

A WADHAM SCHOOL STUDENT PUBLICATION

THE QUILL



SLEIGH WHAT! QUILLMAS UNLEASHED: THE WINTER EDITION HAS LANDED!



INSIDE THE MIND OF A FORENSIC EXPERT

Life, death and the things in-between with Dr Richard Shepherd



POLAND 2027
World Scout
26th Jamboree
Scout Mondial



POLAND 2027
Wadham Scouts
fundraise for
Poland adventure!



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EXCITED**
It's
**ALMOST
Time!!!**

LESTER IN THE SPOTLIGHT!
Adrian Lester, the award-winning actor on life, craft, and career highlights



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Last minute Christmas gift guide ideas



Plus news, reviews and opinions



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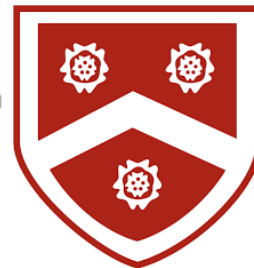
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Welcome to the Christmas Edition of The Quill — Issue 22. As the year draws to a close and the festive season arrives, we're excited to bring you the Christmas edition of The Quill. This special issue celebrates creativity, curiosity and student voice, showcasing the wide range of talents, opinions and interests that make our school community so unique.

Inside this edition, you'll find thoughtful reviews, festive features, creative writing, and reflections on the events and experiences that have shaped the term. From culture and entertainment to student life and seasonal celebrations, The Quill continues to be a platform where ideas are shared and voices are heard.

As we head into the holidays, we hope this issue offers a moment to reflect, enjoy, and feel inspired. Thank you to all the students and staff who contributed to making Issue 22 possible. Sit back, get festive, and enjoy reading *The Quill*

Happy reading!
Peter Hopwood ~ Editor



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Shocking Christmas Facts

YULE BE VERY SURPRISED...

Four people broke their arms last year as a direct result of over-enthusiastic cracker pulling.

TINSEL WAS INVENTED IN GERMANY ALL THE WAY BACK IN 1610 AND IT WAS ORIGINALLY MADE OF REAL SILVER.



The tallest Christmas tree ever recorded was in Washington in 1950 and stood at a cloud-skimming 221 feet tall.



IN 1997, EIGHT CHRISTMAS REVELLERS SUFFERED FRACTURED SKULLS AFTER FALLING ASLEEP AT THE TOILET MID-VOMIT.



Our Fave Famous Christmas Jumpers



COLIN FIRTH IN BRIDGET JONES'S DIARY



JIM CAREY IN HOW THE GRINCH STOLE CHRISTMAS



TIM ALLEN IN THE SANTA CLAUS 3 - THE ESCAPE CLAUS



THE CAST OF DUMB AND DUMBER

The song "Jingle Bells" was originally written to celebrate Thanksgiving and was originally called "One Horse Open Sleigh"

The Nazis hoped to transform Christmas into a nonreligious holiday celebrating the coming of Hitler rather than Jesus. Plans were in place to swap the stars on top of Christmas Trees with swastikas.



EVERY YEAR SINCE THE END OF WWII, THE PEOPLE OF OSLO, NORWAY HAVE DONATED A CHRISTMAS TREE TO THE CITY OF LONDON. IT'S PUT UP IN TRAFALGAR SQUARE.



Every year around 1000 people in the UK are seriously injured by their Christmas tree. The most common accidents happen when we try and hang decorations onto the higher branches.



"White Christmas" BY IRVING BERLIN IS ARGUABLY THE BEST SELLING SINGLE IN HISTORY WITH OVER A 100 MILLION COPIES SOLD.



CHRISTMAS IS ABBREVIATED TO X-MAS BECAUSE X IS THE GREEK LETTER "CHI", AN ABBREVIATION FOR THE WORD "CHRIST" IN GREEK.



WADHAM UNWRAPPED: THIS TERMS HIGHLIGHTS

FRIGHTS AND BITES: HALLOWEEN BAKE SALE

By Jessie Vowles

The Year 10 Outdoor Learning group worked hard throughout term 1 to plan and help run a Halloween Bake Sale and Pumpkin Raffle, and I'm pleased to report that it was a huge success! They raised £122.50 which will go towards Outdoor Learning equipment and in doing so, they have completed the first Unit in their BTEC assessment 'Helping with an Event'. Congratulations to them all!

From the very start of the term, the group worked hard planning what needed to be done to run the bake sale and raffle. From making posters for the event, selling raffle tickets, decorating spooky cakes, and even growing the pumpkins at school themselves!

It pushed many of us outside of our comfort zones, serving cakes and collecting money to many hungry Wadham students. It was as an absolute sell out! The students involved were fantastic and should feel very proud of themselves.

Thank you to all the staff that helped run the event on the day and to those who baked deliciously, terrifying cakes for us to sell!



NAILED IT! YEAR 11 ACE MOCK INTERVIEWS

By Laura Andrews

A highlight event for our Year 11 students was their Mock Interviews. We organised these in collaboration with our local Rotary groups and invited 27 interviewers into school over two days. Each student had the opportunity to practice their interview skills before their real college, sixth form, and apprenticeship interviews begin.

It was brilliant to see students dressed smartly and so well prepared for the event. We would like to extend a big thank you to all the volunteer interviewers from the Rotary groups, local employers, and educational establishments for giving up their time.

A massive well done to all our students for making a great impression and representing Wadhams School so proudly!



PLANNING AHEAD: 2025 CAREERS DAY INSPIRES STUDENTS

By Laura Andrews

On Thursday 13th November, we held our annual Careers Fair for all students in the Sports Hall.

In conjunction with this, we also ran a Careers and PD drop-down day across the school, giving students valuable sessions throughout the day.

These included employer experiences from Boeing, BAE, the NHS, Topline Glass, HK Law, the Army, and Discover Farming; Post-16 and Apprenticeship talks from Richard Huish College, Yeovil College, and Your Future, Sorted!; Work Experience preparation for Year 10; Career Pilot sessions for Year 7; a Languages competition for Year 9; a visit to the Book Fair for Year 8; and essential English, Maths, and Science revision for Year 11 in preparation for their mock exams.

There were also PD lessons across the school. This was an incredibly valuable day, showcasing the many career opportunities available to our students. We would like to extend a huge thank you to all the employers, volunteers, and educational establishments who helped make this day such a





A JOURNEY FROM DARKNESS TO GRACE - HISTORY BROUGHT TO LIFE AT WADHAM SCHOOL

By Jonathan Broome

On Tuesday 25th November, Wadham School Hall was transformed into an 18th-century fully rigged slave trading ship, set to sail from Africa to the New World and soaked in the horror of injustice.

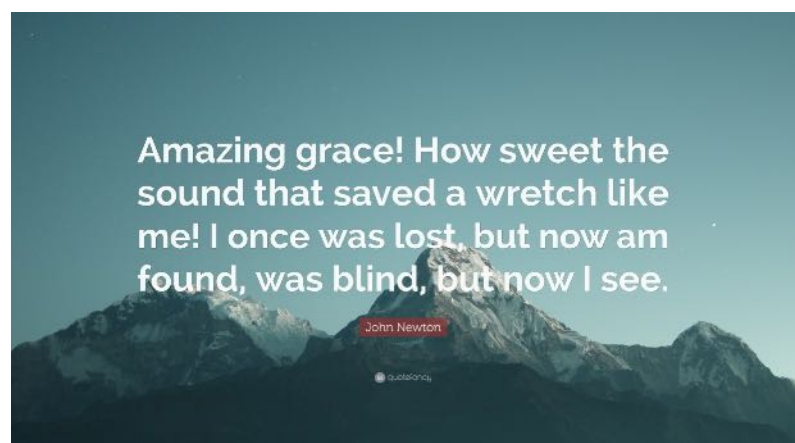
The journey that took place on board, however, was not just one of suffering, but a journey from hatred and division towards grace and equality.

Oddments Theatre Company told the story of John Newton, a former slave trader who comes to realise the abhorrent nature of his industry and changes his ways. His heart breaks for the injustice and suffering he has caused, and he dedicates the rest of his life to the abolition of slavery through Parliament.

The performance was rich with humour, romance, and song. The actors delivered committed performances and made the most of a script that, at times, could have benefitted from deeper emotional weight to fully reflect the seriousness of its subject matter. The Sea Shanty and Courtroom scenes were real highlights.

Working on a shoestring budget, the troupe created an intriguing and effective set using innovative and imaginative ideas. The multi-role setup for the small cast presented a challenge, which the performers overcame with ease and confidence.

History tells us that Newton and his allies succeeded in ending the slave trade. The play then reminds us that there may still be more to do in our own lives to ensure we continue to move towards faith, equality, and justice. It also reminds us that even the vilest offenders can be redeemed, offering a message of hope and *amazing grace*.



WADHAM DEBATE CLUB SHINES AT YOUTH SPEAKS COMPETITION

By Bella Taylor

On Thursday, 27th November, the Wadham Debate Club attended the Youth Speaks Debate Competition at St Dunstan's School in Glastonbury.

Let's have a heated debate!



Hedley Egré, Phoebe Curtis and myself dared to take on the challenge of debating the topic of cloning.

After weeks of researching, planning, and practising our speeches, we were all understandably nervous. The topic for the debate was "Should human cloning be allowed?". Hedley delivered the speech arguing in favour, while I presented the case against it.

The competition was an exciting experience. It was fascinating to listen to the other teams and their topics.

As it was our first time at a debate competition, it was great to see how everything worked and to experience the lively, supportive atmosphere. Despite our nerves, we were excited for our turn, and we were fourth to present our arguments.

Standing in front of the judges and sharing our hard work felt amazing. We were proud of our team for sticking to the time limit and even managing to get a few laughs from the judges.



Even though this was our very first debate competition, we came away in second place! We were all thrilled with this achievement and are already looking forward to our next competition.



CLONING: THE DEBATE


<p>Resurrection of Extinct Species</p> <p>At the behest of the Aragon Regional Government, scientists briefly brought an Pyrenean ibex - an extinct species - back to life.</p> 	<p>Immortality</p> <p>Like it or not, the science behind cloning could prove key in indefinitely extending the life-span of the average human.</p> 
<p>A Solution For World Hunger</p> <p>Scientists might one day be able to quash world hunger by cloning meat. (We can do this now, but not cheaply, or on a wide-scale basis)</p> 	<p>No More Degenerative Diseases</p> <p>"Therapeutic cloning" could provide a cure for degenerative diseases, like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's.</p> 
<p>Don't Get Too Excited</p> <p>Since DNA degrades over time, don't expect a real-life Jurassic Park scenario to play out any time soon (if ever).</p> 	<p>In Conclusion:</p> <p>Regardless of your personal stance, breakthroughs in cloning would lead to a new understanding of biology & medicine.</p> 

Image Credits: Pyrenean ibex, Jose Luis GOMEZ de FRANCISCO, Lab-grown Meat, Bart van Overbeeke, Cells, Oregon Health and Science University Photos (Turritopsis nutricula, Dinosaur and Brain Illustration: Unknown). Infographic by "From Quarks to Quasars."

ROTARY YOUTH SPEAKS PUBLIC SPEAKING COMPETITION



FROM SNUFFLE BLANKETS TO SEAL PUPS: STUDENTS EXPLORE THE RSPCA

By Beth Church

In November, we held our first RSPCA curriculum session at their centre in West Hatch. We took eight students—four from Year 8 and four from Year 9.

During the session, students learned about the work of the RSPCA, the wide range of careers available within the organisation,

and the needs of animals and wildlife. They also took part in a crafting activity, making a snuffle blanket for dogs to search for treats and a pom-pom toy for cats.



As an extra treat, the students had a peek at the seal pups currently being rehabilitated at the centre. We are looking forward to three further sessions over the rest of the year.



FESTIVE FUN AT THE WADHAM PTFA CHRISTMAS FAIR!

By Laura Andrews

Well done to our dedicated PTFA for the first Christmas Fair at Wadham. It was a wonderful event. It was a huge success, bringing festive cheer to students, staff, and families alike. The main hall was full of colourful stalls and delicious treats, giving everyone the chance to shop for unique gifts and enjoy the holiday atmosphere.



The fair was not only a great way to celebrate the season but also helped raise funds to support school projects and activities.



A big thank you to the PTFA, volunteers, and everyone who came along to make the day so special. It was a perfect way to get into the Christmas spirit at Wadham School!



YEAR 7 MEETS THE FUTURE: AI IN ACTION!

By Laura Andrews

At the beginning of December, Year 7 were excited to welcome BAE Systems, the Royal Air Force, and the Royal Navy for an engaging theatre roadshow celebrating STEM across Britain.



This year's 2025 show focused on Artificial Intelligence.

The performance highlighted useful applications of AI and emphasised the importance of human skills in maximising its potential. Students also learned how to spot deep fakes and other risks associated with AI.

Highlights of the day included meeting the AI robotic dog, Fluffy, and working together to create a brand-new song using AI, complete with a music video! The show was full of surprises and provided a fun and insightful look at how AI tools can be safely adopted today and in the future.

A big thank you to all the organisers for such a fun and inspiring production!



DECEMBER DELIGHTS: MURDER MYSTERIES & READING ADVENTURES

By Emma George

This month has been a busy one in the library with the launch of the Reading Advent and the Murder Mystery Challenge for Key Stage 3. At the beginning of December, 42 students from Years 7, 8, and 9 were invited to take part in the murder mystery challenge, *Murder by the Book*, which ran in the library during lessons. Working through a large number of clues, witness statements, and suspect profiles, students collated evidence to decide who the murderer was. Poor Miss Terry, the librarian's assistant, was the victim, with the librarian, the Head of English, and the Head of Science as the suspects.

All teams worked brilliantly together to solve the crime. The winning teams in each year group were those able to link the greatest number of clues to the case while also spotting a few clever red herrings!

December has also seen the launch of Wadham's Reading Advent. Students have enjoyed crafting Christmas bookmarks and recycling old books into festive decorations. On Tuesday, some Year 7 students enjoyed hot chocolate in the library while sharing books with friends over lunchtime.

If anyone takes an 'Extreme Reading' photo over the holidays, please send it to library@wadhamschool.co.uk—there are prizes to be won! Maybe you could read outside, read upside-down, or get creative. Safety note: Entries showing readers in dangerous situations will not be accepted—please be sensible. If in doubt, ask a parent.

Listening and Learning

FROM CLASSROOMS TO THE STUDENT
PANEL: GOVERNORS SEE SCHOOL LIFE IN
ACTION

The governors spend a day at Wadham

By Neville Hobson, Governor, Wadham School

What makes a good school? Great teachers, certainly. Engaged students, absolutely. But there's another group working behind the

scenes that many families don't know about: school governors. When parents and carers think about school life, the first people who come to mind are usually teachers, support staff, and, of course, the students themselves. Yet every maintained state-funded primary, secondary, and specialist school in England and Wales also has another group quietly shaping its direction: the school governors.

What do governors do?

Governors in maintained secondary schools have three main responsibilities:

- ◆ Setting the strategic direction: Working with senior leaders to establish the school's vision, ethos, and long-term aims.
- ◆ Overseeing financial performance: Ensuring public money is spent wisely and lawfully.
- ◆ Holding the headteacher to account: Acting as a "critical friend," supporting and challenging leaders to ensure the best outcomes for students.

In everyday terms, governors are like the school's "board of trustees." They don't run the school, but they make sure it is being run well. Wadham School governors are volunteers from the local community who give their time, skills, and experience to help ensure the school is well-run, ambitious, and focused on the success of every child. They don't teach lessons or manage the day-to-day running of the school—that's the role of the headteacher and senior leadership team. Instead, they focus on the bigger picture.

Governors' Day: Seeing Wadham in Action

In November, Wadham governors dedicated a day to get to know the school better with a Governors' Day—an opportunity to spend time inside the school, observing learning in action and meeting staff and students.

Governors visited classrooms, observed lesson transitions, and spoke with students about their experiences. One governor described how "lessons were calm and settled, with students appearing relaxed and confident. We observed classes where students were happy to discuss the practical experiments in which they were engaged." Another noted the atmosphere in the Internal Suspension Room, where pupils removed from lessons were still working productively: "It was clear they were not missing education by being there."

Perhaps the highlight of the day was the Student Panel, where representatives from all year groups met governors informally to share their views. Students spoke candidly about what they love at Wadham—such as practical science experiments, supportive teachers, and the friendly atmosphere—and what they would like to see improved.

Year 7 students talked about feeling welcomed and safe, while older students discussed homework systems and suggested practical improvements, such as using prefects to manage lunch queues. Every year group contributed ideas, showing real investment in their school. Governors were impressed by the students' honesty and thoughtfulness. One reflected: "I was especially impressed by the student panel, who gave up their lesson to talk to us about the issues that matter to them—for example, homework and reward systems, as well as concerns about queues in the canteen and problems with the student toilets."



Another governor summed up the day: “We spend a lot of time keeping track of what is going on at Wadham through reports, documents, and emails. So having the chance to get to know the school better by spending the day with them all was a real treat. The thing that came through strongest was how supportive and inclusive Wadham’s community is.”

When asked how they would describe Wadham to someone unfamiliar with the school, students’ replies were clear and positive:

“Teachers are very good at teaching. Generally, there are lots of resources for revision, and I appreciate teachers taking time out to do revision sessions.”

“It’s a great place—friendly teachers, kind, and helpful. If you don’t feel safe, teachers support you.”

Why did the visit matter?

For governors, the day was not just about observing—it was about listening. The feedback from students was shared with the Senior Leadership Team later that day, ensuring that student voice directly informs decision-making.

This is the essence of governance: making sure the school is accountable, responsive, and continually improving. By spending time in classrooms and hearing directly from students, governors gained a deeper understanding of Wadham’s strengths and challenges. That insight helps them ask better questions, make more informed decisions, and support the headteacher and staff more effectively.

For families, the impact is clear. Governors help ensure resources are used wisely, safeguarding is robust, and the school remains ambitious for every child. Their work may be behind the scenes, but the benefits are felt in the quality of education, the well-being of students, and the confidence parents can have in the school.

What’s the plan looking ahead for Wadham?

School governors play a vital role in maintained secondary schools. The Governors’ Day at Wadham showed how valuable it is for governors to connect directly with staff and students, and it underlined the importance of governance as part of the wider school community. Governors left with fresh insights, students felt heard, and staff appreciated the chance to share their work. As Wadham continues to grow and develop, governors will remain dedicated to working alongside staff, students, and parents to ensure the school is the best it can be.

Sidebar: What Students Told Governors

Best things about Wadham

- ◆ Practical lessons like science experiments
- ◆ Teachers who care about learning and friendships
- ◆ Feeling safe and supported

Areas to improve

- ◆ Queues in the canteen and pre-order line
- ◆ Toilets (cleanliness and crowding)
- ◆ Short lunch breaks and limited movement time
- ◆ Online homework platforms do not always match lessons; some are accessible only on laptops, not considering that some pupils only have phones.
- ◆ Tutor time dominated by reading, less flexibility

Suggestions

- ◆ Prefects helping to manage queues
- ◆ Rewarding kindness more visibly
- ◆ Clearer year group spaces

How they describe Wadham

- ◆ “A great community, with kind teachers who help when you need it”
- ◆ “Busy, but friendly and supportive”
- ◆ “A large school with freedom and opportunities”

Wadham School on the move!

RACING INTO LEARNING: TAUNTON RACECOURSE TRIP FOR STUDENTS

By Darcie Ridewood

I greatly enjoyed our visit to Taunton race course and here's why. Firstly we all got to wear jockey colours (mine was yellow with light blue stripes) We learnt all about how the jockeys were weighed and how they could add weights to the horses tack. We also got to measure the distance of the parade circuit with a meter roller, the total was 125 meters. During our trip we also filled in booklets with questions about our trip inside. We got to watch three races in total and it was very fun to watch. For the last race we were able to take some photos which was excellent!



By Bella Best

We went to Taunton racecourse on Thursday 27th November. We watched three horse races and we had a project activity book to complete. In the book we had to write answers to questions and other activities like word searches and making a top for a jockey to wear.



We all had to wear a different colour jockey top, they had different designs on them, mine was white with pink spots on. My favourite part of the day was watching the horse's race, and I guessed the right winner in all 3 races. The winners were Miss Altea blue, Avada Kedavra & Wicked thoughts. We looked at how the jockeys are weighed because it all depends on how heavy the horse is and how young it was. If the jockeys don't weigh enough they get given this bendy metal called lead to help weigh them down.

We also had to find out how long the parade ring was, and how many metres each horse had to be from each other. We measured the ring first in foot steps then we measured it using a trundle wheel. I estimated it was 125m in my foot steps and it was actually 125m! Everyone did their own result and then we found the median and the mode result (both were 125m).

I would like to go back to Taunton racecourse again as it was really fun and I really liked estimating which horse would win.

By Violet Croft

This trip took place mostly in the morning, with a little in the afternoon. In the morning, instead of going to our tutor group, we went to the computing room to register. After registration, we got on the



bus for the trip. The journey took about an hour, although the racecourse isn't too far from school. When we arrived, we went to our room where we could leave our bags and eat lunch. There were also some jackets available to wear; I chose a dark red and blue one. After lunch, we split into two groups. I was in the first group, which went into the weigh-in room. In this room, jockeys are weighed while holding their saddles, both before and after their races. This ensures that their weight is consistent. If it isn't, they have to go to the stewards' office, which is like having to see the headteacher!

Jockeys are paid for every race, but the payment is split between the rider and the trainer. Horses can only race once a day, but jockeys can participate in as many races as they are scheduled for.

Next, we went outside to the parade ring. We measured the distance around the ring (125 meters) and worked out how many horses could fit in there.

Finally, we watched the racing! We saw three races. In the first race, there were seven riders:

- ◆ Jonathan Burke on Sun Art
- ◆ Harry Kimber on Charlie's Jetaway
- ◆ Ellis Collies on Kings Order
- ◆ Rex Dingle on Knock Off Soxs
- ◆ Harry Cobden on Miss Altea Blue
- ◆ Sean Houlihan on Lydeard Girl
- ◆ Paddy Hanlon on Pure Logic



The winner of the race was number 5, Harry Cobden on *Miss Altea Blue*. Second place went to number 4, Rex Dingle on *Knock Off Soxs*, and third was number 3, Ellis Collies on *Kings Order*. The trip was so much fun.

By Rose Goddard—Head of Maths

I was lucky enough to take 30 Year 7 students on a Maths-themed trip to Taunton Racecourse. It was a really fun-filled day, with the morning spent across two workshops and the afternoon watching three races. Our first activity took place in the parade ring, where we calculated how many horses can parade at one time. This involved estimating the perimeter of the ring, the length of a horse, and the amount of space required between them for safety. Students then checked their estimations using a trundle wheel – some were spot on! We also worked out the median and modal answers from their results.

The second session was in the weighing room, where students learned about the different units of measurement used in racing and how jockeys are able to add weight. They also got to see the jumps up close and even have a little race of their own! A highlight was getting a photo with Brendan Powell, who has impressively won 17 races in the last month.

Back in the classroom, we were shown how to read the data and statistics on a race card before heading out to watch three live races. It was amazing to see the horses so close and to feel the excitement of the crowd. It was an incredible day, and we want to say a massive thank you to Ollie and Amanda from *Racing to School* for a truly educational and well-thought-out trip. The Year 7s did Wadham proud and were an absolute pleasure to take out for the day.

WADHAM SCHOOL DOES OUTDOOR LEARNING

MAGDALEN FARM: LEARNING IN THE WILD

By Jessie Vowles

This term we are really lucky to have former Wadham Student, Isobel Rowe back to Wadham to lead 6 Forest School Sessions with our year 7 Outdoor Learning students. At the end of our 6 sessions myself and the Outdoor Learning group will get a day visiting Magdalen Farm where Isobel is based. What a great experience for our students!

Session 1

Despite the pouring rain, the group had a great first Forest School session with Isobel, learning how to use a flint and steel to start a campfire. After getting the fire going, the group cooked campfire popcorn and used the Kelly Kettle to boil water for hot chocolate. We all enjoyed our much-needed hot drink at the end of a very wet session!

Isobel commented on how well all the students participated and she loved the groups' engagement and energy.

Session 2

Session two started with a game of tag (as requested by the students) to get us all warmed up. Next, we all experimented whittling sticks using a potato peeler. Once we had all had a practice, as a group we were tasked to whittle several sticks to use to spike apples to be baked on the fire.

We lit a campfire using the skills we learnt last week and toasted apple sliced that had been coated in sugar and cinnamon. Meanwhile, some of the girls decided they wanted to make a den, using ropes, a tarpaulin, guy ropes and tent pegs- the den was great and kept them warm and dry! The girls also decided to use their base as a



place to make some art out of clay that had been provided.

Session 3

This week our year 7s were taught to use a bow saw and a drill to craft a medallion out of wood. They cut a thin disc of wood from a branch, drilled a hole in the disc, added some string and decorated it with felt tip pens. The end result was fantastic!

Also during the session (back by popular demand) was den making and more campfire cooking. Again some of the girls made a den using a tarpaulin and crafted things out of clay, while others in the group made a campfire and cooked 'campfire doughnuts'. They were a hit, and a lovely, warm tasty treat on a cold day.

Thankfully though, this week the weather remained mainly clear and dry, so we could really see the beautiful autumn colours all around us. Another successful session – Thank you Izzie from Magdalen Farm!

Session 4

For our fourth session started with a team building game, trying to replicate a picture using large coloured puzzle pieces. This involved lots of communication and teamwork. It was harder than it looked!

Again the girls started by building a den, for some role play games while others in the group chose to make more wooden medallions and tree climbing.

The cooking option this week was campfire bananas! The students could slice into a banana, add their choice of chocolate buttons or cinnamon sugar, wrap it in foil and place carefully in the campfire. The end result was soft and sweet and enjoyed by all!

Session 5

The students played a team building game using Lego and Walkie Talkies. One group had to go out of sight and describe a



simple pre-made Lego construction to the other team over the radio. The other group had to aim to build the exact same model by following their instructions. They did really well! The group loved playing with the radios and have begun to play much more collaboratively together.

Meanwhile some students preferred to help with the campfire. Neason in particular has become very confident in starting the fire. He had to try for a long time on his first few attempts, but now feels very confident doing this. Henry is growing in confidence, speaking more and more in the sessions. They made 'damper breads' (a simple bread dough mix, layered with their choice of fillings and wrapped around a stick to cook over the fire.

As we near the end of our forest school sessions, I would like to say a big thank you to Izzie Rowe, for giving our group such amazing Forest School sessions. We can't wait for our day at Magdalen Farm in December, to celebrate all the skills we have learnt and the experience we have shared.

Giving Back: Ex-Student Boosts Outdoor Learning

By Isobel Rowe

Since leaving university in 2023 I have been working as an education ranger at Magdalen Farm, where I spend my time teaching young people in the outdoors and leading nature-based activities across our 132-acre farm. It has been great to return to Wadhams as a Forest School Leader, and to give something back to the school community that supported me and gave me opportunities throughout my education. I love being able to share my enthusiasm for the outdoors and passing on new skills to the people I teach.

It makes me happy to see people trying new things and finding new interests that they wouldn't have otherwise experienced! I've had a lot of fun with the group I've been working with on Tuesday's, their excitement for the sessions is infectious, and it's been great to see their confidence and independence grow. Making dens using knots and tarps and cooking different things over the fire has been a highlight so far.



"Life in all its fullness"

INTERVIEW

**ON A JOURNEY
FROM LIFE TO DEATH:
INSIGHTS FROM
DR RICHARD
SHEPHERD,
BRITAIN'S TOP
FORENSIC
PATHOLOGIST.**

1. What does your daily routine look like?

I don't have /didn't have a fixed daily routine as "on call" work would always take precedence. But generally I would go to our mortuary first thing (0800) to perform postmortem examinations on people who had died from natural diseases, drug overdoses, non-homicidal trauma (RTC etc), if there were Inquests I would attend them. After lunch I would go to my office to write reports etc. If required I would attend Crown Court to give evidence in a murder trial (x 20 / year - roughly)

2. What were you like in school?

Just average, middle of the class. No special skills at any subject. Don't tell anyone now but I got CCDE for A levels (medicine was easier then!!) Enjoyed rugby, cricket and swimming.

3. What was your favourite school subject and why?

Sciences - we did a mixed Physics / Chemistry course, animal biology was great including dissection of a rat and a fish (plant biology wasn't interesting but had to be done!!)

Foreword by Peter Hopwood and
interview by Joy Jeffery

Dr Richard Shepherd is one of the UK's most well-known forensic pathologists, recognised for his work investigating sudden, suspicious, and unexplained deaths. Over a long and demanding career, he has carried out tens of thousands of post-mortem examinations and has been involved in many high-profile cases, helping courts understand how and why people have died.

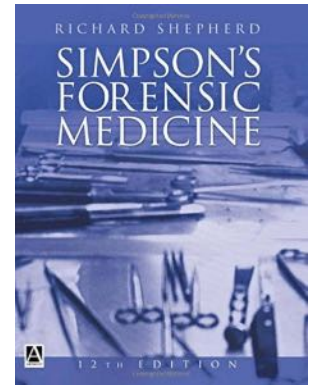
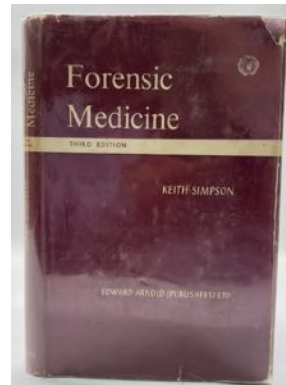
Beyond the courtroom, Dr Shepherd is also known for bringing forensic science to a wider audience. Through his writing and media appearances, he offers an honest and human look at the realities of his profession, challenging common misconceptions about forensic work and highlighting the emotional impact of dealing with death on a daily basis. His

work combines scientific precision with compassion, making him an influential figure in both medicine and public education.



4. Have you always wanted to get into forensic science? If not, what were previous things you'd thought of doing?

From age 13 / 14 I always wanted to be a forensic pathologist after a friend brought a book to school on the subject that he'd "borrowed" off his dad's bookshelf and I saw what forensic pathologists really did. Dead bodies and all! It was *Simpsons Forensic Medicine - 3rd Edition*. I later wrote the 12th Edition!!



5. How did you end up in the career you have now?

When I knew what I wanted to do I found out that I needed to become a doctor first and then specialise so I had to get into medical school and then work for a year on the wards treating people as a Houseman (now it's 2 years as a Foundation Doctor), then I had to specialise as a pathologist for 5 years and pass a professional exam and then do 2 more years training and pass another exam to become a forensic pathologist - a total of 17 years medical training!!

6. Who has inspired you in your life and why?

The main inspiration was that book I saw at 13-ish but many other doctors I met while training inspired me and encouraged me. Also my Dad who encouraged, pushed and cajoled me!

7. How did you feel after completing your first case?

Thrilled and excited! It was a relatively simple case of blunt trauma to the head but it was such a thrill to be able to put to use all of the things I had learnt and to be at the centre of a real case and to see someone convicted of murder.

8. How has forensic pathology developed throughout your extensive career?

In many ways not a lot - but then the human body hasn't changed a lot either!! So the methods of examining body - developed over 100s of years have worked well. Recently Scanners (now so commonly used for living people in hospital) have been used to examine the dead and that has helped us to understand particularly trauma (as scanners are good at identifying fractures etc) but they have also helped with identifying some natural disease such as strokes and heart attacks. They are also very useful in finding bullets in bodies who have been shot!

9. What is the importance of forensic pathology in our modern world?

Society always needs to know why its citizens are dying. Either from murders or from natural disease - in fact it was a forensic pathologist who identified the first death from COVID in the UK. So forensic pathology can help guide health policy at a very high level.

10. Is there a case which notably changed your work ethic/perspective? Why and how did it do this?

There isn't just one case but many as I think we all need to develop continuously through our careers. If I had to pick just one it would be the case of a lady called Joy Gardner (look it up on Wikipedia) who died while being restrained by the police. It was clear that the Police didn't understand the risks of pinning people down (like a rugby scrum) and so I was able to teach them about the risks and dangers of restraint and get them to design and learn new restraint techniques - I'm pleased to say many fewer people have died in this way since then.

11. Can you tell us about a less high-profile case which was significant or fascinating to you, and why?

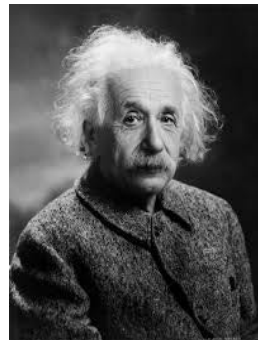
I performed an examination on a case of a girl who died from epilepsy, that itself was not new or unheard of. What was important for me was that I learned from talking to her parents how to explain these sudden and terrible deaths far better to family members in a way that they could understand. Understanding can be very hard but is such an important step in the grieving pathway.

12. Do you have any advice for teenagers interested in pursuing a career in science/law, or any words to convince them to pursue such a career?

Both careers are very challenging and hard to get into. But both law and medicine have so many different avenues to follow after you qualify - things that you really cannot even begin to know about now. So many fascinating areas and a chance for life long interest and learning. So if you're interested go for it, but remember sometimes a bit of experience of real life first can be very useful. Never forget the possibilities of later entry to University or (for Law at least) part-time study.

13. What's an aspect of your profession which people often misunderstand or get wrong? Why do you think they make this error?

Most people think we just "cut up" bodies which doesn't understand the immense complexity of what we actually do or the need for our extensive anatomy and pathology skills ...



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

#000H !! A famous pathologist of course - Sir Bernard Spilsbury.

A politician - Sir Winston Churchill

An explorer - Dr Livingstone

A Mathematician - Albert Einstein

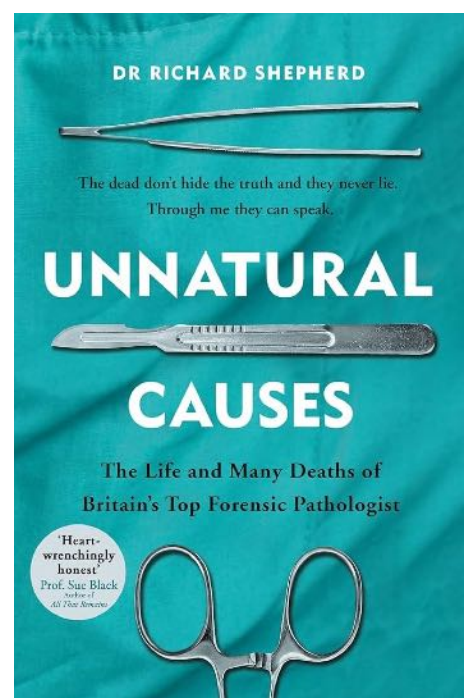
A writer - Alexander Pope

15. What's next for 'Richard Shepherd'?

A bit more work, perhaps a new book in my Series "*Unnatural Causes*", certainly another month of touring theatres in the UK next autumn and of course more flying my plane - ideally to France next summer!!

16. What five words describe 'Richard Shepherd'?

Retired, interested, Grandad, active, happy.



RAISING FUNDS, CHASING ADVENTURE: WADHAM SCOUTS LOOK TO POLAND 2027

WADHAM STUDENTS SELECTED FOR WORLD SCOUT JAMBOREE 2027

By Evan Pearce

On Monday 27th October, three students from Wadham School received the email confirmation they had all been waiting for. Each email read the same:

"Congratulations! I am pleased to inform you that you have been selected to represent Somerset at the next World Scout Jamboree in Poland 2027."

We had all completed application forms along with a personal statement, either written or as a video, explaining who we are, our hobbies, why we wanted to attend, and what we hoped to gain from the experience. This will be the 26th World Scout Jamboree in Scouting history, with the very first scout camp taking place on Brownsea Island in 1908 and the first World Scout Jamboree held in 1920. It is the pinnacle of any Scout's career.

We then attended a selection day at Huish Woods with other applicants from across Somerset. We were placed in small groups of eight and spent the day completing a variety of team tasks. Assessors observed how we worked within our teams, communicated, and interacted with others. My group gelled almost instantly. We took part in team cooking, public speaking about personal objects, and "taskmaster-style" challenges. I brought a pot of sand collected from the Normandy beaches (Gold, Asnelles), where my great-uncle had fought and died. Other activities included making the Scout logo out of leaves, sawing a piece of wood using ropes, and guiding a blindfolded team from point A to B.

All three of us impressed the assessors and are now proud members of Somerset Unit 58, which comprises only 36 youth members and 4 leaders. The World Scout Jamboree takes place once every four years, with 40,000 people attending. Only six countries in the world do not have Scouts!

Since the selection weekend, we have participated in an activity day at Wells, playing dodgeball, taking part in team-building exercises, and walking around the city solving a murder mystery by looking for small clues on the floors and walls. We also met Scouts from an older age group who had attended a separate selection day.

Over the coming year, we have many meetings planned, along with camps and hikes. With just over 599 days to go, we need to save, fundraise, and apply for grants. We have already started fundraising, including taking part in Christmas markets, starting with the first one here at Wadham School. Each of us needs to raise £3,650 to attend this three-week trip of a lifetime across Poland and other countries.

We are Evan, Toren, and Poppy—Wadham students—and we will keep you updated on our progress and journey to the World Scout Jamboree 2027!



WILD, WEIRD, WONDERFUL GALAPAGOS

By Asha England

Where are the Galápagos Islands?

The Galápagos Islands are an archipelago (a collection of islands) located in the Pacific Ocean, around 906 km (536 miles) off the coast of Ecuador. They belong to Ecuador. The islands have a land area of 7,880 km² (3,040 sq. miles) and are spread across around 45,000 km² (17,000 sq. miles) of ocean. The archipelago includes 18 main islands, 3 smaller islands, and 107 rocks or islets. There are 21 volcanoes, which are either shield volcanoes or lava plateaus (areas of level ground caused by volcanic activity). Despite being located on the equator, the islands receive cold water from the Humboldt Current, which flows up from the Antarctic.



What is the ecology of the islands?

Most of the Galápagos Islands are covered in shrublands, grasslands, and humid forests. This range of climates allows for a high level of biodiversity. Due to their isolation, many species are endemic (only found in one location) to the Galápagos Islands. Well-known species include the Galápagos tortoise, finches, flightless cormorants, Galápagos lava lizards, and marine iguanas.

Galápagos Tortoises

Also known scientifically as *Chelonoidis niger*, Galápagos tortoises are one of the most famous animals from the islands. They are the largest living species of tortoise and the largest cold-blooded animals in the world. They can live for over 100 years and weigh up to 417 kg.



Galápagos tortoises are herbivores and feed on cacti, grass, leaves, fruit, and milkweed. They travel across the islands to sandy coastal areas to lay their eggs. Like many cold-blooded animals, the sex of their offspring depends on the temperature of the eggs during incubation.

Finches

Darwin's finches, also known as Galápagos finches, are a group of around 18 bird species from the genera *Geospiza*, *Camarhynchus*, *Certhidea*, *Pinaroloxias*, and *Platyspiza*. They are famous as a key example of adaptive radiation and natural selection.



Although most species are found in the Galápagos Islands, some are also found on the Cocos Islands. These birds are particularly known for their differently shaped beaks, which are adapted for eating specific foods such as insects, nectar, cacti, and seeds.

Galápagos Lava Lizard

The Albemarle lava lizard, also known as the Isabela lava lizard, is an endemic species found only in the Galápagos Islands. Despite their name, they do not live in lava but are commonly found on volcanic terrain, which explains their name. Lava lizards feed mainly on insects and play an

important role in controlling insect populations.

Marine Iguanas

Amblyrhynchus cristatus, the marine iguana, is another well-known species endemic to the Galápagos Islands. Marine iguanas spend much of their time sunbathing and feed mainly on red algae, or green algae in some populations. The type of algae eaten depends on availability.

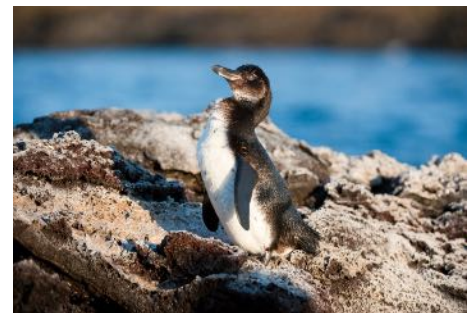
Female iguanas choose mates based on size, with larger males being preferred. Between 1 and 6 eggs are laid, usually 2 or 3. The eggs hatch after around 3 to 4 months, and the young iguanas immediately run for cover to find safe living conditions.

Galápagos Penguins

Unlike most penguins, Galápagos penguins live in warm climates rather than icy environments. They are part of the banded penguin group and are easily recognised by the white bands across their bodies. Galápagos penguins often live in caves around the islands and hunt in groups. Their diet mainly consists of fish found around the islands.

Conclusion

Overall, the Galápagos Islands are incredibly beautiful and home to many unusual species. Their unique location allows for high biodiversity, and their isolation has resulted in many endemic species that cannot be found anywhere else in the world. This makes the Galápagos Islands a truly unique and fascinating place.



*Time to
think about...*

A COUNTER ARGUMENT ON CURRENT HOMEWORK APPS

By Darcy Andrews

My name is Darcy Andrews. I left Wadham last year and found the homework apps used by the school extremely useful.

Seneca offers lots of different options, allowing students to choose the way they learn best. I

particularly found the 'Adaptive Learn' setting helpful, as it lets you read information and then recall it. It's also great for understanding the structure of exam questions and provides extra tips that can really impress an examiner. Using Seneca helped improve my GCSE grades, and I still recommend it for students at college.

Sparx Maths makes it easy to access maths questions from home. Teachers provide a code for the necessary topics, and you can work through different levels of difficulty at your own pace, with videos to help explain each question if needed. The app adapts the questions based on what you get right and wrong, helping you reach your maximum potential without getting stuck.

I think these apps are especially useful as students get older, but it's great for younger years to start using them early. These are just two examples of the helpful homework platforms Wadham provides, and I trust the teachers' judgement when choosing the right tools for learning.

INTERVIEW

FROM STAGE

TO SCREEN

AND BEYOND:

ADRIAN LESTER

ON ACTING,

DIRECTING,

AND LIFE

Foreword by Peter Hopwood and
interview by Poppy Spurway

Adrian Lester is one of Britain's most well-known and respected actors, with a career that spans theatre, television, and film. He is especially famous for his powerful stage performances, including leading roles in Shakespeare plays at the National Theatre, where he became one of the youngest actors to play some of its most iconic characters. His work in theatre has earned him major awards and critical praise.

Many students may recognise Adrian from television, where he starred in popular series such as *Hustle*, as well as serious dramas that explore social issues and complex characters. Alongside acting, he is also a director and writer, showing how creative careers can develop in many different directions.

In this interview, Adrian talks about his journey into acting, the importance of hard work and resilience, and what he has learned along the way. His story is both inspiring and relatable, especially for young people interested in drama, creativity, or performing arts.

1. What does your daily routine look like?

It really depends on what project I'm involved in, or what I am preparing to do. There is no routine for actors. Sometimes I'm filming, sometimes on stage. Sometimes it's out of the country, sometimes it's at home. Through the changing schedules and time zones I try to maintain a good sleep pattern, diet and exercise.

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

I didn't like school very much. 1980's Birmingham. No real teaching of the performing arts in any way shape or form. A teaching style copied from the major corporal punishment schools at the time.



3. Was acting initially your goal when you were younger?

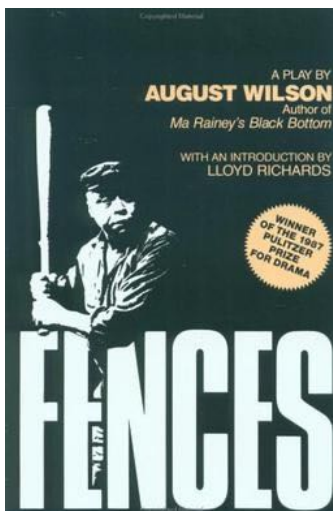
When I was younger I started with an interest in dance. This moved on to singing when I was about 9/10 and then later on, when I was about 14, I discovered acting.

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

As a child singer in a children's opera company production I watched members of the Birmingham Youth Theatre mime alongside the songs we were singing, which they did in order to bring the lyrics to life. I was mesmerised. I wondered How they were managing to conjure so much with so little. I auditioned for the youth theatre the next year.

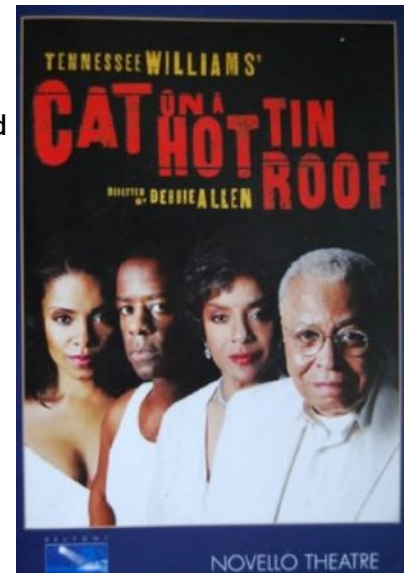
5. Across your varied acting roles, has anyone ever been a particular inspiration to you? If so, who and why?

I have admired a number of people over the years, but I have to say, I admire performances or work executed more than I admire an artist outright for everything they have done.



James Earl Jones. Ever since I saw his interpretation of Troy Maxon in *Fences* I felt I'd been introduced to someone who was in so many ways overlooked as an exceptional actor. I got to work with him on *Cat On A Hot Tin Roof* in the West End with Phylicia Rashad and Sanaa Lathan. The production was directed by Debbie Allen.

James was an incredibly hard worker. It was an experience working alongside the whole cast. James had no ego. None. His ethic was hard work and an acceptance that each performance was achieved only because it pushed him further along a path to something better, something that he would put into the next performance.



6. Having worked in theatre, TV and film – which medium do you prefer to work in and why?

I honestly like all three. Theatre is harder work. It involves many more tools that are a part of my craft. I also have more control of the tempo and delivery of the performance, but it is transitory. It disappears after the final show.

TV and Film offer me the chance to have the work recorded and therefore available to a much larger audience. But, in the recorded medium, I haven't had the opportunity to deliver the breadth of emotion and complexity of character that I have had the opportunity to deliver on the stage. So my answer is: all three.

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

That is a very hard question. I don't have a favourite. I have had a great time on so many of the projects I've worked on. The ones where I have developed most as an actor and had the most fun time all stick out to me; *Hustle*, *Undercover* (TV) *As you Like It*, *Company*, *Othello*, *Cyrano De Bergerac* (stage).

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

I am drawn to a lot of roles I don't get as well. But I suppose I'm drawn by the writing and the scope of the character's story.

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

Well, I couldn't really say... But there have been lots of roles I really wish I had gotten the opportunity to do. But only made it to the audition.

10. Outside of acting, what are you passionate about?

I love music. I like my martial arts and continue to practice my particular form of Tae Kwon Do whenever I can. I have been teaching since I got my black belt a while ago. A martial arts ethos of humility and hard work fits perfectly with the despondency that can creep around you during periods of unemployment.

**11. Have you ever been star struck by someone you've worked with? Who was it and why did it have that effect on you?**

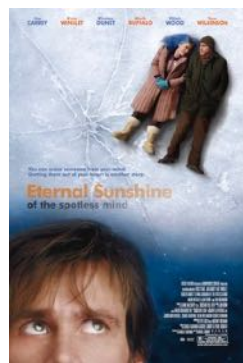
No, I haven't been star struck by anyone.

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

Get Out. It is a fantastic horror movie. Very clever commentary on race and America.

The Shawshank Redemption. The message of the film is perfectly delivered in Morgan Freeman's Voice alongside the exceptional acting and script.

And.... *Avengers Age Of Ultron* or *Endgame.* These films are excellent pieces of cinema. Perfectly orchestrated to deliver big action set pieces but with a secure attachment to character and story. What the writers and directors have held onto clearly is the fact that no matter what happens on screen, (and they really can make almost anything happen on screen)



But then I could never choose just three films so.....*Eternal Sunshine Of The*

Spotless Mind would also have to go in there with *Requiem For A Dream.*

13. 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?

Practice. Make sure you have joined a theatre group and regularly engage with performance. After which you have to test yourself to make sure you have what it takes to replicate genuine emotions,

repeatedly. Then, depending what level you may be at, create the opportunities for members of the industry to see you.

14. Which performances, either on stage, TV or the silver screen, would you advise any aspiring actor watch and why?

- ◆ Denzel Washington in *Man On Fire*.
- ◆ Will Smith in *Pursuit Of Happiness*.
- ◆ Kathy Bates in *Misery*
- ◆ Tom Hanks and Barkhad Abdi in *Captain Phillips*.

The performances finely judge the camera to help the actor peel away layers of feeling. In some cases that feeling is big. At other times it is very small. But the details of these performances shows work that is closer to a documentary. (except Kathy Bates)



15. 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?

Be better than you were yesterday. That is the true definition of any success.

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

That I've managed to make a living at it. That I feel like I've gotten better as I've gotten older. I have really enjoyed the travelling. My career has taken me all over the world. I have been to places I would never normally have seen.

17. If you weren't an actor, what do you think you'd be doing instead?

I would have gone into the music industry. But if not any kind of performance, I would have studied Psychology and perhaps medicine.

18. If you could have a dinner party and invite any 4 people from history who would be on the guest list and why?



Martin Luther King. Maya Angelou. Stevie Wonder and Malcolm X! I think the reasons are obvious. And apart from the politics, I'd just love to hear the anecdotes and recollections. All before Stevie sat down at the Piano.

19. What 5 words describe 'Adrian Lester'?

I have no idea. But I bet they change everyday!

20. And finally, what's next for 'Adrian Lester'?

I will hopefully be doing more theatre in London, before I shoot my first feature film in the autumn.

History Matters

A VISIT TO AUSCHWITZ: REMEMBERING THE PAST

By Annie Best

Going to Auschwitz was an amazing but saddening experience. Upon entering, you walk through the "Arbeit Macht Frei" gate, and as soon as I walked in, there was a huge change in atmosphere. The first place we went into was a gas chamber. On the ceiling, you can see the hole where the Zyklon B was released. If you look closely, you can see scratch

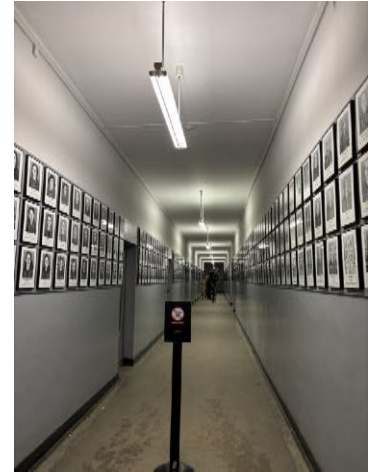
marks on the walls from where the people inside were struggling.

All around the area were signs giving information about what happened there. They also showed photographs and even drawings. Shortly after exiting the chambers, you enter a room showing items that were found during the clean-up process. These include glasses, prosthetic limbs, bags, clothes, and more. This part of the museum was by far the saddest, especially when thinking about the reality of what this place was.

Next, you go into a room full of photographs of the prisoners. This was the longest room, as there were so many prisoners. It was also one of the most interesting yet upsetting places, as each person had their own life and story.

The next place we saw was a wall displaying photographs of the children who were held there. This was heartbreaking, imagining how scared they must have been being taken away from their families. The last thing I saw was the "execution wall." This wall is at the end of a path, with lanterns and flowers placed in front of it. Looking closer, you can see the bullet marks from where people were executed.

Overall, visiting Auschwitz and Birkenau was a very enlightening experience. Going there really helps you understand the history on a deeper level. It was an incredibly powerful experience.



History Matters

ADRIAN CARTON DE WIART- THE UNKILLABLE SOLDIER

By Jonathan Margetts

“Quite frankly, I enjoyed the war.”

It isn't a quote that you would expect to hear from someone, especially not a person who experienced the atrocities of not one, not two, but three mass conflicts and who lived to tell the tale. But Adrian Carton de Wiart was a man who had an aura the size of a small country, and the heroism to back up his reputation as “The Unkillable Soldier”.

Born in Brussels in 1880, of mixed Belgian and Irish descent, Adrian Carton de Wiart had a pretty steady rise through the ranks in his career in the army. That was, of course, until he saw real action and transformed from “upper class gentleman” into “the stuff of legend.”

He served in the Boer war, The First World War and The Second World War and during the course of all those conflicts, he was shot in the leg, hip, groin, ankle, stomach, ear and the head and the face! He also suffered significant shrapnel damage to his arm, but more on that later.

During The First World War, he suffered terrible damage to his skull and was shot in the head during The Battle of the Somme. He entered the battlefield again shortly after being bandaged up, describing the whole thing as having left him “feeling a little worse for wear”, which has to go down as the biggest understatement of the 20th century.

He was also shot in the hip, leg and ear and apparently found every trip to the medical tent to be patched up as an inconvenience that just took him away from the fight. During this time, he fought at Passchendaele, Cambrai, Fleur-Corcelette and Arras, was shot over four times and apparently only avoided death because he was too stubborn to accept it. He was blinded in one eye, resulting in him continuing his military career looking like a cross between a pirate and G.I Joe.

During the Second World War, his carrier plane was shot down and plummeted into the ground. He walked away from the crash. He was later captured, placed in a prisoner of war camp and dug his way out to return to his own forces. When his arm was caught in a shrapnel explosion, crippling three fingers, he once again had to be dragged away and sent to a medical tent. Whilst there, he grew so impatient waiting for recovery that, against the army doctor's advice, he amputated his own



fingers rather than wait for them to heal so that he could go back to fighting. This meant that he now went into battle with an eye-patch and a snazzy leather glove to hide his injuries. He also was unable to use a rifle with one functioning hand, meaning that he was given a custom made pistol, allowing him to fight on with a one-handed weapon. Later, his vehicle was attacked by the Luftwaffe when it was driving him to a new location. Every single person in his convoy was killed, apart from him. He once again walked back to the nearest allied based and found himself re-deployed.

For his troubles, he was awarded the Victoria Cross in 1916, which I can only assume just made him shrug and get on the first boat back to the trenches. He achieved many other things in his time, but he ended his life with so many medals for bravery that writing about them all would make this article far too long for publication. If you want to know more, then there are plenty of websites and YouTube history channels that chronicle his career in more detail.

There is also a song by the heavy metal band Sabaton, titled "The Unkillable Soldier", should you want your history lessons given to you in musical form. He retired after taking rest in French Indochina, where he slipped on a mat, broke three vertebrae and knocked himself unconscious. Whilst he didn't die, he never fully recovered and was unable to fight again. In the end, it wasn't the enemy's bullets that concluded his career- it was a floor mat.



De Wiart died at the age of 183 on the 5th of June, 1963, having been married three times.

In his memoirs, he wrote: "The pen is mightier than the sword, but I know which one of these weapons I would choose." One can only assume he doesn't mean the pen.

Getting into journalism

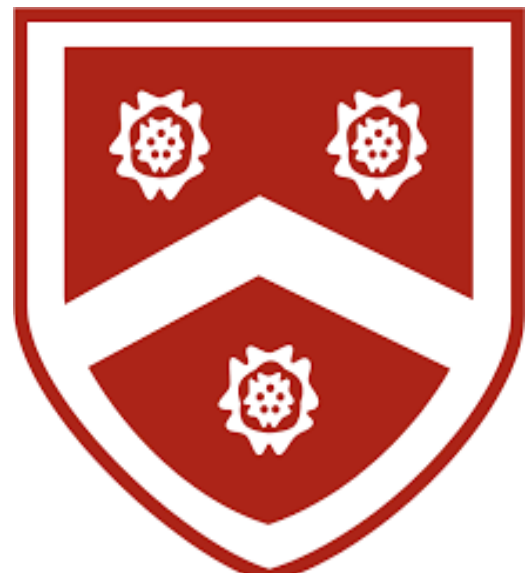
Have you thought about writing for a living, being a reporter, working on a newspaper or magazine?

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:

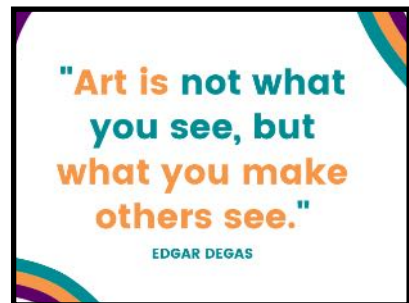
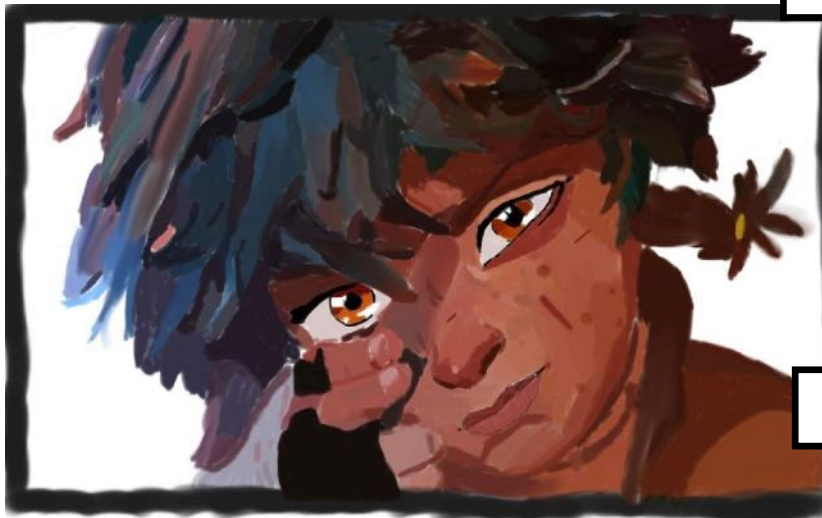
- Message Mr Hopwood on Teams
- Come and see Mr Hopwood in B23
- Email Mr Hopwood – Phopwood@wadhamschool.co.uk



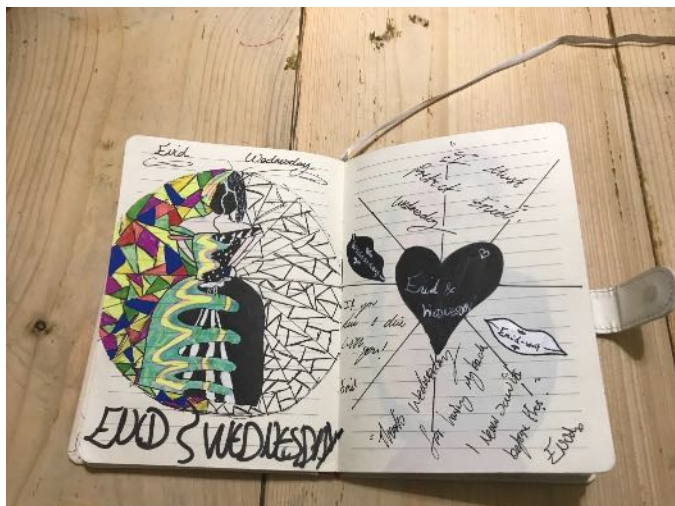
Let's Get Creative!



Artwork by Maggie Singleton



Artwork by Florence Richardson



Artwork by Poppy Best

WADHAM SCHOOL EGG TIMER INTERVIEWS

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

Charlotte Brennan - Cover Supervisor

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

I decided to work in a school because I loved the idea of helping young people learn new things and to encourage them to want to learn and enjoy learning. Seeing young people grow and decide what they want to do with their futures in an amazing thing to be a part of.

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

Absolutely it is acceptable to have pineapple on a pizza. It adds a whole new flavour and just jazzes it up. I'm happy to discuss with anyone who disagrees.

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

So, I do have a dog called Braxton but he's not really a pet he is a member of the family, so if I was to choose an animal as a pet, I would like to have a Meerkat. They are just so cute. They look amazing when they are standing to attention. I visited Longleat in the summer holidays and you can actually go in their enclosure and see them up close. Although you are still not allowed to pet them. it was a great experience getting closer to them.

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

If I was stuck on a desert Island, I think the book I'd like to have would be the *Magic Faraway Tree* by Enid Blyton. Growing up my nan used to read this book to me and I still have the copy today. The pages are a little yellow in colour now, but I still read the book at least once every year or two. I highly recommend giving it a read.

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

I would say that a lot of different people have inspired me in my life, and I don't think I could choose just one. I believe each of us are inspired everyday by our family, by the people we work with and by others we may see on tv or hear on the radio. I feel inspired every day.

Louisa Ridgley - Head of Science

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

I believe the children are the future...

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

Yes - I'm a 70s baby, cheese and pineapple was the height of sophistication at my childhood birthday parties and are perfect on a pizza.

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

A capybara, they are like guinea pigs but more.

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

Lord of the Rings - it is an amazing story and I would love to reread it but also it is a long book and there are many uses for sheets of thin paper if you are shipwrecked!

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

Terry Pratchett - he was an author who wrote the disk world books, these are possibly the most amazing books ever written!

Jonathan Margetts - Cover Supervisor**1. Why did you decide to work in a school?**

I took an English and History degree, with no idea what my plan for the future was other than loving History and loving English. A lot of the people on my course were looking at going into education and teaching, so I naturally just put some feelers out at local schools. I got offered a job in a local school, and decided that I'd try it for a year. If I hated it, then I could try something else. Turns out I loved it! The rest is history (or English, as the case may be).

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

They do chocolate pizzas now, and some countries have a love for putting anchovies on a pizza? Do I like a ham and pineapple pizza? No. But I have no problem with it being on a pizza.

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

An Axolotl. They're pink, they're cute and they never actually grow out of their adolescent form. They can also regrow limbs and scientists think they might be the key to cell growth and a cure of cancer. So, to have a pet like that, which would potentially change the world would be pretty cool. I keep tropical fish already so it wouldn't be a huge leap!

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

Stephen King's *The Stand*. It is the only book I've ever read which I can return to and still have a different experience. If I was allowed to pick a series, then I'd have the Lord of the Rings. But if we're sticking to one book, then it would be *The Stand*. Its about a plague that wipes over 99.3% of the Earth's population, with the survivors having to embark on an epic journey before the ultimate battle between Heaven and Hell. It is truly epic, and it is post-apocalyptic, which is a genre I absolutely love, and it is written by Stephen King, who is my favourite author ever! Not the most pleasant of subject matters, but I suppose it'd make me feel better to just be trapped on a desert island rather than trapped on a desert island with a deadly disease on the loose!

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

Bruce Dickinson, the lead singer to Iron Maiden. Not only are they one of my favourite bands ever, but he's an inspiration in everything that he does. Being the lead singer to a band wasn't enough- he's also a pilot (he flies the band to all their gigs on his own jet), a movie director, an author, an actor, a television presenter, a solo artist, an artist and a man who was diagnosed with throat cancer and just thought "oh what a nuisance". The first question he asked his doctor upon his diagnosis was "so when can I get back on stage then?" His son is also in a heavy metal band, he can play guitar and drums, he's played a gig in war-torn Sarajevo (where they had to pause the gig as bombs fell outside) and he owns a repaired World War One Fokker tri-plane which he flies in re-enactments...and he's still touring at the age of 67. I highly recommend his auto-biography, "*What Does This Button Do?*".

Laura Manning - PE Teacher**1. Why did you decide to work in a school?**

I decided to become a PE teacher during year 10 at school. I think it was as a result of having an inspirational PE teacher and enjoying the variety that comes within PE for physical and social development. Working in a school also provides a lot of variety, as every day is different.

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

Yes - it also counts towards one of your five a day right?

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

Not a massive animal lover and having three children keeps me busy enough. Perhaps a horse, as it would allow me to spend lots of time in the countryside and would keep my daughter happy too!

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

I guess it would make most sense to choose a book with survival tips and escape plans, in case I decide desert life isn't for me!

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

Both my grandparents were inspirational to me. They had amazing family values and were genuinely hardworking and kind people.

Lucy Martin - Head of Personal Development**1. Why did you decide to work in a school?**

I have always wanted to work with children, probably because my mum is a teacher so I used to "help" her with little jobs from before I even started school myself. When I was at Wadham as a student my art teacher said she thought I would make a good art teacher, and after some exhausting work experience in a primary school, I agreed that it was a much better idea! I went on to do a degree in Fine Art and then teacher training. Once I had been teaching for a couple of years I started teaching a lot of PSHE alongside art and really enjoyed it. From there I decided to apply to be in charge of PSHE and moved across to working at Wadham a couple of years after. I still absolutely love teaching art and photography but it is great to look after Personal Development at Wadham.

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

Why? I guess it is if you like pineapple on pizza... but its a no from me! But then I eat bananas with curry...

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

At this point, with a toddler, 2 cats and a dog to look after, a tortoise sounds fab.

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

Frenchman's Creek by Daphne Du Maurier. I read it every summer - it is a pirate adventure story for adults and completely transports you to another world. My dad read it to my brother and I when we were children and I have always loved it.

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

My brother - he had a really hard time at school and he has travelled (literally and metaphorically) so far since. Above all he is so incredibly kind.

LEVEL UP AT CONTINUE ARCADES, TAUNTON!

By Sarah Baker & Tom Baker

Part 1—By Sarah Baker

I was offered the chance to experience an afternoon of non-stop family gaming at Continue Arcades in Taunton, so to make the review a bit more interesting we've given a two-person perspective of the arcade experience - parent and student. Thank you to Continue Arcades and Mr Hopwood for the discount code!

A 'pay in advance' entry charge allows you to explore the plethora of retro arcade entertainment for about 2 hours (bookable online) - priced at £13 for adults (16+) and £11 for children (4-15). Although, we did run slightly over our two-hour session and we weren't hassled or hauled out. Booking was very easy on their website. 'Continue' have arcades in Taunton and Plymouth, so you select the location when booking. However, it's not necessary to book in advance, we learned that you could just role up there and pay on the door if you wanted to. It was a very laid-back atmosphere of gaming nostalgia, comprising of consoles, simulators, air hockey machines, foosball, basketball, shoot 'em ups, pool tables, motor racing...this place almost had it all! (no Golden Axe??)

Most of the machines were available to use immediately and then there were a few very popular ones, which you had to wait in turn for. One thing we commented on was how dark it was inside, I guess this is intentional to add to the gaming atmosphere and for seeing the brightly lit up machines. Thankfully, there was enough lighting over the pool table to enjoy a couple of rounds.



The gaming lounge was vast and there were some smaller side rooms for playing consoles, air hockey and pool. The facilities were good and clean. Refreshments were limited to canned drinks and some snacks, such as popcorn and crisps, which were available to purchase from the ticket counter on the front entrance.

My favourite gaming experiences; First off, the Star Wars simulator. Flying an x wing around and trying to defend against the alliance. Sadly, I failed the mission. Luke Skywalker won't be calling me up for help any time soon. It was a fun, immersive experience with a realistic air affect when flying around and brilliant graphics for its time.

Second in line, was the 'world's largest packman' which I found much easier to play than the original PC version and I was extremely impressed with myself for getting through a level without being killed by the ghosts. Last, but no means least, was the skiing simulation. It was real retro



immersive technology – standing on a movable disk and holding onto static ‘pole’ handles. It was great fun participating in Olympic skiing down the steep, mountainous slaloms.

I'd give ‘continue arcades retro gaming lounge’ an overall rating of 8.5/10



Part 2 – By Tom Baker

I personally haven't got much experience in arcades, maybe at most, playing the odd game while waiting in the queue at Hollywood bowl, or piling 10p coins into those pusher machines at the beach.

So up till now, even though I spend my days playing videogames, I had no real experience in their original retro counterparts. And so, my belief of arcades were based on those found next to bowling alleys and by the sea, the ones with the rigged claw games and the tiny basketball hoops, covered in dirt and smothered in “Out of Order” stickers, but after going to ‘Continue Arcades’ I have certainly been proven wrong.

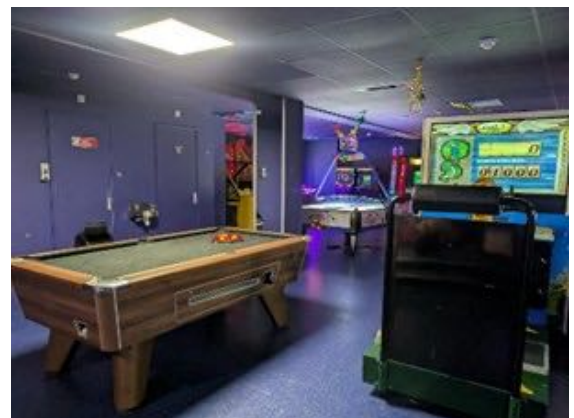
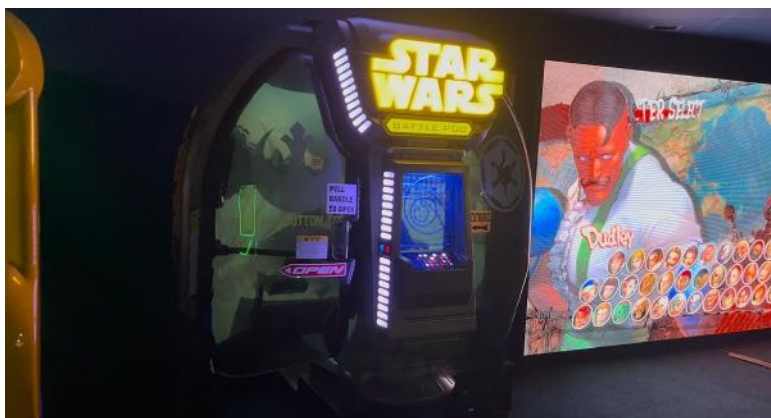


The games were a huge step up from what I was expecting, as stereotypically, it's not anticipated to find a whole lot in arcades nowadays, but again, this prejudice was completely removed. I couldn't count the number of games in there if you gave me all day, the range and size was truly impressive.

The first game I got my hands on was street fighter, and I must say, as someone who has very little experience in side-on fighter games, I wasn't very good, in fact I was beaten 5 times!

However, the game itself was quite fun with an impressively massive screen (well, as fun as losing 5 times can be). I then went to snoop around the simulator games and found myself in the seat of a Japanese street-racing game, now that was where I shone, or at least think I did well, though I could have ended up in last place having gone around the track backwards...who knows?

Overall, while I was pretty bad at the games themselves, they were fun, and the ‘Continue Arcades’ experience has really boosted my view of what an actual retro arcade is like, so I'll give it an 8/10.”



What's worth a read?

We Ride Titans (Vault Comics)

By Anon

We Ride Titans is a swaggering, high-octane mash-up of coming-of-age drama and kaiju-scale action, delivering exactly what its title promises: giant monsters, reckless ambition, and the intoxicating pull of power. Set in a future where colossal robots or 'Titans' are ridden and exploited as living weapons, the graphic novel frames its spectacle through the eyes of young pilots desperate to prove themselves in a brutal, fame-driven system.



The story centres on a group of teenagers thrust into a world where riding a Titan is both a privilege and a death sentence. Rather than glorifying the role outright, *We Ride Titans* interrogates the cost of hero worship, the pressure of expectations, and how quickly idealism can curdle into obsession. The narrative is loud and fast, but beneath the explosive battles lies a sharp critique of militarization, celebrity culture, and how institutions chew up youth in the name of progress.

Visually, the book is a knockout. The art revels in scale—Titans tower across pages, their sheer mass emphasized through wide panels and dramatic perspective. Action scenes are chaotic in the best way, capturing the terror and exhilaration of riding something that could kill you at any moment. At the same time, character moments are grounded and expressive, reminding readers that these pilots are still kids grappling with fear, rivalry, and loss. The book wears its influences proudly—mecha anime, kaiju films, dystopian sci-fi—but forges its own identity through character-driven stakes and unapologetic intensity.

Explosive, stylish, and emotionally charged, *We Ride Titans* is a thrilling read for fans of giant monsters and sci-fi action, offering not just destruction on a massive scale, but a thoughtful look at

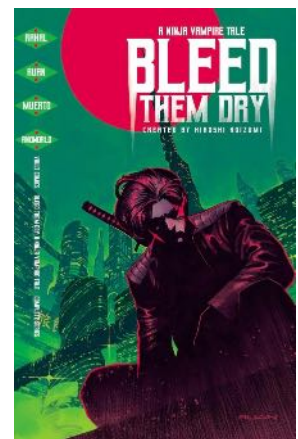
Bleed Them Dry (Vault Comics)

By Anon

Bleed Them Dry is a sharp, neon-lit collision of cyberpunk noir and vampire mythology that knows exactly how pulpy it wants to be—and revels in it. Set in a near-future Tokyo where technology hums alongside ancient power structures, the graphic novel follows a hardboiled police detective entangled in a turf war between rival vampire yakuza clans. It's a premise that could easily tip into excess, but the book's confidence and craft keep it thrillingly on track.

Eliot Rahal's writing leans into genre with style: clipped dialogue, morally compromised characters, and a world that feels lived-in despite its heightened concept. The result is a story that moves fast but still carries thematic weight, touching on power, loyalty, exploitation, and the cost of survival in a system rigged from the top down.

Dike Ruan's artwork is the standout. His line work is kinetic and expressive, perfectly suited to brutal fight scenes and rain-soaked cityscapes. Panels feel cinematic, with dynamic layouts that emphasize motion and impact, while quieter moments are given room to breathe. The blend of futuristic tech, traditional Japanese aesthetics, and monstrous violence creates a visual identity



Totally Wired: The Rise and Fall of the Music Press
by Paul Gorman (Thames & Hudson)

By Thomas Baker

I must preface this review with stating that, up until now, I never really knew a whole lot about music's recent history, and especially how it has shifted mediums, I never thought there was much to talk about, I thought the switch to digital was smooth and accepted, maybe a few defunct music magazines replaced by the internet causing some irritated discourse, or music shops put out of business by music streaming triggering some annoyance. However, I have been proven astonishingly wrong, this book has granted me a new knowledge for music's public exposure as a whole.



The impressive author Paul Gorman has put “decades of toil” into this masterpiece, and I have to vouch for the fact that it is abundantly clear. Because, this isn't merely a book recounting a certain history of media, this is an analysis, written by a man exploring and explaining his greatest passion. You see, Gorman's first ever publication (*'In Their Own Write: Adventures in the Music Press'*) was written in 2001, and since then, he has worked on 15 other books (all related or directly commenting on music's history and the music press), all coming together in his magnum opus, *"Totally Wired"*, this treasure is the of product of 21 years of work, research, interviews, first-hand experience, all of it, and it seriously shines.

I have to frantically point out the sheer depth in not only the detail of sources and descriptions, but the clarity in explanations, as going into this book, I didn't have the prior interest in the subject that an archetypal reader would presumably have, but it's composition, descriptions and explanations are freeing-ly digestible for a reader that would have no experience in subject previously. Also, compared to other analysis-style non-fiction books, this gem feels less like monotonous textbook ramblings, and more like an informal, but still informative, chat with a professional, it's really something.

Now, I want to get across this book's masterful writing, there is around a chapter (less a 'chapter', and more a 'waypoint', as the topic shifts from event-to-event through history) every 4 pages, this makes each time picking up the book feel educative even in small chunks. But, I could (and have) read this book for hours, because it just does not get old, and unlike stale textbooks, it uses the periods between events as time to explain and take in, instead of jumping from surface-level point to surface-level point.

I must also say that the actual music publications that Gorman covers are widespread, and unlike a stereotypical music press analyses, the effects of the press's influence is also explored, and how we still find remnants of it today in places like 'Pitchfork', and those who made it through the switch to digital, like 'NME'.

This book is MASTERFUL, and it should be a genuine model for what every analysis should be, it's intuitive, engaging, and digestible for anyone, even if they have no prior experience in the area.

I rate this book a 9.5/10





Black Clover, Blue Box, Heart Gear (All by VIZ Media)

By Olivia Donahue

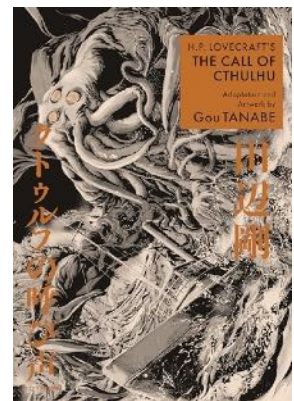
Black Clover is an anime and a manga book series. Asta (the main character) has to fight against a devil to protect clover kingdom. I read the 36 book. It was actually really good. He came back alive somehow.

Blue Box is also an anime and a manga series. It's a romantic manga where a boy and a girl both like each other but are too scared to tell each other. I have only read a couple of pages but so far it's really good. *Heart Gear* is also a manga. It's about a girl who is in a world with a bunch of robots but there are many different kinds of robots. Her and her friend try to save her uncle and are travelling around the globe. It's soo good. I recommend it

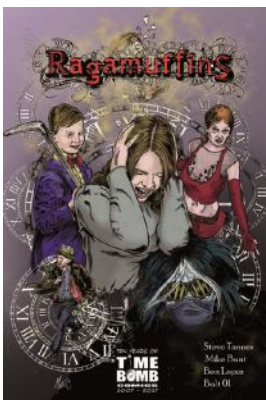
The Call of Cthulhu (Dark Horse Comics)

By Josie Bulmer

This manga adaptation by Gou Tanabe, based on the original short story by H.P. Lovecraft, follows a series of investigations into a cult worshipping a monster called Cthulhu, and what this means for Francis Thurston, who is looking through these and discovering more himself. I have always been a big fan of gothic, generally darker stories, and always an appreciator of great art. This manga absolutely delivers in both. Though I have not read the original, without spoiling anything, this adaptation was a wonderful read, both plot wise and art wise.



I would recommend for anyone who is into horror, mystery, or is just looking for an interesting read. The art is amazing and I love the way it illustrates the darker parts of the story in a way that almost draws more attention to them. A captivating story, albeit very obvious horror in many places, which I enjoyed but may not be for everyone.



Ragamuffins (Time Bomb Comics)

By Izy Clements

Ragamuffins is a comic that is funny and creative, with humour, imagination, and friendship. It is a story of a group of friends who quite often find themselves in the most unlikely or trying situations, but who always resort to cooperation and swiftness to get out of those situations. The story is light-hearted and adventurous, showing how people who seem to be different get together as a group and assist each other. Ben Lopez's style is vibrant and expressive, bringing the characters and world to life. Each panel is vibrant and full of details, and the style accommodates the fun but sometimes heart-wrenching story. Steve Tanner

and Mike Bunt's writing gives each character a distinct personality, and Bolt 01's editing makes the story short and to the point. Friendship, imagination, and belonging are the underlying themes found in *Ragamuffins*. The book teaches readers that small or unlikely heroes can influence others significantly by working together. Creativity is also encouraged by the comic, as it shows that problems can usually be solved by applying a different mindset.

Overall, *Ragamuffins* is an enjoyable and well-written comic that has a good mix of humour and intelligent messages. It's worth the read for anyone who enjoys fanciful quests, emotional artwork, and stories about collaboration and courage.



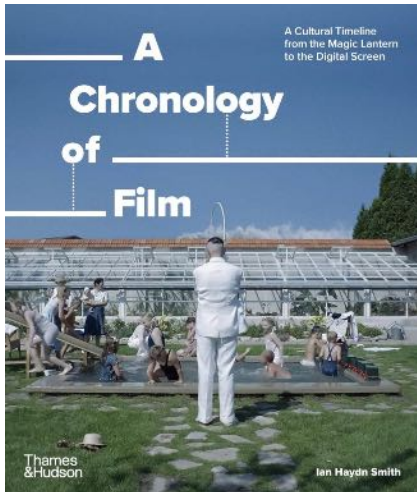
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A Chronology of Film by Ian Haydn Smith (Thames & Hudson)

By Henry Hopwood

Okay, so *A Chronology of Film* is kind of like the ultimate guide to everything that's ever happened in movies, and honestly, I wasn't expecting to get so into it. Ian Haydn Smith takes you from the super early days of film—like those weird magic lantern shows or the first silent shorts—right up to today with streaming and digital cinema. It's crazy to see how much movies have changed, and how a lot of stuff we take for granted now actually came from really old experiments.

What I liked the most is how it's all in this timeline format. You can see, like, when a new technology came out, which big movies were released that year, and even what was happening in the world at the same time. It makes everything feel connected instead of just random facts. Plus, it's not just about Hollywood. There are movies from Europe, Asia, and other places too, which I thought was pretty cool because I never really thought about cinema outside the big American films I've seen.

The book has tons of pictures—movie posters, stills from films, and old black-and-white shots—which made it way more interesting than just a bunch of text. Honestly, some parts were a little info-heavy, and I had to reread some sections to really get it, but that's because there's so much packed in.

If you're into movies at all, or even just curious about how they got to where they are today, this book is actually kind of awesome. It's like a history class, but way more fun, and it makes you appreciate all the stuff behind the scenes that goes into making the movies we love. Definitely recommend it if you want to sound super smart about film without it feeling boring.

Farewell My Odin (Titan Comics)

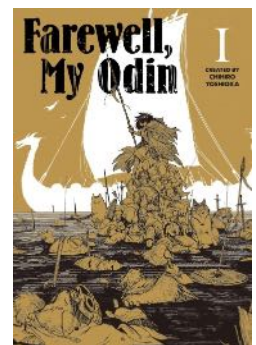
By Henry Hopwood

Farewell My Odin is an exciting and emotional read that mixes action, mystery, and Norse mythology. The story follows Odin, a character who faces impossible challenges, tests of loyalty, and difficult choices that keep the reader hooked from start to finish.

The writing is fast-paced and easy to follow, making it perfect for students who enjoy adventure stories but also want a deeper emotional story. The characters are well-developed, and you really feel for them as they struggle, make mistakes, and grow throughout the book. The mix of myth and modern storytelling gives the story a unique twist that keeps it interesting. One of the best things about the book is the way it combines suspense with emotional moments. There are times when you're on the edge of your seat, and other times when it makes you reflect on friendship, bravery, and sacrifice.

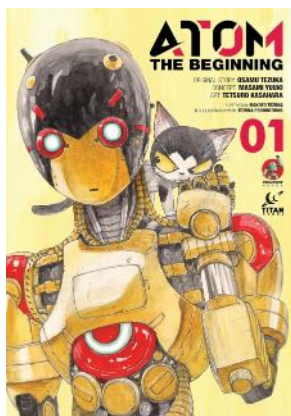
Overall, *Farewell My Odin* is a gripping, emotional adventure that's easy to read but hard to put down. I'd recommend it to anyone who enjoys action, mythology, or stories with strong characters and exciting plots.

Rating: 8.5/10



Welcome to Ghost Mansion (Titan Comics)**By Elliott Osborne**

In this comic, there's a girl - Kaori Shinonome - who has moved to a new town. She doesn't have a job, and she finds an abandoned hotel. Kaori decides to convert the hotel into one for ghosts, as she has the ability to speak to spirits! This is a scary but quite an remarkable story, you always want to find out what will happen next, as it is so intriguing. I've never read anything like this before, although I have seen other mangas. I would say it's definitely one I would recommend to my friends. The comic would be best suited for readers aged 10 or over because it is a bit gory. I really enjoyed reading this book and I can't wait to read more interesting books at Wadham.

Atom: The Beginning (Titan Comics)**By Olivia Moncur**

Atom: The Beginning is a sci-fi manga created by Tetsuro Kasahara.

The story is set five years after a strange catastrophe devastates Japan. Engineering students Umataro and Hiroshi work together to create A106 (nicknamed "Six")—an unassuming, mild-mannered robot with incredible super strength! When their university faces funding issues that could shut down Six forever, the trio enters the world of robot fighting to keep their dream alive.

Six stands out from other robots thanks to his emotional and mental capabilities, which develop at a rapid rate. Unlike other robots, he has a will and personality, allowing him to neutralise threats in the arena rather than just smash them. This earns him the fighting name "the kind-hearted child of science." This unique development comes from Umataro and Hiroshi's experiments with the Bewusstsein, a technology designed to give robots "hearts," allowing them to form feelings and thoughts.

During a fight in the arena, Six encounters Mars, a strange robot created by Dr LoLo. Mars is the undefeated reigning champion, but at the end of their battle, he shows an unexpected act of kindness. Is Mars different like Six, or is he just following orders? Six's new mission is to uncover the reasons behind Mars's actions. I would definitely recommend this manga—it's a 10/10 for me! The story is amazing, the characters are well-designed, and I've already decided to buy the next book in the series.

Tomorrow's Ghost by Tanya Landman (Walker Books)**By Molly Caswell**

Tomorrow's Ghost is a clever and twisty story by Tanya Landman that follows a young girl, Anna. While staying with her great-aunt over the summer, Anna begins to have worrying and foreboding dreams. Her curiosity leads her to an abandoned grand house, where the strange events from her dreams start to become a terrifying reality. Anna becomes determined to uncover the mystery and figure out how to save what is at risk.

Although this might not be my top recommendation, Tanya Landman does an excellent job of capturing the feel of historical fiction and ghost stories. If you choose to read this book, you can expect an engaging and atmospheric experience that draws you into the mystery and suspense of Anna's world.



MOVIE REVIEWS



DOWNFALL - INSIDE HITLER'S LAST DAYS: A FILM REVIEW

By Casper Crouch

The year is 1945. After 6 long years of war, Germany is exhausted. Thanks to catastrophic defeats on the Western and Eastern fronts, the German military is in full retreat, with the Red Army reaching the outskirts of Berlin by the 21st of April, one day after Hitler's birthday. Despite the fanatical resistance of the SS, their efforts are often thwarted due to a lack of valuable resources, such as fuel, unrealistic expectations and the sheer manpower of the allied forces that are advancing very swiftly

through German territory. The seemingly invincible Nazi war machine that had conquered most of Europe in the span of a few years had completely collapsed, and Adolf Hitler ends his own life in the Führerbunker on the 30th of April.

But what was really happening in the Führer's underground bunker, and how did he finally accept that the war was lost after years of delusional, military fantasies? The 2004 film, *Downfall*, directed by Oliver Hirschbiegel, has been hailed by historians for its highly accurate depiction of the final days of Adolf Hitler during the Battle of Berlin, with the film relying heavily on firsthand accounts from survivors.



The film begins in November 1942, where Adolf Hitler interviews young women for the position of personal secretary, and chooses Traudl Junge. On the 20th of April 1945, Hitler's 56th birthday, the German capital of Berlin is subject to heavy shelling from the Red Army, igniting the Battle of Berlin. The head of the SS, Heinrich



Himmler, is unable to persuade Hitler to leave the capital and secretly leaves to negotiate with the Allies. In a meeting in the Führerbunker, Hitler strictly forbids the retreat of the overwhelmed 9th Army and orders Obergruppenführer Felix Steiner's units to counter-attack with Lieutenant General Walther Wenck's 12th Army.



Then, in a rare instance, Hitler leaves his bunker to award the Iron Cross to 12-year-old Hitler Youth conscript, Peter Kranz, for the destruction of two enemy tanks, and remarks that he is even braver than his generals. This highlights Hitler's deteriorating trust in his generals, a topic which is brought up



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again later in the film. High-ranking SS member Wilhelm Mohnke asks Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels to stop sending inexperienced soldiers to the front, but Goebbels reveals that he has no sympathy and that the German people deserved their fate for being “weak”.



When Hitler learns Steiner's weakened forces didn't counter-attack as ordered, Hitler launches into a furious tirade, denouncing his generals and for the first time openly acknowledges the war is lost. He promises to commit suicide rather than surrender or leave Berlin. This scene has become very famous on the internet and is easily the most recognisable part of the film.



As the situation worsens in Berlin, Hitler gives his last will and testament to Junge, before marrying his long-time companion, Eva Braun. After realising that Walther Wenck's 12th Army can't turn the tide in battle, he bids farewell to his staff and commits suicide with Eva, and the couple is cremated in the Chancellery garden.

Peter, the sole survivor of his unit, discovers that his parents were executed, and attempts to escape the city. After their leader's death, the remaining occupants of the

Führerbunker attempt to break out from the city, and only Junge, joined by Peter, escapes successfully.

Overall, Downfall is a very well put together film, emphasising Adolf Hitler's crumbling mindset and physical health. The figures of Goebbels and other generals are generally faithful to their roles.

Despite its praise for its historical accuracy, there are some minor inaccuracies. While Hitler did have some rants, many felt that the level of shouting was “Americanised” for general effect, with many accounts from survivors claiming that the bunker was quieter than what would be expected.

Although the character of 12-year-old Peter Kranz is fictional, he is based on the 12-year-old Alfred Czech, who saved dozens of soldiers from a Russian attack on his home village, Goldenau, in modern day Poland.



I believe that Downfall is a must-watch for any history-buff, with it being very informative and interesting to watch. It has a perfect balance between meaningful, yet powerful scenes from inside the claustrophobic bunker, and battle scenes from the fighting in Berlin's city centre.

VIDEO GAME REVIEWS

SHALL WE
PLAY A
GAME?

ARC RAIDERS: EVERYTHING WE KNOW ABOUT EMBARK STUDIOS' PROMISING NEW CO-OP SHOOTER

By Rob Lawson

Imagine dropping into a lush, overgrown world where machines hunt you

down. You grab your gear, link up with friends, and fight back. That's the pull of *Arc Raiders*, the fresh co-op shooter from Embark Studios. These devs come from DICE, the team behind Battlefield hits. They bring their skills to this game. It mixes team-based action with smart survival twists. In a spot where solo shooters rule, *Arc Raiders* shines by focusing on group play against robotic foes. The world has gone wild after humans fell. Nature takes over old cities. Robots, called ARC, roam and attack. You play as a raider, a survivor who raid for supplies. This setup promises tense battles and deep teamwork. Fans buzz about how it fills a need for co-op fun without solo stress.



Understanding the Core Gameplay Loop of Arc Raiders

The heart of *Arc Raiders* beats in its raid missions. You and your squad head out to scavenge resources from dangerous zones. Robots swarm as you grab loot and fight to escape. Devs stress that every run feels fresh due to random events and enemy waves. This loop keeps you coming back for more gear and better runs.

Third-Person Combat Mechanics and Weaponry

Combat in *Arc Raiders* feels tight and responsive. You aim from over the shoulder, dodging bullets while firing back. Guns range from rifles to shotguns, each with mods for punch. Teamwork matters most against big bots. One player distracts while others flank. You switch weapons on the fly to match the threat. Devs say balance comes from ammo limits, forcing smart shots.

Progression Systems and Loot Acquisition

You grow stronger over time in *Arc Raiders*. Loot from raids upgrades your kit. Find parts to craft better armour or guns. Characters level up skills like aim speed or health. Squads share resources back at base. This setup rewards risky runs with big payoffs. Devs aim for fair play—no pay-to-win junk. Long sessions build your loadout just right. Expect hours of tweaking to fit your style.



The Threat: Designing the Relentless AI Opponents

Robots in *Arc Raiders* don't mess around. They adapt to your moves, pushing squads to think fast. Design draws

from real machines but with scary twists. Swarms overwhelm if you split up. Heavier units tank hits and charge. Devs built AI to feel alive, not scripted. This keeps battles tense and fair.

Vulnerability Points and Strategic Takedowns

Hit weak spots to drop foes fast. Legs on walkers buckle under fire, tripping them. Cores glow on tanks—aim there for big damage. Use the world too; lure bots into traps like unstable bridges. Co-op shines here—one spots, another shoots. Devs tease patterns you learn over time. Master this, and tough fights feel winnable.



The Narrative Role of the Raiders

Why do these machines rage? The story hints at a human-made disaster that sparked their war. You, as Arc Raiders, uncover clues during missions. Logs and audio paint a tale of lost tech gone wrong. Your role? Push back to reclaim the land. This lore ties raids to a bigger picture. It adds weight to every shot fired.

The World of Arc Raiders: Setting and Atmosphere

Arc Raiders paints a world that's half ruin, half rebirth. Cities crumble under green vines. Sun filters through leaves on rusted towers. This post-fall vibe mixes hope with dread. Sound design amps it—wind howls, bots whir. It pulls you in deep.

Exploring the Scandinavian-Inspired Landscape

Devs nod to Nordic roots in the look. Fjords twist with forests, old factories hide in hills. Snow caps peaks, but summers bloom wild. Tech relics dot the scene, like crashed ships. Nature rules now, swallowing human marks. This blend feels real and fresh.

Dynamic Weather and Day/Night Cycles

Weather shifts change everything. Rain slicks paths, making slips deadly. Night drops light, so bots glow to spot them. Dawn raids favor stealth; noon means open fights. Cycles tie to enemy spawns—more at dusk. You adapt or die. It keeps runs varied.



Conclusion: Arc Raiders' Potential Impact on the Genre

Arc Raiders stands out with its team-first raids and smart world use. Enemy bots feel tough yet fair. The overgrown setting hooks you visually. Embark Studios nails co-op without solo crutches. It could shake up shooters by blending action and strategy. Watch for launch— it might set a new bar.

CUTE, CREEPY, AND COMPLETELY
UNFORGETTABLE, ENTER THE DARK WORLD OF
LITTLE NIGHTMARES 1

By Arthur Wood



Little nightmares 1 is a unique horror experience with a mix of platforming and puzzle solving and creates an amazing atmosphere with plenty of tension spanning every level. You guide a small, hungry girl named Six through a mysterious vessel called the Maw to escape monstrous, twisted inhabitants that stop at nothing to try and kill you.

Little Nightmares 1 was released on the 28th of April 2017, the company Tarsier Studios worked on the first and then the second game due to the huge success of the first game and Bandai Namco published both games. Tarsier studios stopped working on the Little Nightmares franchise due to them being acquired by the

Embracer group in 2019 and their contract to work on the game ended in 2021. The publisher Bandai Namco still owns the little nightmares IP and now supermassive games works on the little nightmares franchise, Releasing the third game on October 10th, 2025.

One of the most memorable levels in the entire game is the kitchen, encountered early in the game and is infamous for its stressful gameplay dynamic, intense imagery, fresh puzzles and game mechanics that are on another level to those found earlier in the game. Despite being so early in the game, it is considered to be one of the hardest levels and instantly recognisable. The level has even been recreated inside of Little Big Planet 3, another popular game around the same time.

Tarsier studios had a special connection with the game and when their contract ended in 2021. Many fans were left disappointed; they had breathed so much creativity and passion into the first and second games that fans were less than thrilled at the announcement of Supermassive games working on little nightmares 3. little nightmares 1 is the best of the franchise in many fans opinion and has a deeper meaning than many casual players would expect.



In my opinion I think little nightmares 1 was one of the best indie horror games of all time. It tells such a gripping story without the characters even speaking, the unique art style has shaped the game into such a recognisable piece of media. Many other games have tried to channel some of that creativity into their games, like Reanimal that follows a small boy trying to save his friends whilst trying to avoid freakish twisted monsters. It has been such an inspirational game for the entire horror gaming genre.





It cannot have missed your attention that the countdown to Christmas 2025 is almost over. With this in mind the students and staff of Wadham have taken on the task of testing out various items which could be worth getting if your searching for that elusive gift or stocking filler.

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

Academic Planner from Pepper and Cute

Reviewed by Jessica Henly

I took away the pepper and cute to do or not to do. After a week of using this diary I can report that it is very good. The pages are all high quality as well as all the stickers that are included into the diary. As a year 11 student I found the deadline tracker on the first page particularly useful for tracking the revision tasks that I need to get done. I use the ruler/stencil it came with as a page bookmark; it is good for this as it just clips into the wire binding of the diary.

The dividers that tell you what is in each section of the panner/diary are very useful as it allows me to of the dairy. I like the 'I have my money under because it allows me to track what I am spending money on and make sure I'm not over buying things that I don't need. I also like all the verity of stickers it offers, they are all really cute and high quality. Looking on the pepper and cute website, I am very impressed with the verity of stationery products and diaries.

Overall in my opinion I would say that this I a vey high quality and good dairy and I would probably purchase this with my own money, if It was release again for 2026.

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



see what is in each bit control section'

Pens and pads from Kawaii Stationery UK

Reviewed by Jessica Henly

The first thing that I will review is the normal pencil that was in the pack, the pencil was a triangular shape that has a pink plastic coating on it. This shape makes the pencil very easy to hold. The lead of the pencil writes on a page very smoothly. The actual pattern on the outside is unicorns that may be suited for a younger age range, other than that I rate it 7/10



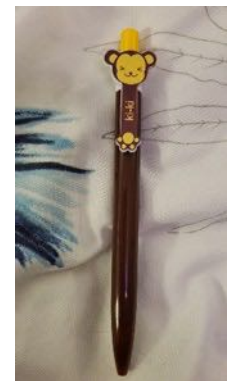
The second thing that I received in the pack was a green pen that has a removable koala on it. The design of this pen is cute, the koala on the top of the pen makes the pen have a bit more weight on it compared to a normal pen. The lid is still able to go on the top of the pen. The ink flows in the pen nicely I like how it is a black inked pen. 8/10

The third thing I received in the pack was a mechanical pencil. The pattern on this is cute and intricate. The blue pants brings it all together, combined with the bows at the top and the flannel design all over. It is easy to use however when you put it back in it is a bit tricky to get back into the pen. As the lead is 0.5mm thick it is very easy to snap it if you press too hard onto the lead. 6/10



The fourth thing I received in the pack was a pen with an animal/figure on the top. This pen is black inked and writes very smoothly. The nib is a 0.35mm so quite fine, but personally I really like a fine nib on a pen so it's perfect. The charm/figure/animal on the top of the pen is perfect to fiddle with, and it makes little to no noise. 8/10

The fifth thing that I received in the pack was a monkey bird pen. This is a blue inked biro. Personally, I usually like to write with a liquid ink pen over a biro. However this pen is the perfect biro as the nib of it is really thin as well. This pen is good as the ink in it doesn't get all clumped up. 7/10



The sixth thing that I received in this pack was a four-leafed clover pen. This is a blue inked pen it is a 0.38mm nib pen. The shape and weight is the same throughout the whole pen. It has a very nice feel when writing. The ink is a little bit streaky when writing but other than that I love it. 7.5/10

The seventh thing that I got in the pack was a pig rubber. The rubber has a lovely feel to it. It rubs pencil out with ease without having to press extremely hard. 9/10



The eighth thing that I received in the pack was a note pad. The purple bunny design on the outside is a cartoon. The paper is a perfect thickness. The lines inside the notepad are a bit thick. This allows you to have a clear differentiation between the things that you are writing. 7.5/10



The ninth thing that I received in the pack was some koala sticky notes. The different sizes make them extra cute. The little ones are perfect for making a note



on a page or a book. The bigger ones are better for making a note. The adhesive between the notes is strong, it dose peel easily form one another however the sticky notes don't stick especially well to other surfaces. 6/10

The final thing that I received form the pack was a cute sticky notes. The adhesive on the is not existent they just ripped away from one another. So in order to remove them from one another you had to do it very slowly. However this may have been a user error. The design of them however is so cute the light purple is so perfect 5/10



Kawaii Stationery UK is a family-run business based in Lancashire in the north-west of England. It began with fewer than forty items for sale, working from a dining room table. Now, eleven years later, the business stocks hundreds of products and has built a loyal customer base of regular shoppers, with new customers joining every day.

From the beginning, Kawaii Stationery UK has aimed to provide a welcoming and friendly service, treating customers the way they would like to be treated themselves. Even today, every order still includes a personalised, handwritten thank-you note.

The name comes from the Japanese word kawaii, meaning “cute,” which perfectly reflects the brand. The business is always on the lookout for new items to add to its shop and continues to offer them at affordable prices. Its mission is to bring the joy of writing to as many people as possible—and if its stationery makes customers smile while doing so, then even better.

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



Japanese Themed Stationery from Uki Uki

Reviewed by Poppy Best

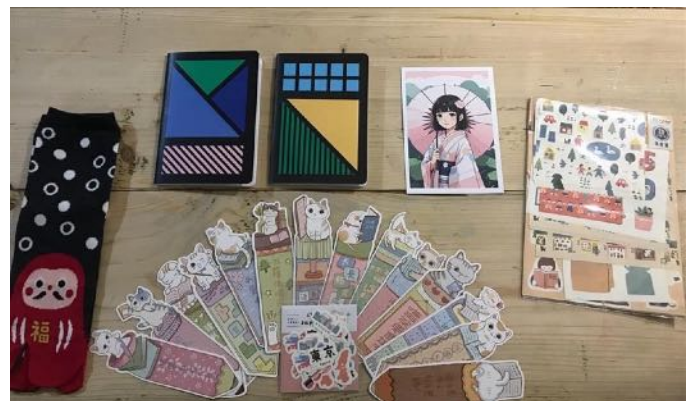
First up were the Japanese slipper socks. I really loved the look of these and was excited to try them on. However, my first thoughts while wearing them were that they felt a bit odd and I didn't really like the feeling. The quality of the material is good, but I don't think they are for me. I also don't wear sandals, so sandal socks aren't something I would use.

Rating: 2/5

Next were the set of 16 cat bookmarks. These are so cute—I absolutely love them. The quality is excellent, and they feel like they will last a long time. They are perfect for all ages; my little sisters love them, and even my parents think they're great. The printing is clear and high quality.

Rating: 5/5

After that came the two shaped notebooks. My first impression was that they looked really good, and once I picked them up, I could feel how strong and high-quality the cover material is. The paper has a nice feel, and when writing in them there is no ink bleed-through or smudging. They're also great for



drawing, although I wouldn't recommend using a Sharpie as it would bleed through.

Rating: 5/5

Finally, there was a pack of cut-out stickers. I love the designs—they're really cute and fun. I can definitely imagine my little sisters enjoying them even more and using them to create pictures. The printing is excellent, and they're perfect for crafts like découpage.

Rating: 5/5

Overall, this is a lovely set of stationery. I would definitely recommend this company to my friends and family. I'd give this group of amazingly cool stationery a solid five stars. 5/5

Reviewed by Olivia Donahue

Uki Uki is a Japanese brand that sent us a lovely selection of stationery items, including two rolls of masking tape, sandal socks, a travel journal, scrapbook materials, and some complimentary stickers. They also included cat-themed bookmarks, which are very cute.

The travel journal is especially useful. It includes sections for planning trips, such as maps, timetables, and checklists for things you might need to take on holiday—for example, your driving licence, cash, clothing, and health items. There are also different categories, including sections for children and camping, which makes it very practical. The journal is lightweight and easy to carry, making it ideal for travelling.



I have used the masking tape in my journals and sketchbooks to add ideas and decoration. One advantage of these items is that they are very easy to use and versatile. However, one small disadvantage is that the masking tape can be a bit hard to tear. Apart from that, everything worked really well.

Overall, the items are high quality, lightweight, and fun to use. The travel journal is A3-sized and very practical, and the masking tape is also lightweight and colourful.

Thank you to Uki Uki for sending us this package.

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

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

Bonsai Tree Model

Reviewed by Ewelina Hartnell

This I chose this set because I always loved Lego, especially the Botanical range, which combines creativity with nature-inspired design. The Chan Bonsai Tree stood out to me because of its shape and the opportunity to build something that looks both artistic and realistic.

The build wasn't particularly difficult overall, but it did require patience and creativity. The branches were the trickiest part – there was an awkward empty space on the trunk, yet no obvious place to attach one of the spare branches. This made me double-check the instruction several times to make sure nothing had been missed.

The instructions could have been clearer and the shades of green – regular green and deep green – were sometimes hard to tell apart, especially when printed on the instruction booklet. A few steps were also a bit confusing, as the diagrams didn't always make it obvious where the smaller pieces should connect.

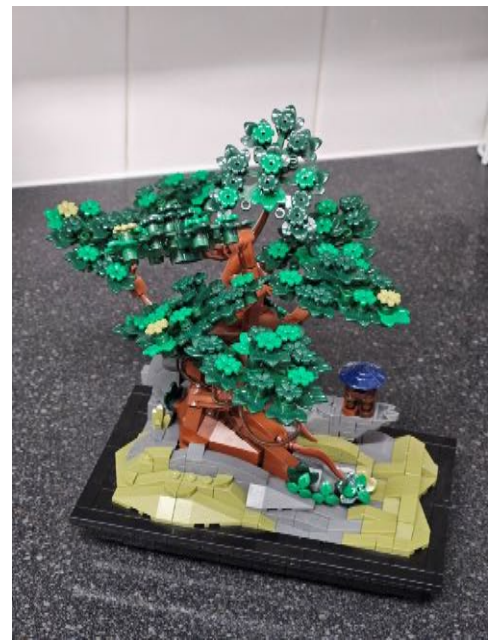
The set uses some really clever techniques to create the natural, twisted tree trunk. The leaf clusters also use small parts in interesting ways to create texture and depth.

The final model looks excellent. The tree has a strong, sculptural shape, and the foliage is full and vibrant. It manages to capture the decorative style of a real bonsai tree.

The branches are adjustable, allowing you to shape the tree to your liking. This adds a nice personal touch and makes the model feel more interactive.

This set doesn't include minifigures, which is normal for the Botanical Collection.

As a display piece, it works brilliantly. It's stable, well-balanced and looks great from multiple angles. The rocky base gives it a finished, polished look.



<u>Pros:</u>	<u>Cons:</u>
High-quality pieces and sturdy construction	Instructions could be clearer
Beautiful final design with realistic details	Some colours in the booklet are hard to tell apart
Enjoyable and relaxing build	A couple of steps would benefit from zoomed-in images
Excellent display piece	

I would definitely recommend this set to Lego fans, especially those who enjoy decorative builds of the Botanical Collection. It's a great choice for builders who like creative, natural-themed models.

Rating: 9/10

A lovely set with only a few instruction-related frustrations.

Geology Rock Formations from Nifeliz**Reviewed by Oscar Dart**

This build is an impressive display of creativity and technique. It features a stunning purple crystal cluster mounted on a transparent, tech-inspired base. The use of translucent purple elements catches the light beautifully, giving the model a vibrant and almost magical glow. Each crystal spike is carefully arranged, creating a formation that feels both natural and geometric, mimicking real mineral growth.

The base complements the crystal cluster with subtle details using transparent and printed elements, suggesting a scientific or futuristic setting—as if the crystal is part of a lab experiment or a sci-fi power source. The contrast between the base and the sharp crystal shapes adds depth, making the build feel grounded yet imaginative. This piece demonstrates excellent use of materials, a strong sense of design, and a clear theme. Whether it represents a sci-fi energy core, a magical artifact, or simply an artistic sculpture, it is both eye-catching and thoughtfully constructed.

Rating: 9/10, A beautiful and clever creation that merges science fiction aesthetics with natural inspiration.

**Reviewed by Sam Canner**

I recently reviewed a crystal-building set for The Quill. Some small pieces were missing since it was an opened set, but I still managed to build a pretty cool crystal—though it didn't look exactly like the original picture. I really liked how clear the red pieces are.

Highlights:

- ◆ Great colours
- ◆ Good detail and shape curves
- ◆ Building it was relaxing



If you enjoy creative building sets, this is a fun one to try! build is an impressive display of creativity and technique. It features a stunning

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

Reviewed by Abigail Key

I think building it was quite difficult for Quartz. I found it very confusing to start with but once you sort of got used to the instructions lay out the way they were I think I found it a Lot easier which was really good and exactly the same with the other. I found it quite hard actually this one I found a lot harder because there were a lot more steps to do but it was very interesting to build, it did go wrong so I did have to start over the But it it was very fun and amusing.



Blue Brixx Balody Review – Toco Toucan

Reviewed by Poppy Spurway



I recently tried the Blue Brixx Balody Toco Toucan set because of its bright, quirky design and the unique transparent dome case. The set costs around £10 and is available on the Blue Brixx website.

The set uses tiny “diamond” bricks, which are like nano-sized building pieces. When I opened the bags, the pieces weren’t very organised, so it took a while to sort them.

I also discovered that some extra tools—like tweezers for picking up the bricks and a hook for removing them—were really helpful, but these weren’t included.

The instructions were picture-based and not very detailed, which made building tricky, especially given the tiny size of the bricks. It wasn’t always clear where pieces should go. Despite this, I enjoyed the challenge, and the build took about five hours, making it a rewarding experience.



The finished Toco Toucan looks fantastic! The realistic colours, shape, and level of detail really stand out, and the display case protects it nicely. However, it’s not really a set for young children—even though the box says 6+, I wouldn’t recommend it for anyone under 10. The completed model is a little wobbly, so it’s more for display than play.

Pros:

- ◆ Affordable price
- ◆ Very detailed and vibrant finished product
- ◆ Good entertainment value – takes time and focus to build
- ◆ Unique, quirky design

Cons:

- ◆ Poor instructions – hard to follow
- ◆ Fiddly pieces – tools not included
- ◆ Packaging not recyclable
- ◆ Age rating too low

Overall: If you want a challenging set that will fill an afternoon and give you a sense of accomplishment, this is good value. Blue Brixx offers a wide selection of themes and prices on their website. I give the Toco Toucan set 3/5 stars because of the poor instructions and packaging, but the finished model looks amazing.




Stargate SG1 Portal**Reviewed by Logan Fowler**

The portal looks realistic with a complex design on the opaque blue portal pieces. This fixed onto with ease to the intricate portal frame with a shiny silver walkway. All pieces were easy to put together and compatible with other branded brick companies.

The main strength I feel is that the portal and sign is printed straight onto the plastic bricks rather than other companies making it on stickers that you must peel and stick on.

On a negative the instructions weren't that clear. This was because it came with an extra piece that made it confusing to build the portal frame.

The set I feel is good value for money due to the low price and detail printed on the bricks.

For conclusion although the instruction were a little confusing in hasn't taken away from how cool the set is, and it will look great as a bit of decoration in my room.

Snoopy Popcorn Stall**Reviewed by Peter Hopwood**

I chose the Blue Brixx Snoopy Popcorn Stall and I have to say, it was a lot of fun to put together! I chose it because my daughter loves Snoopy and the Peanuts characters, and the popcorn stall looked really cute.

When I opened the box, there were a ton of tiny pieces. Some were a bit fiddly, so I had to be patient. The instructions are just pictures, which made some steps tricky, but it was kind of like a puzzle trying to figure out where each piece went. Building it took a couple of hours, and I enjoyed seeing it slowly come together. The finished stall looks so bright and cheerful, with fun details like a little popcorn bucket and signs. Snoopy sitting on top is the perfect finishing touch. It's not really for playing rough with, but it looks awesome on a desk or shelf.

What I liked:

- ◆ Super cute and colourful design
- ◆ Fun to build, like a mini challenge
- ◆ The finished stall looks amazing
- ◆ Snoopy on top is adorable

Not so great:

- ◆ Some pieces are tiny and fiddly
- ◆ Instructions aren't super clear
- ◆ Definitely better for older kids or teens

Overall:

I really enjoyed the Snoopy Popcorn Stall—it's a fun, colourful build that's satisfying to finish. I'd give it 4/5 stars, and I'd recommend it if you like cute builds and mini challenges!



Wartime Brick Bunkers**Reviewed by Evan Pearce**

The Bluebrixx small bunker and Einmann bunker are great sets. Rivals to even the biggest brands such as lego. They're based on the German bunkers from the second world war. I've always been interested in the second world war and as a lego fan myself, I love to get my hands on to anything that crosses those two paths and these two sets are just that. Also, the Bluebrixx website sells sets for cheaper prices than other brands so all of these factors led to my choice.



The building experience itself is just as you would expect. There's no special building technique but it isn't repetitive either. Just the pure joy of clicking plastic bricks together. There were no stickers either so you can't really mess up anything on the set. You can only access the instructions online but all it takes is just scanning the QR code on the side of the box and there you go, you can build the set from the online instructions. The final models look amazing as well. They feature plant life, interiors, working doorways, the whole lot. They're very stable as they sit on base plates and the interiors just really make the play ability so much better, while the plant life makes it look more alive and lived in like the real life bunkers once were. Unfortunately, there are no mini figures in both the sets but that's a fair tradeoff for the price of both of them together for less than 20 euros. As of now I like to display them next to my Cobi tanks and they fit right in.

The pros most certainly outweigh the cons so I'll start with the cons. The Einmann bunker set unfortunately has some unstable connections and you can't access the instructions via QR code; it has to be through the website directly. Everything else I have to say are all pros such as the price, looks, quality, anything you can think of. I think these sets make great editions to my collection and I would highly recommend them to any history lovers out there.

Overall I would give the EinMann bunker a 7/10 and the small bunker a 10/10. I can't find any problems with the small bunker and the only drawbacks of the EinMann bunker is that some connections are unstable. Regarding all these factors, I love this sets.

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 AFOBs), 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/>



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Brick Building Courtesy of Jadlam

By Emily Harwood

CaDA Elements Paper and Brick Set 'Flower Garden'. I chose this set because it looked pretty and I thought it would be easy. The build took me 3 to 4 lessons to make, and it turned out to be quite hard to build.

My favourite part to build was the butterflies and flowers. I found the model challenging, but I had some help from the TAs, I stuck with it, and I got there in the end. Now that it is finished, I really like the way it looks. Especially the flowers, bee and butterflies. The colours are really bright.

I found that all of the pieces fitted together well, except the part that joins the garden sign, as it has come off a few times. Other than that, no pieces were missing or broken. Overall, I really like the model set and would give it 5 out of 5. I love the butterfly and I am pleased I get to take the it home.



Lego Star Wars Set (75412) Death Trooper and Night Trooper Battle

by Toren Radford-Hyland

I chose this set to build and review because it is Star Wars themed and includes both an Imperial Dropship and



four minifigures with weapons. The set was very easy to build as it is aimed at children aged 6 and above. It took only around 10-15 minutes to build. The instructions were very easy to use, and it was a straightforward build. There were no stickers to add which I like because they can be tedious.

The upper part of the ship uses a ball and joint piece connection which it is often used in Lego sets, however the end of this ball and joint connects to an unusual building technique – it slots into two small holes. The set includes two Night Trooper and two Death Troopers which all contain front, leg and back printing alongside four boosters for them to hold. I like the fact that the Night Troopers are not identical as they have different helmets and different torso prints. Although the Death Troopers are identical, I like the addition of metallic gold repairs and dark red bandages on their bodies. The zombie-like faces underneath their helmets are another fun element of the set. The finished model has a strong, thoughtful design and it is quite fun to look at with the minifigures attached to the sides and front.

I think the best feature of the set is the two side blasters which shoot out studs (a small rounded Lego piece) when you press down on small lever on the side of the ship. This firing mechanism is actually an updated version of the original stud shooters. This set would be an ideal small present for a Star Wars loving fan who could use it to complement their other Lego sets. Overall, I would give this set 7 out of 10 as it is easy to construct and has a few fun features.

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



Jack and the Bean Stalk Model Review**By Jessie, Robin and Jay Vowles**

Model to Review: 'FUNWHOLE' Jack and the Beanstalk – Fantasy Series – set F9002.

I chose the Jack and the Beanstalk model for my children to build because I liked the fantasy/fairy tale theme and I knew my boys would love the light up element of the kit. FUNWHOLE are dedicated to the lighting bricks products, combining bricks and light, allowing the lights to 'shine through your bricks and bring your night bricks to life' (FUNWHOLE).

I gave the set to my two sons, Jay aged 7 and Robin aged 9. Even though the kit has a recommended age of 12+ both boys are confident model builders who like a challenge. In total the kit took them 3-4 days to build, with Jay starting the kit, Robin doing the middle section and then Jay taking over again towards the end of the build to complete it. They said they found the kit engaging throughout and enjoyed making it.

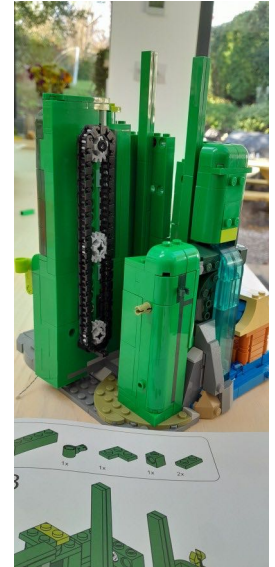
We had 2 problems during the build. Firstly, there seemed to be a small stage of the instructions missing, meaning that the base where the castle sat at the top of the bean stalk was not level. Jay found this frustrating. But when we worked back through all the previous steps, he had completed everything correctly, and it was in fact the instructions that seemed to miss a step. We were able to use some of our other bricks at home to level out the base and thankfully, it did not affect the rest of the build.

The second problem was that one of the tiny wires that connect the lights came out of its fitting, so the middle section of lights do not light up. However, we think we will be able to reinsert the wire and hopefully get those lights on again.

However, on the whole both boys loved making the model, in particular, the moving parts. Robin said "I like that there are mechanical bits inside, which make it look like Jack is climbing the bean stalk". And Jay's said his favourite part of the build was "adding the details at the end like the lady birds, butterflies and flowers".

Robin and Jay both really like the finished product, especially the way the castle at the top of the bean stalk lights up and the final details. As FUNWHOLE suggest, the model looks really great in the daylight, but also looks magical when it gets dark and the model lights up.

Overall, the boys would give the model kit 9/10 and say they would recommend it to a friend.



Flower shop by AFBrick**By Charlotte Brennan**

This brick set had 1593 pieces, and I'd say a medium difficulty level. It took me a few hours to complete and had a few fiddly bits that did take some time, but it was a very enjoyable build.

The instructions were very clear and easy to follow and there were only a couple of stickers to place. The decorations were made with real pieces, which helped the finished product look high quality.

I enjoyed building the flowers on this set, they were intricate and look like real flowers and are nice and bright. The lighting system was easy to install and adds a beautiful warm, glow when switched on.

The finished flower shop looks stunning. The white walls, glass roof and colourful flowers make it look like a sort of greenhouse shop. When the lights are turned on, it gives the model a cozy, inviting look especially in the evening. You can open this lovely set in the middle and see all the beautiful details inside as well.

I highly rate this set and give it a 10/10. Enjoyable to build, lovely to display, realistic. AMAZING!!!



Barweer was founded in 2016 with a simple mission: to let people around the world enjoy the joy of building. As a distributor and promoter of creative brick culture, Barweer represents and showcases more than 80 Chinese building block brands to global audiences. This allows builders worldwide to discover a broader range of styles and themes, and to experience a fresh alternative to the traditional LEGO system.

In 2025, Barweer entered a new stage by launching its own original product line, developed through licensed collaborations with renowned creators such as 2bricks, SugarBricks, yangyang, and ahri.bricks. Current products include the BWR002 Corner Garage (Apocalypse Version) and BWR005 Spooky Manor Building, with more themed collections currently in development.

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to Mr. Peter Hopwood and the school for allowing us to be part of this project. We hope these building sets bring enjoyment, inspiration, and creativity to the students who review them, as well as to the readers of 'The Quill'.

Our connection began through building blocks—bridging two continents with a shared passion. May this enthusiasm continue to inspire us as we grow together. For more details go to <https://www.barweer.com/>



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

Miyoo Mini Plus – Handheld Gaming Fun!

Reviewed by Jacob Prouse

Today I'm reviewing the Miyoo Mini Plus, a



compact handheld gaming device that packs a lot of power into a small package. It comes with hundreds of games, ranging from Game Boy Color classics all the way to PS2 favourites.

The screen is large and clear, which really improves the gaming experience, making everything look sharp and colourful. Some of my favourite games to play on it are Gran Turismo 2 and Colin McRae Rally—they're super fun and feel just like the originals.



However, the console isn't perfect. Some of the buttons can be unreliable, which makes a few games tricky or even impossible to play. Also, not all games are fully compatible with the device.

SCAN ME



Overall, the Miyoo Mini Plus is a solid handheld console that's perfect for gaming on the go. It has tons of games, a great screen, and is really fun to use. I'd give it 4 out of 5 stars!

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

Trimui Smart Pro Handheld Console by LITNXT

Reviewed by Nye Edgar

The LITNXT handheld console is a really solid gaming device. The buttons are responsive, and the screen is high quality, making games look great. It comes with lots of games from different consoles like Nintendo and PlayStation, so there's something for everyone.



It also includes handy attachments like a grip extension, a stand, and a charging dock. They all feel sturdy and work exactly as they should, so you don't have to worry about them breaking.



Most games run perfectly, but a few don't because they were originally designed for different consoles. This can make some controls confusing since the buttons are in different places, and there aren't any instructions to help. Luckily, once you get used to it, it's not a big problem and doesn't affect gameplay too much.



Overall, the LITNXT is a reliable and fun handheld console. It's well-built, has tons of games, and is easy to enjoy. I'd give it 4 out of 5 stars!

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



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

Jersey from Dyenamik - Shoryuken!!

Reviewed by Lee Baker

90's Vintage Nostalgia *at its best*. When I Fighter II CAPCOM branded T-Shirt that thought was "I hope it does the game justice". Street Fighter II is often regarded as one of the greatest video games ever made, it was one of the most sold games of the 90's, 2000's and even into 2017 it remained in the top 3 highest grossing video game titles ever made! So this T-shirt needs to be good...



heard there was a Street needed reviewing, my initial

When I received it, I was more than pleasantly surprised, I was amazed! The printing is very high quality, with all the characters faithfully portrayed in a grayscale version of their original 16-bit graphical glory, performing their iconic special moves. Blanka is there surrounded by an electrical aura, Chun-Li is executing the Lightning Kick and Guile is mid "Sonic Boom", to name but a few. The CAPCOM logo is strongly printed, in the iconic font, across the front and the "Street Fighter" logo is printed in high quality, full colour vinyl on the top left of the chest.

The predominant colouring is black and white, but the sides have a subtle orange to red fade, a nod to the colour fade from the Street Fighter logo itself. There's a gold "CAPCOM Official Collection" logo tucked neatly on the lower left hand side, affirming the authenticity of the garment and its imagery. A lot of thought has gone into the design of this t-shirt, as is befitting for such an icon. Suffice to say, it *looks* fantastic, almost a piece of art, and would not look out of place mounted in a frame and hung on the wall of a 90's video game collectors hall of fame room.

Being made of 100% polyester, it's very soft and comfortable to wear and the fit is excellent. I would usually wear a medium, and this fits true to size, snugly around the shoulders and neck line, not too loose around the arms, and with enough fabric about the body to keep it comfortable and not baggy or clingy. It's a good length, allowing it to hang nicely when untucked. The neck is a V-Neck style with a collar, giving it a "smart casual" feel.

If you rocked up at PowerCon, DragonCon or ComicCon in this, you'd be well dressed for the occasion. With that said, this item should be worn rarely and kept for very special occasions. There are several washing warnings on the label, such as "wash at 30, do not use conditioner, wash separately" that suggest it might not survive well if being used as an everyday item, but then, this is no *everyday item*.



There are a couple of minor manufacturing defects, a few hanging threads here and there on the seams for example, but nothing that detracts from its overall high quality and presentation.

What a brilliant piece of nostalgic memorabilia, commemorating a game that defined an entire genre for the next 3 decades! Dyenamik have definitely done the game justice with this 5 star garment, visit <https://www.dyenamik.com/> to buy yours now, and while you're there, check out the other collections available, like The Witcher, Tekken and CyberPunk 2077.

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

Beauty products from Woman Kynd

**Reviewed by
Bryonee Carling**



Woman Kynd foaming bath salts- Cherry&Vanilla: This product is very useful in the category of relaxing muscles in the bath. This product has a strong scent of cherry and smells almost like a cherry Bakewell. This product is a peachy/pink colour and also stains the water in the bath a pink colour but does not stain the bath which I found pretty good. Overall I found this product very useful and I loved using this in the bath. The scent was my favourite part as it smells delightfully fresh. I will definitely be using this again.

Woman kynd body spray- Snow angel- This product I have started to use mostly everyday. It doesn't affect the skin and can last about 1 hour every use so you would have to reapply it. The fragrance is very sweet and very strong but it's a nice essence to have in the air. It's a white liquid but comes out to be clear and is also super light. Overall I found this product pretty good to use everyday and has a nice smell and super strong. I would purchase this again.



Reviewed by Nicole Zondo

Simply Strawberry Body Oil is a delightful treat for the skin. The natural strawberry scent is both refreshing and subtly sweet, making it a joy to apply. The oil absorbs quickly, leaving the skin feeling soft, hydrated, and a bit greasy (not too greasy). It's perfect for a sunny day as it adds a touch of summery vibes. I highly do recommend this oil for anyone who loves a natural, fruity fragrance and effective moisturization.

The whipped soap is an absolute delight, from the moment you open the container the nostalgic bubblegum scent takes you back to childhood. The scent lingers gently providing a subtle burst of happiness throughout the day. The texture is incredibly light and fluffy, like a cloud of sweetness in your hands. It lathers beautifully, leaving your skin feeling clean, soft, and moisturized.

Reviewed by Lily Obern

I recently tried the Fluffy Skies Body Butter and overall, it's a pretty nice product. The smell is amazing—refreshing, subtle, and really pleasant. The texture is light and airy, which feels interesting when you apply it. When I put it on my skin, it melted instantly, which is great, but it did leave my skin feeling a bit oily and greasy. It definitely made my skin softer, but the greasiness was a little annoying.



The product looks and smells great, and it's enjoyable to use, but I'm not sure I'd use it regularly—maybe just a personal preference. Overall, I liked it, but it's not perfect for me.

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

Soaps and Bath Bombs from Lush**Reviewed by Annie Best**

Lush's "Honey I Washed the Kids" soap bar is a sweet treat for your skin, offering a rich, comforting, and moisturizing cleanse.

The scent is the star of the show, featuring a blend of honey, toffee, and caramel notes that create a warm, gourmand fragrance. It's like enveloping yourself in a cloud of delicious, sugary goodness, making each wash a delightful experience.



The soap lathers beautifully, creating a creamy foam that gently cleanses without stripping the skin of its natural oils. It contains honey, which is known for its moisturizing and antibacterial properties, leaving your skin feeling soft, hydrated, and refreshed. The scent lingers on the skin long after you've rinsed off, providing a subtle, sweet aroma throughout the day.

Overall, "Honey I Washed the Kids" is a fantastic soap bar for those who love sweet, comforting scents and want a moisturizing cleanse. It's perfect for anyone looking to add a touch of indulgence to their daily routine, turning a simple task into a luxurious treat.

The soap is gentle, effective, and leaves your skin feeling loved and cared for.

Lush's Ghost Bath Bomb is designed to offer a spooky and refreshing bathing experience. As it dissolves, it fills your bath with a crisp, clean scent, blending citrusy notes with a hint of floral sweetness. The aroma is invigorating and uplifting, making it a great choice for a morning bath or when you need an energy boost.



The bath bomb creates a visually appealing display, turning the water into a vibrant, ghostly white with a touch of shimmer. It features skin-softening ingredients that leave your skin feeling smooth and hydrated. The combination of refreshing fragrance and moisturizing effect makes it a delightful treat for your senses and skin.



Overall, the Ghost Bath Bomb is perfect if you enjoy a refreshing and subtly spooky bath. Its invigorating scent and skin-softening properties make it a great way to rejuvenate and add a bit of fun to your bathing routine.



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



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

Candy Giftbox from Candymail UK

Reviewed by Lily Obern

The spongebob gummy burgers i tried out was such a funny experience to do with my friends, you didn't know what to expect and some of the flavours were so nice and intense, others were bitter and not very nice but that's part of the fun you don't know what your going to get. the texture of the gummy was nice, not too chewy and not too soft it was like the perfect texture. I would definitely get these again and would recommend trying these.

Reviewed by Nicole Zondo

Sour Punch Rainbow Straws offer a perfect blend of tangy and sweet flavours with a satisfying chewy texture. Each bite delivers a zesty sour punch balanced by fruity sweetness, making them a fun and flavourful candy to enjoy. Their bright colours and playful shape add to the overall experience.

Honey Buns Strawberry are soft and flavourful with a nice strawberry taste. The bun itself has a light, tender texture that melts in your mouth, while the strawberry icing adds a burst of fruity sweetness without being too overpowering. The honey buns strawberry hit the spot with its nostalgic taste and satisfying chewiness,

Fanta Berry has a lovely berry flavour that's sweet and refreshing without being too overpowering. The fizz is gentle, so it's no overly bubbly, making it smooth and easy to enjoy. It's a great choice if you want a fruity soda that's tasty but not too fizzy.

Haribo Berries are a delicious and fun treat combining a chewy, crunchy texture with a sweet and slightly tangy berry flavour. They come in a mix of red and black berry shapes that are both visually appealing and tasty. The berries are perfect for a quick gummy fix, they offer a nice balance of fruity sweetness without being overly sugary. Overall I think the berries are a really nice snack.

Reviewed by Bryonee Carling

Mike and Ike mega mix- This product is in my opinion super good. Bursts with flavour and has a range of different flavours. This product can also be travel size and is suitable to travel with, also super nice to share with friends as there is plenty to go round. Overall this product is super good. Very flavoursome and bright colours. Good to share and travel with and will be purchased again

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



Doing Wadham Proud, Former students changing the world

Interview with former Wadham Student Laura Evans.

1. When were you at Wadham School?

I joined Wadham in Year 9, September of 2015. Completed my GCSEs in 2018 and attended the Sixth Form from 2018-2020.

2. Do you have a favourite memory from school?

During my school years doing the Duke of Edinburgh Expeditions were great fun at times. Camping with my team and stealing some of the chips from Mr Huggett's fish and chips was a particular highlight!

I really enjoyed my time at the Sixth Form, all of my teachers were very supportive, and I had a great circle of friends, we put on a pantomime where we dressed up as all of the teachers (I was Mrs Finch) and lightly took the mickey out of them all, that was great fun!

3. What was your least favourite moment at school?

I really struggled with exams, I was very anxious and didn't particularly excel academically, whereas for all of my friends it came very easily to them. I think comparing myself to them and the exam experience in general was a fairly miserable time. I'm glad I stuck it out and now look back and kick myself at how hard on myself I was.

4. What was your biggest success at School?

My Bronze, Silver and Gold Duke of Edinburgh Awards! These were some of my favourite things I have done and they are still helping me today, they make me a better candidate for jobs and I learned a lot of skills from them. Whilst doing them I learned to play the cornet, partook in ballet and jazz and volunteered teaching primary ballet, hiked across Dartmoor and wild camped on Exmoor.



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

After finishing Sixth Form it was 2020 so we were straight into lockdown. I went to the University of the West of England to study Business Management after getting a great passion for business, taking it at A-level and having the lovely Mrs Finch teaching me. I chose the 4 year course which included doing a year in industry in the third year, finding a job at Boeing (an aerospace company).

I worked as a Business Improvement Specialist which involved finding opportunities to save the company money (my total was \$20,000 that I ended up saving). It was here I was offered a graduate position, so as long as I attained my degree I would have a job there.

This led me to attaining my degree with a 2:1 and joining Boeing Defence as a Programme Management Graduate. I worked to support our P8 aircraft in my first year and I am currently on the RWE team (Rotary Wing Enterprise) helping our management team to keep the Apache and Chinook Helicopter Programmes running.

On a more personal note, my other greatest achievement since leaving Wadham was running the London Marathon this year and raising £2,500 for Marie Curie, a charity that supports families that have loved ones going through palliative care.

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

Comparison is the thief of joy! It is natural to compare yourself to the people around you, but I would have had such a better educational experience had I just focused on myself.

Ask for help! Your teachers want to see you succeed; it is better to ask silly questions than struggle in silence.

Your grades do not define you. Where of course, they are important, the world won't stop spinning if you don't get all 9s. As long as you try your best and work hard, there is no reason to fixate on grades and place your worth on them.





...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

