. This is a situation where on the majority, homework is in fact misinforming children and making them work at least an hour thirty a week on non beneficial tasks. Although Sparx and teams level this out, Sparx science is a recent app id advise the school to at least consider, same goes to have a look at bedrock learning (even if it costs more) and to care about this future generations education. Although Sparx maths and english are great apps, the contrast between that and Seneca is appalling. I don't hate homework. I hate the fact it's just a box to tick, and anything that says "homework" will do .

**Sparx Reader**  
*Competition!*

Step up to the reading challenge!  
Top readers across Key Stage 3, from now until  
December, will be invited to participate in solving.....

**MURDER BY THE BOOK!**

This is a murder mystery challenge to be held during lessons.  
In teams, search through the clues to identify the murderer.

**PRIZES AND HOUSE POINTS TO BE WON**

# My Hearing Journey

By William McKelvey

My name is William & I am in year 10. I wear Cochlear Implants (CI's) as I am profoundly deaf. I have been deaf since birth.



I was born extremely premature at 26 weeks weighing 1lb 10oz. I was lighter than a bag of sugar & could fit in my Mum's hand! I failed my newborn hearing test & had to wear hearing aids soon after.

When I was 9 the Audiologist asked if I had heard of Cochlear Implants. After many tests at the University of Southampton Auditory Implant Service (USAIS) with my Mum & Dad, they decided I was eligible for

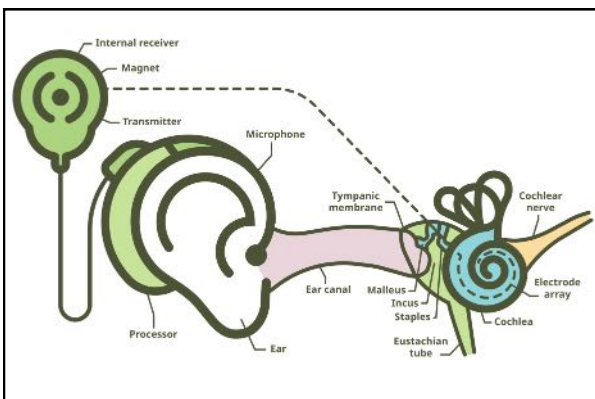
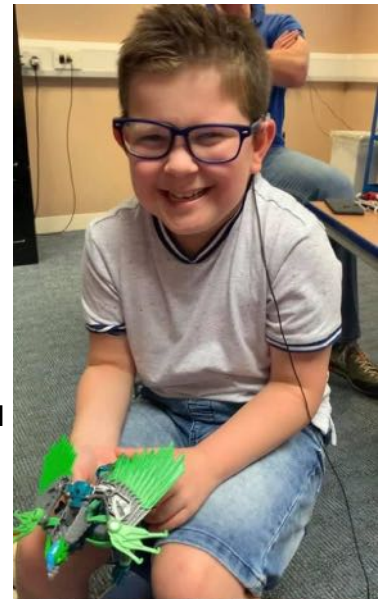
bilateral CI's.

I had a 5 hour operation at Queen Alexandra Hospital Portsmouth on the 17th July 2020. I had to be in complete silence for 2 weeks until I was "switched on" on the 6th August 2020. Everyone sounded like robots at first.

4 years later, because I am such a good wearer of CI's, USAIS & Guy's & St Thomas' Hospital asked me if I would like to take part in research to help future CI wearers. The project was called Bears (Both ears). I had to do lots of tests, including using a VR Headset to see how I handled quiet & noisy situations. All my results were saved & used for future research.



A few weeks ago I had to do more research to see how I listened with my CI's - doing an acoustic test. It was very difficult but I got the highest score they have ever had. I will be doing some more research, to continue helping future CI wearers, again soon. Here is a picture of me during the research



# Wadham School on the move!

## YEAR 11 DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY TRIP

By Beth Church

12 GCSE DT students were treated to an interactive morning at local company Numatic to celebrate National Manufacturing Day on 25th September.

The students had a tour of the 43 acre site, including the different factory areas. The students were surprised to hear that over 1200 people work at Numatic and that the company makes around 30,000 products every week!

The tour consisted of seeing different departments within the factory from where the Henry faces are made to seeing the huge machinery and equipment such as the million pound laser cutter. They all learnt that the company produces both products for retail and for the commercial sector too. In total Numatic have 5000 different products.

The students took part in assembling and taking apart a Henry vacuum cleaner. They all worked in small groups to use their GCSE DT skills to work out how it went together. This ended in a competition with Team Logan and Duncan assembling a Henry in the quickest time - winning their own Henry face!

Our students had lots of questions for the Numatic team and were great at guessing some of the answers to questions such as 'How much do we spend on materials to make our products each week?' The answer being a whopping £1.4million!

The boys were a credit to the school and engaged so well in the whole trip. Thank you to Numatic for offering our students this opportunity.



# PRODIGAL BIKES - CHANGING THE WORLD, ONE SPOKE AT A TIME

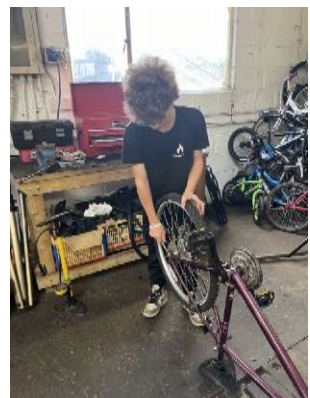
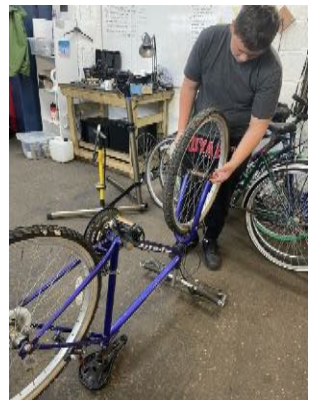
- By Anthony Raybould

Prodigal Bikes was established in 2016. We collect unwanted bikes from the south Somerset & west Dorset area. We refurbish them working alongside disadvantaged people as a way of teaching them basic technical skills. This work helps them towards further training and employment in Engineering-related sectors.

The bikes are checked over by our professional bike mechanics, then most are shipped to one of our four projects in East Africa, where they are given to teachers, school children and healthcare workers to help them schools and medical facilities, otherwise long walk away. We have shipped 980

bikes to Africa so far.

More complex bikes stay here in the UK and are given to people around Somerset who cannot afford their own transport, to help them with access to college and employment. We have given out over 300 bikes to people in Somerset.



You can find more out about our work on our website at [www.prodigalbikes.co.uk](http://www.prodigalbikes.co.uk) or on our Facebook page, Prodigal Bikes.

If you have a bike you no longer want, please get in touch with us on 07528 718394 and we will arrange a collection.

“So when I had a chance to go to the bike shop I thought I wasn’t going to like. However on the first day I went there and I liked it because I stripped a whole bike down and put it back together. We also learnt how to put rubber tyres on and fix punctures.

When we finish the bikes we send them to Africa to the people there who don’t have push bike. If anyone gets a chance to go you should say yes. They also serve a nice cup of tea.”

by Presley Vincent

# ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

## THE PROBLEMS OF SHARK FINNING

By Asha England

Sharks are apex predators of the sea often feared by us because of their sharp teeth, deadly instincts and ability to kill us. But beneath their aggressive overcoat they've shown acts of kindness such as not attacking and even helping injured creatures.



Understanding their behaviour is crucial to stopping shark finning and peaceful human-shark interactions.

Shark finning is the practice of cutting of the sharks' fins the discarding the rest of the body, sometimes even while there still alive! But why does this happen? It's down to shark fin soup, a traditional Chinese delicacy that can cost up to £75 per bowl and up to £300 per kilogram! This is why shark finning has become highly practiced and leads to the finning of over 100 million sharks every single year! That is more than the entire UK population!!! When the sharks are finned often the rest of the body is thrown back into the sea, this is because the rest of the shark, unlike the fins, are worth less than a pound per kilogram.

Shark finning is thought to of began around year 1000 CE (AD) In traditional Chinese culture, animals know to be fierce and strong were believed to of had a beneficial impact on those who at them, so naturally they were of higher cost and therefore reserved for people of higher status. Shark fin soup is rarely eaten by commoners, because of this they gained status and importance. Improvements in mechanical fishing led to the increase of shark finning in 1997.

There are many problems with shark finning one of them being the effect it has on the environment due to the disruption it causes in ecosystems. Because when an apex predator (for example a shark) is removed from an ecosystem it allows its prey to reproduce making the ecosystem unbalanced and eventually leading to its collapse.

As well as the effect on the environment shark finning also has a negative effect on us because sharks contain high levels of mercury. When we digest high levels of mercury the effects cause damage to our immune system, brain and our digestive system and could even be fatal.

To help stop shark finning, across the world, we can support or donate to charities like, shark Guardian - a UK-registered charity that teaches over 20,000 students annually and organizes ethical shark diving and snorkelling trips. There's also Shark stewards an international non-profit charity, they introduce shark fin trade bans, regulate fisheries and support MPAs (marine protected area).

To conclude, shark finning is when you cut of the fins of sharks it is commonly made for shark fin soup, a traditional delicacy that originated an estimated 600 years ago. Because of its high price and the advances in technology the practice has increased. Shark finning on mass scales can have a negative effect on ecosystems and even cause some species to go extinct. Sharks also contain high levels of mercury and when this is digested it can be terrible for us. Fortunately, Shark finning has been banned in several countries around the world however it still happens and continues to affect us, but we can support charities like: Shark Stewards and Shark Guardian, who work hard to stop shark finning all over the world.

## INTERVIEW

## SECURITY CORRESPONDENT

## AND INTELLIGENCE

## EXPERT GORDON CORRERA

## ON SPIES, SPOOKS AND

## WHAT THE REAL THREATS

## ARE TODAY!

Foreword and interview by Evan Pearce

Gordon Corraera is a 51 year old London born author. He studied at Oxford and Harvard universities. He was the BBC's security correspondent and has covered issues such as espionage, terrorism and cybersecurity from all over the world. As of now he co hosts the podcast *The rest is classified* which covers intelligence operations. He has also specialised in computer technology throughout a large portion of his life. He has written many books from 2006 to the present. His latest book is called *The Spy in the Archive*. It's a biography about Vasily Mitrokhin Who fled to the west and gave away secrets from the USSR to Britain.

**1. What does your daily routine look like?**

Every day is different. Some days I'm working on the podcast, other days I'm out talking to people. That's the fun of it.

**2. What were you like at school?**

A bookworm! By the later years of secondary school, I'd discovered a love of history. But it wasn't all work.....

**3. What were your most and least favourite subjects?**

History was the favourite, biology the least so.

**Why?**

That was a lot down to the teachers as well as my own interest. I had a great history teacher called Terry Morris.

**4. Did you have an inspirational figure in your life? If so who were they and how did they inspire you?**

See above - he made history fun.

**5. What's the best part of being a security correspondent?**

I was a security correspondent for 20 years (and am now an analyst) - the best part was getting to meet interesting people and glimpse into the normally secret world of spies.

**6. What made you want to become one?**

There was no plan. It happened by chance. I wanted to be a journalist rather than a security correspondent





### 7. How did you become one?

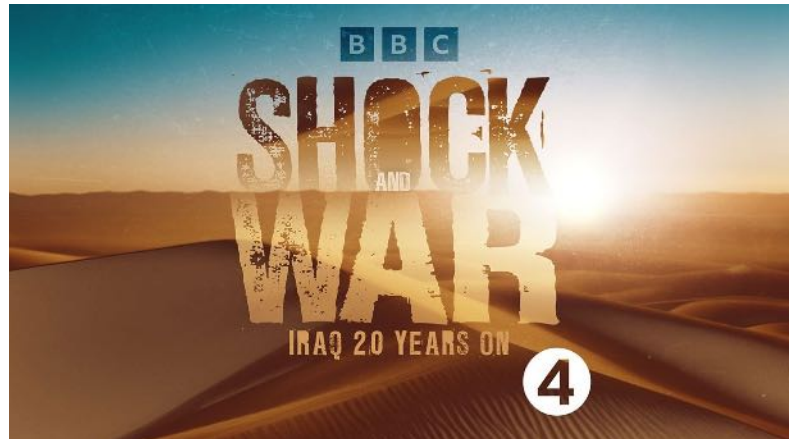
I was interested in the US and studied and covered it and then after the 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001 that brought me into covering security.

### 8. Was there a particular subject, skill or bit of knowledge you think has been most helpful in your career to this point?

Being interested in the subject really helps as a journalist. People can tell if you are genuinely interested or not.

### 9. Is there a particular part of your career which you're most proud of, why?

I think a series I made in 2023 looking at the 20th anniversary of the start of the Iraq war was one highlight as it explained something important and complex to people.



### 10. What's an element of your industry which you think people misunderstand the most or often get wrong?

Journalists are not quite as portrayed in many TV dramas. They are a more complex bunch.

### 11. Do you ever feel, or have you ever felt, that your life's in danger because of your profession?

A few times when I've been in Iraq and also some other places but I've never been as close to danger as some of my former colleagues.

### 12. What is the biggest security challenge facing the world at the moment?

I think its the mix of challenges - other states, terrorism, cyber insecurity but also climate change.

### 13. Do any particular regions in the world pose key threats?

For those in Europe, then Russia is the closest and most imminent threat. China is more of a challenge than a threat.

### 14. How do intelligence agencies work against them?

They recruit agents to provide intelligence and gather it also by intercepting communications and collecting data on their targets.

### 16. Which country do you think is the biggest threat to the UK?

Russia at the moment. Between Trump and Putin, who's the biggest threat to Europe? Putin



**17. Do you think a 'WW3' will ever happen? If so what will start it and where?**

It could start in Europe or Asia but it will not be like World War II or World War I - it will be different and technology will play a greater role.

**18. What advice would you give to the intelligence communities of the West to counter the threats we face?**

I wouldn't dare give them advice!

**19. How would you describe your current podcast 'The Rest Is Classified' and why do you think people should listen to it?**

It takes people into the world of secrets and spies and gives a glimpse of what it's really like and why it's important. Its entertaining as well as informative.

**20. If there was one piece of advice you could give to anyone about anything, what would it be?**

Make time to get to know people properly.

**21. Are there any upcoming projects, or anything that you're looking forward to, that you could tell us about?**

I've got a book out on the KGB called *The Spy in the Archive* which explains a lot about Russia today as well as the past.

**22. If you could have a dinner party and invite any four people from history, who would be on the guestlist and why?**



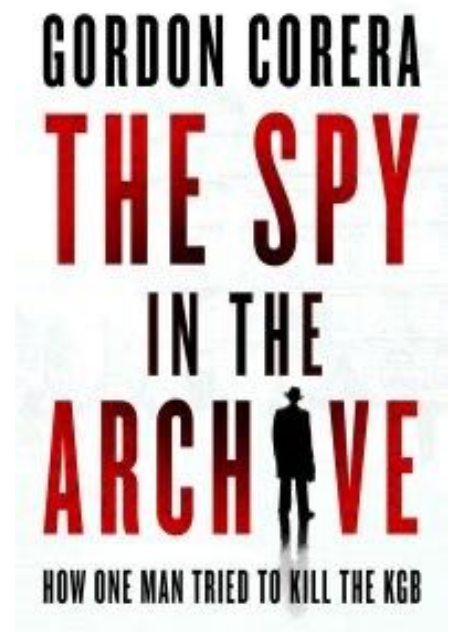
Napoleon, Churchill, Julius Caesar and Alexander the Great - just to watch the egos clash.

**23. What's next for 'Gordon Corera'?**

More podcasts. There are plenty of stories.

**24. What five words describe 'Gordon Corera'?**

I'll leave that to others!





*Let's have a heated debate!*

One of the extra-curricular events we have on offer at Wadham is a debate club. Here, one of its members **Hedley Egre**, presents the topic he's preparing to debate at the next Youth Speaks debate.

Cloning, some are afraid of it, some think it is something that we will never be capable of. It has been represented and misinterpreted through many works of fiction as unethical and easily corrupted such as: *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley, *Never Let Me Go* by Kazuo Ishiguro, even *Jurassic Park* by Michael Crichton. However, this technology does not bare these characteristics, we are not cloning an army of super-soldiers in order to take over the world, we are not bioengineering consciousnesses to do all of our thinking for us... I mean, we already have AI to do that.

Ladies and gentlemen, now I invite you to look beyond the headlines, beyond the fear we humans have, and into the future—a future improved by the help of this technology. Often misunderstood, cloning is not a threat to humanity; it is a tool that, when used responsibly, can elevate it. This idea happens in nature around us all the time, some bacteria, insects, plants, reproduce asexually naturally generating the genetically identical offspring. If we can work on this already incredibly amazing, naturally occurring concept, we can do equally as amazing things. Imagine a world when no sick child dies while hopefully waiting for a transplant, where no patient who has been battling the disease for so long of their lives, just dies when their body no longer has the means to fight. Through therapeutic cloning, we can grow organs that are exactly what the patient needs to survive, we can help develop resistances to the most destructive of diseases. Most, if not all, we can defeat with this technology. This isn't science fiction; this is science with compassion.

And yet, despite the promise, we hesitate. We hesitate because we fear playing god, we fear the unknown, we fear change. But let me ask you—when did fear ever move humanity forward? Was it fear that cured polio, that mapped the human genome, that sent us to the moon? No. It was courage. It was vision. It was the unwavering belief that we could do better. Cloning, when guided by ethics and empathy, is not a betrayal of nature—it is a continuation of it. It is the hand we extend to those suffering, the hope we offer to families shattered by illness, the legacy we leave for generations who will look back and say, "They dared to care." Let us not allow fear to silence progress. Let us instead be the generation that embraced possibility, that chose healing over hesitation.

Critics argue that cloning challenges identity and ethics. But the real question is: how do we use it?

Like any powerful technology, cloning demands regulation, transparency, and moral clarity. But fear should not halt progress, it should guide it. Cloning is not about playing God, it is about playing guardian of life, of health, of hope. Let us embrace its potential, the modern age, not with blind enthusiasm, but with bold responsibility.

Thank you

We debate every Friday\*

3pm—4pm

(WE PROVIDE SWEETS AND CHOCOLATE)

We debate a whole range of topics



*A World of Opportunities With Wadham School Debate Club*

If interested speak to Mrs Hartley in English

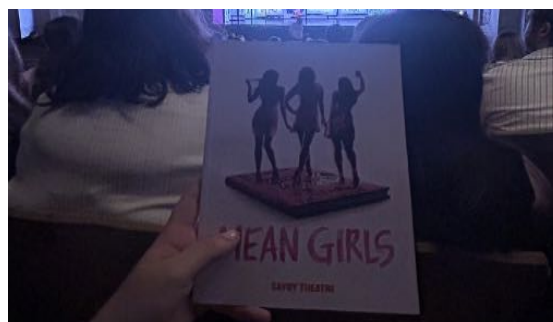
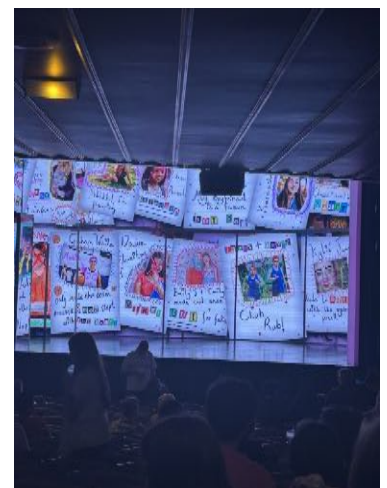
\*Changed from Tuesday to Friday

# IT'S SHOWTIME

## MEAN GIRLS AND WICKED IN THE WEST END

By Phoebe Swain

In May 2025, I went to London and saw *Wicked* and *Mean Girls* in the west end. I enjoyed it very much as I absolutely love both musicals. I saw *Wicked* on the 29th of May as an evening show. It was absolutely incredible and I'm so glad I saw it. My favourite song and choreography were 'Dancing Through Life'. The next day I saw *Mean Girls* as an afternoon show. Again, this show was amazing. My favourite song and choreography in this were 'Meet The Plastics' or 'Revenge Party'. Unfortunately, *Mean Girls* has closed now, and they are showing *Paddington the Musical* at the savoy theatre instead. But you can still go see *wicked* at the Apollo Victoria theatre and *Mean Girls* is going on tour. I absolutely recommend both musicals as they are jam packed with amazing musical numbers and fun characters. I am going to see *Hamilton* in the west end next!



# History Matters



## THE FLYING TAILOR: THE CURIOUS CASE OF FRANZ REICHELT

**By Jonathan Margetts**

Sometimes, there *is* such a thing as false advertising. This is one of those times, because to call Franz Reichelt “The Flying Tailor” is akin to lying. He never flew. Not once. He just sort of...fell.

Born in 1878, Reichelt was just 33 when he made the fateful decision to jump from the Eiffel Tower in a wing-suit made out of old bed sheets. So confident was he of success that he had asked the local Paris journalists to attend with a video camera. This was in 1912, when only a handful of very crude and very expensive camera of this type existed, so he must have been pretty sure of success to ask them to set it all up to record his moment of glory.

Reichelt spent most of his adult years working as a tailor, and he became obsessed with creating a ‘parachute suit’- a wearable piece of cloth that would allow a human being to glide through the air. He began by stitching some used bedsheets together, forming a wing-suit, and tested the prototype design on some clothes dummies. The dummies were too heavy and the suit fell to the ground. After a second, equally disastrous test, Reichelt came to the questionable conclusion that the problem was not his design, but the fact that a dummy is not a human. Many experts, and even his own wife, pleaded with him to give up with his plans, with many people stating that a person is considerably heavier than your usual mannequin. If the suit couldn’t hold the weight of a dummy, what hope would it have with a human?

Rather than test his design further, like most inventors would, Reichelt decided that that was his design needed to work were two things- more weight, and a bigger drop. And so, on the 4<sup>th</sup> of February, he arrived in Paris with the idea of throwing himself from the first platform of the Eiffel tower where, he presumed, he would amaze the world by becoming the first person to fly through the air. However, he lied to the authorities- he had told the Paris council that he intended to test it with a dummy, but he turned up on the day with no dummy and stated that he intended to fly in the suit himself. Despite further warnings, and further pleading from his family, he climbed to the first floor of the tower and threw himself off. He plummeted 57 metres to his deaths, with it all being captured on film. The next day, reports were circulating about the “reckless inventor”. An expert on aviation described the suit was “only slightly more voluminous than normal clothes” and “disastrous”. Others questioned his invention’s purpose, reminding people that the parachute had been invented in 1783 and worked perfectly fine.

History can be tragic. It can be strange. It can be a little bit funny. And in the case of Franz Reichelt, it can be all three.



# History Matters

## THE BATTLE OF JERSEY

By Hedley Egre

On the cold morning of 6 January 1781, on the island of Jersey- just 14 miles off the coast of France became the stage for a dramatic and decisive clash between British and French forces. Though the battle was brief, it was a pivotal moment in the Anglo-French War (1778–1783).

Jersey's location made it a thorn in France's side. British privateers operated from the island, harassing French merchant ships and even disrupting transatlantic routes to America. With Gibraltar under siege and tensions high, France sought to eliminate Jersey as a British stronghold. Led by Baron Philippe de Rullecourt, a French force of around 1,400 men landed at La Rocque under cover of darkness. Despite losing four transport ships and 200 men to the treacherous granite coastline, the French pressed on, capturing Lieutenant Governor Moses Corbet in his nightshirt and forcing him to sign articles of surrender.



The French occupied St Helier's Royal Square, but their momentum faltered. Major Francis Peirson, just 24 years old, refused to accept Corbet's surrender and rallied the British troops. In a fierce counterattack, Peirson was fatally shot in the chest, but his men pressed on.

The turning point came when Elizabeth Castle, still under British control, refused to surrender. Cannon fire from the castle repelled the French assault, killing several attackers and forcing a retreat.

By the end of the day, 600 French soldiers were captured, and Baron de Rullecourt lay mortally wounded. The British had successfully defended Jersey, securing a symbolic and strategic victory.

The Battle of Jersey was more than a simple defence; it was a statement. It demonstrated Britain's resolve to defend its territories, even the smallest outposts, and highlighted the islanders' fierce loyalty and resilience.

Today, it remains a proud chapter in Jersey's history, a reminder that even in the shadow of empires, local valour and strength can shape the course of war.



# Let's Get Creative!



Artwork by Lucy Pike



Artwork by Maggie Singleton



Artwork by Poppy Best

# WADHAM SCHOOL DOES OUTDOOR LEARNING

By Mrs Vowles

Our Outdoor Learning groups have had a great time building den's this term. The groups have had to problem solve to make shelters out of basic materials and whatever they could find in the woodland area.

The groups have shown really good teamwork and creativity.

Well done everyone involved!



# "Life in all its fullness"

# WADHAM SCHOOL EGG TIMER INTERVIEWS

5 MINUTES - 5 QUESTIONS. WHAT DID WADHAM STAFF HAVE TO SAY?

## Anneka Hartley - English Teacher

### 1. Why did you decide to work in a school?

In my 20s, I thought it would be a good idea to do something really challenging (being a teacher) and then everything else in my life would be easy after that. Years later, I am still a teacher.

### 2. Is it every acceptable to have pineapple on a pizza? Why?

Yes, I love pineapple on pizza, but only with tomatoes, olives and jalapenos: sweet and sour.

### 3. What animal would you like to have as a pet and why?

I already have two rescue dogs who I like very much, thank you.

### 4. Which book would you take to read on a desert island and why?

*Middlemarch*. I still have never gotten around to finishing it.

### 5. Who's one person who has inspired you in your life? Why?

I had two very good English Literature A Level teachers whilst I was at sixth-form college. They were very passionate and knowledgeable about their subject and are probably part of the reason I do what I do.

## Amy Cox - Cover Supervisor

### 1. Why did you decide to work in a school?

I never intended to end up in a secondary school, I started my academic journey a few years ago doing my degree in early years, this progressed into an honour's degree in education and then I did my PGCE (teaching degree). But due to covid, there was very little classroom experience because of restrictions, I took my current job as a cover supervisors and have never left!

### 2. Is it every acceptable to have pineapple on a pizza? Why?

I think some people like it, but for me it's a no! I think it is too sweet for pizza.

### 3. What animal would you like to have as a pet and why?

I would love a tiger or a lion, they are just big kitty cats, who just need a belly rub and a boop on the nose!

### 4. Which book would you take to read on a desert island and why?

*Children of the Wheel* by Pamela Scobie, it is a book that I have read a few times and know I would enjoy it.

### 5. Who's one person who has inspired you in your life? Why?

This is a really difficult question, I think through life I have been inspired by many people and don't think I could just name one.



**Jodie Brown - Science Technician****1. Why did you decide to work in a school?**

When I was at secondary school, I was very sure of the career path that I wanted to take, but after I achieved it, life changed my path by presenting me with an opportunity that took me in a very different direction, which eventually led to working in a school.

**2. Is it every acceptable to have pineapple on a pizza? Why?**

Absolutely, it's one of my favourite toppings. Why? It's really tasty and juicy and when else would you get to eat hot pineapple?

**3. What animal would you like to have as a pet and why?**

I would love to have a pet rat. My friend and her sister had rats when we were children, and they used to sit on our shoulders as we watched TV, and they were really cute.

**4. Which book would you take to read on a desert island and why?**

It would probably be a sensible idea to take a Bear Grills survival book! I'm not sure I'd survive otherwise!

**5. Who's one person who has inspired you in your life? Why?**

My friend Dawn, she looks at the world in a completely different way than I do, and usually sees things from a completely different perspective that no one has.

**Jake Cox - English & Film Studies Teacher****1. Why did you decide to work in a school?**

I can always have a good laugh and surround myself with countless people shorter than me to just further inflate my ego.

**2. Is it every acceptable to have pineapple on a pizza? Why?**

Sure. I don't really have a strong opinion as when I've had pineapple on pizza, I don't really taste it. People can do what they want: dye their hair pink, listen to *Spandau Ballet* or have pineapple on pizza - whatever makes them happy.

**3. What animal would you like to have as a pet and why?**

If it was any animal in the world then I would have to go with an Orangutan. They are so interesting to me and I like the idea that I could easily teach it to just prank people. But I could also be its student as well, like it could teach me how to husk coconuts with my feet or something. But I would feel bad having it as a pet. Could I just move into the jungle and become Tarzan 2.0 instead?

**4. Which book would you take to read on a desert island and why?**

Surely something really long to entertain me for quite a while so that I forget details when it comes back around to me re-reading it. I'll just say the *Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Mythology of the World* (which I definitely did not just search for on Amazon). Other than that, something like *Desert Island Survival for Dummies*.

**5. Who's one person who has inspired you in your life? Why?**

This is the one I found the trickiest to answer. There is definitely not one concrete answer to this for me. I could say Bob Mortimer with his strange, wonderful humour, I could be soppy and say my mum, I could be nerdy and say my old Film Studies teacher Mr Turner. I really don't know. It probably isn't the actual answer but I'll say Matt Groening (the creator of *The Simpsons*) as he has probably influenced my humour to unimaginable levels but also influenced others who influenced my humour. If I find the person funny, they will have a greater hand at influencing me.



# What's worth a read?

Beyblade 1 - By Homura Kawamoto & Posuka Demizu (Viz Media)

**Review by Adom Baah**

Amateur Blader Robin Kazami finds himself out of a team when he is ditched by his friends after a crushing defeat. Lucky for him, a chance encounter with former champ Jaxon Cross leads these two unlikely teammates to join forces. Jaxon intends to climb back to the top of The X under the alias "Blader X" and challenge his old teammate and current champ, Khrome Ryugu. When they find a third team member in mega-popular influencer Multi Nana-iro, the newly-formed Team Persona set their sights on going pro and claiming their spot at the top. It's time to show the world something X-traordinary!



Minecraft: The Manga - By Kazuyoshi Seto (Viz Media)

**Review by Aiden Bazley**

Join Nico White as he journeys through the many biomes of Minecraft searching for the end of the world just like his father, making new friends and fighting different foes and crafting the unthinkable. This book is great for fans of comics and Minecraft. After reading it I thought it was an amazing book with beautiful art and a thrilling story with many twists on the original Minecraft world. My rating—I would rate this book an 8 out of 10 because it could have better art, as it is just in black and white but it really set the tone of the Minecraft world and the blocky theme of Minecraft. The story was a masterpiece with the wildest turn at the beginning with Nico's first new friend being a zombie. I loved every second I spent reading it. Overall the story is

moving with many surprises around every corner.

Marvel Comics: A Manga Tribute (Viz Media)

**Review by Annabel Woodcock**

Marvel comics a manga tribute is an awesome mix of marvel heroes and Japanese manga styles, the artwork is full of energy and creativity, giving classic characters like Spiderman and Iron Man a whole new look. It's a fun and unique book that any Marvel fan will enjoy.



# What's worth a read?

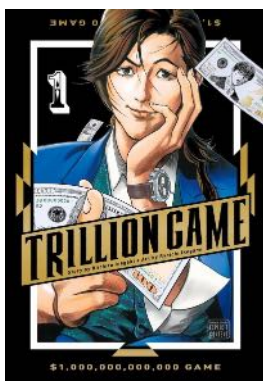
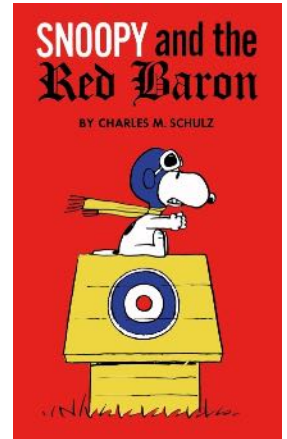
Peanuts: Snoopy and the Red Baron - By Charles Schulz (Titan Comics)

## Review by Georgina Harmes

Story: This book is about Snoopy imagining he's a World War One pilot. He sits on top of his doghouse, pretending it's his airplane, and fights the Red Baron in the sky. Snoopy is brave, but sometimes things go wrong, and he has to find his way home after being shot down. The story shows that even when things are tough, Snoopy never gives up.

Art: The pictures are in black and white with different colored pages, which makes the book fun to look at. Most of the drawings are of Snoopy flying or in battle. Charlie Brown and his friends only appear a few times, watching Snoopy's big adventures.

Final Thoughts: I liked this book because it's exciting and shows how Snoopy uses his imagination to be a hero. It's fun, brave, and a little sad, but really good to read. Rating: 10/10!



Trillion Game, Vol. 1: Volume 1 - By Riichiro Inagaki & Ryoichi Ikegami (Viz Media)

## Review by Harley-George Kellaway

*Trillion Game* is a fast, energetic story about two friends with completely different personalities who team up to chase the impossible goal of earning a trillion dollars. The book mixes business, technology, and ambition with a fun, modern tone. The writing is sharp and easy to follow, with moments of humour and tension that keep you hooked. The main characters are bold and clever, and their partnership is what really drives the story. Overall, it's an exciting and clever read about big dreams, risks, and the power of confidence — perfect for anyone who enjoys stories about ambition and success.

In the Name of the Mermaid Princess, Vol. 1 - By Yoshino Fumikawa (Viz Media)

## Review by Sophie Hillard

I enjoyed reading this book, but I found it quite tricky to read it from the back page to the front, the text also reads from right to left! Apparently all Japanese books are written this way!

The book is like a fairy tale but in a modern style. It has comic strip illustrations in a manga style which were fun and exciting to look at. The story is of a mermaid who is also a princess who is trying to escape the kingdom, to be free.

She is stuck in a castle and has to take medication to hide the mermaid side of herself. The main character, Princess Mio is strong and brave and very likeable. The character makes you want her to succeed in escaping and living her own life as a mermaid. The ending of the story is exciting and mysterious and definitely makes you want to read the next book to find out what happens next! I would recommend this book to others between the ages of 10 and 13 years old. It is fun to read and keeps you interested all the way through.

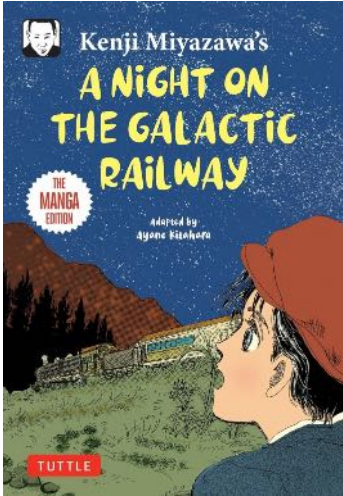


# What's worth a read?

[A Night on the Galactic Railway: The Manga Edition - By Kenji Miyazawa, Moss Quanci & Ayano Kitahara \(Tuttle Publishing\)](#)

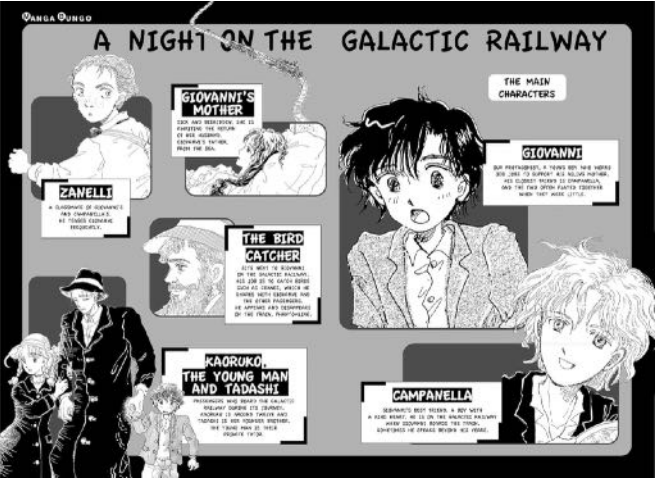
**Review by Daisy Wells**

*A Night on the Galactic Railway* is a manga adaptation of a Japanese classic that was written in 1927 and published around 1933 by Kenji Miyazawa. This manga is only one of many adaptations of this novel, the most popular one is the movie *A Night on the Galactic Railway* which has the same plot yet the two main characters have been swapped into cats instead of young boys (there are also many similar movies that are based upon a magical train such as the polar express.) No matter which version that you want to watch or read the two characters are Campanella and Giovanni, young boys who are classmates and close friends. (Their ages aren't actually ever stated but I would guess that they are around ten.) In the version that I read Campanella is an average character who has little development or any past. On the other hand Giovanni is isolated and only has one true friend to look out for him (Campanella) and gets bullied by his other classmates for his father either being off on a long fishing trip which is the reason Giovanni believes or that he went to Jail. Giovanni is left by himself to support his sick mother by



working jobs such as helping a typesetter and more every day after school.

Although I think that the whole plot of the book is quite boring (Its in the title, it's Giovanni and Campanella together) I do think it has a really cute art style. The ending was quite bittersweet especially considering Giovanni's situation. Despite all of this I believe that creating a manga version is a great way to introduce classic books to younger readers who may enjoy the plots but might not understand some parts of older books as they



may have out of date views and phrases. As the original book was from 1927 the book has very Christian themes such as three people praying on a train and waiting to go to heaven plus nuns singing hymns.

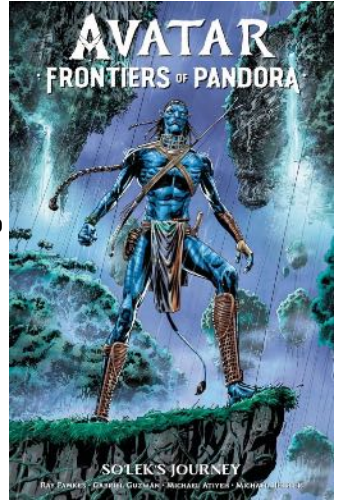
Although a *A Night on the Galactic Railway* is Kenji Miyazawa's most famous piece of work he has also written many other books that feature the same theme of space, stars, travel (especially during the night) such as: Night train to the stars, the night on the milky way train and the nighthawk star. Even though he is most famous for his books he also wrote poems, his most famous being 'Ame ni mo makezu' which he wrote while ill with pneumonia which he eventually died of at age 37. (1896-1933) Outside of his writing he was a Buddhist, a teacher, a scientist and a social activist.

# What's worth a read?

Avatar: Frontiers of Pandora - So'lek's Journey By by Ray Fawkes, Gabriel Guzman & Michael Atiyeh (Dark Horse Comics)

## Review by Izy Clements

The comic makes So'leks personality very clear, it shows how he is very fierce and how he never gives up. It shows his story perfectly of him trying to find other Na'vi after his own clan was killed by the sky people (humans). It makes you feel empathy for So'lek after he becomes alone in Pandora. The comic shows how So'lek tries to find other na'vi, speaking to his ancestors to find guidance through his grief. After his travels of trying to find more of his kind, brings him to make relationships along the way.



The art of the comic is mind blowing, it's so beautiful. Reflecting the characters emotions perfectly. The style is very realistic and the na'vi are drawn perfectly. The comic continues on with the game, Avatar frontiers of Pandora amazingly and would be a great thing to read while playing the game.



Behemoth - By Grant Sputore, Ryan Engle & Jay Martin (Dark Horse Comics)

## Review by Izy Clements

*Behemoth*, penned by Grant Sputore and Ryan Engle with illustrations by Jay Martin, is a four-issue survival horror Dark Horse comic that features kaiju-sized destruction and human-sized terror. Sara, a gruff food-truck chef, has her life and dreams literally gulped down when a behemoth monster consumes her bus and most of the city. Inside the monster's gigantic, hellish body, Sara and a handful of survivors must navigate a dark, pulsating labyrinth of surreal hazards in a bid to survive.

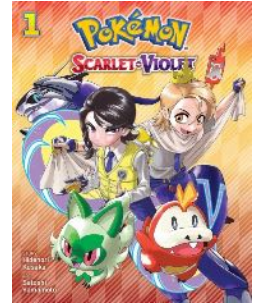
The concept is immediately gripping — a mashup of monster-movie spectacle and desperate claustrophobia that keeps you on the edge. Jay Martin's writing makes the horror a reality through epic, cinematic spreads of the creature towering over skyscrapers, before shifting to close, visceral scenes inside the creature's body; his use of colour and texture creates a tangible atmosphere of horror. The pace is brisk and sharp, the danger constant, and while the short length doesn't allow for highly developed characters, survival tension and dream symbolism devoured by mayhem give depth to the story.

It's a cinematic enterprise with big ideas and a thrilling fright-fest that teeters on the edge of terror and awe — perfect for fans of Godzilla, The Mist, or Alien. My personal favourite scenes are where they match up the vulnerability of human beings with the impossible scale of the monster: Sara's repressed defiance amidst devastation, the unsettling calm before every rush of horror, and the disturbing quiet at the monster's core. Behemoth is not trying to reinvent the monster movie, but it does one thing differently — it puts you inside the monster instead of keeping you safe on the outside. Overall, it's a suspenseful, beautifully illustrated story.



# What's worth a read?

Pokémon: Scarlet & Violet, Vol. 1: Volume 1 - By Hidenori Kusaka & Satoshi Yamamoto (Viz Media)



## Review by Joseph Mate

I absolutely loved this manga. It was an amazing book. I really like the story line, art and everything else about it. As soon as I saw the eye catching front cover I already knew I wanted it. It's full of adventure and I love the story line behind it. It started off slow and worked its way up. It's definitely an amazing book. Personally, in my opinion my favourite character is definitely Violet Yang as he is really cool. He rides on his Pokemon Miraidon which is really fast! I really do love it and I think you will too. I highly recommend it for any Pokemon fan.



Cat + Crazy Volume 1 - By Wataru Nadatani (Dark Horse Comics)

## Review by Mason Toop

The story line is about a cat that gets taken by a man who has other cats that follow him, he uses a yarn ball to get them to follow him, the man then tames the cats to follow his commands with the yarn ball. Another boy then tries to learn what the man does with the cats. The boy finds that the man has his missing cat and asks to join the man as a disciple to get his cat back, but he doesn't manage to. The boy gets another cat called Tiger who he looks after for the rest of his life. The man is powerful as he is able to tame the cats with the yarn. The girl gets annoyed with the boy, but she helps the boy find the cat. The boy is good at the start and then starts to get confused whilst running all over the place looking for him. The setting is good, and he is based round his house. The themes are based around the house and a school.

I like the drawing, the anime characters and the faces in particular as they have been made very cool. The tone of the characters makes each of them show their emotions like happy and angry.

RuriDragon, Vol. 1: Volume 1 - By Masaoki Shindo (Viz Media)

## Review by Meadow Curtis

As someone who is familiar with manga and graphic novels, Ruridragon was an interesting read featuring the main character, Ruri. It's a very well-paced comic but some parts can drag a little bit. It also is quite engaging due to the artstyle and short chapters. The main themes for the manga are partially fantasy, but I don't know the name for the other one I'm trying to explain. The story cuts right to the point and doesn't have too many build-ups for anything that happens. Ruri is a 15-year-old schoolgirl whose life had changed in one morning. The style of the art is quite appealing for me, and I am quite picky with certain artstyles. The comic is in black and white, but I think it adds to the atmosphere of the story. On each chapter it features a piece of art and the sketch the artist had to do for the previous chapter's one. The artist (Masaoki Shindo) makes it very easy to see each character's emotion. Overall, I think that Ruridragon is a great read and I am planning to buy some more of the manga series because it is that great. I think it can be targeted to all audiences, and anybody can read comics.

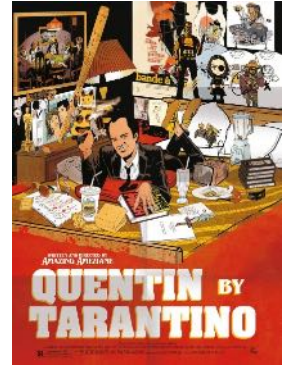


# What's worth a read?

Quentin by Tarantino - By Amazing Améziane (Titan Comics)

## Review by Jake Cox

An illustrated regurgitation of the filmmaker's rise is weighed down by his inconceivably giant head. Originally published in France, this reasonably dense graphic novel serves as a whistle-stop tour through the life and career of the monumentally big-headed - figuratively as well as literally - Quentin Tarantino (director of Pulp Fiction, Inglourious B\*sterds and Django Unchained, to name a few).



Now, before reading this, I already had a pretty good knowledge of Tarantino's career journey and his films. I was also incredibly aware of his tendency to sound painfully egotistical in relation to his craft as a filmmaker and storyteller. Many times, he has cited that he only aims to direct 10 feature length films before riding off into the sunset à la John Wayne at the end of THE SEARCHERS. The only thing is, what was supposed to be Tarantino's penultimate venture turned out to be his self-proclaimed magnum opus: a love-letter to filmmaking, ONCE UPON A TIME IN... HOLLYWOOD. Which I think is just hilarious.

Anyway, back to the graphic novel...Written and illustrated by 'Amazing Ameziane', it follows an interview structure where Tarantino is being questioned by a faceless interviewer (revealed later in an eye-rollingly predictable fashion), sometimes going off on tangents and deviations but staying surprisingly chronological, all things considered. Not only does it talk about each of his directed films, but also the films that he had written or acted in.

We learn some interesting tidbits of facts or versions of famous stories from his point of view throughout these chapters, but nothing spectacular to read. 50% of what makes a graphic novel a graphic novel is the writing, the other 50% are the illustrations and colouring. The word that I would use to capture the quality is 'inconsistent'. Sometimes it looked great. And sometimes it looked very janky. It left much to be desired, put it that way.

I did, however, find one section of the book to be impactful to read - the Weinstein scandal and his personal connection with Uma Thurman. It read with genuine sincerity, and the caricature of Weinstein reflected his vile morality. However, the writers still managed to make it about Tarantino which felt slightly gross but did align with his ego.

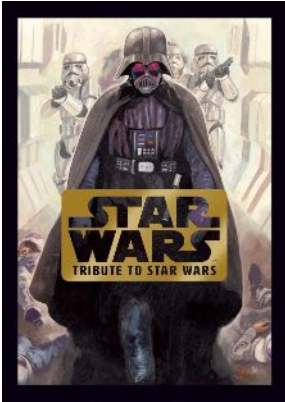
Overall, for me personally, reading this began to feel like a bit of a chore at quite a few times throughout. Which is a real shame as I so desperately wanted to enjoy it. Though I do think that readers who have an interest in film, maybe Tarantino's projects, where this is their first time dabbling into the 'origins' of a creator and his work will enjoy it much more than I.

At the end of the day, I would much rather read this than have to listen to Tarantino's voice as he says "alright" a billion times just to tell you that he is the Scorsese of his generation or the Bruce Lee of directors (both things the version of him says in this).

Now, Norm MacDonald's version of Tarantino is certainly a guy I would want to hang out with. ("What separates me, okay, from like 'Hollywood directors', okay, is that I have, like, I have a HUGE head, alright, okay. No, I don't mean I have a big ego, okay, 'cause I don't, alriiiight. I mean my actual HEAD is HUGE, alright. I mean, I have to sleep sitting up, okay, like the Elephant Man or I'll die, alright.").



# What's worth a read?



Star Wars: Tribute to Star Wars - By Lucas Film (Viz Media)

## Review by Poppy Spurway

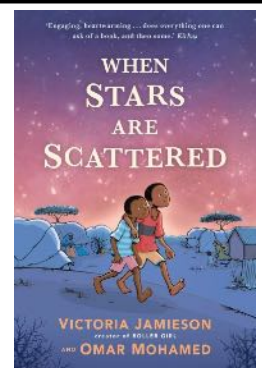
*Tribute to Star Wars* is an amazing Asian themed picture book put together by loads of different artists. It's a fascinating nonfiction art book where you delve into how different people view the saga of Star Wars through their interesting and diverse artistic talent. It's a delightful book to sit a look at without having to read too much! This makes it a good relaxing read. Unlike any other book, this wonderful book showcases the work of talented artists like Rikachi, Uri Sugata and many more. It details some of the more famous Star Wars saga characters like Darth Vader and Luke Skywalker, and some of the not so known characters like the very cute but fierce Ewoks or the very ugly, evil bounty hunter Jaba the Hutt, all put into unique pieces of art. This book is like a mini biography of many different artists, with a personal message about their first encounters with Star Wars, why they chose to draw the character they have and a little bit about them. Its newspaper like layout also makes it an easy read. I'm not sure what I like more about this book... whether it's the profiles on the artists or getting to know so many of their other works.

It's amazing to see how creative people can get with their art, in that they weren't worried whether it matched the original style of Star Wars or not. The art ranges from anime to abstract to realism. You won't need to worry about any massive Star Wars spoilers in this book because it doesn't mention anything about the trilogy. To summarise, *Tribute to Star Wars* is definitely a must have for Star Wars fans, aspiring artists or even people who appreciate the views of artists. I'd give this book a 4 out of 5 -star rating because of how interesting it was, however, I did feel it was missing something, maybe some comic strip illustrations to add to the artwork, especially for the price of £19.99 in hardcover.

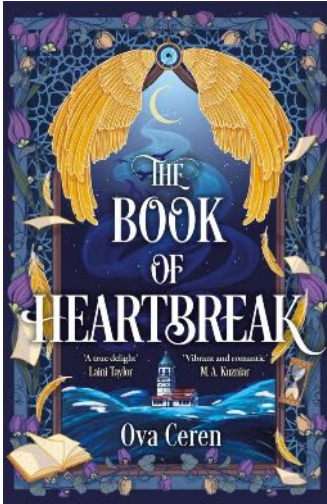
When Stars are Scattered - By Victoria Jamieson, Omar Mohamed & Iman Geddy (Faber & Faber)

## Review by Sarah Hutter

There's been so much talk about refugees in the news this year, but it often feels distant — focused on numbers and policies rather than people. For me, *When Stars Are Scattered* gave me a very different perspective. This graphic novel tells the deeply personal autobiographical story of Omar, an orphaned boy from Somalia, and his brother, who live together in a refugee camp in Kenya. The story follows Omar and his group of friends as they navigate life in the camp and dream about what the future might hold for them. Based on Omar's real experiences, the story shows what it's like to grow up missing your parents, carrying the responsibility of caring for a brother with a learning disability, and holding onto dreams of a better life — maybe in America or Canada. As a graphic novel, the illustrations are both beautiful and heartfelt, capturing the dull routine of camp life as well as the small, powerful moments of hope that keep people going. What makes this book so special is that it's real. Knowing that Omar's story truly happened makes it all the more moving, along with reading about his life now and how he has dedicated it to refugees like himself. This book is both heart-warming and inspiring — a reminder that even in the hardest places, hope can still shine through.



# What's worth a read?



The Book of Heartbreak - By Ova Ceren (Hot Keys/Bonnier Books)

## Review by Annabel Woodcock

*The Book of Heartbreak* by Ova Ceren is a beautifully written story. Sare Silverbirch (the main character) is under a curse if her heart gets broken 5 times before she turns 18 she will die. Her fourth heartbreak was from her mother's death. She then asked questions if there were any ways to break the curse. Her search leads her to Istanbul the land of her mothers roots. There she meets Leon a seer who helps her discover more about her curse Leon and Sear grow closer which is risky because this could trigger her final heartbreak. Sear learns that more than just humans controlling her or watching her fate. Their plans don't like being changed.

An Illustrated Guide to Samurai History and Culture: From the Age of Musashi to Contemporary Pop Culture - By Gavin Blair (Tuttle Publishing)

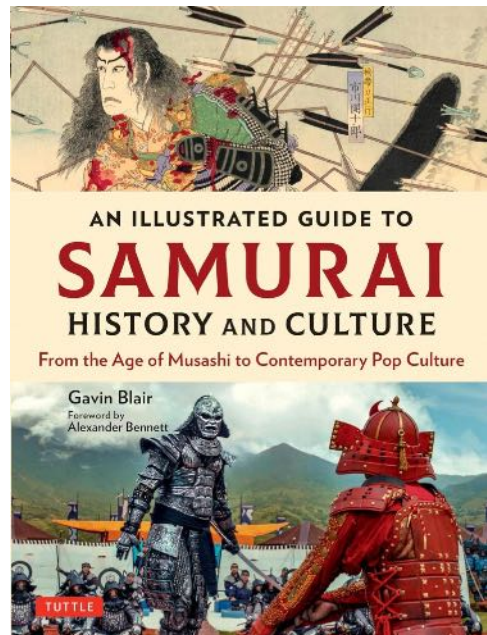
## Review by Evan Pearce

The book *An Illustrated Guide to Samurai, History and Culture* is a nonfiction book written by Gavin Blair, covering the entire timeline of samurai in Japan. It explains every major point in the history of samurai from their origination in the 9th and 10th centuries all the way up to the 19th century.

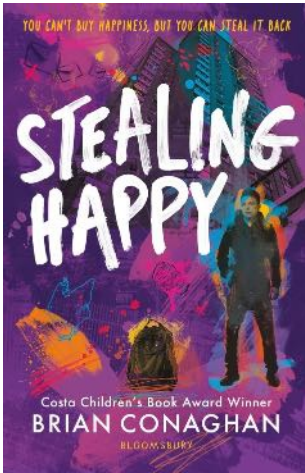
The book is very engaging, including details from every time period, explaining everything you can find about samurai in Japan. The book also features historic illustrations from the time, drawn by people who have seen the samurai first hand. One part of it that stood out to me was the actual formation of the samurai, exploring the earliest warriors who were paid to fight for their clients and their eventual takeover, creating their own government. It dives deep into every region of Japan and the samurai influence there.

One particular samurai who caught my eye is Minamoto No Yoshitsune who was exiled to a monastery at a young age after the death of his father. He then later escaped to the northeast with a band of men disguised as monks. One of the 'monks' beat Minamoto for allegedly clumsy behaviour. This made the guards think that he couldn't be a samurai lord if he was being beaten by monks. Because of this unique interaction, Minamoto has remained a legend to this day.

All in all, I love this book. I've never really had much of an interest in Japanese culture, but this book has turned my opinion around, sparking a new interest in my mind. I would recommend this book to any history lovers, you don't even have to like the history of Japan as, like me, this book has sparked an interest in samurai. Overall, I would give this book a 9 out of ten.



# What's worth a read?



[Stealing Happy by Brian Conaghan \(Bloomsbury Books\)](#)

**Review by Lucy Wood**

*Stealing Happy* is a young adult book aiming to capture the effects of poverty in an unapologetically realistic way. Written from the perspective of twelve-year-old Sonny, it details his family's struggles to regain normalcy after his father was rendered unable to work due to illness. His mother, in a state of desperation, was forced to borrow money from local loan shark, Chick Lennon; and now he wants his money back. Sonny, knowing his parents are unable to pay, and desperate to help them, ropes his friends into coming up with a plan to somehow get the money. Their plan? To steal it from Chick Lennon himself. A fool-proof plan, all they need to do now is carry it out. But

that is easier said than done; especially with Sonny's Tourettes causing him to blurt out "rob Chick Lennon" at every turn.

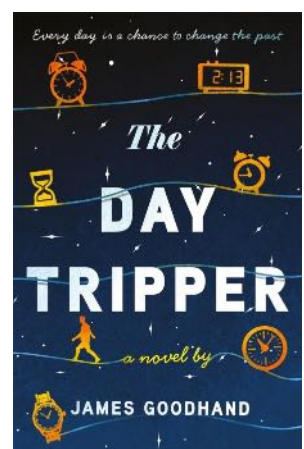
*Stealing Happy* is a laugh-out-loud, relatable novel that captures the authentic voice of a teenage boy perfectly. It displays an accurate and easily understandable representation of Tourettes, one that is the perfect balance between simplification and over-complication. It advocates empathy and friendship above all else, and shows just how detrimental both of these can be in a young person's life- especially one dealing with such struggles as what Sonny faces. As with all Conaghan's book it is laugh-out-loud funny, expertly combining both comedy and tragedy in a way that is filled with heart.

I would absolutely recommend *Stealing Happy* to young adults of any ages over twelve, for I think it is a wonderful insight to the mind of someone with Tourettes, a condition which is severely underrepresented in modern media. Furthermore, it discusses perfectly problems which have arisen and are a big problem in current society- such as long-term Covid, unemployment, poverty, and the lack of support surrounding these issues.

[The Day Tripper - By James Goodhand \(Black & White/Bonnier Books\)](#)

**Review by Molly Caswell**

*The Day Tripper* is a book by James Goodhand, this exhilarating story falls at the crossroads of sci-fi, romance and coming of age. The book begins by introducing us to the character of Alex, when we are introduced to Alex it's 1995 and he has recently secured a place at Cambridge university with the love of a spectacular woman named Holly. When Holly and Alex go out for the night Alex finds himself in a feud that leads to him almost drowning in the Thames. He wakes up the next morning and he's in an unfamiliar setting and somehow it's 2010. Now every night he goes to sleep wondering where the next day will be and what adventures it may hold. This novel really teaches us how different choices can impact you in many varied ways, I would recommend it to anyone asking for a heartbreaking quick read that you won't stop thinking about.



# STICK THIS IN YOUR EARHOLES

London Calling by The Clash

By Alfie Cox

This a great album I discovered this year, and it's now one I couldn't live without.

This album is inherently a punk album, and its one of the best to do so. Unlike some other famous punk albums, it embodies the values of punk rock- Challenging authority and standing up for what you believe in.

This album mocks fascism and conservatives in tracks like "Clampdown" and addresses issues with 70s England in the title track. One of the best tracks on the album is "Lost in the supermarket", which challenges consumerism and its effects.

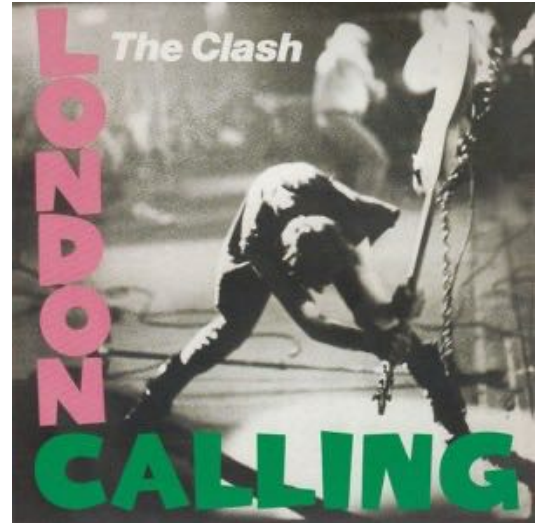
What makes this album a truly unique LP is the elements of other genres, such as jazz, reggae and ska.

As well as the traditional instruments imagined in punk records, London calling challenges punk norms and added a horn section to some tracks.

This pushed the boundaries of what was 'punk' in instrumentation and broadened the potential of punk records in the future.

Even the cover is a masterpiece, signifying its tribute to the whole history of rock and roll with a parody of Elvis Presley's self-titled album. It shows the bassist in a moment of true frustration, linking to the often held feeling of frustration against the world the punk groups often have.

The Album is also just frankly an amazing listen, and one of my favourite albums of all time.



# MOVIE REVIEWS

## THE ELECTRIC STATE

By Jonathan Margetts

"Mr Peanut signed the Treaty of Surrender with President Clinton on the White House lawn today". That's an actual line from this movie, which takes 'alternate history' and runs with it to its whacky conclusion.

With my cinema trips limited due to my parenting duties, I have found that my best chance of watching a movie in the current climate is to check it out on some streaming service or other. And so, not so long ago, I took up some advice from a friend about this movie and gave it a watch.

On the surface, it had everything that appealed to me- robots, a dystopian future, some pretty cool mech suits. It is also directed by the Russo Brothers, who gave us *Avengers: Infinity War* and *Avengers: Endgame*. It stars Chris Pratt, who is normally good value for money, and Millie-Bobby Brown from *Stranger Things*. They're powerhouse actors. On paper, it should absolutely appeal to me. And it does, in concept.

Based on a graphic story by Scandinavian artist/novelist Simon Stalenhag, the dark imagery of the source material is touched upon in some of the film's visuals, but the story is much more playful and takes the concept very loosely. In an alternate timeline, the 1990s have seen humans and robots peacefully existing until, one day, the machines decide they have had enough of being second class citizens and rise up against the humans. Their uprising is quickly quashed, and remaining robots are exiled to exclusion zones. However, when a random robot breaks through into the human world, we find out that there are more secrets to the robot uprising than initially thought, and they're certainly not the bad guys that we think they are at the beginning.



Chris Pratt, looking a lot more messy and unkempt than we've come to expect, is a lot of fun here but he doesn't do anything that we haven't seen him do before. He is capable of great depth in some scenes, and he is clearly a great actor, but the script plays it safe far too much, resorting to giving him some silly pratfalls and zingy one-liners in scenes that should have more emotional weight.

Anthony Mackie, A.K.A Marvel's Falcon, provides the voice of one of the wise-cracking robot companions, but he also isn't explored enough outside of a harrowing and emotional fake-out 'death' scene near the movie's climax.

The real scene-stealer, though, is Millie Bobby Brown, who is very quickly breaking away from *Stranger Things* and showing that she is a talented and varied actress in her own right. Not only does the British-born





actress carry off a convincing American accent throughout (nothing new considering her start on *Stranger Things*), but she plumbs emotional depths as a long-suffering young adult who just desperately wants to find her brother. There are also voice

roles for Woody Harrelson (as the rather unfortunately named Mr Peanut) and yet another villainous turn for *Breaking Bad's* Giancarlo Esposito. However, the movie is very predictable and, despite some exciting set-pieces, there is no sense of danger or any feeling that the main characters will ever come to any harm.

Where the Russo brothers are at their best, as always, is in the action sequences. A particularly thrilling finale battle takes place, making brilliant use of revealing many of the world's robots unique designs, but it doesn't have the same impact as that awesome battle from *Avengers: Endgame*. These are characters we are still getting used to, so piling them all into a big fight at the end doesn't work because we simply don't know who we're dealing with yet. The special effects are suitably luxurious, the scenery is gorgeous and the world-building is effective in making us believe in a world where robots and humans once lived hand in hand.



The problem, however, is that this movie is never as adventurous as its source material. Considering that the original book was just a series of images based around a theme, it doesn't give the directors much to work with and they have tried to create a plot based around not much at all. The world could have spawned so many stories, but what we are left with is a movie that doesn't do anything original. Perhaps the fact that there was no guarantee of a sequel made the production team cram in as many ideas as possible into

one movie. Had this been part of a trilogy, with time to flesh out characters, we might have been able to see how awesome the Electric State could have been.

Sadly, the lukewarm reception to the movie on Netflix probably means that we won't see a sequel.



Instead, we get a mad-cap movie with a robotic peanut, a violent baseball droid and a robot who used to work for the postal service but now fires letters at people. No, really. It could have been great, but instead it's just 'meh'.

There's nothing very 'electric' with this state.



# Wadham Christmas Countdown



It cannot have missed your attention that the countdown to Christmas 2025 has begun. With this in mind the students and staff of Wadham have taken on the task of testing out various items which could be worth putting on the present list of your nearest and dearest.

What to get for the person  
who loves...stationery?

Academic Planner from Pepper and Cute

**Reviewed by Abigail MacKay**

This academic planner by the company 'Pepper and Cute' is a great product for planning and organising events and daily tasks. It features a lovely nature-themed design that adds a beautiful, aesthetic touch to your daily routine.

The paper is thick so won't rip easily allowing for it to last a long time and remain easy to use; it has smooth pages allowing for an enjoyable writing experience. All pens write easily on the paper; ink pens do not seem to feather, ensuring notes are easy to read, and the ink dries quickly, preventing smudging. Being slightly bigger than A5 allows for plenty of space to write.

You can buy filler packs that include stickers, dividers and planning pages and all the pages are removable meaning that the planner is very versatile and can be reordered to suit your style and purpose. However, a word of caution: repeated rearranging of 240 pages of various types of pages come in the planner from a monthly plan, lined pages and pages with a variety of boxes with different layouts for different types of planning and notetaking. Dividers help section the planner's four-year content, allowing for easy use and making the planner more user-friendly. Three sticker pages are contained in the planner, including monthly stickers that allow you to order the month



pages to suit your working pattern. These stickers are of great quality and peel easily of their backing and adhere well to the pages.

This planner cost £10.95 and any additional packs start from £5.95 which I believe is a reasonable price for the quality and performance of this product. Overall, I would rate this Pepper and Cute Planner an 8 out of 10.

Notebooks, pencil case and pens from Pepper and Cute

**Reviewed by Bella Taylor and Mel Taylor**

### Notebooks

The notebooks are light, and the colours stand out. The covers of the books are smooth and have cute, inspirational quotes on them. They all have a good quality, and expensive feel. The notebooks are the perfect size for my homework notes, and I liked how in the popcorn one's paper it is squared, the lemon one is lined, and the spotty one is dotted. I really liked how the front cover design is also on the inside cover! On the inside cover the lemon and popcorn notebooks have cute little faces on them, which I loved. They all have 32 pages. I would personally use the lined one for my creative writing, the squared one for maths homework, and the dotted one for sketching, but it is totally up to you! Although they could've had more pages, I loved these products!



### Pencil Case

I loved the pastel colours on the pencil case, as well as it having three different colours. There was a lot of space for all my coloured pencils, and in it there is a little platform and a meshy piece on the inside on the front. I would say that it is perfect for school. I also love how it opens upwards. The zip is quite big and is very secure so there is a low chance of breaking it. The stitching is also very neat. Although it

could've been a bit bigger, it was overall a very good product.

### Pens

These pens are nice, bright colours. The little sayings on each pen really made me smile and the pen toppers, although quite big, are cute. I love the inspirational message that is on the back of the packaging. I think it is thoughtful and shows that the teacher who would be gifted these have been thought of. I think these pens would be a great gift to give a teacher and would be something that I would be happy for my son to gift to his teachers. When writing the ink writes nicely and did not leave any blotches that some ball point pens can do. I do feel that there are quite lightweight, even with the big topper on them. The only downside to this set was that unfortunately one of the pens clickers were quite squeaky, which would be quite annoying if I was using it a lot. However, I do really like these pens.



For more details go to <https://www.pepperandcute.com/>

*What to get for the person who loves... 'Lego'?*



T34 tank from Nifeliz

**Reviewed by Henry Hopwood**

This unofficial Lego T-34 is a stunning addition to my collection of Lego Tanks, it fits right in with my ww2 Tanks, the building process was enjoyable and fun, but very complicated in some areas, but overall was a rewarding build. Similarly it took me a few hours to build it, about 4 hours I think, compared to Cobi's sets which can take up to 6 hours, this T-34 was a breath of fresh air and was enjoyable to construct, the pieces were good quality and had a good clutch power, which mean it had a very good structural integrity, the stickers use to represent insignias on the

Tank were very good and stuck very well to my Tank, whilst this set had no figures, it is just fine without them, as a display piece, I have to say they did a very good job on the design, and I enjoyed laying ever piece, there are not any cons I could consider and I would recommend this brand of brick sets to anyone with a passion for Lego and War, I would have to Rate the set 5/5 as I cannot find anything wrong with it, it is a brilliant set and I am proud to display it on my Tank shelf



Geology Rock Formations from Nifeliz

**Reviewed by Ted Hartley-Smith**

The pyrite (fool's gold) Lego set is a medium sized, intricately detailed Lego set and strongly resembles the common sulphide mineral. This is not a vastly complicated build, but the realism is stunning, it really does look like pyrite and would be a great gift for any geology loving Lego fan. My only complaint would be the lack of square shaped builds that are in it, it does give you two but if you look at a picture online, it does feature a lot more of those square shaped rocks. Overall, it is a



very good set for fans with a more realistic taste.

**Reviewed by Lewis Taverner**

This MOC beautifully captures the striking geometry of natural stibnite crystals. The use of metallic silver elements instantly gives the model a realistic, metallic sheen — perfectly suited to represent the mineral's natural luster. The builder cleverly combines slopes, tiles, and hinge pieces to form sharp, intersecting "crystal" rods that fan out from a compact, rocky base.



The color-coded corners (red, green, blue, orange) add a subtle visual contrast, grounding the sculpture while hinting at a display or classification system — a nice museum-exhibit touch.

#### □ Build Techniques

Despite its small scale, the build demonstrates some smart LEGO geometry. The use of clip connections and angled joints creates convincing crystalline branching while maintaining structural stability. The central core is tightly packed but cleanly designed, showing a good understanding of balance and stud orientation.

The mix of smooth tiles and textured studs gives it visual depth — from the polished “crystal shafts” to the rugged mineral base.

#### □ Aesthetic Appeal

This piece would look right at home on a shelf next to other mineral-inspired LEGO creations. The metallic colors reflect light beautifully, and from every angle, the model presents a different crystal silhouette. It's abstract but recognizable — a perfect artistic interpretation of stibnite's natural elegance.

#### □ Overall Impression

Rating: 9/10

A small but stunning LEGO sculpture that captures the geometric beauty of stibnite in a minimalist, display-worthy form. It's both scientific and artistic — a testament to how creative part usage can turn simple bricks into something that looks almost geological.

#### Highlights:

- Excellent color and texture choices
- Realistic crystal structure
- Compact, stable, and well-proportioned

#### Minor suggestion:

Consider labeling the base or adding a transparent stand to elevate it like a mineral display case piece.



#### Reviewed by Lily Greenham

I chose to get the Rhodochrosite Emerald 'Lego Set' because it looked interesting and I liked the colour of it.

When I began building it, I felt it was a bit confusing as the instructions looked different to the usual Lego and had lots of information to look at. It took about 15 minutes to build and was quite repetitive but this could have just been this model.

The completed model looked quite good and I liked the colour mix of emerald and diamond. It is quite stable and you can pull off a few pieces on the sides as they are connected with a hook. I would recommend this set to collectors as there are others to include to the collection.

I give it a 4.5 star rating as it was really fun besides the instructions.

For more details go to <https://www.nifeliz.com/>

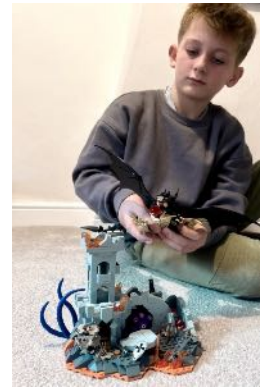


Dragon Fire Castle from iambrick

**Reviewed by Luke Hodnett**

### 1. Introduction.

The brick set is called Dragonfire Castle and features a tower for a dice track and secret door mechanism. It is made by a company called 'I am brick'. It has 913 pieces. I was really interested in this Lego set because it was a fantasy build and the main attraction was the fire-breathing dragon and the eye monster that covers the secret door.



### 2. The building experience

When I was building the model it was easy to get into the building mindset and although it took all my concentration while building it, the instructions were easy to follow and were clear.



The interesting thing about the instructions was that they had a story at the beginning and a little picture at the beginning as well. The stickers were ready printed and separate to the set so they were more like personal stickers than for any real use on the lego.



When I was building the set I noticed it was complex and had three packs per stage which I found strange, Lego brand only has one pack per set. And I found the base of the floor kept falling off. Also there was a difference in the picture and in the lego build because in top of the box, on top of the castle, the fire was glowing but in real life it wasn't.

### 3. The final model.

The final model looks fierce and true picture on the box (except for the fire). The eye monster can open a secret door from a lever behind and the dragon can move all its limbs. Once fully build the castle is stable. Sadly, there were no minifigures but there was lots of playing parts and the dragon could move.

### 4. Conclusion

So after doing the Dragonfire Castle set over a few days and with the help of my friend Fletcher I can say the set was great to build and was fun to play with. A weakness I feel is that that the floor of the base which the rocks and castle fit on to are fragile and do not connect very well so then other parts fall off, this is also the same for the flame which comes out of its stand. I really liked the backstory that introduces the story behind the set.



Tyrannosaurus Mecha Dino from iambrick

**Reviewed by Tai Loveless**

Is an easy 14+ set, it was fun to build because the light brick is really fun but hard to

do the half skeleton.

The half life idea is amazing and really good for younger children because you can see all the different types of bones. The only bad and difficult thing is you need to cut some of the pieces. However it is fun to build and worth every penny. 10/10

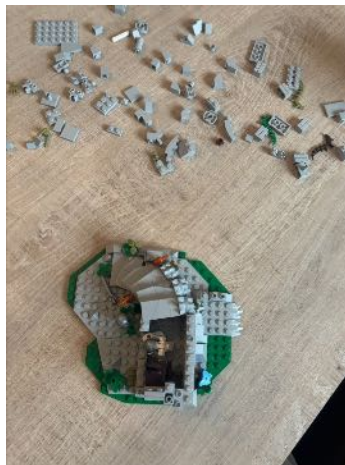
The Aboreal Keep from iambrick

**Reviewed by Charlotte Brennan**

The Aboreal keep by IAmBrick is a fantasy themed Lego set with 942 pieces. I chose this set because I loved the idea of the giant tree guardian protecting an old stone ruin and treasure.

The build was moderately challenging as there were lots of intricate bits to add and took me about 3-4 hours total to complete. The instructions were very easy to follow and there were no stickers included which meant the detailing was made using textured pieces

The finished model looks amazing; the mix of colours gives it an authentic forest look. The arms, head and body can move and there is a detachable staff that can be moved to make different scenarios. The finishing touches on the base like the fold down treasure chest are great too.



The pros of this set are the level of detail and how engaging it was to build. The only con for me was the Lego bags, multiple bags were needed at once.

Overall I'd highly recommend this set for fantasy fans and for fans of creative display's.

#### About IAMBRICK

Iambrick is an imaginative and healing creative brand dedicated to the design and production of trendy toys and building blocks.

They embrace the brand DNA of "I am brick, together we create," where each "brick" represents a spark of creativity and connection.

#### There Mission

There mission is to use building blocks as a medium to spread positive energy and rediscover the pure beauty of creation. Every iambrick piece helps build an inspiring world — one that blends innovation, joy, and quality.

Beyond play, there creations offer a sense of freedom and inner peace — a truly relaxing and healing experience. When we say "Together We Create," it reflects not only the joy of building with our community but also the shared spirit of imagination and creativity that unites us all.

For more details go to [www.iambricktoy.com](http://www.iambricktoy.com)

Time Machine Car from BlueBrixx**Reviewed by Richard Burgas**

When Mr Hopwood announced he'd soon be receiving 10 construction sets from BlueBrixx – a new German brand similar to Lego, I had to get in on the action and I asked if I could be given a set to review.



A few days later, a sturdy brown cardboard box arrived, with a colourful cardboard band that announced the contents as “set 107641 – Time Machine Car”

Instantly recognisable, I was excited to sit down and spend time putting the 339 pieces together to create an iconic Irish sports car and movie legend, complete with display stand and flaming streaks from the rear wheels. The first thing to note is there were no paper instructions supplied. Instead, scanning a QR code took you online to a detailed online manual, which set out in a near identical way to Lego how each step should be completed. Clear and colourful pictures, with red highlights for each step, made finding and building the whole model really easy and straightforward.

Building the car was a fun and rewarding experience that any brick enthusiast or movie fan will appreciate. The set does a great job capturing the iconic look of the famous time-traveling car, with plenty of clever design touches that make it stand out once complete. The attention to detail is impressive—especially the gull-wing doors, rear-mounted “time circuits,” and the classic silver colour scheme. Once assembled, the model looks fantastic on display and is instantly recognizable. The designers clearly put a lot of thought into recreating the movie car’s signature look using Modbrixx elements. The brick quality is solid—tight clutch power, good colour consistency, and only a few minor fitting issues that you’d notice if you wanted to play with the finished car. It’s very close to LEGO quality, which is always nice to see from an alternative brand.

Overall, the Modbrixx Time Machine Car is a fun, nostalgic build that combines creative design with solid construction. Whether you’re a fan of the movie, a collector, or just love a detailed build, this set is well worth your time at a price that offers great value when compared to big name rivals!

Grey sportscar from BlueBrixx**Reviewed by Oscar King**

This set drew me in because I like cars and Lego, and I liked the look of the set it looked like a fun set to try and build. The build was not too challenging although some parts of the build were quite challenging. The instructions were very clear and easy to follow and greatly laid out. The set had included stickers but no printed bricks

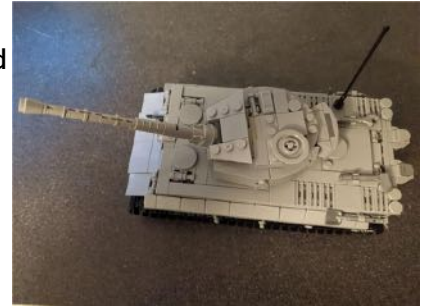
One building technique that stood out to me was how they made the bonnet of the car able to move up and down so you could see the engine. The engine also stood out to me because once you had built it it would be placed down on its side.



In my opinion the completed set looks fantastic almost looking like an Audi r8 and the colour scheme matches the type of car perfectly and contrasts well together. Cool detail is that the steering wheel moves and the seats can have mini figs sat in them. There are no mini figs included in the set. It is fun to play with, and the wheels move smoothly and freely. The stability of the set is

good and structured well. The set looks really good as a display as that is what I have chosen to do with it. It works well as a display piece as many people do not have cars for display so it will stand out from everyone else and add a touch of you into your displays. The set is overall a good set to buy and is good for its price of only £14.95. I would highly recommend this set to anyone who is considering buying a new set

# Blue Brixx



Tiger VI from BlueBrixx

### Reviewed by Nye Edgar

The Tiger VI was a very good set when I first got it, I admired its amazing design and when I opened it for the first time, I dumped all the packets onto my workstation and saw the immense amount of work ahead of me. As I started to construct the set, I slowly started to realize how long it was going to take me to complete it overall. It took me about 7 to 8 hours to finish it in total, but a lot of that time was spent finding certain pieces as they were all grey. The instructions weren't bad but could use some improvement with telling me where specific pieces go instead of just a red outline of wear.

There were a lot of very unique building strategies involved in the construction, such as the turret being made up of a lot of smaller pieces rather than one long one. The overall aesthetics of the set were very good in my opinion as it is very realistic to the actual tank with cool details like having an engine in the back. There was only really one feature, that being the rotating turret, but it did have movable tracks which were quite cool. It did not have any features for playing as it is more of a model than a toy, but it does a very good job of being a display piece. The only real problem I have with the set is the fact that it was very fragile so if you did anything to it, it would break apart also it was very hard to find a specific piece because all of them were out at once and they were all one colour. In conclusion I think that it is a very good set and I highly recommend it to anyone who wants to get into Lego models. Rating; 4/5

Us at BlueBrixx are excited to let the students of Wadhams School review some of our brick sets. Each student got to choose a set that they liked, and we can't wait to read about their building experience. As an alternative brick brand, that is compatible with all other major brands, we love to see new fans discovering us. We set out in 2018, near Frankfurt in Germany, to create sets spanning various themes, such as trains, the military, fantasy worlds and also medieval times, plus many more. In addition to that we have various licensed sets such as Stargate, RoboCop, the Peanuts and more German centric licenses like "Die Drei Fragezeichen" (The three Investigators), DGzRS (similar to the RNLI) and BRABUS.

In addition to our BlueBrixx Specials, which come in plain, brown boxes with the building instructions, downloadable as a PDF, we have BlueBrixx Pro Sets. These include more printed pieces, a physical instruction booklet and sometimes minifigures. We also sell sets from other brands, which some of the students have also chosen to build.

While many of our sets are focused towards adult fans of bricks (affectionately known as AFOB's), we also have a growing number of sets for kids and more complex ones for young adults. We strive to give any brick building enthusiast any set they want, which is why we have such diversity. Take a look at our website or our social media channels to see more of what we do!

For more details go to <https://www.bluebrixx.com/en/>



Brick Building Courtesy of Jadlam

**By Jessie Vowles**

The Year 10 Outdoor Learning group have had a great time building a range of models to review for the Quill over the past few weeks. We were lucky enough to have been given the following models courtesy of Jadlam:

- ◆ An Airfix Quick Build 'Apache' Helicopter
- ◆ A LEGO Classic 'Creative Food Friends' set
- ◆ An Airfix Quick Build 1:35 'Sherman Firefly' tank



It has been great to see the students enjoying the challenge of working on their builds. We have had a range of model sets, from a fun and friendly, LEGO 'Food Friends' set which Gracie completed at a super speedy rate, to more challenging builds.

The class have shown real perseverance, teamwork and concentration working on their models. I look forward to seeing all of the models being completed in the coming weeks. Well done to all the students' involved. Great work! For more details of these sets go to [https://](https://www.jadlamracingmodels.com/)

[www.jadlamracingmodels.com/](https://www.jadlamracingmodels.com/)



**By Alfie Windsor and Mrs Vowles**

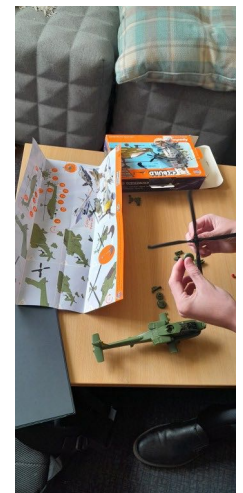
I chose the Airfix Quick Build Apache helicopter to build in class. I chose it because I like the army theme.

I enjoyed building the kit, which took me about 45 minutes. It was hard to build, but I got there in the end. I found the instructions clear and easy to understand.

When I finished making it, I really liked the way it looked. It is an army green helicopter with a large black rota blade which can rotate.

My only criticism was that the gun underneath wouldn't click in nicely and kept coming out and the stand is a little bit wobbly.

Overall, I thought it was fun to build and I would recommend it to a friend.



## What to get for the person who loves..gaming?



Chromatic Hand Held Console by Mod Retro

**Reviewed by Jacob Prouse**

Today I am going to show you my review of the Modretro chromatic, it is a type of Gameboy that you can play original Gameboy games on! It also has a wide range of games that you can order which come with charms to hang of the Chromatic.

On the topic of appearance, the screen is much bigger than I anticipated, and the colours are

vibrant, bold and striking. There are many different options for the colour ranging from Sapphire blue to a bold, dark orange. The console is made from a durable metal that is hard to scratch the paint off.

The buttons are smooth and very fast responding and it's fast in loading screens. The graphics are better than expected on Modretro original games and are enhanced on Gameboy ones! My opinion is the Chromatic is it's a great handheld console that could be amazing as a pocket boredom reliever.

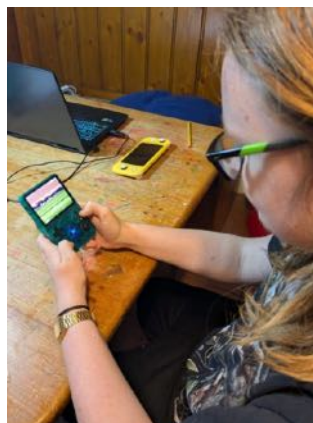


For more details go to <https://modretro.com/>

### R36S handheld Gaming console by Retronanix

**Reviewed by Nye Edgar**

I really like the R36S handheld Gaming console. Everything about it is good, the screen is high quality, all the buttons are nice and responsive, and everything works, which is good. My favorite game on it is Airforce Delta which was originally made for the Gameboy colour I like it because it keeps you entertained for hours on end. This Leads me to probably the best feature of the R36S which is the fact that it has over 20,000 games pre-installed on it from several different consoles such as PlayStation, Nintendo and Neo-Geo.



I only really have one problem with it, is that some of the controls are very strange because the game was not made for the buttons on the console. Other than that, I do not have anything else to say negatively about it. Every feature and selling point is there, so overall I think it is very good and well-made, and I highly recommend it to anyone who wants a good, cheap, portable, handheld console.

For more details go to <https://retronanix.com/>

*What to get for the person who loves..their toiletries?*

Focus Therapy  
Balm from  
Scentered

**Reviewed by**  
**Hayley Rich**



I was asked to review the product 'Focus Therapy Balm'. Having a busy family and work life working with lots of different people learning lots of new things every day, the balm specifically for focus was something that greatly interested me.

The balm itself is the size of a lipstick or roll on perfume, very compact and can be easily put into your pocket. It is pleasantly presented in a baby blue packaging and is easy to open and shut. It has clear instructions of use on the packaging, where it was made, and the products main ingredients all clearly to read.

To use the balm you just simply remove the lid and apply the balm to pulse points on your wrists, neck, and temples. I decided to test this product everyday over 4 weeks to see if I felt it improved my focus. Although I was initially sceptical, I can honestly say overall my experience with the balm was positive, these positives were:

- ◆ Improved focus,
- ◆ Easy to use,
- ◆ Wonderful Scent,
- ◆ Fine on sensitive skin,
- ◆ Long lasting product.

I couldn't really think of any negatives regarding the product, and it is something that I will keep using. I would recommend Focus Therapy Balm to older teenagers and adults who just need a little boost, overall fantastic. For more details go to <https://www.scentered.com/>

Blueberry Party Eau de Cologne - 200ml from Avon

**Reviewed by Maddie Hallet**

The product I am reviewing is a blueberry scented perfume made by Avon. I have been using this product daily for the last 2 weeks and have found it easy to apply and those around me have complemented on the scent.

The product is 200ml and can last up to 1 year if used daily. The packaging is also very detailed with a clear description of the name of the product and what the product is. The product is presented in a clear pink bottle with fine designs all around. There is a simple spray mechanism at the top to allow easy application.

A warning is to keep away from eye contact. I enjoyed using this product although instructions on the back of the bottle is written in Arabic so not so easy to understand. Another negative is the large packaging. Overall, this product offers good value and a pleasant scent but due to its size I would not recommend it to someone wanting perfume in their handbag.

For more details go to <https://avon.uk.com/>



Strawberry Lip Balm, Clearskin bubble cleanser, Nourishing lip oil and Exfoliating scrub from Avon

**Reviewed by Olivia Turton**

### Lip Balm

The GET HYDRATED strawberry scented lip balm is defiantly one of my favourites from AVON that I have reviewed for this edition. The lip balm has lived up to its name with a sweet strawberry scent and a hydrating touch on the lips. The lip balm gives a light rose tint and has sparkles in it that create the perfect gloss and shine on the lips. Overall, this is a amazing product I have found AVON to be great for their lip products which I would recommend.

### Bubble cleanser

Going into this review I had high hopes for this product that were not met. AVON'S bubble cleanser was on the good side very good at taking off makeup. It only took one swipe to take of my mascara so if that's what you're looking then top marks for that. On a side note this product doesn't seem to have had a lot of thought put into it for different skin types.

After using this product, I found that my skin had become very inflamed and irritated causing me to need eye drops from especially bad irritation on the eyes. It's claims that it is blemish clearing in this case didn't stand up because after a day or two of using this product I experienced a very bad break out. The product also had a very strong chemical smell which made it hard to use without gagging. Definitely wouldn't recommend this product especially if you have sensitive skin.

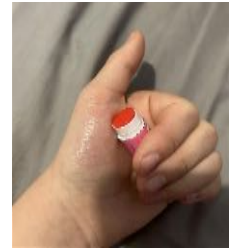
### Nourishing lip oil

AVON's Nourishing lip oil is a must being super hydrating and leaving a beautiful glow on the lips. The lip oil also could double as a gloss with its pink shade appearing clear on the lips. It's in the shade shimmering petal with added glitter, on a note when the lip oil was first opened the glitter had settled in the corner from being lay on its side, but over the next day or two it mixed with the product and has stayed evenly spread out since which is not a big problem. One more thing when you put it on as it dries on your lips your lips a left sticky. Overall, I would say this product is really good but AVON should just see if they can change their base product to a less sticky one because that really did put a low on the product.

### Exfoliating scrub

AVON's exfoliator is defiantly better than their cleanser but it all comes down to your skin type. When first opening the exfoliator there was a sweet smell of hazel which was genuinely nice, the product was this light green kind of mint chocolate chip colour. However after using the product my face felt raw and inflamed like a burning sensation, I have narrowed this down to my skin type.

All skin types need exfoliating sometimes but there are rules. If you have dry or sensitive skin then I would use this once to twice a week, for oily or acne-prone skin you can use it more frequently maybe even daily but work it into your skin care routine slowly and last but not least if you have combination or normal skin you could use it every other day or daily. Personally, I would only recommend this product to people who have oily or acne-prone skin because it has stronger chemicals in it. For other skin types I would use a softer exfoliating product for your skin. Overall, this product is really good and I would definitely recommend it but do some research first on your skin type. For more details go to <https://avon.uk.com/>



100ml bottled Bramley range of bath, body and skincare

**Reviewed by Sarah Baker**

When I was given the opportunity to review some products by Bramley, I was intrigued by the sleek, little bottles with their elegant pastel flower design on the front. Pressing open one of the sturdy lids, I did the necessary 'sniff' test and, I was met with an amazing aroma of botanical extracts much like the essence you would experience in a tranquil spa. I jumped at the chance to test out these divine creations and find out more about Bramley. Now, I've become a Bramley aficionado and want to tell everyone about them!

Founded in 2009 by Chloe Luxton, Wiltshire born Bramley have created wellbeing toiletries which 'harness the very best of nature': 100% natural, British botanicals blended with apple seed oil. Bramley products are Vegan friendly, cruelty free and use 100% recyclable packaging – so much to love!

Bramley's selection of shower, hair and skin products that I put to the test were delightful to use and I wanted to see what else they had to offer. Lucky for me (and everyone) they have a huge range of gorgeous products to peruse online, from 'Bath & Body', 'Skincare' and 'Home & Wellness' to 'Little b for children' and even 'Digby for Dogs'!

All Bramley products contain natural ingredients, infused with essential oils and botanical extracts, to create what they call "Botanical Magic!" (Trademark). I tested a selection of the 100ml bottled Bramley range of bath, body and skincare, including: Hand-wash, Hand cream, Shampoo, Conditioner, Body wash and Body lotion. So, here's what I thought (and rated) for each ...

### Hand-wash

With Lavender, Geranium & Petitgrain: a golden liquid gel, easy to extract from the bottle. Just a small amount needed, which foams well with a little warm water. The aroma is refreshing and the mix of essential oils in this product promote relaxation & stress relief (Lavender), with natural antibacterial properties (Geranium) and soothes dry or irritated skin (Petitgrain). My hands felt clean and the fragrance lingered for a while afterwards. 10/10

### Hand cream

With Lavender, Geranium & Petitgrain: a smooth, light cream consistency which was fairly easy to extract from bottle – lid size is good for managing how much to apply. It absorbed properly into skin with no greasy feeling afterwards. Hands felt soft and well moisturised. Invigorating, botanical fragrance was noticeable and lots of compliments on the aroma for an hour or so after use. 10/10



Shampoo

With Lemon, Mandarin & Rosemary: a refreshing, burst of citrus from this golden, liquid gel which felt luxurious when massaged into hair. The infusion of extracts in this shampoo are balanced well to cleanse, deodorise & promote healthy skin (Lemon), improve mood & cognitive function (Mandarin) and stimulate hair growth, reduce stress and relieve inflammation (Rosemary).

A decent soaking of warm water was needed on hair before applying with a good handful of the product, as it took a little while to create the perfect foam. It rinsed well, but did leave my hair feeling a tad dry and course at the ends – it was literally ‘squeaky’ clean. Following it with conditioner was definitely a must for me. 9/10

Conditioner

With Lemon, Mandarin & Rosemary: same beautiful aroma as the shampoo, but a much thicker cream consistency making it tricky to extract from the bottle. It wasn't too much of a problem initially – it just required a few forceful, downward shakes. However, about halfway through the bottle, I did have to completely remove the lid to get the remaining conditioner out. I found that storing the bottle upside down also helped. The conditioner rinsed well and softened the ends of my hair. It left my hair feeling smooth, manageable to comb and smelling delicious! 8/10

Body wash

With Grapefruit, Lavender & Sweet Orange: the essence of citrus and zest in this body wash aim to awaken the senses and help balance mood (Grapefruit), act as an antioxidant (Sweet Orange) and also reduce stress with a calming effect (Lavender). A generous application on wet skin, it foamed well and was easy to rinse off afterwards. I felt refreshed and my skin felt soft and clean, with that ‘just stepped out of a spa’ aroma that lingered for several hours afterwards – the bathroom smelled gorgeous too! 10/10

\*Bramley Body wash has also received the ‘Beauty Shortlist Awards 2025 Editor’s Choice’!

Body lotion

With Juniper, Sweet Orange and Bergamot: a smooth, easily absorbed, cream consistency – this was one of my Bramley favourites. The therapeutic aroma from this lotion was amazing! It harnesses botanicals which contain antioxidant properties (Sweet Orange) and enhances mood for reduced stress and anxiety (Juniper) while also providing antiseptic, antibacterial and anti-inflammatory benefits (Bergamot). The lotion absorbed well into skin and it left my arms feeling well moisturised, so was effective and non-greasy. The ‘aromatherapy’ fragrance lingered for a while and it got lots of compliments! 10/10

I have fairly sensitive skin and prone to eczema, but I had no problems with any of the Bramley products I used on a daily basis, over the course of a week. I thoroughly enjoyed trialling this range and I'd definitely recommend their products to everyone. If you love aromatherapy and want to experience that spa pampered feeling at home – Bramley deliver that little bit of luxury that everyone can enjoy!

For more details go to <https://www.bramleyproducts.co.uk/>



Skin Smoothie Skin Serum, Body Wash and Shampoo

**Reviewed by Lily Obem, Caitlyn Edwards and Bryonee Carling**

Skin Serum

In a world of skincare solutions that often feel generic, this offers a breath of fresh air with their customizable face serum. The premise is simple: you complete an online questionnaire detailing your name if you want it on the bottle, flavour, colour and which product you would like such as face serum, shampoo, conditioner, and they formulate a serum specifically for you. The process is surprisingly thorough. This level of personalization is what sets them apart from other brands.



Body Wash

The vanilla body wash provides full cleansing with a mild vanilla fragrance. It maintains skin hydration without causing any dryness or irritation, making it suitable for daily use and sensitive skin. I found it to be an excellent product, after use, my skin felt softer and better hydrated. I would 100% recommend to others who are looking for a nourishing cleanser with a good scent. One feature I especially liked was being able to customise the product, it made the experience more personable and enjoyable. I would definitely purchase from Skin Smoothie again.

Shampoo

After using the watermelon flavoured Skin Smoothie shampoo, my hair felt noticeably softer and cleaner. The shampoo lathered well, and the watermelon scent was really pleasant without being too strong. I appreciated that it didn't leave my hair feeling stripped or dry, which is a common issue with other shampoos I've tried. The feature of choosing and picking the scent, colour and to customise the name choice was a great experience to have and a unique way to bring out the oddly satisfying feeling when you finally get a shampoo that you want but a way easier way to achieve it without any troubles. I liked this experience because they have many options to choose from and to customise it with any name you want is also a great option for a gift for someone.

My scalp felt refreshed, and my hair had a nice shine to it after drying. Over a few weeks of use, I noticed less frizz and my hair seemed more manageable overall. If you're looking for a gentle, nourishing shampoo that delivers on its promises, Skin Smoothie is a great choice.

For more details go to <https://skin-smoothie.co.uk/>

Beauty UK Glass Lipstick, Glitter Eyeliner and Ultimate Contour Palette

**Reviewed by Zuzanna Zrebiec**

Glass Lipstick

The lipstick in light pink offers a beautiful, soft colour that's perfect for everyday wear. The black cylindrical tube gives it a sleek and modern look, making it easy to carry around in your bag. The lipstick glides on smoothly, providing a creamy texture



that feels comfortable on the lips without drying them out. Its shade is versatile, flattering many skin tones and adding a subtle pop of color that enhances your natural beauty. Overall, it's a great choice if you're looking for a reliable lipstick that combines style and comfort.



The Beauty UK Glitter Eyeliner

The eyeliner tubes in white and silver are a great addition to any makeup collection. They offer vibrant sparkle that can really make your eyes pop, perfect for parties or special occasions. The black caps make them easy to handle, and the glitter is finely milled for a smooth application without clumping. Whether you want a subtle shimmer or a bold glittery look, these eyeliners provide versatility and long-lasting wear. Overall, they're a fun and stylish way to add some sparkle to your eye makeup!



The Beauty UK Ultimate Contour Palette

The contour palette is a versatile and user-friendly product perfect for creating defined and sculpted looks. It includes three different shades that blend smoothly, allowing you to contour, highlight, and add dimension to your face with ease. The compact packaging is sleek and travel-friendly, making it convenient to carry around. The shades suit a variety of skin tones, and the pigmentation is just right—not too intense but buildable for a natural or dramatic effect. Overall, it's a great palette for both beginners and more experienced makeup users looking to enhance their contour game.



For more details go to <https://beautyukcosmetics.com/>

*What to get for the person who loves..to be creative?*

Airfix A55011 Starter Set - Aston Martin DB5 1:43 Model Kit

**By Caspar Crouch**

As of late, the once dominant superpower of scale-modelling, Airfix, has really upped their game in order to compete with more popular brands such as Tamiya and Eduard. This particular kit was a perfect example of this. I

was very much surprised by the quality of the mould and by how easy the kit went together. The sprues had very little flash (excess



plastic which has overflowed from the mould) and was quite detailed, which is nice to see from such a small model, which only measures at 10cm in length.

I start by snipping the required pieces from the sprue and sand down any excess plastic to make the building process smoother. As the theme of the build will be a German WW2 tank,



the interior of the car will be painted the same as the interior of a German tank would. I use AK Real Colours "Cream White" and "Rotbraun" to paint the interior using an airbrush. After detailing and a paint wash, this is the end result:

The next step is to attach the remaining exterior pieces to complete the hull. This was easy due to the excellent moulding and build quality of the kit. I also installed the canopy pieces (windshield, rear windows, etc.) but I will need to mask them so they don't get covered in paint during the painting process. I use Mr. Hobby "Mr. Masking Sol R", which is a liquid painted onto a surface in order to protect it from chemicals and paint.



To make this supercar look more like a battle-worn tank, I scribe some hatches and use a tool to produce rivets all over the surface, and I also attach Jerry Can handles to the sides. I spray the surface with a black primer and follow with a single coat of AK Real Colours "Dunkelgelb '44". As you can see, the Mr. Masking Sol has done a great job of shielding the clear parts from the paint.

To mimic the late-war camouflage pattern, I take inspiration from German tanks used in the defence of Normandy in 1944. Once again, I use AK Real Colours "Rotbraun" and "Olivgrun" to paint the camouflage. After applying the decals, painting fine details and giving it a final set of washes, this Aston Martin DB5 is complete.



In conclusion, I think this kit was very enjoyable to build and great value for money, sitting at a price of £9.99. The sprues were very finely detailed and the clear parts had very little defects or scratches. The decals looked great and had great detail despite being incredibly small. I believe this model would be great for beginners as has a small piece count, requires very little work to put together and the instructions are easy to read and provide lots of useful information on not only the specifications of the build, but also a separate sheet explaining lots of techniques which would be useful to beginners or intermediates. Even though I didn't use them, included was a selection of paints, glue and a paintbrush, which is a nice touch.



For more details go to <https://www.jadlamracingmodels.com/>



Airfix A55007 Starter Set - Lamborghini Huracan EVO 1:43 Model Kit

**By Edward Deakin**

I was really happy to find out that there was a Lamborghini Hurricane that I could build, as Lamborghini is my favourite Car Manufacturer. I particularly like the hurricane because it does 0 to 60 in 2.9 seconds and it can reach up to 202 miles per hour. It is 4,520 millimetres long whilst it's width is 2,236 millimetres and produces 631 horsepower.

I really liked building it because despite following the build instructions, I didn't have to follow the paint instructions, instead I did it in really funky colours and changed the interior design. because I wanted to make it unique. It got quite fiddly in the little tight gaps it was quite hard to get in some of the gaps, but it took patience and skill I struggled with glueing the glass I enjoyed the painting It was a very rewarding experience struggled with glueing the glass I enjoyed the painting It was a very rewarding experience I really enjoyed it

For more details go to <https://www.jadlamracingmodels.com/>



*What to get for the person who loves..fashion?*

T-Shirts from Quertee

Stormtrooper Surfing T-shirt (Empire Wave)

**Reviewed by Andrei Radulescu**



The T-shirt overall is comfortable to wear, it looks good, and the texture feels like high-quality. The T-shirt was kind of loose but also true to size. The T-shirt after washing kept the same shape and it did not shrink. The print on the shirt feels like high-quality and after washing it did not wash away. One thing I liked about the T-shirt was the texture and how comfortable it is. One thing it can be improved on is that it could be more breathable and less itchy to skin. The fabric of the shirt feels soft and comfortable to wear outside. Overall, the T-shirt is comfortable, looks good and the texture of the fabric feels like high-quality. I rate this T-shirt 8/10

Velocitractor

**Reviewed by Bryonee Carling**

This gray "Velocitractor" T-shirt from Qwertee is a fun and quirky addition to any casual wardrobe. The graphic features a dinosaur wearing a hat and driving a tractor, which is sure to grab attention and spark conversations. The text "VELOCITRACTOR" adds a playful touch, making it a great choice for those who enjoy humor in their clothing.



The design is printed on a gray T-shirt, which offers a versatile backdrop that pairs well with jeans, shorts, or even a skirt. The Qwertee tag suggests that the shirt is made from a comfortable, lightweight material, perfect for everyday wear. The fit appears to be standard, making it suitable for a wide range of body types.

Overall, the "Velocitractor" T-shirt is a fun and unique piece that would make a great gift for dinosaur lovers, tractor enthusiasts, or anyone who appreciates a good pun. Its comfortable fit and eye-catching design make it a standout item in any collection.

### I'm Doing Side Quests

#### **Reviewed by Oscar Dart**

This shirt is a must-have for any gamer, fantasy fan, or professional procrastinator with a sense of humor. Featuring an adorable cat dressed as a medieval knight, sword in paw and flanked by tiny dragons, it perfectly captures the mindset of anyone who's ever gotten \*just a little\* sidetracked from the main quest—whether in a game or in life.

The print is bold, colorful, and easy to read, with the standout phrase "I'm Not Procrastinating, I'm Doing Side Quests" cleverly blending relatable humor with nerdy charm. The artwork adds a whimsical vibe without being over the top, making it perfect for casual wear, conventions, or just lounging around like the hero you are.

Made from a soft-looking fabric in a neutral gray tone, it's easy to match with jeans, joggers, or even armor (if you're committed to the bit). It's a fun conversation starter and a cozy piece of clothing rolled into one.

### Game Lover

#### **Reviewed by Sam Canner**

This Hi, I reviewed this T-shirt from Quertee. When worn, how it feels: it feels soft but not too soft. This t-shirt actually fits me. When I put it on, I said to myself; This is a nice T-shirt. The quill does such bangers, the printing is all about video games such as: Halo, Mario, Zelda, god of War and many more, and the colours and details really stand out, so eye-catching. I wore it out, and I noticed some people looking at it, probably wondering where I got it. We did wash it after a couple of days, and it was fine, no colour fade. My favourite things about the t-shirt are i will say in bullet points

- ◆ that it has more than one game on
- ◆ The quality of the shirt felt amazing when worn
- ◆ The colours and detail really stand out
- ◆ Also, when wearing it, it fits me perfectly and is breathable. When wearing it, you just want to chillax

For more details go to <https://www.quertee.com/>



### T-Shirts from Dirty Velvet

#### Pure Vibes

#### **Reviewed by Sarah Baker**

Out of a variety of T-shirts which I had the privilege to review, there was only one which immediately stood out to me. It was a T-shirt made by Dirty Velvet in vintage white 100% organic cotton — and I have been genuinely impressed by its quality and comfort.

The first thing that caught my eye was the image of a cat playing the drums, with 'Pure Vibes'! It's fun and quirky, plus it looks a bit like my





own cat which I found amusing. The T-shirt has been produced as part of a collaboration with Stereophonics to raise funds for Teenage Cancer Trust. I have been proud to fashion this quality product for such an awesome cause. In terms of the fit, I was wearing adult small size. It's well-proportioned and comfortable without being too tight or too loose, which makes it ideal for everyday wear. The fabric feels fairly thick, yet breathable and soft against the skin, which adds to the overall comfort. This T-shirt retails at £34.50, which to me, suggests a decent level of production quality.

One of the most notable features was how well it holds up after washing, the vibrant colour of the print image shows no signs of fade and the stitching has remained neat and secure. Three washes in and looks like new, the shirt is still maintaining its shape and colour, which is something not all T-shirts can claim.

I also like that it's suitable for different styles. It pairs well with jeans or layered under a jacket, making it a practical and versatile.

For a little bit of background, Dirty Velvet produce Vegan garments with organic dyes – made from water based, organic certified inks which are better for the environment and considerably softer than oil-based inks. Their factory, located in Turkey, is powered entirely by 100% renewable energy. They claim to offer a “creatively different perspective to the mainstream” in terms of their designs. Dirty Velvet are also the only company to design a garment swing tag that can be reused as a drinks coaster – this makes an inspired addition to an already excellent gift idea!

I can honestly say there's clearly no compromise on style, quality or comfort with their clothing and I would certainly consider purchasing more T-shirts from Dirty Velvet. This T-shirt would make a perfect gift for anyone who likes to stand out from the crowd, whilst sticking to comfortable everyday wear.

It gets a 9/10 from me! (It would've got 10, if not quite so pricey) I would definitely recommend for a special purchase, birthday, anniversary, concert gig or seasonal gift!

### Space Race

#### **Reviewed by Anna Whitfield**

The t-shirt had a print of cars on a planet. It was oversized but comfortable. The fabric was soft and the print kept its colour after washing. Due to the size of the t-shirt it's versatile and can be used as a day shirt or a nightdress. The design was cool and the planet was life like. I have worn the shirt a lot and find it goes with lots of outfits.

For more details go to [www.dirtyvelvet.co.uk](http://www.dirtyvelvet.co.uk).



T Shirts from British Vintage BoxingLe Bombardie Marocian T Shirt**Reviewed by Alice Henly**

I recently had the opportunity to try the British Vintage Boxing's 'Le Bombardie Marocian' T-shirt, and I am pleased to say how comfortable and well fitted it was to my regular size of a small, I was slightly disappointed to see how long it was in length, but nothing a quick tucking in can't fix!

The comfortable cotton, had excellent breathability and strength (durable to my mother's merciless washing!) As a not so regular fan of boxing championships I found myself very interested in the meaning behind this t-shirt and am glad to say that I am proud to wear a tribute to such an outstanding boxer. The print is clear and simple, which was right up my street.

However, I could not find an exact t-shirt price, but I compared the relative prices with other t-shirts on the website, and I did find myself slightly shocked with the price they are on sale for, and this was a minor disappointment. Apart from this I thoroughly enjoyed wearing it and would recommend for its comfort and breathability.

3 ½ out of 5 stars.

Bombardier Boxing Gloves Crewneck Sweatshirt**Reviewed by Eoghan Neville**

This hoodie is amazing, full stop. The fabric is dense and thick, it keeps you warm when it is cold and doesn't overheat you when it is warm. This hoodie is unlike others that I have tried that are flimsy and cheap. It's nice and soft on the inside and cozy without being overwhelmingly so. You can tell it's a good-quality piece - the stitching is quality, and it feels like it will last forever.

The washed black look is great too. It isn't blackp, only that already worn-in look that makes it feel like it's already broken in already. The print on the front is also nice quality - good old-fashioned boxer gloves with "British Vintage Boxing" written around it. It doesn't look tacky or overdone, only clean and elegant. I would 100% recommend buying a hoodie from British vintage boxing !

The fit is good, the only thing I would say is that it is a little bit too big for me but others would find it fits just right. It is not too baggy or tight. The cuff and the waistband are nicely fitted and do not become flabby after a bit of wear. It's the kind of hoodie that you can wear anywhere at most places. It doesn't look bad with jeans or joggers, so you don't have to think about it too much when putting it on !

Comfort-wise, it's amazing: You can wear it all day, and it still feels comfortable. The inside stays soft after a wash, and it does not shrink or distort. You can see the material's been worked properly.

But in there website they are really hard to get ahold of and cost quite a lot of money so we where lucky to get given to us free of charge by British vintage boxing

I would 100% recommend buying a hoodie or sweatshirt from them as you would be getting high quality and amazing comfort.

For more details go to <https://www.britishvintageboxing.com/>



Caps from Capiche

Golden Dragon

**Reviewed by Fen Hopkirk**

Hats are amazing things and can be used for a variety of distinct reasons. You have bucket hats, hard hats, woolly hats and so on but the hat I have come talk to about is a cap. You have probably seen hundreds of caps, but I guarantee you have never seen a cap like this.



This hat is an amazing, unique cap; therefore, I would like to describe the appearance of it. To start with I must talk about its incredible colour. For the crown of the hat (also known as the top part of a cap) is a beautiful shade of blue with an embroidered golden dragon on it. This dragon really brings the cap to life and shows off its unique appearance; on the back of the cap is the word Capiche which is the name of the company that made this exquisite hat. Now I am going to talk about the visor of the cap. I am speechless for how cool it is. It's an amazing gold colour that shines making it an eye-catching thing to look at. It really makes the cap worth buying. Finally, I would like to include the bottom of the visor. When you first look at the cap you think wow, that is a really nice cap, but when you look underneath the visor, your mind is blown for underneath the visor is an extremely detailed drawing of a golden dragon. It looks as if it is swooping around. That is all I have to say about the appearance of the cap but now I am now going to talk about the material.

A hat can look really nice on the outside but when you put it on it may not be the best material for you. Luckily, the material of this cap is a nice, comfortable fit for pretty much anyone. The Golden Dragon Snapback hat is 100% acrylic and feels durable. The visor on the cap has a smooth, metallic feeling with visible stitching and the whole cap itself is good enough to last you for a good amount of time. If you first put on the hat and it does not fit right, there is no reason to panic because you can adjust the fit by using the adjuster at the back. The inside of the hat is spacious and can fit a variety of different sized heads in it so it doesn't matter what size head you have but overall, the Golden Dragon Snapback hat is a durable hat that can be adjusted to fit a wide-range of different people.

Overall, this hat is cool and trendy hat that can really pull a look together. Anyone could have it and anyone could wear it and that is why this might be the hat for you.

Brainwashed

**Reviewed by Chloe Pattenden**

I really love the picture on the front of the cap and it really suits the colour. I really like how the picture on the front isn't just a sticker, it's stitched on and actually looks like a brain. I love the drawing on the underside of the peak



because it's related to the stitching of the brain and soap. I think it fits me really well and I like the logo on the back and the fact that it has a clip which helps you to tighten it. I'm going to use it when I'm outside or playing sport because it will help to protect my eyes from the sun.

Swiss Pikemen

**Reviewed by Wyatt Titterrell**

I chose the Capiche snapback cap to review because the bottom print reminds me of a game I play (age of empires IV) and that game reminds me of the



historical battle that took place in 1066, the battle of Hastings, after a little search on google I discovered its theme is Swiss pikemen.

The cap is mainly a fashion piece but is also useful in sunny weather. It comfortably sits on my head, and the material didn't feel too stiff. The stitching is good and the red really stands out against the blue, I like how the sword is done where the middle of it is hollow just like a fuller on a real sword. Overall its a really comfortable and cool looking hat that has a practical purpose, I liked it so much I had a look to see what else the company had to offer and there were some really awesome designs. I might be tempted to get another and would definitely recommend them to other people. 4.9/5

### Vikings Spirit

#### **Reviewed by Megan Whitehouse**

At first sight my hat doesn't look that interesting compared to other hats, maybe even, dare I say it, dull, but when you look at it a bit more carefully, you see my hat from a different perspective. This classic baseball style cap from Capiche is black with a navy blue shield on the front edged with a turquoise. It sounds a bit more interesting now doesn't it. Behind the shield are two swords with navy blue hilts crossing behind. In the middle of the shield there's a black Anglo Saxon style geometrical pattern. Capiche say that this symbolises strength and resilience. The visor of the cap has the same Anglo Saxon style geometrical pattern in a silver over the black background.



The hat is well made and high quality. The embroidery is neat and tidy, and the fabric looks as if it will last a lifetime and a little more. My hat feels really comfortable on my head, like a friendly hug, and stays in place without squeezing. It fits perfectly and it is very simple to adjust the size. It is a fashionable hat, that will keep the sun out of my eyes and protect my head and face from sunburn in the summer and keep my head warm in winter.

I love my hat.

### Treasure Map

#### **Reviewed by Harriet Grand**

I took a hat that was donated to our school to review and here it is.

The stylish, pristine white fashion cap made by the brand Capiche

I was attracted to the black contrast stitching of the compass on the face of the cap and on closer inspection there are some surprises and images that give the cap an interesting feel. The cap is also part of a collectible range. I was surprised to find a treasure map hidden on the underside of the Peak this also feels comfortable on any size head and is good for hot weather as the colour reflects the light and keep your head cool in any temperature this also works the cold weather where it will keep your head warm.



For more details go to <https://capichecaps.com/>

*What to get for the person  
who loves...something sweet?*

Fatso Foursome Chunky Dark Chocolate from Fatso chocolate Company



**Reviewed by Mel Taylor and Cara Panter**

The design of the main box has a nice contrast of colours, with the gold and red. However, I found that the ingredients list on the back of the box was quite hard to read. It was much easier to read on the individual mini boxes. I like the designs on the mini boxes and the names of each of the chocolates are fun. Each mini box has a fun design; bold colours and the gold writing really stand out. I am not 100% sure on the branding of this chocolate. I do see the fun side to Fatso but at the same time, although I would buy it myself, I'm not sure if I would gift it due to what it may imply and the offense that it could possibly cause.

Home Run – salted pretzel, whole almond and honeycomb

The chocolate is nice and smooth and is not bitter like some dark chocolate can be. This bar had a nice amount of honeycomb, but it definitely needs more pretzel pieces. Although the flavour suggests there is a whole almond, with the ingredients also saying Almond, I did not find any obvious almond pieces or a whole almond. I was expecting for there to be one whole almond within each of the chunks of chocolate. The flavour was quite subtle but was just the right size.

Nan's Stash – peanut, toffee and digestive biscuit

This bar was just as nice and smooth. The balance of the pieces inside this bar was better. There seemed to be much more of the pieces inside this bar. I enjoyed this flavour a lot more than the Home Run bar. I found it very moreish and could have eaten this in a much bigger bar.

Mint, Pistachio and Cocoa Nibs

I thought the chocolate was smooth and not at all bitter, seeing as it was 60% dark chocolate. The Mint flavour was, however, quite overpowering, and I couldn't taste the pistachio at all, or even see any of the characteristic green flecks that told me the pistachio was in the chocolate.



Cherry, Almond and Shortbread

I absolutely loved this flavour of chocolate! The cherry and almond flavours were a perfect match although I couldn't see or taste any of the shortbread.

Overall, I would recommend this chocolate, but am slightly disappointed that not all the flavour combinations came through. I do, however, like the packaging, it's got an olde 50's traditional feel. As the packaging is a small 40g box, I did find it difficult to read the gold lettering on the back, plus the ingredients aren't on the individual boxes, but on the overall packaging, which can easily be thrown away by mistake!

For more details go to <https://www.sofatso.com/>

Halloween Sweets from Vidal

**Reviewed by Nicole Zondo, Caitlyn Edwards and Bryonee Carling**

Vidal Bloody Eyes are like a Halloween party in your mouth, but are they a trick or a treat? The gummy eyeballs are visually striking, with a glossy, bloodshot appearance. The texture is uniformly chewy, offering a satisfying, sustained gnawing experience. It's like a gummy bear in eyeball form, providing a good, firm bite. Flavour-wise, you're hit with a consistent, sweet, and slightly tangy fruitiness, Without the liquid, the taste is more concentrated and evenly distributed. It's a more straightforward gummy, delivering that sweet, fruity punch. If you prefer a chewier, less messy gummy. this version might be an improvement!



Vidal jelly sharks are a delicious sweet that stands out for their fun twist in shape, fruity flavours and soft, springy texture and that is exactly what they aim for, they are quite appealing for children because of their playful shape, bright colours, variety of flavours and they are also appealing for parties/events such as birthday parties, trick-or-treating and movie snacks. These Vidal jelly filled, skull-shaped gummies are kinda spooky and fun, especially around Halloween. They have a chewy outside and a gooey, liquid-filled centre. The flavours are usually fruity, but can be a bit artificial tasting for some.

Some people love the combination of textures, while others might find the liquid center a bit too much. They're definitely on the sweeter side, so if you're not a fan of super sugary candy, these might not be your fave. Overall, they're a novelty candy that's good for a fun treat, but not necessarily a gourmet experience.



For more details go to <https://www.vidalcandies.co.uk/>

*What to get for the person who loves..to fidget?*

Fidget Toys from Flexi Fidgets

**Reviewed by Peter Hopwood**

As a parent of a

daughter with SEND needs I know the difficulty she faces in focusing in class. I am always on the look for anything she can use to help find calm in what can be stressful days at school. Flexi Fidgets might be the answer. The company produces a range of unique, 3D printed fidget toys and sensory figures across a range of themes. The sample we received had a distinct Halloween feel and my daughter loved the Pumpkin spinner straight away and I couldn't help but endlessly click the cute Boo-ccino.



Perfect for anyone looking to relieve stress and anxiety and ideal for a stocking filler. Highly recommended. For more details go to <https://www.flexifidgets.co.uk/>

# Doing Wadham Proud, Former students changing the world

Interview with former Wadham student, actor, director, singer, writer and all round creative genius Harriet O'Grady.



## 1. When were you at Wadham School?

I was part of the old system, so I went to 'middle school' first! I joined as a Year 9 Student in 2009, and left in 2012.

## 2. Do you have a favourite memory from school?

This memory is very much associated with my favourite teacher, Miss Simpson! She taught music, and ran a lot of the extra-curricular activities as well. She directed *We Will Rock You* when I was in year 10, and I had a huge fear of singing in front of people - something I'm still working on now, even though I get paid to do it! - so I decided to play it safe and audition for a chorus role.



But when I walked into the music room and handed her the sheet music for the chorus part, she took one look at it and swapped it immediately for the main role of Scaramouche. I cried. She pushed me to do it anyway. And I got the role!

She believed in me, even if I didn't have faith in my talent - it was the push I needed, and I will always be grateful to her for trusting me before I had even learnt to trust myself.

## 3. What was your least favourite moment at school?

Probably the build up to getting my GCSE results! I was so stressed, and I was in a permanent state of anxiety in the days leading up to it... There was so much pressure on getting good grades, and a lot of threats and cautionary tales if they weren't achieved. So much emphasis was put on getting decent grades. However I can now look back and say honestly - it doesn't matter! There are so many ways, paths, avenues to get to the career you want. People may make you feel like it's the end of the world - speaking from experience, it's not!



#### 4. What was your biggest success at School?

Ironically I would have to say my GCSE Physics grade, which was an A\* - but not because of the grade itself! I was really struggling with physics in particular, and I was certain I was going to fail. I had a wonderful teacher, Mr Hoskyns, who gave me extra support - practical and emotional! - and was so proud of me when the results came through. I was also just really proud of myself, because I put a lot of hard work, time and effort into studying for the exam, so it reinforced the belief in myself that hard work yields results.

#### 5. What have you been up to since you left Wadham?

I left Wadham at a crossroads. I got into Richard Huish to study Biology, Criminology, Psychology and Sociology, but I also got into The SPACE - a brand new performing arts college, to study Acting and Performance. I was very hesitant to go down the performance route - it was something I had always loved, but didn't necessarily offer safety and financial security. In fact, up until September 2nd - the day I was supposed to start college - I had my mind set on going down the safe route and focusing on Criminology. However my heart won at the last minute, and I cancelled my place at Richard Huish and started at SPACE the very next day - and I have never looked back!



After college I moved to the French Alps for a year, working and learning the language, then I moved back and lived in London for a year, learning about the industry, watching plays and musicals, and doing extra classes on the side. I then got into Rose Bruford, a prestigious drama school, and completed my BA (Hons) Acting there. I left my third year early and went straight into work as a professional actor with the biggest immersive company in London, SECRET CINEMA, performing as Q in CASINO ROYALE to 1,500 people a night, and since then I have worked consistently as an actor, singer, director, movement director, dramaturg, workshop leader and facilitator, immersive performer and mover/dancer.

#### 6. What lessons did you take from working at Wadham?

It's ok to leave people behind when you leave school behind - as you go through life you'll start to learn that some people are lifetime friends, and some are convenient friends. That's ok! You're supposed to learn, grow and evolve, and sometimes that means leaving people behind who aren't ready to do that yet.



As a second thought - I remember feeling like school was the entire world when I was there. Everything mattered, and everything was felt so deeply. It was such a huge part of my transition to adulthood, and a massively formative time for me working out who I was and where I fit, especially as a mixed-heritage teen. But as I have moved through each stage of life, the world grows a little bigger every time - and so does my sense of self and security. It's ok to feel lost, or to not know what you are yet. You're at the very start of your journey - and trust me, there's a whole world out there for you to discover!

# Doing Wadham Proud, Former students changing the world

Interview with former Wadham student and now award winning hairdresser Ben Russell

## 1. When were you at Wadham School?

I was at Wadham from 2005 to 2008 It feels like a lifetime ago now, but I still remember it well!

## 2. Do you have a favourite memory from school?

Definitely the friends I made and the laughs we had and playing football at lunchtime. I also remember we won the county cup in football - the first team since Mr Whites school team! So as you can imagine it was a long long time ago before us.

## 3. What was your least favourite moment at school?

Probably exams! I found it really hard to concentrate revising for things I didn't feel passionate about, and I always felt like they didn't reflect what I was good at.

## 4. What was your biggest success at School?

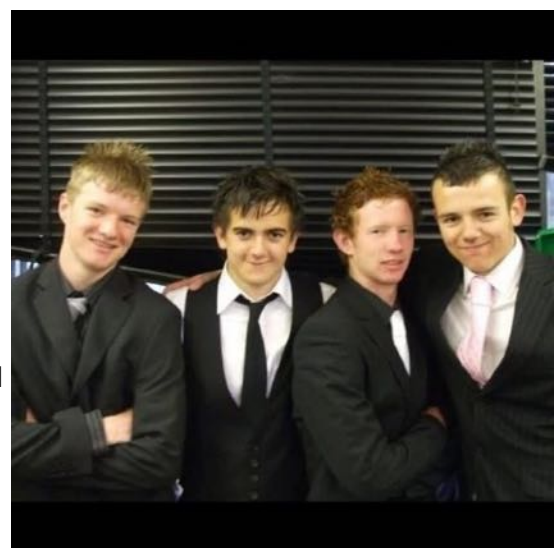
It wasn't one big moment but realising that I was more creative than academic was a turning point. It gave me confidence to stop comparing myself to others and start thinking about what made me different in a good way.

## 5. What did you do after Year 11 and/or Year 13?

I left after Year 11 and I applied for the army, but couldn't join due to my asthma. I kicked around in sixth form while I worked on what I wanted to do then I went straight into a hairdressing apprenticeship. I knew I wanted to be hands on and learn in a real salon rather than stay in the classroom. It was the right move for me.

## 6. Did you always know hairdressing was what you wanted to do?

Not always, but when I started I immediately fell in love with it and the atmosphere that a Hair salon has. I always looked at life in a different way to a lot of my friends and I knew there was more out



there for the world to offer me. I started to notice how much I enjoyed helping people feel better about themselves and hairdressing is such a great mix of art, people and business. Once I started, I knew it was right for me.

### 7. What was your first step into hairdressing?

I got an apprenticeship at a salon in Taunton and used to take the bus from Crewkerne to Taunton each day. I worked in CO-OP at night as the Apprenticeship wage only just covered the bus pass.

I started at the bottom - sweeping floors, making tea, washing hair, but I learned so much just from being in the environment. It was a proper hands on education and I wouldn't change it.

### 8. Did you get involved in clubs outside of school to help with your career plan?

Not specifically, but anything that let me express myself creatively helped. I used to experiment with hair at home, and I watched a lot of videos online to teach myself bits early on. I also think just being curious and asking questions wherever you are helps build your path.



### 9. What are the favourite part(s) of your job?

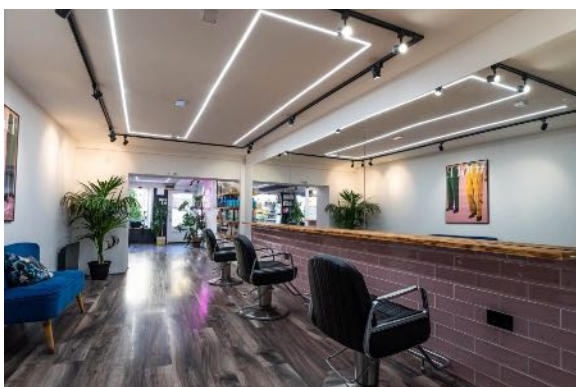
The people! I love building relationships with clients and making someone feel amazing when they leave the salon. There's also something so satisfying about transforming someone's hair. It's creative, personal, and always different.

I've been lucky enough to do almost everything hairdressing has to offer from working at London fashion week cutting Hair on stage; doing live shows and cat walks at London fashion week to educating and teaching in Australia, New Zealand, Greece and Milan. I've been mentored by so many incredible hairdressers but I always say looking after my regular Clients is my favourite and most privileged part of my job

### 10. Least favourite part of your job?

Honestly probably the paperwork side of running a business! I'd rather be on the salon floor than sorting out admin, but it's part of the job and you just have to get it done.

### 11. Do you offer work experience to school students? Or Apprenticeships? If so, why – what are the benefits?



Yes, we do offer both work experience placements and apprenticeships although we've never actually had an apprentice, as we haven't been able to find the right person to fit our salon yet.

I believe it's really important to give young people the opportunity to see what the industry is like firsthand. Work experience gives students a chance to get a feel for the salon environment, build confidence and develop basic customer service and teamwork skills.

Apprenticeships take it a step further they're a fantastic way to learn the craft while earning, and you gain real hands-on experience with clients alongside formal training. Watching someone grow from a complete beginner into a confident stylist is incredibly rewarding, and it's brilliant for the team dynamic too. The most important thing is to stay motivated and not get distracted.

### 12. Can you give a typical week in the life of a hairdresser?

No week is exactly the same, which is one of the best parts of the job. But typically, it involves a mix of cutting, colouring, consultations, and styling. It's non-stop - fully booked days of back-to-back appointments. Every client has a different personality and hair type so we're always problem-solving, listening and creating. On top of that there's a lot of behind the scenes work too. Maintaining a clean salon, keeping up with trends, ordering stock, and planning social media content.

### 13. What advice would you give to current school students who are considering hairdressing as a career?

Go for it but be ready to work hard and stay passionate. Hairdressing is so much more than just cutting hair. It's about making people feel good about themselves, building trust and expressing creativity. If you're someone who loves working with people, enjoys being hands on and wants a career that's always evolving it can be an amazing path.

My advice would be to get some work experience in a salon, ask lots of questions and don't be afraid to start from the bottom - every great stylist did. And most of all stay curious and open to learning. This industry rewards passion, consistency and a good attitude.

In the early days there's a lot of cleaning up and watching so you might feel like you're not getting anywhere, and then suddenly everything starts to click. It's like a mighty oak tree is planted with a single seed beneath the dirt. But once it grows Big and strong and has overcome all the bad weather and the other trees falling onto it, eventually it will stand on its own in the forest.





...to everyone who has helped put this edition of *The Quill* together.

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*The Quill* is a magazine for Wadham students and is open to anyone. We want writers, artists, reporters, photographers, reviewers, critics, etc from all across the school.

If you'd like to get involved in our next edition please speak to Mr Hopwood via teams, in B23 at break & lunchtime or via email at [Phopwood@wadhamschool.co.uk](mailto:Phopwood@wadhamschool.co.uk)