

A WADHAM SCHOOL STUDENT PUBLICATION

THE QUILL



CHAMPION MINDSET: STORIES FROM THE TOP!

FROM CONTENDER TO CHAMPION & BEYOND

Conversations with boxing
champion Johnny Nelson



POLAND 2027

World Scout
26th Jamboree
Scout Mondial



THE JOURNEY CONTINUES

Raising Funds for
Poland 2027



BREAKING BARRIERS

Conversations with track
legend, Olympic champion
and sporting icon Sally
Gunnell



MASCOT, SOLDIER, LEGEND!

Wojtek - The bear who
fought the Nazis



FROM CLASSROOM TO COMMONS

Wadham visits
Parliament

WAKE THE TIGER

Blow Your Mind!



Plus news, reviews and opinions



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Introduction

As we move through the spring term and look ahead to the busy months beyond, this issue celebrates the ambition, resilience and community spirit that define life at our school.

We are especially proud to feature not one but two remarkable sporting voices. In this edition, you'll find an inspiring interview with former Olympic champion Sally Gunnell, who reflects on the mindset, discipline and determination that shaped her career at the highest level. Alongside this, we also hear from former world boxing champion Johnny Nelson, who shares insights into his journey, the challenges he overcame, and the lessons he believes young people can take from sport.

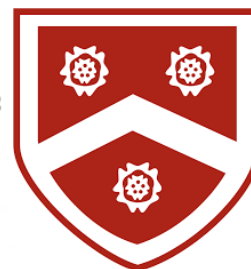
This issue also highlights the ongoing fundraising efforts of students working towards the 2027 Scout Jamboree in Poland. Now in their second year of fundraising, their continued commitment and teamwork demonstrate impressive perseverance and community support.

In addition, we feature reflections on recent school visits to Parliament, where students engaged directly with politics and democracy beyond the classroom. Alongside these highlights, you'll find reviews, opinion pieces and creative writing that showcase the talent, creativity and voice of our students.

Once again, The Quill continues to provide a platform to celebrate achievement, share ideas and report on the events shaping our school community. Thank you to everyone who contributed to making Issue 23 possible.

We hope you enjoy reading — and feel inspired to be part of the next edition.

Peter Hopwood ~ Editor



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SPRINGING INTO ACTION: WADHAM SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS THIS TERM!

STRONGER, SMARTER, FASTER: PHYSIOTHERAPY IN ACTION AT WADHAM

By Daniil Lyszyk and Cara Panter

Did you know Wadham has a Physiotherapy Room?

Wadham is pleased to offer physiotherapy to students who have been assessed by the NHS as benefiting from regular physiotherapy to support their mobility.

Qualified physiotherapists visit the school once each term to work with students. During these sessions, they review the exercises students are completing, ensure they are performing them correctly, and introduce new, appropriately challenging activities to support continued progress.

What is Physiotherapy?

Physiotherapy helps people recover from accidents, illness, or injury, and can also play an important role in preventing future problems. Preventative physiotherapy focuses on teaching correct movement patterns and providing exercises that strengthen muscles and joints.

For children in particular, physiotherapy is vital in supporting healthy physical development. It helps them develop good movement habits, improve flexibility, build strength, and gain confidence in their physical abilities as they grow.

Physiotherapists work across many areas of healthcare, including:

- Sports physiotherapy
- Paediatric physiotherapy
- Wound management
- Orthopaedics
- Cardiopulmonary physiotherapy
- Neurological physiotherapy



Inside Wadham's Physiotherapy Room

Building Strength & Confidence Through Physio!

What is Physiotherapy?

Helps with:

- Injury Recovery
- Improving Mobility
- Preventing Future Problems

Why It's Important for Students:

- Develops Strength & Flexibility
- Builds Good Movement Skills
- Boosts Confidence and Growth

Supervised Sessions Each Term!

In the Physio Room We...

Stretch & Strengthen Muscles

• Core, Hips, Legs & More

Cones, Balls & Balance Games

Throwing, Kicking & Catching

Physiotherapy in Action!

Throw Balls into Hoops

Navigate Obstacle Courses

Pass & Kick the Football



What Happens in the Physio Room?

In our physiotherapy sessions, we focus on stretching and strengthening key muscle groups, including the core muscles of the trunk, hip muscles, quadriceps, calf muscles, and Achilles tendons.

We use a gym mat for a variety of exercises. For example, students may roll across a peanut ball to improve balance and coordination, or practise catching and throwing a ball while kneeling to engage and strengthen their core muscles.

We also use equipment kindly loaned by the PE department. To keep sessions varied and engaging, each piece of equipment is used in multiple ways. Activities may include:

- Throwing rubber balls into hoops
- Walking around cones forwards, backwards, and sideways
- Balancing a ball on a racket
- Passing or kicking a football

COOKING UNDER PRESSURE: MY JOURNEY **IN THE ROTARY YOUNG CHEF** **COMPETITION**

By Ella Priddle

I felt nervous when I first entered the Rotary Young Chef competition. The room was fast-paced, but I knew it was my moment to shine. The competition allows young chefs to present their dishes in a format similar to a cooking show you would see on television.

Rotary **YOUNG**
CHEF **COMPETITION**



During my practice and preparation time, I learned a new skill: how to make fresh pasta from scratch using flour and eggs. I knew I would be challenged on the day of the competition, but I was determined to try my best. Throughout the two-hour competition, I focused on staying calm while creating my dish to the best of my ability. I carefully followed each step, making sure I was precise and stayed within the time limit.

Although I didn't win, I felt proud of myself for participating and achieving something I wouldn't have experienced if I hadn't taken part.

After the competition, my friends and family enjoyed tasting the dish I created.

Participating in the Rotary Young Chef competition has given me the confidence and support I needed to develop my cooking skills. I hope this experience will help me continue my journey toward becoming a future chef.



FROM FLOUR TO FEAST: OUR HOMEMADE PASTA ADVENTURE

By Annabel Lamb

Recently in Food Tech the year 9's have been making pasta from scratch, I found the lesson to be entertaining and enjoyable.

My class, 9RC, is quite small so the lesson was pretty chilled out and easy to get on with. We started by sending two of us to go and get the pan ready to cook the pasta with and the other two to go make the dough.

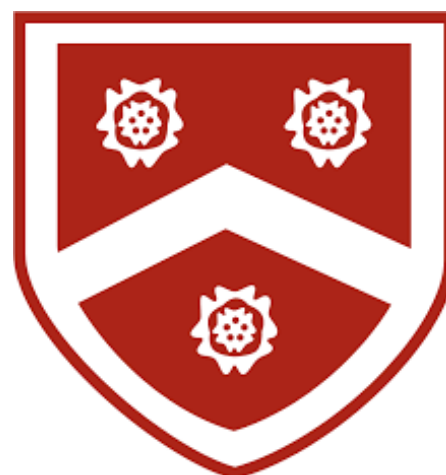
To make the dough we had to create a mountain of flour and form a hole in the middle, we then cracked an egg in the hole and blended it with a fork. After we had formed a dough, we had to knead it together and that really hurt our hands but we pushed through and kneaded it properly.

Once we had our fully formed dough, we finally got to do the part I was looking forward to, the pasta machines. It took all of us to get it through the machine properly and we had to fold it every time we pushed it through the machine.

Finally, it was time to cook the pasta. We dropped it into the pan, and it boiled surprisingly quickly. Meanwhile, Miss Gosney had been heating up some premade tomato sauce (thankfully from ASDA), and I have to say—it was absolutely heavenly.

I've never tasted a better sauce: rich and salty, with just a hint of garlic. Its consistency was perfect—not too runny, not too thick—and it paired beautifully with the pasta.

Honestly, it was the best sauce I have ever tasted.



FROM THE FIELD TO THE FINISH LINE: WADHAM SPORTS ROUNDUP!

FROM COURTS TO FIELDS: WADHAM TRIUMPHS!

By Laura Manning

It has been an exciting and successful period for Wadham students, with impressive performances across badminton, cross country, football, netball and basketball.

KS4 Badminton Success

A huge well done to our KS4 Badminton girls who competed in the County Badminton Tournament on 4th February. The team showcased the skills they have been developing at Badminton Club and played strongly against Castle School and Westfield. A special mention goes to Molly, who delivered an outstanding performance, winning her singles match 21-9. She also teamed up with Bethany to secure another victory, winning 21-19. Fantastic effort from all involved!



Cross Country Achievements

Wadham students also took part in the Yeovil Area Cross Country on 5th December at a very soggy King's Bruton. Despite the challenging conditions, all students performed brilliantly.

Out of 18 runners, an impressive 15 qualified for the District Cross Country by finishing in the top 20 in their age groups. The remaining runners narrowly missed qualification but still achieved top 30 finishes — a fantastic accomplishment.

We congratulate everyone who took part and wish those progressing the very best of luck for the next round in January 2026.



A Hat-Trick of Wins!

We've seen a brilliant evening for Wadham sport with three fantastic team victories: in recent months.

Year 7 Girls Football defeated Millfield 3-2 to secure their place in the County Cup semi-finals.

Year 10 Girls Netball claimed a strong 7-3 win against Buckler's Mead.

Year 9 Boys Basketball delivered a commanding 31-15 victory over Buckler's Mead.



Overall, it has been a hugely successful period for Wadham sport. The determination, teamwork and resilience shown across all year groups is something to be incredibly proud of. Well done to everyone involved — keep up the great work!



FROM WADHAM TO THE WORKPLACE: LEARNING BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

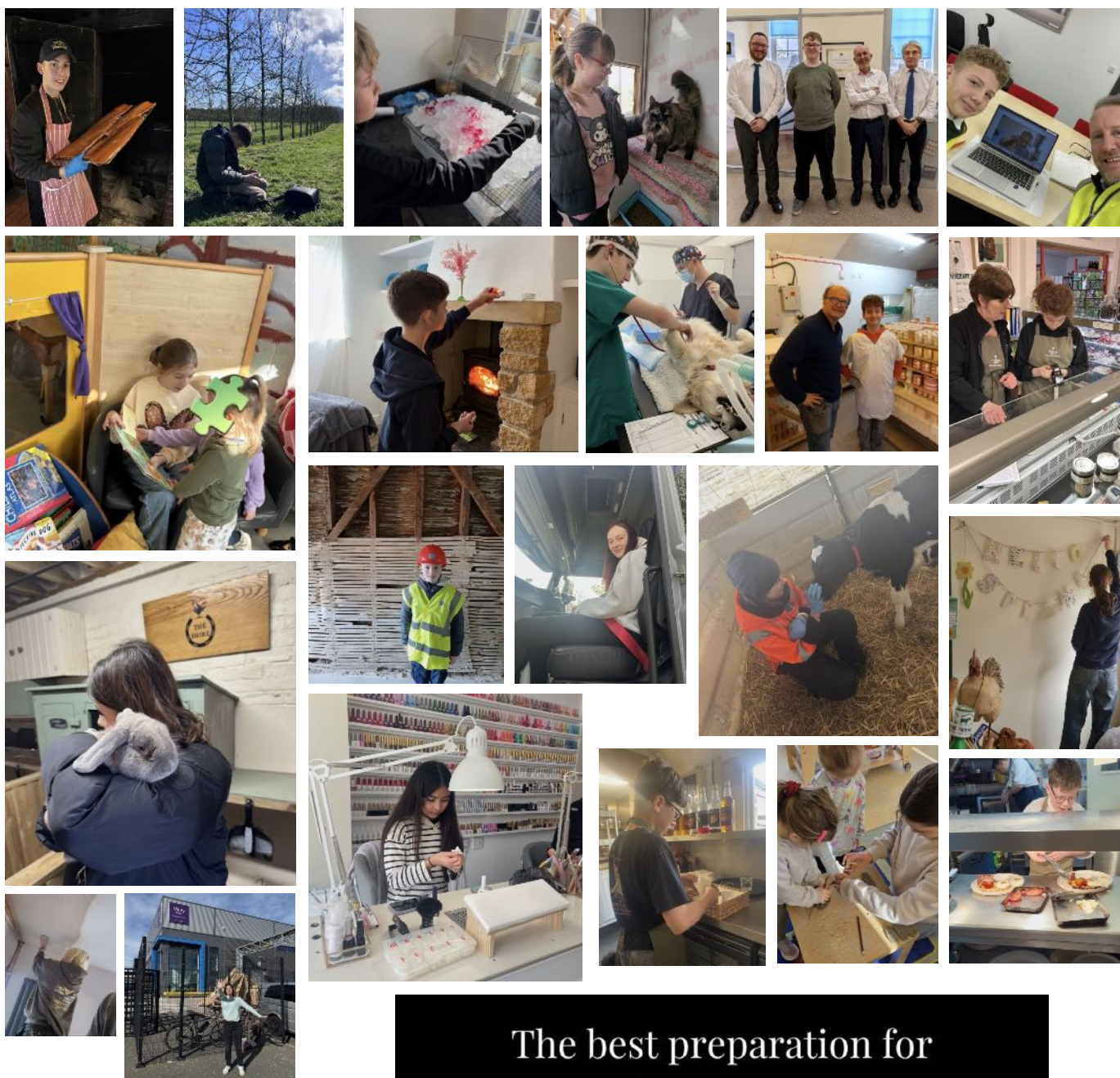


TAKE YOUR CHILD TO WORK DAY 2026

By Laura Andrews

Our take your child to work day on Monday March 2nd saw nearly 400 students experiencing the world of work. Photos are flooding in of all the amazing things they got up to, here is a selection. We had students travel to Leicester, Portland and Bristol, it fabulous to see such a range of placements.

We'd like to thank our parents/carers and their families & friends for organising placements and to all the employers who allowed one of our students into your workplace. #ncw2026



The best preparation for
good work tomorrow is to do
good work today.



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The Books That Made Us: Teachers' Top Reads

WORLD
BOOK
DAY

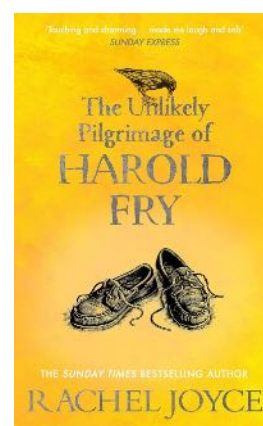
5 MARCH 2026

Every reader has that one book — the story they return to, the characters who feel like old friends, or the pages that first sparked a love of reading. At Wadham School, students and staff alike have been sharing the books that mean the most to them, revealing a wonderfully varied collection of favourites. From gripping thrillers and magical adventures to heartfelt coming-of-age stories and timeless classics, these choices reflect not only different tastes, but different experiences and personalities too.

This article is the first in a series celebrating the favourite books of the Wadham community. In each instalment, members of staff will share the stories that have stayed with them and explain why these books continue to inspire, comfort and captivate them. As you read their recommendations, why not set yourself a challenge? Pick a title you've never tried before and give it a go — you might just discover your next favourite book.

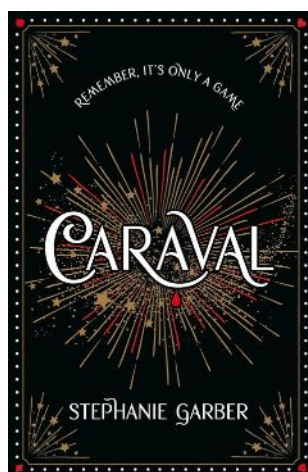
***The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry* by Rachel Joyce - chosen by Mr Jackson**

I love this book because it captures the quiet, often uncomfortable space where regrets turn into reflections. It explores the fragile, beautiful complexity of human connections, how people shape us, break us, and ultimately help us grow. What stays with me most is the way the story portrays change not as a single moment, but as a journey: uncertain, messy, and deeply human. It reminds me that transformation happens in small steps, through the relationships we build and the courage we find to face who we've been and who we might become.



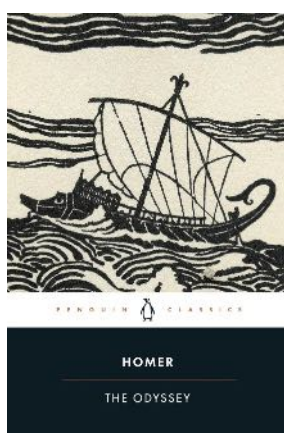
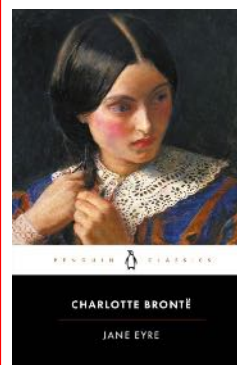
***Caraval* by Stephanie Garber - chosen by Miss Coombs**

I really enjoyed the plot of the book as I found it very engaging and therefore I did not want to put it down.



***Jayne Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte chosen - by Mrs Bailey**

I just love the story of the journey that Jayne goes on from being very badly treated in an orphanage to being a governess to falling in love and then after more tragedy looking after the man she fell in with after he loses his sight. The book is full of tragedy,



***The Odyssey* by Homer - chosen by Mr Phelan**

The Odyssey is a story that is at once incredible and relatable. At its core it is the tale of a man trying to get back to his home after a long voyage, but it takes the form of a truly epic poem. One man has to use his guile and cunning to overcome giants, witches, gigantic sea creatures and the gods themselves to return to his island kingdom where his wife, besieged by a horde of suitors who are literally eating her out of house and home, waits for him.



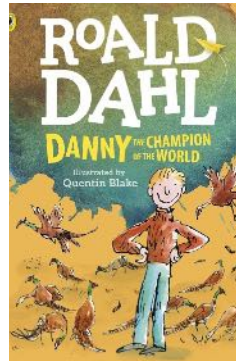
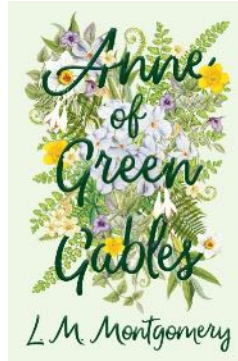


Nancy Drew: The Secret Staircase by Carolyn Keene – chosen by Mrs Church

I loved the mystery whilst reading this book. I love solving problems so this book had me thinking and coming up with the potential answers. I loved the character of Nancy, especially when she does a little bit of law-breaking! The hauntings give this book an eerie feel and makes you just want to keep reading.

Anne of Green Gables by Lucy Maud Montgomery – chosen by Miss Hartnell

It's a wonderful story about red haired girl mistakenly sent to live with older siblings.

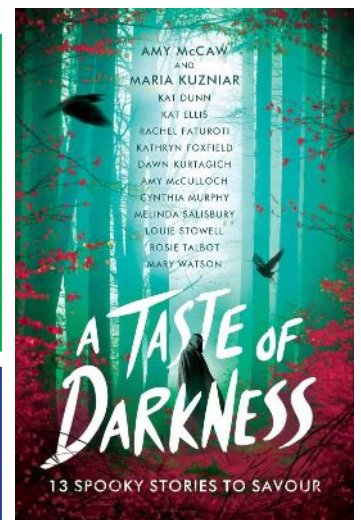


Danny the Champion of the World by Roald Dahl – chosen by Mr Broome

The most beautiful portrayal of a father/son relationship ever put to paper!

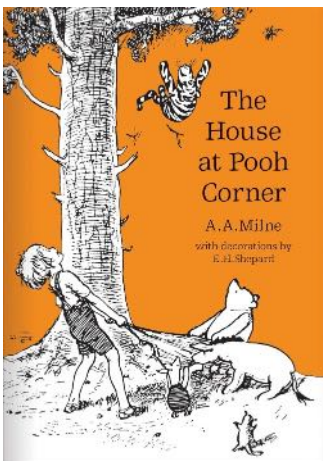
A Taste Of Darkness by Amy McCaw and others – chosen by Miss Taylor

I really liked this book because I like books that keep me guessing. There were quite a few of the stories that had unexpected twists.



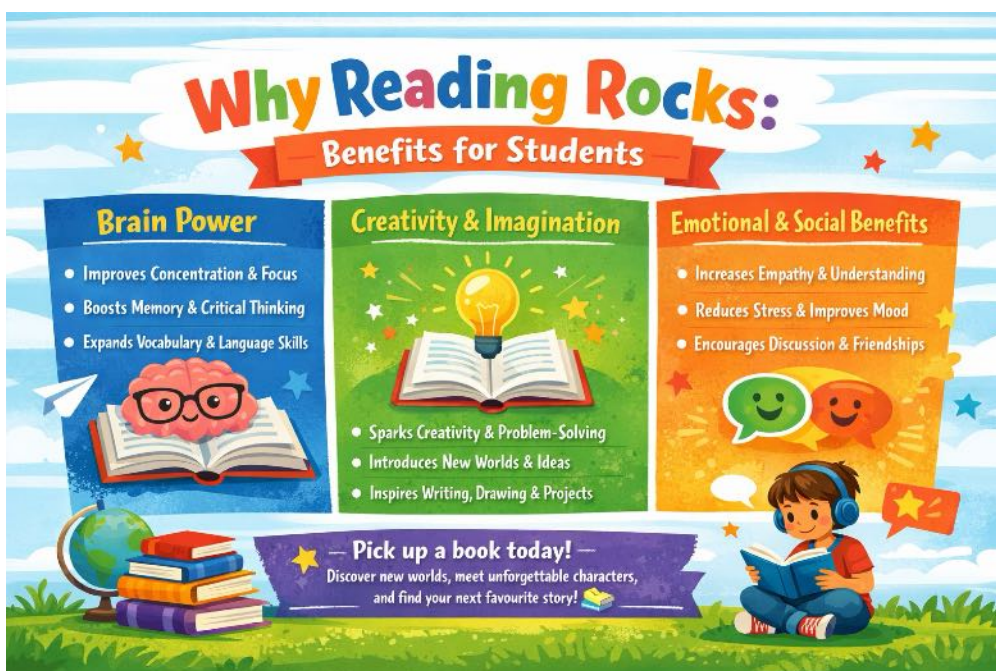
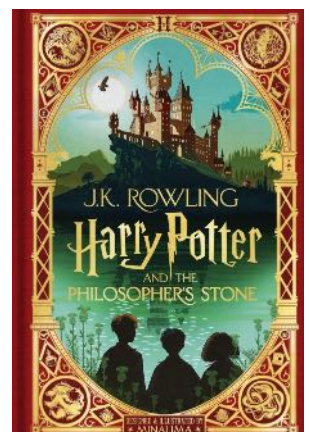
The House at Pooh Corner by A.A. Milne – chosen by Miss MacKay

It is a heartwarming story that teaches us life skills such as courage and the importance of friendships. Also Winnie the Pooh is my favourite character.



Harry Potter and the Philosophers Stone by J K Rowling – chosen by Mrs Vowles

I really loved it as a child and it opened the door to all the Harry Potter world! My children enjoy it now.



Primary Voices — Big Impact!

As part of an exciting new initiative for *The Quill*, we have been reaching out to our local primary and feeder schools to invite them to contribute to our student magazine. This project aims to strengthen links within our wider community by celebrating the creativity, learning and achievements of younger students alongside our own.

Through articles, artwork, stories and classroom projects, we hope to create a shared space where different schools can connect, collaborate and inspire one another. I am delighted to showcase and celebrate the incredible work students have produced as part of this partnership. We hope you enjoy exploring what they have created and sharing in their success.

HERNE VIEW ARTISTS ON SHOW

By Harry F (Year 2) and Felicity S (Year 1)

Herne View Primary School burst into the Ilminster Arts Centre by contributing lots of amazing art pieces to an exhibition.

The exhibition started on the 6th of February and stayed open to the public until the 27th of February. We were



very lucky to visit the Ilminster Arts Centre at different times to see pieces that were created by children from Pre-school all the way through to Year 6!

Each class took it in turns to walk up to the Art Centre and we were excited because we wanted to find our own pictures on the walls.

The Art Centre felt big and bright, and everywhere you looked there were



paintings, drawings and even some 3D models. We loved seeing what the other schools had created and it was nice to try and spot our friends pieces too.

We asked children across Key Stage One to comment about their experience.

Gracie L *"I liked seeing the drawings of our castles because they were so bright and happy!"*

Freddie F, *"My favourite part was finding my drawing on the wall. It made me feel proud."*

Harvey B *"I want to go again because there was so much art and I didn't want to leave!"*

We all felt very proud to have our work shown to everyone in Ilminster. It made us feel like real artists. If you were lucky enough to go and see it, we hope you enjoy it as much as we did!

ILMINSTER **arts** centre
AT THE MEETING HOUSE



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These lovely artworks were also created as part of Ilminster Arts Centre's Schools Go Visual (XI) project.

Exploring Colours: Wilby, aged 3 - Apple Orchard Pre-School

Kandinsky Circles: Quinn, aged 4 - Pippin Class

History topic of Castles: Octavia, aged 7 - Puffin Class

Bluebell Woodland Scene: Jacob, aged 9 - Gatcombe Class

Dichotomous Landscape: Hermione, aged 11 - Clarinette Class



ROSE CLASS BLOOMS WITH HAIKUS!

Rose Class at Winsham Primary School have been exploring the art of haiku poetry, creating short but powerful pieces inspired by nature, seasons and the world around them. Through careful word choice and creative expression, the students have produced thoughtful poems that showcase both imagination and skill. Here is a selection of their wonderful work.

Haiku Definition

A classic style of Japanese poetry, aimed at capturing a moment of keen perception or understanding in a short form.

NANCY, AGE 11, ROSE CLASS
SOME BUZZARDS FLYING
CIRCLING HIGH ABOVE THE CROPS
EATING SOME SMALL MICE

RUBY, AGE 8, ROSE CLASS
ONE HORSE RAN AROUND.
HAPPY AND SO FREE, RUNNING.
RUNNING IN THE GRASS.

LEO, AGE 10, ROSE CLASS
THERE WAS A GREY WOLF
THE WOLF WENT HUNTING
FOR FOOD
HE ATE IT AT THE DEN

JESSICA, AGE 9, ROSE CLASS
THERE IS A GREY HORSE
GALLOPING IN THE FLOWERS
HE LIKES TO EAT THE GRASS

ELFY, AGE 8, ROSE CLASS
CUTE AXOLOTL
WRIGGLING IN ITS TANK, WAITING.
FOR FOOD, FOR ITS LUNCH.



MERRIOTT MASTERPIECES!

We're pleased to publish a fantastic variety of work from students at Merriott School. From word searches and cartoons to jokes, poems, artwork and photography, this collection highlights the creativity and imagination of their students — enjoy exploring their contributions!

JOKES

- 1) What do you get when you cross a parrot with a porcupine? - A walkie talkie
- 2) Why was the blanket so confident before the test? - It had the material covered
- 3) What's an English teacher's favourite dinosaur? - Thesaurus rex
- 4) Why did Gary bring an orange to prom? - He couldn't find a date
- 5) What do you do if your chemistry teacher is sick? - If you can't helium and you can't curium, you may have to barium.

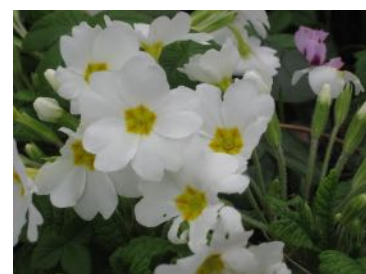
**THE BEACH**

While the waves crash on the shore
and the sun shines in the sky I dip my
toes in the shimmering water of the
salty sea. The water feels crisp and
fresh on my toes and I felt that
summer had just begun. As I walked
up the crisp sand back up to my tent
out of the corner of my eye I spotted
a shimmering piece of gold! I picked it up
in my hand, my eyes nearly popped out
of their sockets. This is how I want my
summer to go!



Panda extravaganza

You have caught them in the summer holidays where our story begins on a regular day in a quiet village. Where red pandas -Ralph and Polly are NOT allowed to fall in love under any circumstances whatsoever but



Ralph and Polly fall in love over the fence of Polly's back garden but they have to keep this a secret from their friends and family, which is impossible for them. Not long after this event happens they sneak off to meet each other in the local park woods not far from where they live.

Later, Polly and Ralph see a figure in the distance and Polly whispers to Ralph "It's our parents, we need to get out of here quickly!" with a sense of urgency. But after all that stress and running they get caught together...



The dads



What do you think happens next?

Fun Facts about the Vaquita

Population: There are few vaquitas left in the wild. Vaquitas are widely recognised as the most endangered marine mammal in the world. There are only about 6 to 10 left.



Habitat: The vaquita has the smallest geographical range of any marine mammal. It only lives in the northern part of the Gulf of California in Mexico.

Diet: Vaquitas are opportunistic, carnivorous feeders, foraging on a variety of demersal (bottom-dwelling) fish, crustaceans, and squid within the shallow waters of the northern Gulf of California. Their diet primarily consists of small fish species like grunts, croakers, herrings, hake, and squid.



*Spring Poems**By H**A Golden Bee*

A golden bee begins to fly,
Beneath the bright and sunny sky.
He stops to sip from every flower,
And works away for many an hour.

*By H**Blossom*

The blossom petals
Adventure in the spring breeze
Until the sunsets

*Haiku By H**Bloom*

The snow Has melted from the hill,
The air is fresh and clear and still.
A single sprout of emerald green,
The finest sight I've ever seen.

YEAR OF READING WORD SEARCH

W	E	R	H	T	N	M	I	O	L	P	D	S	W	A	C	F	D	A
B	D	G	H	H	S	E	R	N	J	I	O	P	L	M	N	S	C	S
C	S	O	M	E	R	S	E	T	T	S	U	N	A	M	I	E	D	H
D	A	C	X	W	Z	S	T	H	B	V	N	U	H	I	O	L	P	A
S	M	A	G	I	C	F	A	R	A	W	A	Y	T	R	E	E	K	A
A	E	D	F	L	O	T	T	I	E	B	R	O	O	K	S	L	O	N
S	S	A	W	D	D	F	R	E	S	W	S	F	V	B	Y	T	H	D
F	S	D	D	R	Z	S	A	X	F	G	H	J	D	E	W	B	N	T
G	F	H	E	O	B	O	T	N	A	R	W	H	A	L	I	G	H	H
H	C	S	D	B	F	R	O	G	T	R	E	E	S	H	E	L	L	E
M	A	G	I	O	S	H	E	E	P	H	I	L	L	F	H	V	B	S
F	S	G	C	T	H	E	E	D	N	S	E	Q	E	N	J	K	L	P
S	D	I	A	R	Y	O	F	A	W	I	M	P	E	Y	K	I	D	I
D	R	A	G	O	N	B	C	E	Y	U	J	K	I	S	E	D	G	R
H	T	H	E	L	A	S	T	W	I	L	D	C	F	G	J	U	Y	I
I	L	A	H	W	R	A	N	Y	B	R	E	D	R	U	M	E	D	T
L	E	H	T	L	A	H	R	A	N	F	R	I	E	N	D	C	A	B
P	R	E	D	R	U	M	J	F	D	G	C	E	S	H	J	K	L	I
S	U	P	O	T	C	O	E	H	T	D	N	E	I	R	F	Y	M	R
F	G	F	E	C	V	B	H	J	N	M	O	L	D	E	F	H	Y	D
A	S	H	A	B	I	R	D	S	H	E	Y	C	V	S	G	H	M	N
Z	E	E	R	T	Y	A	W	A	R	A	F	R	O	B	O	T	E	S

MAGIC FARAWAY TREE

SOMERSET TSUNAMI

ASHA AND THE SPIRIT BIRD

LOTTIE BROOKS

THE WILD ROBOT

MY FRIEND THE OCTOPUS

DIARY OF A WIMPY KID

MURDER BY NARWHAL

THE LAST WILD

The Suffragettes – VOTES FOR WOMEN

The Suffragettes were a group of women who fought for women's freedom. They did dangerous things to themselves and other people so women and girls could have equal, safe and better futures.



One of the many things they did was chain themselves to gates and scream! This was a way to try and spread the word and to make the Prime Minister angry and try and make change.

In the end, women were allowed to vote but it took years of determination, punishments and even some times death of women trying to make things right.

There is still so much we can do though, women are paid 13 % less than men and are still considered less value. In lots of countries, girls and women can't go to school, can't drive a car or even get a job .

So let's change things and make our world a better place for girls and women !



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INTERVIEW

FROM CONTENDER

TO CHAMPION

& BEYOND.

CONVERSATIONS

WITH BOXING

CHAMPION

JOHNNY NELSON

**Foreword by Peter Hopwood and
interview by Papi Mariani & Otto
Stahl**

This edition of The Quill features an exclusive interview with former professional boxing champion Johnny Nelson — a true legend of the sport with an inspiring career both inside and outside the ring.

From unforgettable title fights to the discipline and determination required to reach the top, Johnny shares insights into his journey, the challenges he faced, and what it takes to succeed at the highest level. He reflects on key moments in his career and offers advice for young people who are passionate about sport, ambition, and pushing themselves to achieve their goals.

His story is one of resilience, hard work, and confidence — qualities that extend far beyond boxing and into everyday life.

We're thrilled to share his experiences with our readers. Dive in and discover the story behind the champ!

1. What does your daily routine look like?

Five days a week start at the gym. I'll get up, feed my dogs, fill my water bottle with electrolytes, and head to the gym. I train with a PT, and we've been recently preparing for HYROX races (I've done three in the last few months) so I'm incorporating a lot more running into my training.

After the gym I'll usually head home & shower. Grab breakfast if I'm not fasting. Usually eggs - I have six chickens in my garden! Then the days can be different - ranging from calls and interviews, to appearances, content shoots, or briefings with Sky Sports if there's a show coming up.

2. What were you like in school?

I was quite quiet when I was younger, but in terms of learning I wasn't very good at reading or writing. I didn't have many friends, so made friends by going to the boxing gym with my big brother Alan.



3. What was your favourite school subject and why?

If I'm honest, I don't think I really had one. There were teachers I liked, some more than others. But most of my education started after school – through my coach and mentor Brendan Ingle.



4. How did your journey into boxing begin?

I literally just went to the gym to make friends. Followed my big brother Alan there and started training. I wasn't very good, lacked confidence and self belief. Lost my first amateur fights. But had an incredible mentor in Brendan who believed in me and taught me a lot of life lessons.

5. Your parents separated when you were young — how did that experience shape you later in life?

My dad left when I was about three. My mum worked many jobs to look after us all. I'm one of nine so as you can imagine, times were sometimes tough but she was an incredible woman. My step dad Benji, who I call my dad, supported my mum and all of us kids. He was a good man.

6. What was Brendan Ingle like as a coach, and how did he influence you both inside and outside the ring?

He was more than a coach. He was a father figure, a friend, a mentor. He gave me the education that school couldn't. He once said school teaches you to remember, but the real lessons came for me from him.

He was very well read and would tell me stories from Marcus Aurelius and figures like that. We spent many hours walking and talking, and it was those lessons, matched with the work that was in the gym, that got me to world champion. He built my confidence, self belief... a very special man.

7. When did you first think about pursuing boxing as a career?

I didn't want to. The best thing for me about going to the gym was making friends. Boxing was the down side!

8. Of your 59 professional bouts, you lost 13 (including the first three of your career). What motivated you to keep going and eventually become world champion?

Brendan motivated me. He sent me away to Germany on my own for months – living alone, sparring and learning to be comfortable on my own, with my own thoughts. The power of mindset. I saw people I was beating in sparring winning belts and couldn't understand why they were succeeding and I wasn't. The missing piece was self belief.

9. Boxers are known for their rituals. Did you have any superstitions before stepping in the ring?

No



10. People talk about the mental side of boxing—was there ever a moment you had to fight yourself more than your opponent?

See the previous answer.



11. Boxing gives you so much adrenaline, fame, and routine—what was it like adjusting to life after the ring, and how did you find your new rhythm?

I was fortunate to move into a second career as a pundit at Sky. A dream job as it kept me around the action, the fighters and the culture. The thing I missed the most was going to the gym and the camaraderie there with the other fighters. But working with Sky has meant I've still been able to enjoy an element of that.

12. Why do you think boxer struggle to a life outside of the ring?

Often it's routine, that time with your coach and other fighters. And for some it's financial. Boxers only get paid when they fight. They don't get paid for camps, training, or when fights are cancelled. So there can be a financial burden for many when they retire.

13. What is an aspect of boxing which people outside of the sport often misunderstand?

That it's the only sport where you can legally get killed in the ring.

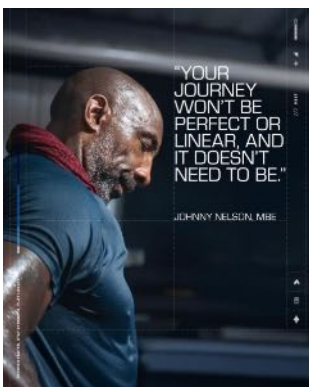
14. How did it feel to be awarded an MBE, and what did that recognition mean to you personally?

Very proud - I didn't believe it when my agent first told me. Meant a lot and I know my mum and Brendan would've been proud too. I took my three daughters to Windsor, and received the MBE from Prince William. A very special day for the four of us as a family.



15. What inspired you to start helping inmates develop life management skills?

Brendan took us into prisons as young fighters so it began way back when. We used to spar with some of the inmates. Going in now and delivering talks is part of me continuing Brendan's legacy as well as building my own.



16. How did it feel to publish your own book, and what challenges did you face during the process?

It was a few years ago, so there are still some chapters that could be updated. But it was great to have my story in print and I still have people reading it now even though it was published 10 years ago!

17. Looking back, what's the one lesson boxing taught you that you still use every day?"

To choose happiness. I believe you can start the day and choose your mood. And I choose to be happy.

18. If you were mentoring a young fighter today, what's the first thing you'd tell them?"

To listen. Truly listen to the advice, coaching and team around them.

19. Which four other people would you invite for a dinner party and why?

Bob Marley, Sir Chris Hoy, Sade, Brendan & my mum! Great music, inspirational people, and to be reunited with loved ones.

Perfect mix. Oh and maybe Eddie Murphy for laughs!

20. How would you sum up 'Johnny Nelson' in 5 words?

Happy, busy, forgetful, curious and funny.

21. What's next for 'Johnny Nelson'?

I'm working on a new savings scheme for fighters to help resolve issues a lot of fighters have when they finish boxing.



JOHNNY NELSON'S BOXING CAREER		
CATEGORY	STATS	NOTES
TOTAL FIGHTS	59	Pro Fights: 59 
WINS	45	KO Victories: 29 
LOSSES	12	Early Career Struggles 
DRAWS	2	Tough Contests 
WORLD TITLES	WBO CRUISERWEIGHT CHAMPION	Longest Reigning Cruiserweight Champion
TITLE DEFENSES	13	Successful Defenses 



Wadham School on the move!

FROM CLASSROOM TO COMMONS: WADHAM VISITS PARLIAMENT

By Lucy Martin

On the 12th of January, a bright and early winter morning, just under 30 students from across all year groups visited the Houses of Parliament. We arrived in London just after 9:00 a.m., and it was exciting to hear first-time visitors commenting on the architecture, landmarks, and large billboard advertisements as we travelled through the city. We passed Westminster Abbey and Big Ben before arriving at the Education Centre.

Students enjoyed an in-depth tour of the House of Commons, the House of Lords, and the connecting halls and passageways, where we met several Lords and Members of Parliament along the way. They were friendly and impressed by our early start. Wearing headsets, students were guided through the buildings and learned about ancient parliamentary traditions, including how seats are reserved for debates. Although photography was limited, it was a special experience to walk in the footsteps of past and present leaders from both the monarchy and Parliament.

After the tour, students took part in a workshop on petition writing, where they created their own proposals. Staff were particularly impressed by a petition calling for free public transport for 16–18-year-olds to support access to post-16 education and workplaces.

We were then surprised by a visit from Adam Dance MP, who had noticed our visit and wanted to meet our students. He spoke about his work since becoming an MP last year and has since been in contact to arrange a school visit later in the spring.

After a quick lunch in the park outside Westminster, we headed home with a bus full of sleepy students. We hope to offer this opportunity to more students in the future — although, having queued for both Glastonbury Festival tickets and this trip, we can safely say these places were just as hard to secure! We will continue to apply for similar opportunities.



INSPIRING GCSE LEARNING IN ACTION: YEAR 11 ENRICHMENT TRIP TO BOVINGTON TANK MUSEUM

By Peter Hopwood

On Tuesday 20th January, Year 11 students visited the Bovington Tank Museum for an immersive and curriculum-focused experience designed to strengthen their understanding of key GCSE History topics while supporting exam preparation.

Students participated in expert-led revision workshops centred on WW1 medicine and the rise of the Nazis. These sessions were closely aligned with the GCSE specification and developed essential exam skills such as source analysis, evaluation, and understanding cause and consequence.



In the WW1 medicine workshop, students explored how medical treatment developed during the war and the challenges faced by medical professionals working in extreme battlefield conditions. Through examining artefacts, historical evidence, and specialist



explanations, students gained insight into advancements in surgery, battlefield care, and the impact of limited resources. Engaging with real examples helped bring classroom learning to life and strengthened understanding of key historical concepts.

The rise of the Nazis workshop focused on the political, economic, and social factors that enabled Nazi control to develop in Germany. Students analysed key events, propaganda, political instability, and public support while developing their ability to evaluate historical interpretations and explain causation — vital skills for GCSE success.

Beyond the workshops, students explored the museum's extensive collection of historic tanks, military vehicles, and wartime displays. Viewing authentic artefacts and technological developments allowed students to deepen their understanding of how warfare evolved over time and connect theory to real historical evidence.



Overall, the trip provided a valuable opportunity to combine academic revision with interactive learning, reinforcing knowledge while enhancing students' confidence ahead of their examinations.



YOUNG MINDS, BIG IMPACT: STUDENTS LEADING FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

By Laura Andrews

On Tuesday 10th February, we attended an incredible Somerset Sustainable Futures Secondary Schools event at Taunton Racecourse.

We were blown away by the quality of the student presentations. It was clear that a great deal of time and thoughtful preparation had gone into their work. Students tackled the question, 'Does Rapid Technological Advancement Support or Threaten a Sustainable Future?' with impressive balance, critical thinking, teamwork, and confident presentation skills.

All of the young people were outstanding. We were especially impressed by the thoughtful questions they asked one another and their ability to listen, reflect, and engage with different perspectives. A special shoutout to the fantastic Year 7 students from The Blue School, Wells – the youngest participants there, yet they demonstrated a wealth of insightful questions for the other schools. Congratulations as well to the Wadham School team, who were superb and handled complex questions with confidence and clarity. Every student was a credit to their parents and schools – well behaved, engaged, and a pleasure to meet.

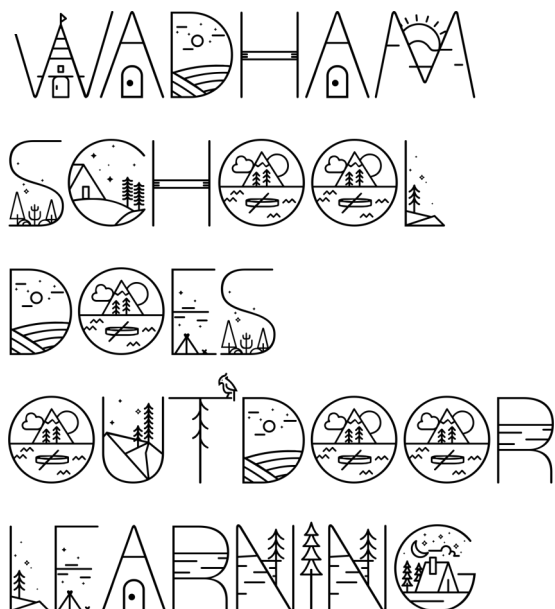
The event also featured inspiring sessions led by industry experts. Thomas Pether from the Ministry of Eco Education delivered an engaging session on sustainability and the challenges facing our climate. Dr Beth Lane from AI in Schools provided insightful workshops on the responsible use of artificial intelligence. We also appreciated the introductory video from Neil Trevett of NVIDIA, which helped students understand how AI is already being used to address sustainability and environmental challenges.

Huge gratitude goes to all the employers who supported the Green Careers Fair and engaged so positively with students. They encouraged meaningful conversations about sustainability, technology, and the wide range of green career opportunities across industries:

ABP, Exmoor National Park, Kier Group, M Group, MCS Building Services Ltd, NHS, Geoconnected, NFU (National Farmers' Union), UK Hydrographic Office, YTL UK Group, EDF, Institution of Chemical Engineers, National Trust, Screwfix, Singer Instruments, Somerset Wildlife Trust, UCS College Group, and Young Enterprise.

Thank you to everyone who made the day such a success and inspired the next generation of sustainable leaders.





MAGDALEN FARM ADVENTURE FOR YEAR 7 OUTDOOR LEARNERS

By Jessie Vowles

Just
before the

Christmas holidays, our Year 7 Outdoor Learning group visited Magdalen Farm to bring their series of Forest School sessions — led by Izzie Rowe at Wadham School — to a fantastic conclusion.

The group enjoyed a fun-filled and hands-on day. Students had the opportunity to feed the goats and pigs, collect hens' eggs, and take part in team-building activities, including balancing on logs and completing a low ropes course.

After a well-earned lunch, they explored the woods, built dens, played in the river, and toasted marshmallows around the campfire — making the most of the outdoor setting and all the activities on offer.

The group were a real credit to Wadham School, demonstrating resilience during the team challenges and approaching the day with a positive and enthusiastic attitude. It was also wonderful to see new friendships forming between students from different schools participating in the experience. Well done to everyone involved!



STUDENT VOICE – MAGDALEN FARM TRIP

Here's what some of our students had to say about their experience:

- ♦ Ella said she loved having the campfire, especially toasting marshmallows and building dens. She was also pleased to have the opportunity to meet and get to know other students on the trip.
- ♦ Neason shared that his favourite activities were the campfire doughnuts, marshmallows, and cinnamon apples. He explained that he learned a new skill — lighting a fire — and feels proud that he was able to use the flint and steel after showing great perseverance.
- ♦ Nicola said she loved visiting the farm, collecting eggs, and feeding the animals. She enjoyed all of the activities, particularly the cooking on the campfire, especially the campfire doughnuts. Nicola also said she learned how to build a den and light a fire during the trip.



BUS TRIP TO NORTH PERROTT – BUILDING TRAVEL CONFIDENCE**By Jessie Vowles**

Our Year 10 Travel Training group recently enjoyed a fantastic and successful bus trip to North Perrott. As part of their Travel Training qualification, students have been developing essential life skills by learning how to read bus timetables, plan journeys, and understand how to use public transport safely and independently. These practical skills are helping to build their confidence when travelling to college, work placements, and further afield in the future.

The group began their journey by leaving school and walking into town to catch the 96 bus towards Yeovil. Students demonstrated independence and responsibility as they checked the timetable, waited at the correct stop, and ensured they were prepared for the journey. The bus ride itself was a short but enjoyable experience, giving students the opportunity to put their learning into practice in a real-world setting.

Upon arriving at North Perrott, the group visited the North Perrott Fruit Farm Shop. They spent time in the café where they were able to purchase drinks and snacks independently, practising communication skills and handling money. Students also explored the shop and experienced a local business environment, observing how it operates and interacts with customers.

The staff at the farm shop were welcoming and friendly, helping to make the visit even more enjoyable. Everyone particularly enjoyed sampling the refreshments — especially the homegrown and freshly pressed apple juice, which was a highlight of the trip!

At the end of the visit, the group successfully caught the return bus back to Crewkerne and walked safely back to school, completing the journey confidently and independently. We are looking forward to our next trip, with hopes of extending the journey further and travelling all the way to Yeovil in the near future as students continue to develop their travel skills.



"Life in all its fullness"



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INTERVIEW

BREAKING BARRIERS: CONVERSATIONS WITH TRACK LEGEND, OLYMPIC CHAMPION AND SPORTING ICON SALLY GUNNELL

Foreword by Peter Hopwood and interview by Caitlyn Edwards

It's a pleasure to speak with one of Britain's most accomplished track and field athletes. As an Olympic gold medallist and world champion, Sally Gunnell has left a lasting legacy in athletics through her determination, resilience, and outstanding performances on the international stage.

In this interview, we explore her journey from aspiring athlete to Olympic champion, the challenges she faced along the way, and how her experiences in elite sport have shaped her life beyond competition. We also reflect on her impact on future generations and what continues to inspire her today.

Her story is not only about medals and records — it's about perseverance, leadership, and dedication both on and off the track.

1. What does your daily routine look like?

These days it's about balance rather than perfection. I train two or three times a week with strength as my foundation, add mobility most days, and walk whenever I can. Work revolves around Life's Hurdle, filming workouts, coaching calls, planning programmes and delivering corporate talks. Family is central to everything. After years of rigid athlete schedules, I now value flexibility and recovery just as much as intensity.

2. What were you like at school?

Energetic and competitive. I loved being outside and involved in sport. I wasn't the loudest in the class, but I was determined and quietly driven.

3. What were your favourite subjects and why?

PE was an obvious favourite because I loved movement and competition, but I also enjoyed biology because I was fascinated by how the body works, which probably explains why I'm still so passionate about women's health and performance today.

4. Who or what inspired you to get into athletics?

A PE teacher who believed in me made a huge difference and she encouraged me to join a athletics club at 12. Seeing athletes like Edwin Moses dominate the 400m hurdles with such control and rhythm also inspired me to think bigger.

5. Why did you choose to do 400 metres hurdles?



It really chose me. I loved that it combined speed, strength, rhythm and resilience. It's a thinking athlete's race — you have to stay composed under pressure.

6. What was the first ever trophy or medal that you won?

Sport day at school as a 5 year old and I won orange ball. I remember the pride more than anything.

7. Who was the strongest opponent you had to go against?

The early 90s field was incredibly strong. Athletes like Sandra Farmer-Patrick pushed me to raise my standards, but ultimately your toughest opponent is always yourself.



8. Winning Olympic gold is

every athlete's dream, can you describe what went through your mind during that race?

In the final at the 1992 Summer Olympics it was pure focus. I wasn't thinking about medals, I was thinking about rhythm, stride pattern and executing each hurdle. When I came off the last bend and knew I was ahead, it was a mix of disbelief and overwhelming relief.

9. What sort of training did you do to win Olympic gold and how did you prepare leading up to the Olympics?

It was a combination of speed endurance sessions, technical hurdle work, strength training and meticulous race modelling. We planned everything, stride patterns between hurdles, recovery blocks and tapering strategy. Mentally, I visualised the race repeatedly so nothing felt unfamiliar on the day.

10. How did you handle setbacks or injuries throughout your journey?

I reframed them as part of the process. Injury forces you to listen to your body. I leaned heavily on my support team and focused on what I could control, rehab, mindset and nutrition.

11. How did you balance training with other aspects of life when you were competing at the highest level?

Balance was limited at times because competing at that level demands focus, but I protected time with family and close friends because that grounded me. Those connections reminded me I was more than just an athlete.

12. Did you have any pre-race rituals or habits that helped you stay focused?

Yes, I liked routine. I visualised the race, listened to calming music and kept my warm-up consistent. Familiarity reduces anxiety.

13. What advice would you give to young athletes who aspire to compete internationally?

Focus on long-term development rather than quick success. Build strong foundations, strength, technique and resilience. Surround yourself with people who believe in you but also challenge you.



14. Outside of athletics, what are you most passionate about?

Empowering women through *Life's Hurdle*, particularly women navigating midlife and menopause. Helping women build strength and confidence now feels just as meaningful as winning medals.

15. If you could give your younger self one piece of advice, what would it be?

Be patient and trust the process. Not every setback is a failure, sometimes it's preparation.

16. Are there any hobbies or interests that helped you unwind during your career?

I loved being outdoors, walking and spending time with friends. Nature has always been restorative for me.

17. Do you think the world of athletics has changed for young athletes since your time, and if so, how?

There's more science, more media exposure and more pressure. Social media can be motivating but also overwhelming. Athletes now need strong support networks more than ever.

18. Looking back, what do you think was the key to your consistent performance at the top level of your sport?

Attention to detail and mental discipline. I treated every session with purpose and believed that small marginal gains compound over time.

19. What lessons from athletics have you carried into life after competition?

Resilience, preparation and the understanding that confidence comes from doing the work. Those principles shape everything I do now.

20. If you could invite any 4 people from history to join you for a dinner party, who would you invite and why?

Florence Nightingale for her courage and innovation, Nelson Mandela for his resilience and forgiveness, Marie Curie for her scientific brilliance and determination, and Jane Austen for her sharp wit and insight into human nature.

21. What's next for Sally Gunnell?

Continuing to grow *Life's Hurdle*, writing and speaking about strength and resilience, and helping women realise that their best years are not behind them.

22. How would you sum yourself up in 5 words?

Resilient, driven, grounded, optimistic, empowering.

SALLY GUNNELL'S ATHLETICS CAREER		
CATEGORY	STATS	NOTES
WORLD & OLYMPIC TITLES	3	Olympic Gold Medal (1992)
EUROPEAN & COMMONWEALTH TITLES	3	European Gold Medal (1994) 2 Commonwealth Gold Medals
PERSONAL BEST	400M HURDLES: 52.74 SECONDS	British Record
MAJOR MEDALS	9	Collected 9 Major Medals in International
YEARS ACTIVE	1986 – 1997	11-Year Professional Career
YEARS ACTIVE		11-Year Professional Career 1986–1997



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For more information see Mrs Taylor in A02.



THE JOURNEY CONTINUES!

RAISING FUNDS FOR POLAND 2027



By Poppy Spurway

Hi, I'm Poppy and I'm one of the 36 scouts going to Poland on the 26th world scout jamboree a 3-week camp in Gdansk's Poland where i will meet over 40,000 other scouts from across the world. I will be going with two other students from Wadham, Evan Pearce and Toren Radford. You may have seen us before in previous additions of the quill or seen us out and about fundraising but I'm here today to talk about what we do in preparation for such a big camp!



Big camps like this take loads of prep so when the day comes to get on the plane to Poland, we are not completely clueless.so at the moment everybody in the contingent [group of 36 scouts going on jamboree] are still getting to know each other so we went bowling at Hollywood bowl in Yeovil.

When we got there one of our leaders took the register and we all just stood around waiting for the others to join us. Once everyone was there, we got into our groups [we were in groups of about 7] then when the time came we all went into the bowling alley. We played 2 games [both of which I lost] and got to know each other and the leaders. When both our bowling games ended we all walked back to the scout hut in Yeovil her we ate our lunch and played games like imposter. When lunch was over, we split into two groups and did some activities.

First my group did so commination work, we did this by blindfolding ourselves with our scarfs and then we all got given a wooden shape. Once we all got a shape, we had to match them with other peoples at first it didn't go so well because we were all talking over each other but then we came up with a staggers which helped. After that we went outside where we made jam sandwiches however one of us was a robot and had to do exactly what the other one said [I got jam all over my hands]. When we came back inside, we got to know each other a bit more and learnt silly phrase like how to say 67 in polish.

It was then time for some cooking, we made dumpling with potato and onion in them and then hade the leftover strawberries from the other group once we finished making the dumpling we did everybody's favourite job washing up. After that it was nearly time for us to go home but we had a person come in a tell us a little more about what happens at the jamboree and then we had our leaders do admin thins like measure for t-shirt sizes and tell us about our next camp .

If you want to help us in the fundraising for Poland, you can come to our fundraising events like bake sales and themed nights, or I have put the link to all our justgiving page below. thanks for taking the time to read about our prep for Poland.



POLAND 2027

26th World Scout Jamboree
26e Jamboree Scout Mondial™

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History Matters

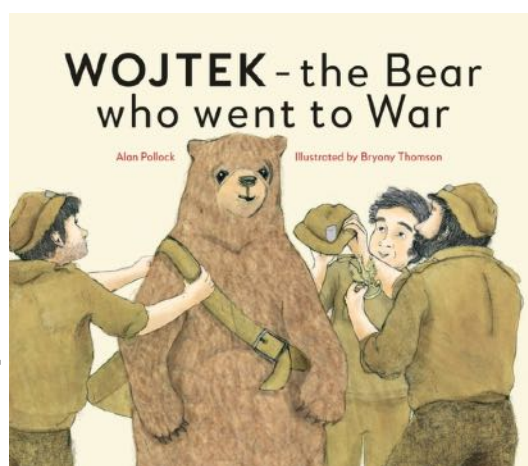
WOJTEK: MASCOT, SOLDIER, LEGEND! - THE BEAR WHO FOUGHT THE NAZIS

By Jonathan Margetts

Wojtek (pronounced Voytek in English) was a Polish war hero. During the 1944 Battle of Monte Casino, he dodged bullets, dragged his comrades to safety and help haul ammunition crates to the frontline under heavy enemy artillery fire. For this, he was awarded a medal and promoted from Private to Corporal. He was a hero of the Polish army. Nothing to see here, right? Just another good soldier being rewarded for bravery. But here's the thing...

...Wojtek was a bear.

Found in Iran in 1942 as a cub, Wojtek was adopted by the Polish army as their official mascot. At first, he did not fight, as his comrades and soldier friends feared that he would come to harm. As time went by, though, it was clear that Wojtek didn't think that he was a bear- he thought he was a person. He began to copy those men around him, and his strength (he was a bear!) made him invaluable for hauling ammunition, weapons and heavy equipment around. Initially, Wojtek was in the care of a young boy who had found the cub after his parents had been killed by hunters. When the Polish army passed through Tehran, they discovered the boy and his bear, and they paid the young boy a fee that he obviously felt was enough to part with an actual bear.



Because they were soldiers during the Second World War, it was difficult for the men in the army to provide Wojtek with the kind of diet that he would have in the wild. Instead, they would share their meagre rations with him. Later, he developed a taste for beer, which became his favourite drink, and he would often share a cigar with his fellow recruits after battles (although he preferred to eat them rather than smoke them). He would also march alongside the other soldiers on his hind legs. He had grown up around humans and saw himself as a large, much hairier version of them. By the time he joined his comrades at the Battle of Monte Cassino, he weighed about 90kg.

As an enlisted soldier, Wojtek had his own rank, number and pay check. He was required to fight because of this, and was



transported around in a wooden crate. He would sleep in his own tent alongside the other fighters when his crate grew too cold at night or in the winter months. During the battle, he effortlessly carried crates of ammunition about the battlefield. This would normally require between 4 and 6 human soldiers, but he was strong enough to do so by himself.

One can only imagine that he survived the battle because the enemy forces simply couldn't comprehend what they were seeing. War is bad enough at the best of times, let alone if you look across the lines and see that your enemy has a literal Syrian Bear in their ranks.



How demoralising for them! For his efforts, he was promoted to Corporal, which meant that he outranked a good number of the men he served with, meaning that they would have to salute him when he was around on official duty.

After the war, Wojtek was taken to Edinburgh zoo to live out the rest of his days in relative peace. Polish soldiers would come and visit him to share cigars and beer with him, and one Scottish journalist even tried to interview the bear about his experiences but said that he had found the whole experience "frustrating", which is what you would expect from someone attempting to interview a bear that just wanted another pint and a sleep- and was also, you know, a bear.



He appeared on the children's television show Blue Peter multiple times in the 1950s and 1960s and died, aged 21, in 1963. At the time of his death, he weighed 500kg and was tall enough to dwarf most men- when stood on his hind legs he was 6' tall.

I've said it before and I'll say it again. History can be weird. And the story of Wojtek the soldier bear is testament to that statement.



Getting into journalism

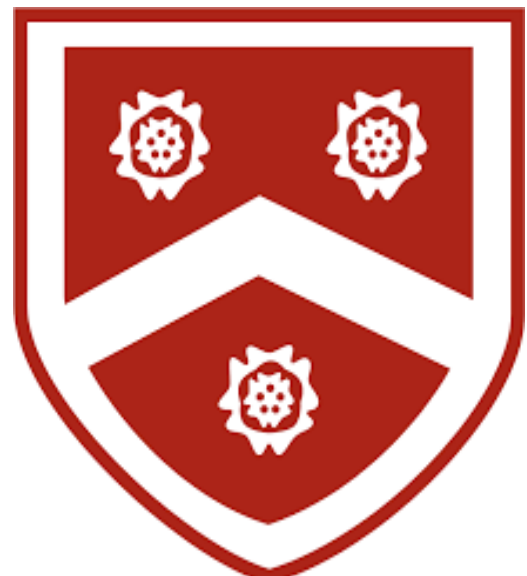
Have you thought about writing for a living, being a reporter, working on a newspaper or magazine?

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:

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TWIST, SQUEEZE, & LEARN

FIDGET TO FOCUS: HOW TOYS CAN BOOST LEARNING

By Amy Grey

Fidget toys have come a long way from simple stress balls and spinners — and they're more than just a fun distraction. Around the world, teachers are discovering that these small, hands-on tools can help students focus, manage stress, and stay engaged in lessons.

Why Fidget Toys Work

Fidget toys give students a way to release nervous energy or restlessness without disrupting the classroom. When used appropriately, they can boost attention, memory, and even problem-solving skills. For some students — particularly those with ADHD, anxiety, or sensory processing differences — having something to occupy their hands can make listening, note-taking, and participating in class much easier.

Types of Fidget Toys

Fidget toys come in countless shapes and sizes. From squishy balls and textured rollers to spinners, cubes, and even wearable bands, there's an option for nearly every need. The most effective toys are small, quiet, and easy to use without drawing attention away from learning.

Tips for Using Fidget Toys in Class

- ♦ Keep it simple: Small, quiet toys work best.
- ♦ Use it as a tool, not a toy: Fidgeting should support learning, not replace it.
- ♦ Respect classroom rules: Every teacher may have different guidelines.

The Bigger Picture

Fidget toys do more than improve focus — they can also help students manage stress, increase self-awareness, and develop fine motor skills. They encourage learners to take ownership of their education and explore strategies that work best for them.

Used thoughtfully, fidget toys aren't just a passing trend — they're an easy, effective way to make learning more inclusive, engaging, and fun.



Should Fidget Toys Help, or Are They Just a Distraction?

A recent survey at Wadham explored whether fidget toys actually help adults and students concentrate or if they can be more of a distraction. Below is feedback from a mix of students and staff — some who use fidget toys regularly, and some who don't use them at all.



Positive Feedback

- ♦ *"If fidget toys weren't a thing, my head would explode by now — I've found them very helpful and useful."*
- ♦ *"The bright colours and variety of textures help me concentrate on my work during lessons."*
- ♦ *"As long as fidget toys are used sensibly, I see nothing wrong with using them during both learning and social time."*
- ♦ *"Whenever I feel overstimulated, fidget toys are my go-to for helping me regulate myself."*
- ♦ *"They're really helpful for students in deep conversations with an adult. For someone who struggles with anxiety and eye contact, having a small fidget toy in their hands helps them feel calmer."*

Negative Feedback

- ♦ *"They can be a distraction to other students. Sometimes they get passed around, and then students stop listening to the teacher."*
- ♦ *"Some fidget toys are too loud, doing the opposite of what they're meant to do."*
- ♦ *"They can be annoying for teachers and other students in class."*
- ♦ *"Some students treat them like toys rather than tools to help concentration, which can lead to missed learning."*

We were lucky enough to receive a box of goodies from Fidget Topia and were excited to get some reviews on this bright, colourful set. Here's what some of our students had to say:

"Wicked colours and different-looking fidgets — 5/5"

"Good selection, though it could do with some squishy ones — 3/5"

"Great variety! I couldn't pick a favourite because they are all really fun and colourful — 4/5"

"Some may be a bit too loud for lessons, but really cool — 4/5"





"During the lesson I had the one that goes on your finger. I liked that it's not very noticeable — it made me feel less anxious and helped me concentrate — 5/5"

"Lovely bright colours and a big range of fidgets. I've used this box many times with different students, and they've been

effective straight away. A box of joy that I will continue to use to help my students regulate and stay focused — 5/5"

This set from Fidget Topia has been a hit, combining fun, colour, and functionality to support focus and calm in the classroom.



Fidgetopia – The Fidget Toys Everyone's Talking About

If you've ever loved messing with a fidget spinner or squishy toy, you need to check out **Fidgetopia**! This UK-based company makes super cool, high-quality fidget toys that aren't just fun — they actually help you focus and calm down.

Fidgetopia started when the founders, Kirsty and Andy, saw how a simple 3D-printed fidget helped their daughter stay calm during exams. Now they make all kinds of toys in-house, from twisty Wigglerz animals to clickers, rollers, and spinners. Every toy is made to feel good to hold, keep your hands busy, and help you concentrate — perfect for school, home, or just chilling out.

The best part? Fidgetopia isn't just about selling toys. They pop up at local fairs and events so you can try the toys for yourself and meet the team behind them. Plus, their mission is simple: make things that are fun, inclusive, and helpful for everyone — whether you're a student trying to focus in class, someone with sensory needs, or just a fan of cool gadgets.

So next time you need something to keep your hands busy or your brain on track, Fidgetopia's got you covered!

<https://fidgetopia.co.uk/>



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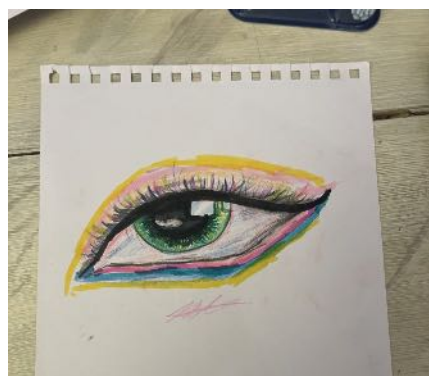
Let's get creative!



Artwork by Fen Hopkirk



Artwork by Poppy Best



Artwork by Izzy Foster



WADHAM SCHOOL EGG TIMER INTERVIEWS

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

Rebecca Curtis - Alternative Provision Manager

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

I am passionate about helping young people believe in themselves and achieve their full potential, and I believe education plays a vital role in that. I've spent 25 years supporting families in their homes, in the community, and briefly within schools. Being part of school life full time is a true honour and privilege.

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

Absolutely!! Because it's not only delicious, it's one of your 5 a day.

3. What animal would you choose as a pet and why?

I adore Sun Bears, but I don't think it would be ethical to have one as a pet, so I would instead pick a Russian Wolfhound (Also known as 'Borzoï') because they are so elegant and graceful & would be a great companion for my dog Peaches.

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

I'm a massive reader so I'd take my kindle & a solar powered power bank (It's a desert island, so always sunny right?) & I would have access to all of the books all of the time!

If I must take only 1 paperback I'd skip the survival books & take *The Road Less Travelled* by M.Scott Peck. I read it in my teens (At a time when I didn't particularly like reading) & it touched me so deeply that I felt compelled to write to the author (unfortunately I wasn't aware that he was sadly deceased...!). I've read it numerous times over the years & I always take something new from it each time.

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

The Poet, actor & musician Benjamin Zephaniah. Because of his unique way of blending street culture & literature to address issues such as social justice, animal rights & racism. As a Young Person he made literature feel accessible & relevant to me. Now as an adult I pride myself on making learning feel accessible & relevant to all of my students.

Charlie Straker-Nesbit - Head of Geography

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

I had an absolute ball at school, I loved being around my friends, playing sport, learning new things and looking forward to the next challenge.

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

No. Its blasphemy.

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

Tortoise. How cool would it be to have the same pet in 50 years time?!?

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

Mukiwa: A White Boy in Africa by Peter Godwin. I was told to read it by my head of year one summer holiday. I have probably read it 7-8 times and this ignited my interest in travel and culture.

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

There are so many I could put in here. But Google Pete Carroll- he changed how I prioritise aspects of my life.



Richard Burgas - Head Teacher**1. Why did you decide to work in a school?**

I didn't really have a plan once I finished university and was working as a manager of a pub in Portsmouth – a job I really enjoyed – but I knew I couldn't do it forever. This showed me that I wanted to work with people, so I used my degree to apply to be either a police officer or teacher. Goldsmiths College were quicker to respond, so I completed my PGCE in German and became a teacher!

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

No – it is never acceptable to put fruit on a pizza. Doing so makes it a crepe.

3. What animal would you choose as a pet and why?

I would love a Maine Coon cat – the giant breed from North America. They're fluffy, gentle giants. We're fortunate to have a Maine Coon Cross, Otto von Pickles, and he's bigger than our dog – he often bosses poor Jeffrey around!

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

This is a really tough question as I love reading. I would try and smuggle 2 books – so if it had to be just one, it would be either *The Count of Monte Cristo* by Alexander Dumas or *The Bachman Books* by Stephen King. I love the epic scale in *The Count of Monte Cristo* and the extremes the protagonist goes to in exacting his revenge – it's beautifully written, although very sad! *The Bachman Books* on the other hand is a collection of 4 short stories, 2 of which have been made into films – *The Long Walk* and *The Running Man* (not the Arnie film from the 80s – the recent 'remake' directed by Edgar Wright) Each story is full of dark humour, with Stephen King warning us of a dystopian future if we're not careful!

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

Again, a really tough question. Reflecting right now, I would have to say my Dad. He has always been a big person in my life, even when he's not always physically been there. My dad died in 2006, after living with MS for several years. He was only 52. Although his health declined, he never complained about his illness or the pain he was in. He was still very active, keen to help others and always saw the positive in everything and everyone. I've tried to be the same, and have also adopted his go-to catchphrase and outlook in life – "no worries."



Nolan Cassidy - Head of History**1. Why did you decide to work in a school?**

Firstly, history is amazing and I really enjoying sharing the incredible stories it offers. Secondly, there is something special about helping someone achieve, teaching offers this constantly.

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

Yes, because it tastes wonderful.

3. What animal would you choose as a pet and why?

Puffin. Not sure why but they seem fun. Collective name is a 'circus of puffin', says it all.

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

Complete works of Dickens. It would take a long time and is easier than Shakespeare.

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

My mum – the most important thing in life is being kind and my mum is the most selfless and kind person I know.

Rose Goddard - Maths Teacher**1. Why did you decide to work in a school?**

I have always loved the environment in 'fully comprehensive' schools, where a whole town (or 2!) and surrounding villages feed the school. I also came to Wadham so it felt like coming home!

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

Yes, if you like it have it! I don't, I like lots of Italian flavours like sundried tomatoes, olives & pesto.

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

We have 10 chickens and I love them, they're so fun. They come to the gate as soon as they hear our door go or our car pull up, its interesting watching the pecking order between them all and they keep us in eggs – natures multivitamins!

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

I originally thought I'd choose a 'complete works of' to give me a long read, but actually I'd want to get off the island pretty quick as I'd miss my family so I'd choose a survival guide.

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

My mum, she's amazing. She turned 80 this year and some of the things on her bucket list were to walk up Mount Snowden, do the longest zip wire in Europe and to do the Crewkerne pram race. She's always so positive, helpful and trustworthy. I got to do the zip wire with her with some of my siblings, it was terrifying!



Been There. Done That: Trips, Tickets & Takes

EXPLORING THE DEEP - BRISTOL AQUARIUM

By Toren Radford-Hyland

I visited Bristol Aquarium on Saturday the 20th of December 2025. It was a very quiet day and so an ideal time to visit as we pretty much had the aquarium to ourselves. Unfortunately, we missed the talks on offer but just took a leisurely walk around the aquarium.

The aquarium is a good mix of enjoying observing the animals alongside learning about the dangers facing our marine life. On entering the aquarium, there is a jellyfish display made from plastic bottles to highlight how deadly plastics is to marine life as many animals consume them thinking it is their food. This is a powerful first message on entering.

There are facts displayed at every tank so you can find out about the names of each animal, where it naturally lives in the world and see whether its numbers are endangered. On my visit, there was a table of objects to pick up and touch. I got to hold a megalodon tooth which was 12 million years old! How cool is that!

Everything in the aquarium is well spaced out and there is seating spots dotted around if you want to take a rest. The toilets are also located throughout. This is great for very young children, or the elderly, who might need a rest during their visit.

One of the great things about the aquarium is your ticket is valid all day so you can pop out and enjoy a meal or one of the many restaurants outside and then go back in later. Again, this would be great for visitors with very young children who might need a break or a run around outside.

There's a bus stop outside the aquarium so it's easily accessible. We parked on the outskirts of Bristol and took the park and ride bus which made entering the city centre very easy. The aquarium has a cafe at the ends which I didn't visit but I did visit the well-stocked shop which was full of a wide variety of stuffed toys of almost all marine life you could think of.



I was really impressed with the aquarium. The building does not look that exciting from the outside, but once inside it is fantastic. Another bonus is that the aquarium is situated right next to the Science Museum, 'We are Curious,' and a combined visit of the two attractions would make an amazing day out. With all the different restaurants outside, it would also make a really good choice of location for a child's birthday celebration.



The aquarium has more than 40 displays from jellyfish to rays, seahorses, piranhas and sharks, and not forgetting Nemo and Dora! My highlight of the aquarium was learning so many new awesome facts about marine life. For example, the Giant Grouper fish, which lives in coral reefs, is a protogynous hermaphrodite, meaning it can change its gender! Lionfish have an average of 18 venomous spines on their bodies and red-bellies piranhas are not the ferocious predators that they are made out to be in films.

If you are taking a trip to Bristol, I would definitely recommend a visit to the aquarium.



WAKE THE TIGER: BLOW YOUR MIND! EXPLORING THE EXTRAORDINARY IN BRISTOL

By Olivia Donohue

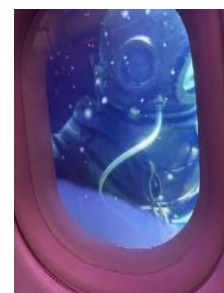
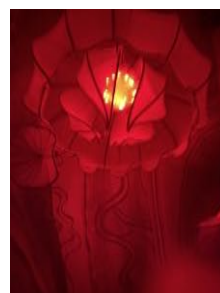
Wake The Tiger is an interactive attraction in Bristol filled with creative rooms, optical illusions, and immersive experiences. It was a wonderful experience to explore, with so many unique spaces and activities to discover. I would recommend it for all ages and would rate it 4.5 stars, as it was an enjoyable day out for me and my family.

One of the highlights was the interactive elements throughout the attraction. There were themed rooms, artistic installations, and engaging features that made the experience feel exciting and immersive. A memorable part was the train-themed area, where staff interacted with visitors by asking where they would like to travel. After choosing a random destination, they would provide a fake ticket, which made the experience even more fun and imaginative.

The attraction is also great for children, as it includes a slide and a small play area for toddlers, making it suitable for families. There was even a room featuring a large Furby installation holding a phone, which added to the quirky and creative atmosphere. It was amazing to see such unique and unexpected displays throughout the space.

The gift shop offered reasonably priced items, providing visitors with the opportunity to take home a souvenir from their visit. The staff were friendly and helpful, which enhanced the overall experience.

It took around two hours to explore everything, and although it felt short because there was so much to see, it was definitely worth the time. Overall, Wake The Tiger is a fantastic family day out and an exciting attraction for all ages — I would highly recommend visiting.



POWER & PRECISION AT BOVINGTON TANK MUSEUM

By Luke Hodnett

I visited The Tank Museum during the February half-term holiday, and I also learned that in June (26th, 27th, and 28th) they are hosting an event. I always find that visiting new places for the first time feels like a shock, and this was the same for the Tank Museum because it is huge inside.

In the first room, you see the first-ever tank built — called Little Willie. It was made in 1915, one year after World War One began. The English wanted to surprise the Germans with their new weapon, so production was top secret. They originally used the term “Land Ship,” but they thought it might give away clues, so they chose the word “Tank” instead. About halfway through Room 1, you can also see Tiger 131, which is enormous and well camouflaged.



In the different rooms, there are scenes set up to help visitors feel involved in the story of the war. The Trenches zone begins with a recruiting room. As you turn corners, you feel transported through medical evacuations and eventually into a warzone. It makes history feel realistic and immersive.

At the end of Room 8, called Tanks for the Memories, there is a gaming zone where you can play World of Tanks. In this game, you control a tank and try to defeat other players by shooting their tanks. I think the age warning of 12 is sensible. My sister had a great time because it was interactive — she especially enjoyed dressing up and taking part in activities.

One thing that stood out to me was how much history is collected inside the building — tanks, uniforms, photographs, letters, and other artefacts from the time. There were also displays about Operation Infatuate, which involved English and Canadian forces in an amphibious landing.



My favourite area was after the Trenches section, where you see the Marks I to IV tanks. Although these tanks are not used today, they were important in history.

A key feature is that their tracks go higher than those of most modern tanks. You can also go inside a Mark IV, which can fit around thirty soldiers.

I was surprised by how much there was to see and do. I explored tanks, drones, armoured cars, and motorbikes. My favourite tank was The Chieftain. Many people might picture a tank like the T-72 when thinking about modern tanks.



Another surprise was the interactive trails. There were stamp trails for younger children and puzzle trails for older visitors. If you complete them all, you receive a badge. The clues were hidden in Rooms 1, 2, 5, and 8, so I searched carefully throughout the museum.

One area that felt uncomfortable was Room 7 because it focused on the war in Ukraine. Listening to the audio, watching the videos, and seeing the images made it feel personal and current rather than historical. It showed that conflict is still happening today.



On the day I visited, there were visitors of all ages — toddlers (who get in free if they are four or under), children, teenagers, adults, and older history enthusiasts. My mum noticed that some older visitors were helping create wooden models and displays.

The visit took me about five hours because I like to look at everything before moving on. There is a café in Room 6 next to the soft play area and another café up high in Room 1, so we took two breaks. We brought our own packed lunch but also bought drinks. There are toilets in the centre of the building and further around the museum. There is also a gift shop selling army souvenirs and model toys.

I believe anyone who enjoys history — especially World War One and World War Two — would enjoy this trip. I would go again because I find those periods fascinating. Before visiting, I had been to the Fleet Air Arm Museum, which focuses on the navy and air force, but not tanks. Visiting The Tank Museum felt special because I finally saw military technology that I had not experienced before.



My overall idea after the visit is that during times of war, new inventions are created. During World War One and World War Two, many advancements were made in tanks, planes, ships, and protective equipment such as gas masks. Some of these innovations were developed to protect people from dangerous gases like chlorine gas, which can be deadly.



What's worth a read?

Dagon Rising by William Meikle (Crystal Lake Publishing)

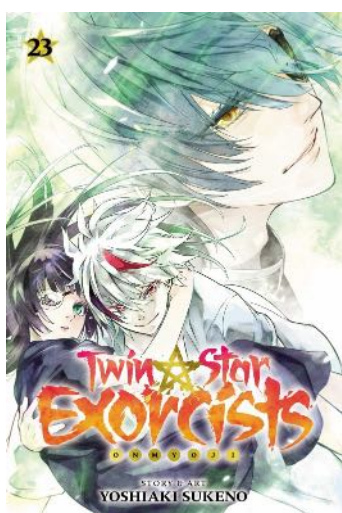
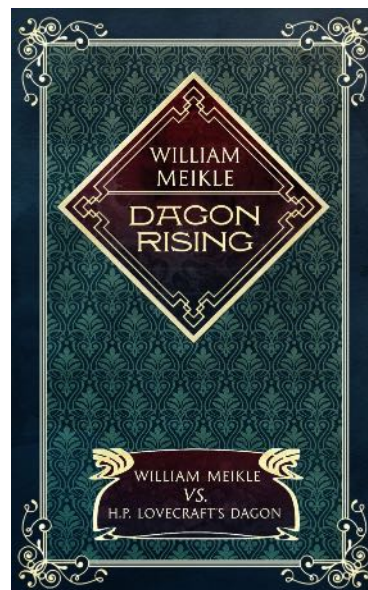
By Paige Hicks

William Meikle's *Dagon Rising* can be read as a modern counterpoint to H.P. Lovecraft's classic short story *Dagon*, and the contrast between them highlights two very different approaches to cosmic horror.

Lovecraft's *Dagon* is brief, abstract, and deeply psychological, relying on suggestion and atmosphere to convey terror. The horror lies in what is left unsaid, with *Dagon* serving as a symbol of humanity's insignificance and mental collapse when faced with ancient truths.

Meikle, on the other hand, expands this idea into a full-length, action-driven novel. *Dagon Rising*, makes the horror more explicit, raising the stakes from personal madness to global threat, and presenting the mythos in a clearer, more accessible way.

While some of Lovecraft's subtle mystery is lost, Meikle compensates with momentum and scale. Together, the two works show how the same core myth can shift from whispered dread to full-blown modern horror, each effective in its own way.



Twin Star Exorcist (Viz Comics)

By Erin Kent

Twin star Exorcist volume 33 is a brilliant manga by Yoshiaki Sueno between the battle of the exorcists and the King of Kegare who has awakened forcing the exorcists into battles in an attempt to save humanity. This volume features intense supernatural action and deeper, dark secrets regarding Benio's spiritual guardian.

Rokuro and Benio unleash high-level combat techniques against the increasingly dangerous Kegare monsters. The volume focuses on intense scenes where the exorcists must take desperate measures to protect the world.

Overall this manga is a visual treat and the art is absolutely breathtaking. Every page was packed with suspense. It is great for manga readers who are looking for an action packed manga and for those who like to see the stunning art. Personally I think the designs of all the characters are really cool and are all very unique. So overall I think it is a must read for any manga readers out there looking to read something as good as twin star exorcist



The Hunger Games by Suzanne Collins
(Scholastic)

By Evelyn Summers

Set in the post-apocalyptic nation of Panem, the story centres on twelve districts under the strict control of the wealthy Capitol. Each year, the districts must send one boy and one girl, known as a tribute, is chosen to participate in the Hunger Games, a death match meant to enforce oppression and instil fear. Sixteen-year-old Katniss Everdeen volunteers to take her sister's place. This sparks a challenging journey of survival, strategy, and moral choices. The narrative shows the tension and brutality of the Games while highlighting Katniss's resilience and empathy.



The novel's strength lies in its characters. Katniss is relatable and compelling, balancing her instinct for survival with strong family loyalty. Peeta Mellark, her co-tribute and ally, shows cleverness and kindness, offering a contrast to Katniss's guarded nature. Supporting characters like Haymitch Abernathy, the mentor, and Effie Trinket, the Capitol escort, add humour, wisdom, and depth to the story, enriching its social and political layers. Critics note that while Katniss is deeply developed, other characters sometimes lack depth due to the limitations of the first-person perspective.

The book explores several intertwined themes:

- ◆ **Survival and resourcefulness:** Katniss's physical and mental strategies highlight the importance of ingenuity in dire situations.
- ◆ **Power and control:** The Capitol's oppressive regime enforces inequality and fear, shedding light on societal oppression and totalitarianism.
- ◆ **Media and spectacle:** Collins critiques the role of media and entertainment, drawing parallels between the Games and manipulative reality television, as well as public desensitisation.
- ◆ **Sacrifice and humanity:** Personal ethics and loyalty face constant testing, especially through Katniss's choices to protect others and oppose oppressive forces.

Collins's writing is clear, immersive, and aimed at a young adult audience. The first-person perspective lets readers experience Katniss's fears and insights intimately. The pacing is relentless, moving from the Reaping to the arena in a way that maintains tension and engagement. The contrast between dramatic, violent scenes and moments of emotional vulnerability elevates the story beyond typical survival narratives.

The Hunger Games has received high praise for its world-building, memorable characters, and gripping plot. The novel established Suzanne Collins as a key figure in young adult dystopian literature and inspired a wave of similar books. Its social commentary continues to resonate, addressing issues such as inequality, media manipulation, and authoritarianism. The first book ends with Katniss and Peeta's survival, setting up sequels and developing a story of rebellion and resistance.

The first instalment of The Hunger Games is a gripping, thought-provoking, and emotionally engaging read. It encourages readers to reflect on moral dilemmas in the face of coercive power, blurring the lines between survival, strategy, and humanity. Whether young adults or older readers read it, the novel remains relevant, accessible, and highly recommended. It tells a story of courage, resilience, and the complicated interplay of power, love, and survival.



Rainbow Days (Viz Media)**By Lily Norton**

Rainbow Days is a manga by Minami Mizuno. It's a slice-of-life comic that follows the lives of four distinct high school boys; Natsuki, Tomoya, Keiichi, and Tsuyoshi, as they navigate friendship and romance. Unlike many shoujo series that focus solely on the female lead's perspective, this series excels by showing the vibrant and often awkward side of teenage life from a male point of view.

Focus: While the other volumes focused mainly on Natsuki and Anna, Volume 14 gives the long awaited development for Tsuyoshi (Tsuyopon) and his girlfriend Yukirin (Yukiko).

The Conflict: The central Conflict is about Tsuyoshi struggling to think of plans for the future and the realization that his path may lead him away from Yukirin. This brings a grounded, realistic coming-of-age theme to the story and tension to their usually stable relationship.

Supporting cast: We also see the other couples dealing with the contrasts of their future plans, such as Tomoya facing a future where he can't be by Mari's side after high school.

Art: Mizuno's art remains a high point, with clean lines and expressive character designs that perfectly capture the vibrant theme of the title.

Criticism: I feel that because Tsuyoshi and Yukiko were already a stable couple, their sudden development in this volume feels slightly late.

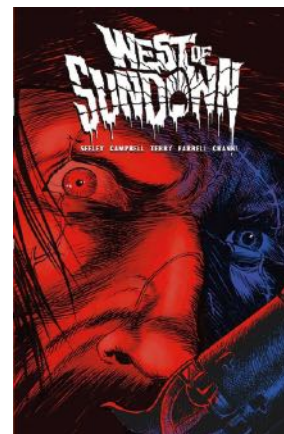
Over all this is a must read for Slice-of-life anime fans and fans of the series.

**West of Sundown (Vault Comics)****By Cassian Roe**

West of Sundown is a moody, genre-blending graphic novel that fuses the grit of a Western with the menace of gothic horror, creating a vampire story that feels both classic and refreshingly off-kilter. Set in the final days of the American frontier, it follows a cursed woman searching for a way to end her immortality before both the sun—and history—set on the Old West.

At its heart, the story is about exhaustion: from violence, from endless survival, and from watching the world move on without you. The protagonist's vampirism is not treated as a power fantasy but as a burden that isolates her and traps her between eras. The writing favors atmosphere over spectacle, building slow tension through sharp dialogue and deliberate pacing. Beneath the horror elements, themes of colonialism, exploitation, and the cost of progress give the narrative added depth.

Visually, the book stands out. The artwork is dark, textured, and cinematic, using heavy shadows and wide frontier landscapes to create a sense of loneliness and decline. The muted, dusk-heavy colour palette enhances the haunting tone, making the violence feel unsettling rather than flashy. While the story sometimes prioritizes mood over momentum—which may not appeal to readers seeking constant action—it rewards patience with a thoughtful, emotionally resonant take on both vampire lore and the Western genre. Elegant, grim, and atmospheric, *West of Sundown* is a smart and haunting genre hybrid.



The Blue Flame (Vault Comics)

By Arin Blackwood

The Blue Flame is a creative and thoughtful superhero story that mixes cosmic science fiction with psychological and philosophical themes. Instead of focusing on traditional hero battles and clear-cut villains, it explores deeper questions about identity, belief, and responsibility. The comic asks what it truly means to be chosen as a symbol — and whether someone can handle the expectations that come with that role.



The story centres on Sam Brausam, an ordinary man who suddenly becomes the Blue Flame, a powerful protector whose abilities depend entirely on humanity believing in him. Unlike many superheroes who train for their powers or are born with them, Sam feels unprepared and overwhelmed. His strength isn't permanent — it exists only as long as people have faith in him. This makes his situation stressful and uncertain, turning the story into more of an emotional journey than a typical action-driven adventure.

Throughout the comic, themes like trust, public perception, faith, and identity play a major role. Sam struggles with self-doubt because his power is connected to how others see him. If people stop believing, he loses everything. This creates constant tension and highlights how fragile reputation and trust can be in a world shaped by misinformation and fear. When action scenes happen, they often feel like the result of emotional pressure or internal conflict rather than just physical battles. The artwork uses clean lines, simple but strong panel layouts, and controlled visual effects. The cosmic scenes feel powerful but not overwhelming, which reinforces the idea that the Blue Flame's power is serious but fragile.

Overall, *The Blue Flame* stands out because it challenges common superhero ideas and encourages readers to think about belief, responsibility, and what it means to carry the weight of being seen as a hero.

I Am a Cat (Tuttle Publishing)

By Olivia Moncur

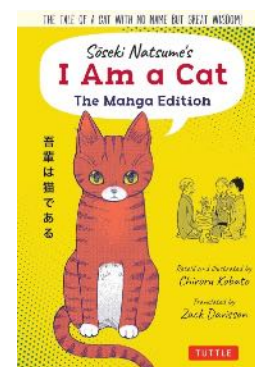
The Manga version of *I Am a Cat*, originally written by Natsume Soseki, works well even if you haven't read the novel. I went into it without anything to compare it to, and it still felt complete and easy to follow.

The story centers on a nameless stray cat who ends up living with a poetry teacher. Instead of action scenes and a big dramatic plot, the manga focuses on everyday life, conversations between the teacher and his friends, small household moments, and the cat quietly watching everything unfold from his spot under the table.

Most of the story comes from the cat's perspective and his silly thoughts about the humans around him.

What stands out is the tone. its calm, a little ironic, and often gently funny. The cat notices how serious people can be about small things, and his unique commentary makes ordinary situations feel slightly absurd. The humour isn't loud, but it's definitely consistent.

What I liked about the story was the facial expressions, especially because you can always tell what the cats thinking just from looking at him. Overall, I really liked this book because it was very different from the ones I'm used to, and I recommend it to anyone who likes cats!!



How to Lose a Country by Ece Temelkuran (Canongate Books)**By Nye Edgar**

How to Lose a Country by Ece Temelkuran explains the steps a government or leader can take to turn a democracy into a fascist regime. It is an important and relevant topic, especially considering current political events in the United States of America. The book outlines seven key stages that show how democratic systems can slowly erode.

The first step is Create a Movement. This is when a person or group develops a new ideology and begins spreading it among the population. This stage is essential because, without a clear idea or belief system, the movement cannot gain support or momentum.

The second step is Disrupt Rational Language. At this stage, leaders manipulate language to persuade people that their movement is the best option while portraying opponents as inferior or dangerous. This often involves misleading claims or emotional rhetoric that replaces logical debate.

The third step is Remove the Shame. Here, leaders justify harmful or unethical actions by presenting them as necessary. They downplay negative consequences and frame controversial policies as unavoidable. By removing the moral weight of their actions, they make extreme measures seem acceptable.

One of the most impactful stages is Dismantle Judicial and Political Mechanisms. This involves weakening courts, limiting criticism, and reducing the power of opposing political parties. By doing so, leaders reduce accountability and prevent legal consequences for their actions. It also makes it harder for opponents to challenge them in elections or through institutional checks and balances.

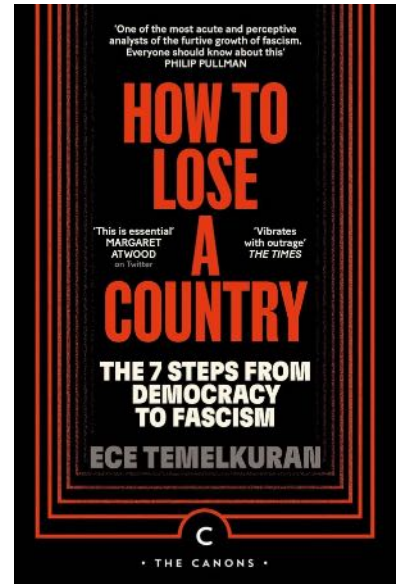
The next step is Design Your Own Citizen. In this stage, the regime promotes a specific idea of what a “good citizen” should believe and how they should behave. Through propaganda and control of information, the population is encouraged to conform and discouraged from questioning authority.

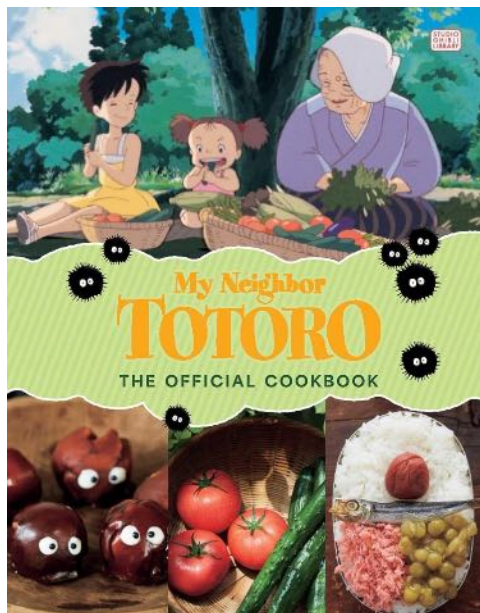
The sixth step is Let Them Laugh at the Horror. When serious issues or harmful actions become jokes, people may begin to treat them as less serious. Humor can sometimes reduce the sense of urgency or outrage that might otherwise lead to protest or resistance.

Finally, the last stage is Build Your Own Country. Once the previous steps are in place, leaders reshape the nation according to their vision. By this point, institutions have been weakened, opposition has been limited, and the population has been conditioned to accept the new system.

In conclusion, *How to Lose a Country* by Ece Temelkuran is a powerful and thought-provoking book. It feels increasingly relevant in today's political climate and serves as an important reminder of how fragile democratic systems can be.

I would rate it 5 out of 5 stars.





My Neighbour Totoro Cookbook (Viz Media)

By Rebecca Curtis

As a lifelong fan of Studio Ghibli, I was delighted that Mr. Hopwood asked me to review this book!! The illustrations are stunning & really capture the film's magical charm. Each page feels like a love letter to the beloved movie, blending the whimsy of Ghibli's world with the joy of cooking.

What surprised me most was how impressive the recipes are. As a visual learner, I appreciated the thoughtful step-by-step photos and clear instructions that made following along both easy and enjoyable. Every dish corresponds to a pivotal scene from the film, enhanced with beautifully reproduced frames that immerse you right back into Totoro's world.

The recipes are thoughtfully curated to reflect moments and moods from the film—simple bento lunches, hearty countryside meals, and sweet treats that feel lovingly prepared rather than showy. Instructions are clear and approachable, making the book accessible to home cooks of all skill levels. Ingredients are generally easy to source, and substitutions are often intuitive, which helps the cookbook feel welcoming rather than intimidating. The variety of recipes ensures there's something for everyone. There are sweet and savoury options, simple snacks, and more advanced dishes for ambitious cooks. The bento box is a personal favourite; it looks like it came straight out of the movie!

This cookbook is a treasure for budding chefs and an absolute must-have for Studio Ghibli fans. Gentle, inviting, and full of heart, *My Neighbor Totoro: The Official Cookbook* is a perfect companion for fans of the film and anyone who believes that good food, like good stories, is best when it's made with kindness—Highly recommended!

Roy of the Rovers: Play-offs by Tom Palmer (Rebellion Publishing Ltd)

By Rhiley Clarke

Roy of the Rovers: Play-offs is an exciting story about Melchester Rovers, a football club trying to win the play-offs and earn promotion to League One. The main character, Roy Race, is a completely normal sixteen-year-old who balances college, family life (including arguments with his little sister), and his role as centre forward for Melchester Rovers. The book explores important messages such as never giving up, the value of teamwork, handling pressure, and building mental strength. These themes make it more than just a sports story—it's about personal growth and determination both on and off the pitch.



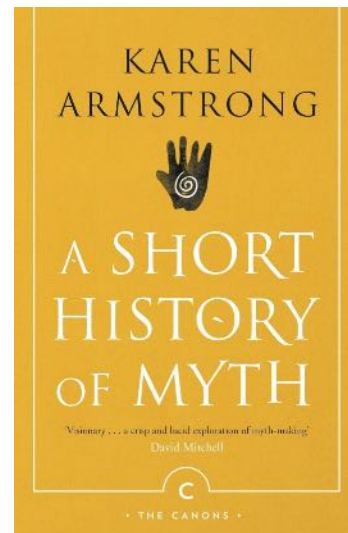
In my opinion, the book is easy to read thanks to its big text and smooth storyline. One downside is that the ending doesn't give much detail about what ultimately happens to Melchester Rovers, leaving some questions unanswered. This book would appeal to teenagers, young sports readers, football fans, underdog story lovers, team players, and anyone who enjoys realistic sports dramas. It's an engaging read for anyone who loves football and stories about hard work and determination.



A Short History of Myth – Karen Armstrong (Canongate Canons)**By Poppy Spurway**

A Short History of Myth by Karen Armstrong is an informative look at the history of myth—but don't expect stories about gods and monsters like in Percy Jackson. Instead, it's more of a deep dive into how people used to think and why myths were important. Armstrong explains that myths helped humans deal with death, find meaning in life, and make sense of the world. It's more like a textbook than a traditional "history" book, but if you enjoy factual reading, it's fascinating.

One of the main ideas she explores is "Mythos vs. Logos", which is basically imagination versus facts. She uses this to show how myths shaped human understanding before science and rational thinking took over.

**What I Didn't Like**

- ◆ No Plot: There aren't characters, so you're jumping from the Stone Age to the "Axial Age" in just a few pages.
- ◆ Kind of Preachy: Sometimes it felt like Armstrong was telling us we're "spiritually empty" now because we rely on science too much.

The Okay Parts

- ◆ The ending was the best part. Armstrong points out that movies and novels are our modern myths, which actually makes a lot of sense.
- ◆ The book goes into great detail about myths, so it's a fantastic resource if you're looking for facts or information.

Final Verdict

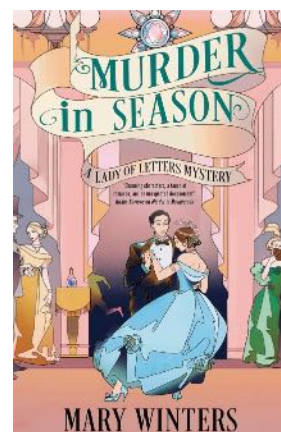
If you enjoy factual books or want to learn more about myths, this is a solid choice. But if you're looking for entertainment or a story-driven read, this isn't the one. I'd give it 3/5 stars—the book wasn't the most exciting, but the information is amazing and packed with more content than most libraries hold.

Murder in Season by Mary Winter (Severn House)**By Abigail MacKay**

Murder in Season by Mary Winter is a captivating crime novel that plunges the reader into high Victorian Society where Amelia Amesbury's younger sister (Margret Scott) has come to stay with her during the London Season so that she can potentially meet a suitor for her to marry.

However, this is jeopardised when a Man is murdered at a Ball they hold at their home. Whilst investigating the Murder there is also various jewel thefts to solve as well.

While it engages the reader through revealing intriguing details slowly to draw the reader in, the story ultimately falls short in the fact that some of the background details are not fully explained. However, I believe that this is because this book is the 3rd in the Series 'A



Lady of Letters Mystery'.

The Characters felt particularly well-developed; for example, the protagonist, Amelia Amesbury, exhibited a depth of courage that was compelling, especially during the scene where Amelia and Margret go in search of the jewel thief at night.

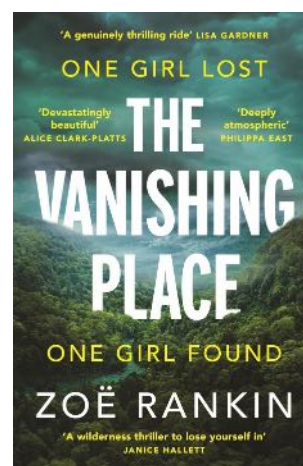
In conclusion, *Murder in Season* is an excellent novel that excels in drawing the reader in. I would recommend this book to readers who enjoy historical fiction intertwined with romance and appreciate a refined narrative. I will definitely be reading books 1 and 2 in this series now.

***The Vanishing Place* by Zoë Rankin (Viper Books)**

By Alice Henly

Effie has been running from her past all her life, but now it has finally caught up with her, just not in the way she expected.

The Vanishing Place by Zoë Rankin is a psychological thriller and mystery narrative about a young woman returning to her hometown after fleeing twenty years ago. Through this daring twist of fate, her family's dark and dangerous secrets rise to the surface after years of being hidden in the shadows. The book follows Effie, a woman in her early thirties, and Anya, an eight-year-old girl with a perplexing and horrifying secret. It portrays religious manipulation and coercive control through the eyes of its victims.



The storyline is fast-paced and makes you feel as though if you stop reading for even a second, something else might happen. The narrative shifts almost constantly between past and present day, keeping you on your toes. The novel also explores Effie's past and present difficulties, as well as her gut-wrenching family life. I personally loved that it wasn't afraid to confront the harsh truths and that it perfectly portrays how the mind copes with certain traumatic situations.

If you're interested in horror or mystery — or even if you're trying something new, like I was — I would absolutely recommend that you have a look at Zoë Rankin's work and pick up this book.

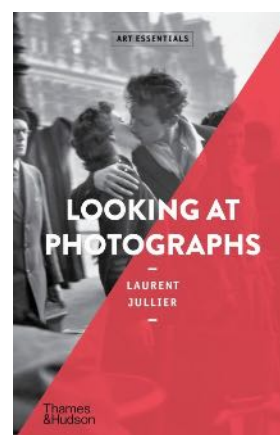
To conclude, it was a genuinely thrilling and topsy-turvy ride, and I rate this book 5/5 stars.

***Looking at Photographs* by Laurent Jullier (Thames & Hudson)**

By Alfie Holt

Jullier explores the various genres of photography from, documentary and portraiture to surrealism. he uses this to create our perception of the reality and the truth. The key themes of this book includes of "representations of the world", "doctoring and defamiliarization", "Areas of uncertainty", "the right angle, the right distance", "suspended time", "from portraits to selfies" and "the power of images"

My personal favourite photograph in this book is called "Tutsi Town" by Richard moose, this is my favourite photograph in the book because: This photographer has caught incredible detail in the soldier's clothing and the surrounding jungle, The soldiers black gun is also contrasting against the vibrant pink background. This is also a very powerful photograph as it shows a very real life crisis making it a very powerful image. I overall really enjoyed this book, and I would recommend it to anyone that wants to look into photography further or if you do GCSE photography.



STICK THIS IN YOUR EARHOLES

This Is What It Feels Like - Gracie Abrams

By Phoebe Curtis

Gracie Madigan Abrams is a 26-year-old American pop artist whose music has helped so many people, myself included. She has opened for **Olivia Rodrigo** and **Taylor Swift**, and even performed at **Glastonbury Festival**.

Her album *This Is What It Feels Like* was originally released in November 2021 and features 12 heartfelt tracks that explore love, self-discovery, and emotional growth. Here's a breakdown of my thoughts on each song:



1) Feels Like

I really enjoy this song for its backstory and the pretty melody and lyrics. It's about her best friend, Audrey, and the bond they share, but it isn't my favourite on the EP because I wish it was a bit longer.

2) Rockland

I LOVE this song. The soft vocals and heartfelt message about feeling like the "villain" in a relationship are so beautifully done—it's sad but somehow romantic at the same time.

3) For Real This Time

This song instantly hooked me with its chorus and beat. The lyrics explore the guilt of wanting to end a relationship while worrying about hurting the other person—a really relatable theme.

4) Camden

This track makes me cry EVERY. SINGLE. TIME. Camden is my absolute favourite on the EP, and probably in her entire discography. It tackles deep issues like beauty standards and bottling up emotions, which is especially poignant knowing Abrams' history with OCD. The lyricism and repetition make it a hauntingly beautiful listen.

5) The Bottom

An absolute banger! A revenge song from someone as sweet as Abrams is unexpected but amazing. The music video, however, is not for the faint-hearted.

6) Wishful Thinking

This song explores trying to fix someone who can't be fixed. I love the repetition and the beat—it's a simple but effective track.

7) Older

A reflective song about looking back on a relationship you thought was perfect and noticing the cracks. I love the simplicity—nothing feels overcomplicated—and the lyrics hit hard: "Guess that happens when you get older."

8) Better

This track is about being someone's rebound



without realizing it and worrying about their mental health post-breakup. The repetitive lyrics make it really catchy and emotional.

9) Hard To Sleep

THE MOST SLEPT-ON SONG on this EP. It's heartbreaking, tackling overthinking and losing control, a theme that resonates with mental health struggles. The piano adds a wistful, haunting element.

10) Augusta

This song explores feeling lost in yourself and everything around you. The repeated line "I'm lost" perfectly captures that emotion, and Abrams' whispery singing style suits it beautifully.

11) Painkillers

A heartbreaking track about calling someone out but being labelled the problem, to the point of doubting yourself. The slow, soft melody makes it incredibly powerful.

12) Alright

My second favourite song. It's about healing and admitting when you're at your lowest, and the raw honesty makes it so relatable and moving.

Overall, *This Is What It Feels Like* is a deeply emotional, beautifully written album. Abrams combines vulnerability, lyricism, and simplicity to create something truly timeless. Every track has its own story, and I can't recommend it enough.



Battle Beast - Steelbound

By Jonathan Margetts

Finnish power metal band Battle Beast are back with their seventh studio album, *Steelbound*. It has been an interesting few years for the band- the departure of original vocalist Nitte Valo and founding member Anton Kabanen (who went to form the excellent *Beast in Black*) resulted in a radical change of sound, from more traditional power metal into a glorious 80s-inspired arena metal sound. They are a band who would not have sounded out of place playing alongside the sides of hair metal greats such as Def Leppard, Whitesnake or Doro Pesch.

Their best album, *Bringer of Pain*, was the result of creative shift, although subsequent effort *No More Hollywood Endings* made for a disappointing follow-up effort. Somewhere along the line, it seemed that *Battle Beast* had forgotten that they were first and foremost a metal band. Following album *Circus of Doom* was an improvement, but it seemed as if there was very little *battle* left in the *beast*. So, with new album *Steelbound*, one question remain: has the beast found its teeth again?

For anyone who is new to the band's bound, the opening track *The Burning Inside* serves as a lovely



sonic serving of just what *Battle Beast* do best. Infectious, ear-wormy choruses, soaring and throaty female vocals and an embrace of stadium-filling metal's wonderful excess. Oh, and a very generous use of double bass pedal drumming and ear-shattering riffs. There are guitar solos in almost every song here that threaten to tear open the skies with how 'widdly' they are.



The title track, *Steelbound*, had me fist-pumping on first listen and loudly declaring (whilst driving home from work, no less) that "YES! THE SYNTHS ARE BACK". Because one of my famous things about their 80s-influence is the shameless use of synths to augment their meaty sound, it is particularly pleasing to see it make a return here, and tastefully so. The synths are back, baby- but they're not all over the place. They're used sparingly. But they're back, and I've missed 'em!

The album's mixing is almost perfect, with every instrument getting its moment to shine and Noora Luohimo's "Bonnie Tyler on Steroids" vocal performance getting the front and centre treatment that it deserves. Since her addition as vocalist in 2012, she has been the band's strongest asset, and her significant pipes are on full display here. Her wail at the beginning of their anthem to resilience, *The Last Goodbye*, is a true demonstration of the power of her vocal ability.

Alongside her striking appearance and dramatic choice of stage regalia, it makes her the perfect frontwoman for a band who would be far more mediocre without her talents. Their ode to lost love, *Angel of Midnight*, makes use of synths and furthermore creates a sound that can only be described as an 80s ballad clashing head first with a Def Leppard concert.

The choruses are predictably massive, proving to be true ear-worms. You'll be humming them for days afterwards. The musicianship is impressive, with a particular guitar solo on closing track *Watch The Sky Fall* being so ridiculously over the top that you can't help but smile when you hear it. There is nothing subtle about the album, but for a band called *Battle Beast*, what did you honestly expect?

Perhaps the most disappointing thing about the album is the lack of variety in the tracks. Each song runs between 3-5 minutes in length, and they all have the same structure. Usually, the band feature a ballad or two on albums, but one isn't present here, with the only moment of slowdown being in the brief instrumental interlude *The Long Road*.

There *is* variety, though. Songs like *Riders of the Storm*- which sounds like a galloping band of old Cowboy times- and *Blood of Heroes*- which sounds like a battle anthem if ever there was one- are proof that the band can inject different influences into their sound. But you get what you pay for here with this album. Its big, its brash, its unapologetic in its theatricality and it's a glorious return for a band who had perhaps lost their way on their last few albums.

So, to answer the previous question: yep. The beast is very much back. 8/10.



VIDEO GAME REVIEWS

SHALL WE
PLAY A
GAME?

GOD OF WAR: WHERE MYTH MEETS MASTERPIECE

By Nye Edgar

The *God of War* series has been hugely influential from the 2000s to today. I recently picked up the 2018 remake by Santa Monica Studio, and wow—it's incredible.



You play as Kratos, the former Greek God of War, who has travelled to the world of Norse mythology to escape his horrific past. Alongside him is his son, Atreus, who is still learning what it means to live in the real world.

Their goal is to carry the ashes of Kratos' wife and Atreus' mother to the tallest mountain across the realms.

But there's a problem: Odin has sent his son Balder to capture Atreus. The twist? Balder cannot be harmed by anything. So, while Kratos and Atreus make their journey, they are being relentlessly hunted.

Along the way, they meet several fascinating allies. Freya, a witch living in the woods, turns out to be Balder's mother and Odin's former wife, who cursed Balder to save him. There's also Brok and Sindri, two dwarven blacksmiths whose sense of humour makes them instant favourites. But my absolute favourite is Mimir, whose head Kratos carries on his belt—and yes, he's brilliant.

I won't spoil the ending, but it is jaw-dropping. The combination of unique combat, an emotionally powerful story, and unforgettable characters makes this one of the best games ever. 10/10.

FOOTBALL MANAGER 2024: THE BEAUTIFUL GAME AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

By Jonathan Margetts

What's that? You're wondering why, in the year 2026, I'm reviewing a game with '2024' in its title? Firstly, it's because Football Manager 24 is the most superior version of the game to exist and secondly, it's because an issue with developers Sports Interactive has resulted in sufficient delay on the 2025 version of the game. In fact, they've openly admitted that, for this year at least, we're all going to have to make do with the 2024 whilst they iron out some not-insignificant glitches. So that's why I'm a 'year behind'. I'm not actually, but you get what I mean!



FM24 is essentially a spreadsheet simulator. If all you want to do is play football, then this is a video game that you will want to give an almighty swerve too. Your Pro Evo and FC games will serve you better. If, however, you're somebody like me who prefers to look at football from the management side, and enjoys hours trawling through player data and working your magic in the



transfer marker, then Football Manager 24 will threaten to take over your life. Never has the phrase 'just one more match' been truer.

In the game, you are tasked with working with real players and coaching staff to achieve glory in digital footballing form. The game has a competent 3D match engine, which means that you get to watch your tactics play out in front of you, but you can't exact much change during the match other than tweaking tactics and making substitutions. You'll spend as much time looking through the game's extensive databased and plotting your next signing as you will actually running the match simulations. The possibilities are endless, and the individual, single-player nature of the game means that you'll never have two separate saves that play out in exactly the same way.

In my current save, the digital version of me is 72 years old and has just won the Europa League with Yeovil Town. I've also managed Tottenham Hotspur, Manchester City, Leicester City and Yeovil (the first time, when I was just a lowly name working my way to the top). I also spent ten years in Norway with Viking FC where a 36-year-old Harry Kane helped me become Norwegian champion as well as to qualify for the Champion's League (Europe's most elite club football competition) for the first time in the club's history. None of this happened in real life, of course. But the sense of achievement is still very real. My first ever title in the game was in my sixth season, where I lifted the Finnish Premier League title for FC Honka (yeah, I hadn't heard of them until I played this game, either). I had the rather comically named Nortei Nortey (pronounced 'Naughty Naughty'. No, really!) as my midfield superstar!

You can pretty much play as any team you want, and the developers release plenty of patches that allow you to download and play as anyone at all. If you're a huge supporter of a club down in the seventh tier of the Netherlands, you can load up that league structure and lose 2-0 every week to another team that nobody other than yourself has heard of. It sounds boring and, to some people, it probably is.

But despite this, FM24 continues to be one of the top ten most downloaded games on Steam. There are mobile versions, console versions and the original and best version for PC. I can play the game on my lowly home laptop with little slowdown at all. With the in-game editor, I can guarantee I never have to rage quit again by signing Lionel Messi for Dorking Wanderers in the seventh tier of English football. Or I can just appoint myself as Manchester City manager and buy all of the best players in the world for £5. Alternatively, I can play the game as it was attended to be played- as a simulation that you can sink your time into and suffer humiliation or glory in equal measure.

Many of us will never become professional footballers. At 34 years old, I think it safe to say that my big break probably isn't going to come by now. Many of us will never become professional coaches or managers. But with Football Manager, we can live out those fantasies in the comfort of your own home. How many people can say they've won the World Cup for England from their sofa whilst wearing a Tiger onesie? I can.



ENDLESS ADVENTURE AWAITS IN TERRARIA

By JJ Taylor

Terraria is a combination of an RPG and a Sandbox; it has multiple ways to play and beat the game with various classes and an extensive weapon roster. The game has tons of hard achievements for achievement Hunters to pour their time into. The game has a total of 33 bosses in *Terraria*, some bosses are not needed to progress the game but add a challenge to the game dropping amazing items to make progression easier. There are 10 mandatory bosses out of the 33 in the game.

Positives and negatives

Terraria can be seen as a slow game which can be seen as a negative to most gamers, the start of the game being the slowest. The tools you start with are terrible which makes sense, there are 3 different parts of *Terraria* working on 'NPCs', Mining and exploring, and Boss* fighting.



All of them have completely different tones from each other as working on making NPC houses is completely different from fighting Bosses. The game never tells you exactly what to do and you will mostly spend your time looking on a wiki (completely viable) unless you have spent over 1000 hours on the game, the Guide NPC tells you some vague hints as to what to do but people tend to stop using him after he stops being useful. Every world is different on *Terraria* and

spawns with a different 'evil'* the evils being Corruption and Crimson both having different enemies and items.

Progression

The game requires you to explore and gather equipment from across the map. Digging down leads you two plentiful amounts of ores and items to progress the game onward and make you more powerful. You fight the mandatory bosses in a specific order being pre-hardmode: King Slime, Eye of Cthulhu, Eater of Worlds or Brain of Cthulhu, Queen Bee, Skeletron, and finally the Wall of Flesh to trigger hardmode. For hardmode, the typical progression is: the mechanical bosses (The Destroyer, The Twins, and Skeletron Prime in any order), Plantera, Golem, Lunatic Cultist, and The Moon Lord. You fight The Wall of Flesh by digging down to Hell and throwing a 'Guide Voodoo Doll' in Lava in Hell.

My conclusion

This game is an amazing experience with endless re-playability especially with mods and friends. *Terraria* provides challenge as well as an enjoyable experience, the progression may be slow but that isn't a necessarily a bad thing if you enjoy a lengthy and fun experience. The game is an honest 10/10 from me thanks to its amount of effort brought to make this game amazing in all aspects.



FROM CART TO CRITIQUE: WADHAM SCHOOL CONSUMER REVIEWS



SOMETHING FOR THE ...BRICK BUILDERS

Cyber Repair City (lambrick)

Reviewed by Edward Oleen

Cyber Repair City by lambrick is a 2,098-piece LEGO-style set that builds into a tall, futuristic multi-storey structure. Each level has its own theme, including a garage with a car featuring working doors and wheels, a detailed bar area, and a cable car that runs along an exterior rail.

Design

The design is one of the set's strongest points. The bright colours and futuristic style give it lots of character, and there's a lot of detail packed into both the interior and exterior. Small features, such as working drawers in the garage, make the model more interesting to explore.

Another highlight is the limited use of stickers. Most of the patterns are printed directly onto the bricks, which makes the building process smoother and avoids the usual frustration of misaligned stickers.

The instructions are clear and well laid out, guiding the builder through more intricate sections without becoming confusing.

The Downsides

The main drawback is fragility. Many of the finer details, especially elements like the traffic light and parts of the upper floors, are delicate and can come loose easily. While the ground floor provides a solid base, the higher levels feel less stable.

Because of this, the set works far better as a display piece than as something for regular play. Even minor knocks can cause sections to detach, which can be frustrating after completing the build.

Get ready to dive into our honest take on some of the coolest products around! From LEGO-style sets and board games to handheld video games, clothes, fragrances, and sporting gear, we've tried them all. We'll tell you what's worth your cash, what's fun, and what might not live up to the hype—straight from our perspective, no filters.



The Positives

Visually, the finished model looks impressive. The bright colour scheme and layered design make it eye-catching on display. The car and cable car are also well designed and function effectively as standalone builds, adding extra value. At around £97, the set is also competitively priced compared to official LEGO sets of similar size and detail, making it a more affordable option for a large, detailed build.

Final Thoughts

Cyber Repair City 2098 is a detailed and visually striking set that offers an enjoyable building experience. While its fragility limits playability, it performs well as a display model. Overall rating: 8/10, impressive design and value, but best handled with care.

Frostspire Dominion (Iambrick)**Reviewed by Luna Grey**

Frostspire Dominion is a building set from Iambrick that includes 862 pieces and is shaped like a frozen fortress or tall icy tower. It has a strong fantasy theme, making it look like something from a storybook or a game world. The design is more artistic and atmospheric than a typical playset, so it works especially well if you enjoy creative builds or want something cool to show off on a shelf.



The build itself is enjoyable and suits students or builders with some experience. It isn't extremely simple, but it doesn't feel too difficult either. The instruction booklet guides you through the steps, though sometimes the colours in the pictures can look close to each other — especially in certain lighting — so you may need to pay extra attention. The good news is that the bricks fit well with other standard bricks, so you can mix these pieces with other sets if you want to customise your creation.

Once completed, Frostspire Dominion looks impressive with its icy details and interesting shape. It doesn't have many moving parts or play features, so it's more of a display piece than a toy for action scenes. This makes it ideal for decorating a room, showcasing on a desk, or adding to a larger fantasy scene. For the price, the set gives you a lot of pieces and a satisfying project, making it good value if you like creative building and detailed models.

Overall, Frostspire Dominion is a great choice for anyone who enjoys imaginative builds and wants a detailed, eye-catching model. It may not be the best pick if you want a set focused on play features, but as a display build, it scores high for design and creativity.

About IAMBRICK

Iambrick is an imaginative and healing creative brand dedicated to the design and production of trendy toys and building blocks. They embrace the brand DNA of “I am brick, together we create,” where each “brick” represents a spark of creativity and connection. Their mission is to use building blocks as a medium to spread positive energy and rediscover the pure beauty of creation. Every Iambrick piece helps build an inspiring world — one that blends innovation, joy, and quality.

**iambrick**

When they say “**Together We Create**,” it reflects not only the joy of building with our community but also the shared spirit of imagination and creativity that unites us all.

For more details go to www.iambricktoy.com



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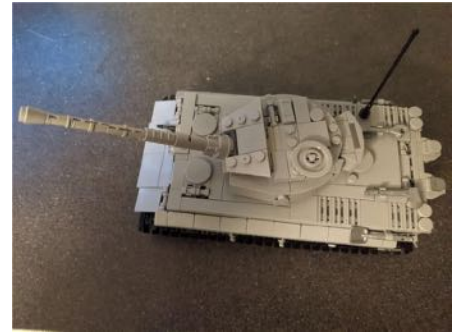
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Tiger VI tank brick set (Blue Brix)**Reviewed by Nye Edgar**

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



The overall aesthetics of the set were very good in my opinion as it is very realistic to the actual tank with cool details like having an engine in the back. There was only really one feature, that being the rotating turret, but it did have movable tracks which were quite cool. It did not have any features for playing as it is more of a model than a toy, but it does a very good job of being a display piece.

The only real problem I have with the set is the fact that it was very fragile so if you did anything to it, it would break apart also it was very hard to find a specific piece because all of them were out at once and they were all one colour. In conclusion I think that it is a very good set and I highly recommend it to anyone who wants to get into Lego models.

Rating; 4/5

Typhoon Anti-Aircraft Missile Truck (Blue Brix)**Reviewed by Charlie Gibson**

I chose the set Typhoon Anti-AirCraft because it looked interesting and diverse compared to other sets with the grass area and the truck overall looked really good.

The building experience was overall fine at best as some of the pieces on the missile stand would not connect very easily as it would keep falling out of the piece it was supposed to connect to and was extremely loose. But it was a good idea overall but the execution could have been done a bit better for it. As well as that the bags were unorganised and seemed to be random increasing the build time and difficulty as all the bags need to be open to retrieve the right pieces which made it unorganised and messy. But in of the good parts is the building experience was how good the instructions were as they were very clear and easy to follow the only bad part being matching up some of the colours as they looked extremely similar in the instructions.

The finished model overall looked incredibly detailed and did an excellent job of looking as realistic as possible on the car and used lots of plant pieces to make the grass look really good and lush with the variety of bricks and plant. But did not have any of the minifigures which could have made the



build much better. But overall works really well and can be displayed easily with outer sets and would still look really good. And stand out.

In conclusion the main strengths of this set are the display ability and the detailed instructions to make it. But some weaknesses are that some of the building techniques did not work very well with each other and the fact that the bags were messy and unorganised. So, I would recommend it to collectors if they want a good display piece to go with other army sets and to people if they want a good time building something detailed and looks good. So I would give this a 7 out of 10 for its excellent design and good build quality but the piece bags and the building techniques that do not work very well with each other. So I would definitely recommend it to other people if they are wanting a good time.

Peanuts Garden (Blue Brix)

Reviewed by Isabelle Coombes

This is a German building block toy brand known as a competitor to Lego due to its compatible bricks and lower prices. This one certainly tested my patience. Again as a lady of a certain age who suffers from arthritis in my fingers this was extremely challenging. I started off by putting all the pieces in 3 small dishes according to size and colour (good move I hear you say).

I then had a look at the instructions (not such a good move anymore). You see I'm not very good with visual instructions (I'd rather be shown what to do) but I'm always up for a challenge.

So I started! I built the first layer and after succeeding I was rather optimistic. I spoke too soon! The pieces were getting smaller. They would jump out of the dishes and more often than not end up on the floor (I forgot to mention I also suffer from a bad back probably due to my age). Luckily I wear glasses (I hear you say due to my age) so it didn't take me too long to find them. I would then persevere for another hour or so (after quite a lot of swearing in French) and then walk away.

If I pressed too hard the pieces would either disappear inside what I'd already built or again end up on the floor. Just another excuse for another piece of chocolate! Well after a few more jumping, bending and eating chocolate I managed to finish it. I'm proud of myself! I didn't give up! Did I gain anything? Yes - just a few more pounds (due to the chocolate!).

I'm very pleased with the end product (I love Peanuts and Snoopy). Unfortunately I have a number of pieces left in a dish and I don't know where to put them (an idea springs to mind). Would I tempt another one? Yes only if I had more chocolate please !!!

PS: It says on the box for children aged 6+. I say Good Luck to the parents!!!



"Wasserfall" Anti-aircraft missile (Blue Brix)

Reviewed by Milo McGhee

What attracted me towards the set is my keen interest in military weapons such as missiles and fighter jets. The build was quite simple to make, although there was a section (the chassis for the missile) which was difficult to build. The instructions could do with some work since the colours were not very bold, and sometimes it was quite confusing as to where to put the



pieces. The stickers, however, were quite easy to put on and adjust if I got them wrong. What was quite fun to use was the rotation system for the missile, and the way you can raise it based on the angle of the aircraft.

I liked how the build very accurately depicts the missile, and I like the colour scheme for said missile; it fits the build very nicely. As I mentioned earlier, the rotation and raising scheme for the missile was very fun to use and to play with. There were no minifigures included with the set, which is a shame because I imagine an engineer minifigure would complement the build very nicely. I have quite a few shelves along my wall, and the missile adds to them very nicely, along with my other LEGO.

The missile's design and use are quite good; however, the instructions need some work. I would recommend the build to some experienced builders with interests in the military. I rate this set a solid 7.5 out of 10

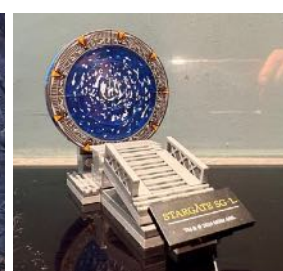
Stargate SG1 Gate (Blue Brix)

Reviewed by Claire Guthrie

I guess I was chosen to make and review this model as I have been a decades-long fan of Stargate SG1 and particularly of the inimitable Samantha Carter. If you haven't watched her in action, then you have missed a great TV character, clever, compassionate, resilient and inventive.

I was intimidated by the number and variety of tiny pieces in this kit but, in the spirit of Miss Carter, I 'gave it a go' and found (once I had donned my spectacles) it was not as difficult or as daunting as I had presumed. In fact, I enjoyed making the Stargate and completing it gave me a sense of satisfaction.

Mini though it is, it resides, pride of place on my kitchen dresser so that I can raise a smile as I glance by.



BlueBrixx is an alternative brick-building brand based near Frankfurt, Germany. Founded in 2018, the company is known for producing a wide range of creative, detailed brick sets compatible with other major brands, giving builders more variety and exciting themes to explore.

At Wadham School, students had the chance to review BlueBrixx sets, choosing one that interested them and sharing their thoughts on the finished models. The company loves seeing new builders discover their products.

BlueBrixx offers sets across many themes, including trains, military vehicles, fantasy worlds, and medieval settings, as well as licensed sets like *Stargate*, *RoboCop*, *Peanuts*, and German-based licenses such as *Die Drei Fragezeichen*, *DGzRS*, and *BRABUS*.

Products come in different ranges: BlueBrixx Specials include simple brown boxes and PDF instructions, while Pro sets feature printed pieces, booklets, and sometimes minifigures. Many sets target adult fans of bricks (AFOB's), but there are also options for younger builders and teens.

Explore their range at <https://www.bluebrixx.com/en/> or on social media.



Dragon Warrior Spring Festival Special Edition (Barweer/Pantasy)

Reviewed by Sarah Baker

Who doesn't love a Kung Fu Panda movie? This was an opportunity not to be missed, a fantastic looking model and I love being creative. The photo of the finished article on the front of the instructions looked eye-catching and awesome too, so I was keen to take on the challenge and give this a go!

The Building Experience

The entire set was supplied in a very large bubble wrapped bag for the review – I assume it would normally be supplied in a box, but I don't know how the original packaging looks. The set was divided into lots of small, cellophane bags numbered from 1 to 8 (with several bags in each numbered set) and included a hefty, A4 sized, full colour instruction manual.

From start to finish the set took a total of 4 hours to build – this was spread out over a couple of weeks and it was a whole family project, we had a bit of a production line going. It was my job to find all the pieces needed for each step and then my family built the parts and we put them together at each stage.

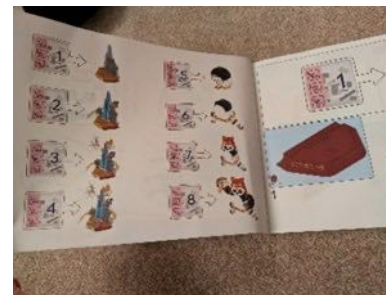
Some sections of the build were purposely repetitive e.g. the scale-style links for the dragon's body and branches for the tree. There was a lot of variety in the techniques needed for construction and some innovative ways of using parts to achieve different sections; it was a well thought out and engaging set to build.

The main challenges with this set were that, on some occasions, pieces did not fit as snugly together as true LEGO does and this impacted on the strength of the finished product. There were also some rather fragile and precarious attachments with not much holding them in place securely – so when finished, any movement resulted in parts falling off or popping out.

Instructions were clear and easy to follow, with detailed illustrations for every step and an example at the beginning of each section to show what the end product of that section should look like. The set had one sticker, which was placed on the front of the build. There were several printed pieces and the images or effects on these bricks were clear and of good quality print.

The Final Model

The finished model, without a doubt, does Kung Fu Panda justice. The colours are bold and eye catching and the main character model accurately reflects 'Po' from the film. There are two 'pose' options to choose from in the instructions, which entail changing Po's arm – either to him having a food tray or holding up his paws in a martial arts move. We chose the food tray. There were a few



duplicate spares of some tiny parts left over.

The various curios and animals positioned around the main character add interest and there are many detailed focal points to 'explore', such as, a fox character, oriental tree with flowers and hanging red envelopes, a spray of fireworks and Po's tray of food that he carries. This model does not have any moving or mechanical parts, it is static and intended as a centre piece on a shelf.



Due to the various fragile parts, it is not a build that could withstand post construction 'child's play' and there are no mini-figures or play accessories in this PanTasy set. I would consider this model to be a display piece, aimed at 10+ yrs. I would highly recommend this set to fans and collectors of Kung Fu Panda merchandise and 'binding bricks' enthusiasts – it retails at around £79.

Based on the overall packaging, instructions, build quality, stability, features and presence, I've rated it 4.8/5.

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 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/>



SOMETHING FOR THE...FASHION FANS

Chernobyl Geek T-Shirt
(Geeks Outfit)

Reviewed by Henry
Hopwood



I recently looked at the Chernobyl Geek T-Shirt from Geeksoutfit, and it's a really bold and unique design for anyone who likes themed or geek-style clothing.

The main thing that stands out about this T-shirt is the graphic on the front. It references Chernobyl and nuclear safety themes, which makes it different from ordinary graphic tees. The design is eye-catching and would definitely start conversations because it's not something you see every day. It suits people who like

wearing something a bit different and expressive.

In terms of comfort, the material feels like standard cotton-style fabric, which makes it suitable for everyday wear. It looks lightweight and easy to wear with jeans or joggers for a casual outfit. The fit appears to be fairly normal for a T-shirt, and it would work well as part of a relaxed wardrobe. Overall, I think this T-shirt is great for people who enjoy geek culture or bold graphic designs. It's not a basic or simple piece of clothing — it makes a statement.

Rating: 7/10 – Strong design and originality, but it's more suited to people who like niche or themed clothing rather than something minimal.



CPU Heart Hoodie (Geeks Outfit)

Reviewed by Fen Hopkirk

Are you looking for the perfect hoodie, but you just can't seem to find it? Don't worry as the store 'Geeks Outfits' might have the perfect hoodie just waiting to be worn. I'm reviewing one of their many hoodies called the 'CPU heart washed hoodie' and it is possibly one of the best pieces of clothing I own. If you're wondering why this hoodie is so great, here's why...

First, I'm going to talk about the appearance of this amazing piece of clothing! The colour is plain black which I know sounds quite boring but here is what brings it to life. This hoodie has an image on it. The design on the front of the hoodie is a stylised circuit board design. This gives off a very technology, coding, engineering, computer science vibe. These things themselves are quite plain but it's when you put them together, it makes it a hoodie worth buying!

Next up will talk about the quality. It's got a very soft texture on the inside (cotton) and is lovely and smooth on the outside making it very cozy and comfortable to wear. I must say though that it isn't very thick, so I recommend not to wear it in winter and other cold days. A good hoodie to wear in spring though. In my opinion, this hoodie is easy and great to style and might be one of the most comfortable things you'll ever wear. I would also like to add; the durability of this hoodie is very good because I have already washed it and it stayed perfectly fine all throughout the wash and seems



quite strong and unbreakable.

Finally, I would like to talk about the price. I think the price is amazing because for a hoodie like that, it only costs £34.00!! I thought it would cost way more than what it is. Overall, though, this is an incredible, cool, stylish hoodie that would go really well with lots of outfits, and it is definitely worth buying.



Lumon Macrodata Refinement Dept Geek T-Shirt (Geeks Outfit)

Reviewed by Jake Cox

This Severance Shirt Satisfies. A 100% cotton white t-shirt from GeeksOutfit that has a black heat-printed logo of LUMON - MACRODATA REFINEMENT as a wearable homage to Severance, one of the best current TV shows out there.

It's super-soft and perfect to wear around the house but is more than fine to wear out on an expedition if needed. I personally like to have my t-shirts slightly loose and so opt for an XL and it's true to its advertised size. I have yet to

wear it after it being washed, but it does appear to have kept its shape and size.

The printing is done extremely well - this is where I was most concerned as a bad print can totally ruin a shirt and relegate it to 'strictly wear around the house' status or even as a decorating shirt. Thankfully, it's done well and is evenly placed so ZERO COMPLAINTS!

However, on the seams for the left shoulder, the stitching is a little iffy with some loose strandy threads poking around. But this is, of course, a very minor inconvenience that is mostly fixed with a pair of scissors.

As of writing, it is currently listed at £17, which I do think is a tiny bit steeper than what I would normally pay (I am a big stickler for spending as little as possible on clothes) but with it being a great printing and its a design directly referencing one of my favourite TV shows, I'm not going to complain.

If you like wearing t-shirts and want some designs based on or inspired by films or TV shows, then I would highly recommend GeeksOutfit and I would highly recommend this Severance shirt.

Love Death + Robots Geek T-Shirt (Geeks Outfit)

Reviewed by Yasmin Hill

This t-shirt perfectly balances comfort and style. The fabric is incredibly soft and gentle on the skin, making it a joy to wear all day. The fit is spot-on, flattering without being restrictive. What really makes this shirt stand out are the unique, eye-catching patterns. The designs are intriguing and slightly obscure, giving it a distinct, artistic vibe that's perfect for fans of Love, Death + Robots. The overall construction is top-notch—every seam and detail is precise, with not a thread out of place. This is a shirt that doesn't just look good, it elevates any outfit with its originality and quality. Highly recommended for anyone who wants a blend of comfort, creativity, and style!





Bricks and Ships Hoodie (Geeks Outfit)

Reviewed by Peter Hopwood

The Bricks and Ships Hoodie from Geeksoutfit is a fun and casual sweatshirt that blends geek-style design with everyday wearability. It comes in a regular hoodie cut with long sleeves and a drawstring hood, making it a comfortable option for colder weather or relaxed days.

□ Design & Style

This hoodie stands out thanks to its playful graphic concept — the “Bricks and Ships” theme gives it a creative, quirky look that would appeal to anyone who enjoys bold, alternative, or geek-inspired fashion. The design makes it easy to pair with jeans or joggers for a casual outfit.

□ Material & Comfort

Made from a **50/50 polyester-cotton blend**, the sweatshirt feels soft and comfortable without being too heavy. It's suitable for everyday wear or layering over T-shirts when the weather cools down.

□ Fit & Sizes

The hoodie is available in a range of sizes from S up to 5XL, which means there's something for a wide variety of body types. Customer feedback on the brand suggests that sizing can run a bit small compared with typical clothing, so it may be worth sizing up if you prefer a looser fit.

□ Overall Impression

The Bricks and Ships Hoodie combines comfort, personality, and unique style in one piece. It's a great choice if you want a standout hoodie that feels cosy and expresses your interests. Just be mindful of the sizing when choosing your fit.

□ Rating: 7.5/10 – Solid quality and fun design, just check sizing first for the best fit.

Pac Turtles Geek T-Shirt (Geeks Outfit)

Reviewed by Meadow Curtis

I absolutely love this shirt! The quality is fantastic, and it fits perfectly in the baggy style I prefer. The design is delightfully silly—in the best way—combining my two favorite childhood classics: the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles and Pac-Man. It's a clever mashup that always gets a smile.

The shirt itself holds up really well. After several washes, the design hasn't peeled, flaked, or faded at all, which is a big plus. The fabric is soft and comfortable, making it perfect for casual wear or lounging around.

I'm so happy with it that I'm seriously considering buying more shirts from this brand. Overall, if you love geeky, fun designs and want a shirt that's both high quality and comfortable, this is a great choice!





GEEKSOUTFIT

Geeks Outfit – Company Profile

Geeks Outfit is an online clothing brand that's all about celebrating geek culture in style. It was started for people who love things like video games, sci-fi, movies, coding, memes, and all kinds of nerdy interests. Their mission is to help fans show off their passions through fun and creative fashion that feels comfortable and cool to wear.

Instead of just selling plain clothes, Geeks Outfit turns jokes, fandom references, and internet culture into wearable designs — so you can be comfortable and express yourself at the same time. What makes them different from regular fashion brands is how they combine humour, pop culture references, and geek pride into each piece of clothing.

The company doesn't just sell t-shirts. Their online store includes a wide variety of items such as:

- ♦ **T-shirts** (including printed, vintage, oversized, long sleeve, and v-neck options)
- ♦ **Hoodies and sweatshirts**, including fuzzy and themed holiday sweaters
- ♦ **Jackets and outerwear** like bomber jackets and fleece jackets
- ♦ **Button-up shirts and jerseys**
- ♦ **Loungewear and pajamas**, like geeky lounge pants and pajamas
- ♦ **Bottoms** like shorts and leggings
- ♦ **Accessories** such as hats, socks, keychains, pins, phone cases, and patches
- ♦ **Home & office items** like pillows, tumblers, and notebooks All of these items are designed to reflect geek interests and make everyday fashion more fun and unique.

If you want to explore their products or get in touch, you can visit their official website at <https://www.geeksoutfit.com>

Moomin Tote Bag & Oversized T-Shirt (Nordic Buddies)

By Ewelina Hartnell

I recently reviewed two adorable Moomin items from **Nordic Buddies**, and I couldn't be happier with both products. They combine comfort, quality, and charming design, making them perfect for everyday wear and use.

Moomin Tote Bag

The tote bag is made from **100% cotton**, which makes it both durable and comfortable to carry. The fabric feels strong yet soft, making it suitable for daily shopping, school, or casual outings.

The Moomin print and included quote add a lovely and unique touch to the design, giving it personality rather than a plain aesthetic.

It is spacious enough to carry essential items while remaining lightweight and easy to fold away when not in use. Overall, it is both practical and visually appealing.

Oversized Moomin T-Shirt (Size XS)

The oversized T-shirt, designed by **Nordic Buddies in Helsinki, Finland**, is also made from **100% cotton**, which makes it soft, breathable, and comfortable to wear. Despite being an oversized style, the XS size fits nicely while still maintaining that relaxed look — especially when paired with



leggings or casual bottoms.

One of the standout features is the large Moomin print on the back. The design is bold and beautifully detailed, making it the main highlight of the shirt.

The quality of the print feels durable and well-applied, adding to the overall premium feel of the product.

Final Thoughts

Both items reflect strong quality and thoughtful design. They are perfect for Moomin fans who appreciate simple yet meaningful designs with practical use. The materials feel comfortable, and the prints make the products stand out.



Moomintroll Women's Crew socks and Stinky Chunky Beanie (Nordic Buddies)

By Sarah Baker

Material: 67% Cotton 25% Polyester 4% Elastodiene 3% Nylon 1% Elastane

Size: One size fits all (EU 36-42)

Colour: Black/White

The Moomintroll crew socks are very comfortable to wear, as the material is thicker and they feel well-made compared with other socks. They boast features such as:

- ◆ Compression for better fit
- ◆ Breathable material
- ◆ Thicker bottom layer
- ◆ Ankle Protection

My feet feel very cosy in these socks and I love the Moomintroll design. The socks washed well at 30°C, I air dried them as washing instructions say not to tumble-dry – they were just as cosy after washing and hadn't lost their thick, cushiony feel or depth of colour, like some socks do.

One reason why these socks might fit so snugly, is it seems they're specifically made for each foot (labelled with L and R in case you forget, which made me smile).

These crew socks are great quality and very comfortable, they're a little pricier than I would wish them to be at £14, but these socks would make an excellent gift for Moomin fans and now one of my favourite pairs!

Rated: 9.5/10





I wanted to review this hat, not only because the Moomins are an awesome nostalgia throw-back from my childhood, but due to the fact it stood out as being extremely good quality and robust – of course, I thought fashioning the 'Mr Stinky' motif would also be rather funny.

Confident that this beanie hat would keep my head feeling cosy in freezing conditions, I wore it on my walk to work and I wasn't disappointed. The first few times wearing it, the temperature was -1°C and the hat definitely lived up to my expectations.



The thick, knitted, mix of wool and synthetic material kept my head very warm and dry. As beanies go, the chunkiness of it makes it feel rather weighty too. I liked the Navy colour, this was very versatile and didn't clash with anything else I was wearing.

The character motif is a good quality print on a cotton tag. The hat is suitable for all and the quality is excellent, it's a little on the pricey side at £32. However, I would definitely recommend this fashion item to anyone who loves the Moomins and wants a well-made beanie hat to

keep them feeling toasty in the winter months.

Rated: 9/10

Nordic Buddies – Company Profile

Nordic Buddies is a fun and creative lifestyle brand that started in **2019** in **Helsinki, Finland**. The company was created because its founders noticed there weren't many stylish clothing and accessories featuring classic Nordic characters for young adults and fans of nostalgic cartoons and stories.

The name **Nordic Buddies** comes from two ideas: "Nordic," which shows their love of Scandinavian culture and characters like **Moomin**, **Pippi Longstocking**, and creations by **Mauri Kunnas**, and "Buddies," which represents their belief that everyone — no matter where they're from — can be friends and enjoy their products together.

Nordic Buddies makes a wide range of products that celebrate these beloved characters. They sell colourful items like socks, t-shirts, hoodies, beanies, bags, bottles, mugs, and other accessories featuring designs inspired by Moomin stories and playful art. Their clothes and accessories combine modern style with nostalgic charm, so fans of all ages can wear something unique and meaningful.

The company cares about quality and ethical production. They work with factories in Europe and Eurasia and even make some items locally in Finland, making sure their products are responsibly made.

Nordic Buddies has grown quickly and now sells products in many countries around the world. If you want to learn more their official website is <https://www.nordicbuddies.com>.



Rocker Frog – Minimalist Backpack (Sea Monkey)**By Aaron Adams**

I recently got the Rocker Frog Minimalist Backpack from SeaMonkey and I'm really impressed with it! It's a simple but stylish backpack that feels perfect for school, casual trips, or when you just want to carry your essentials without something too bulky. One of the first things I noticed was the design – it has a cool frog-inspired print that makes it look fun without being too loud or flashy. It's a minimalist style, so it doesn't have loads of pockets or weird shapes, but that's part of what makes it easy to use every day.



The backpack is made from water-resistant polyester, so it feels strong and durable, and it's not too heavy even when you fill it with books, a lunchbox, or gym gear. Inside, there's a main compartment that's big enough for everyday stuff, and I found it handy for carrying notebooks and a water bottle. The straps are padded, which makes it more comfortable to wear on your back, even when it's a bit heavier. Overall, this backpack is great for students or anyone who wants a practical yet stylish bag that won't weigh you down. The frog design gives it some personality, and it feels well-made for the price – definitely a backpack I'd recommend if you like a cool, simple look!

Octopus Totebag (Sea Monkey)**By Jessica Curtis**

I recently picked up the SeaMonkey octopus tote bag and I'm really happy with it! It's a simple but super useful bag that's perfect for everyday use – whether I'm heading to school, the shops, or just out with friends. The octopus design gives it a fun, ocean-inspired look that stands out without being too weird or loud.

The canvas material feels sturdy and durable, so it should hold up well even when I carry books, snacks, or a water bottle. It has plenty of room inside, which makes it handy for packing whatever I need for the day. The handles are comfortable to wear over the shoulder, and I like that it's big enough to fit most things without being too bulky.

Overall, this tote bag is a great casual accessory – practical, stylish, and just quirky enough to be fun! I'd definitely recommend it to anyone who likes cute designs and wants a reliable tote they can use every day.

Sea Monkey Clothing

Sea Monkey Clothing is a fun and quirky online clothing brand known for bold designs, colourful graphics, and eye-catching prints that make everyday outfits more exciting. Their fashion is playful and creative, letting people show off their personality through what they wear. Sea Monkey offers a wide range of items, including t-shirts, hoodies, jackets, bottoms, and fun accessories, often featuring unique art and unusual patterns that stand out from typical store fashion.



The company also has a sub-brand called Critters, which creates stylish and comfortable clothing for babies and kids while keeping the same colourful and playful vibe as the main brand. Sea Monkey is also mindful of the environment – they work with eco-conscious partners and focus on reducing waste while delivering high-quality, unique clothing for everyday life. If you want to see their products or learn more, you can visit their official website: <https://www.seamonkey.co.uk>.



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SOMETHING FOR THE...TRENDSETTERS



Rosa Salas Perfumes

By Zuzanna Zrebiec

Rosa Salas Eau de Parfum comes in a beautifully designed black box with gold trim, giving it a luxurious and high-end feel.

The packaging reflects the elegance of the fragrance inside, making it a great gift or a stylish addition to your collection.

The 30ml size is convenient for carrying around or trying out the scent before committing to a larger bottle. Overall, this perfume box suggests a sophisticated and carefully crafted product that appeals to those who appreciate refined aesthetics and quality.



By Otto Stahl

Nazman is a bold and complex masculine fragrance that blends traditional oud with surprising accents like raspberry and saffron, creating something rich and memorable. It's ideal for men (or anyone) who want a scent with depth, character, and presence, especially in social or evening settings. With strong longevity and a distinctive profile, it's more than a simple "background cologne" — it's a fragrance that announces itself

Cubano is a classic, crowd-pleasing masculine fragrance that focuses on warmth and comfort rather than sharp intensity. It's not flashy or complex, but that's part of its charm. Easy to wear, inviting, and confidently masculine, Cubano is a solid choice for anyone looking for a dependable scent with a timeless feel.



Rosa Salaz – Modern Luxury Fragrance

Rosa Salaz is a fragrance brand known for creating elegant perfumes that combine **modern style with timeless scent design**. The company focuses on crafting distinctive fragrances using carefully balanced blends of floral, citrus, woody, and oriental notes, creating scents that develop and change as they settle on the skin.

Quality and presentation are central to the brand. Rosa Salaz perfumes are designed with **premium ingredients and stylish, minimalist bottles**, giving them a refined and luxurious feel.

With a focus on creativity and craftsmanship, Rosa Salaz aims to deliver **memorable, high-quality fragrances** that suit both everyday wear and special occasions.



SOMETHING FOR THE...MODEL MAKERS

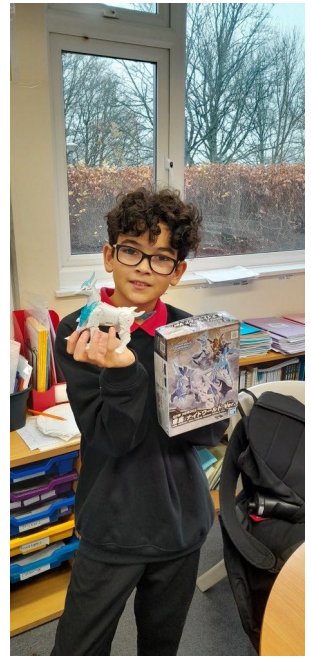
Gundam World Heroes:
War Horse Knight World
(Model Verse)

By Cruz Holloway and
Mrs Vowles

This set caught my eye because it is futuristic. I would say it was a medium challenge to build but only took me 35 minutes to make. I found it a bit frustrating that I had to take some pieces apart to re-do it when I had made a mistake. I didn't use the instructions and just looked at which pieces clicked together.

The most exciting bit to build was the blue collar. However, I was disappointed that there were no stickers to add more detail to the model.

Once completed, the model is a cool white and blue colour scheme, and the legs can move which is great. Overall, I really like it, and I would give it 10 out



Bandai Namco, Rising Freedom Gundam Stts-909 (Model Verse)

By Sam Hardwell

This is not the normal sort of model I would choose, but I was pleased to be able to build it during my intervention sessions.

Overall, I thought the instructions were fairly straight forward to follow. The only tricky bits were the stickers because some of them were really small and fiddly. However, I stuck with it and I managed to do them all with only a bit of

help. The model took me 2 lessons to complete and I'm pleased I get to take it home. The finished model is quite cool. It is small and has a sci-fi look, a bit like a transformer, which I like. I would score the model kit 7 out of 10 and I would consider recommending it to a friend.

GUNDAM RX-78-2 Review

By Andrei Radulescu

The model instructions were accurate, clear and complete. There were no scratches or defects on the model's parts, the texture felt smooth and shiny.

The model's parts fit together good; the model looked the same as it was shown. The complexity of this build was easy but people who are beginners may get confused with the instructions. The moveable parts move good but when you move the parts it may fall off if not moved lightly. The price of the kit is very good because the materials and parts feel high quality for £13. I would say that the target audience for this kit are for people who are beginning to start building models like this.

My overall impression of this kit is that it is very good quality for its price, the instructions are very clear and complete. If you like models like this I would also recommend HGAC Wing Gundam Zero



(£18) and Gundam IBO – #01 Gundam Barbatos (£18)

While building this I also used the DSPIAE TC-S01 Departure Tool Combo Set which helped me a lot while building this model. The tools are very useful especially the nippers.

Overall, this model kit and Departure tool combo set are amazing.

Model Review – SD RX-78-2 Gundam

By Lewis Taverner

The SD RX-78-2 Gundam is a Super Deformed (SD) version of the classic mobile suit from *Mobile Suit Gundam*. Despite its chibi-style proportions, the model retains the iconic colour scheme: white armour, blue torso, red feet, and yellow accents. Key details like the head vents, V-fin, and chest vents are faithfully captured, making it instantly recognisable. The bright, clean paintwork gives the model a lively, display-ready appearance.



From the side, the model's accessories stand out. The beam rifle fits in the hand, the bazooka is stored neatly on the back, and the shield mounts easily on the arm. These storage options are a nice touch, as SD kits don't always offer functional accessory placement. The chunky proportions give the Gundam a cute yet heroic stance, balancing charm with the classic mobile suit look.

The back of the model shows off backpack thrusters and the secure bazooka attachment.

Everything fits snugly without appearing oversized or awkward. Overall, the build feels solid, with no loose parts, making it perfect for careful handling or display on a desk or shelf. In terms of performance, the SD RX-78-2 is fun to pose, though movement is somewhat limited due to its chibi proportions. The included accessories — beam rifle, shield, and bazooka — add versatility, and the clean-fitting parts mean the model is sturdy enough for light handling.

Overall, this SD kit is a cute, iconic, and satisfying build. It works perfectly as a display piece and is an enjoyable quick build for fans of the original Gundam or those looking to try smaller kits. With bright colours, detailed sculpting, and functional accessories, it's a great addition to any collection.



Modelverse – A Store for Model Building Fans

Modelverse is a UK-based online store that specialises in model kits and Gunpla (Gundam plastic models). Created by hobbyists who are passionate about model building, the company aims to make it easier for people in the UK to discover and enjoy modern model kits.

Modelverse offers a wide selection of kits, including mecha models, sci-fi builds, and character-based figures from well-known manufacturers. The company focuses on selling high-quality, genuine products, making sure builders receive authentic kits from trusted suppliers.

The brand is also focused on making the hobby accessible to both beginners and experienced builders. Whether someone is building their first kit or adding to a growing collection, Modelverse provides a range of options for different skill levels. With stock shipped directly from the UK, Modelverse offers reliable delivery and helpful service for hobbyists and collectors across the country.

Find out more at www.modelverse.co.uk



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SOMETHING FOR THE...GO GETTERS!

Leather Boxing Gloves -
Fight Kings

By Ellis Roughsedge

Hello, I'm Ellis and I'm

reviewing Fight Kings Boxing gloves.

For starters, these gloves are perfectly snug, and wrap provides your thumb with a very nice comfort.

With these gloves affording you with great grip and good breathable room, it is really comfy and snug when punching and throwing jabs and hooks. They are extremely good with giving a guaranteed strong yet feeling soft on your knuckle, smack.

Whenever you punch it feels soft and doesn't hurt one bit. I love how they have good padding and give you some good blows while feeling is soothing on your knuckle.

It also has excellent finger positioning which makes it extremely well for gifting them with very good hits. Nothing about the finger placement is awkward or uncomfortable, it put your thumb and fingers in very good spots.

The wrist support is incredible, and it will reinforce your wrist perfectly, the strap can be adjusted into very good support positions meaning the glove won't slip off and can provide flexibility while punching. It gives amazing breathable room without it being too loose.

The material used is very strong and won't collapse for a while. The stitching is very well done and reinforces the gloves perfectly. It is better for bag work than sparring but still can be effective in both. It ensures good quality punches while saying strong.

These gloves are incredible for consistently working without injury or pain. Overall I recommend these boxing gloves and they're very good for just punching.



"I like the brand logo, especially the gold detail. They feel like good quality gloves. However, I wear 10 oz gloves and these felt a lot bigger, despite them also being 10 oz."

Due to this, they felt very heavy compared to my usual gloves. Unfortunately, they also made my hands feel quite hot and sweaty, so not sure I would be able to wear them for a full training session." –

Bella Taylor



SOMETHING FOR THE...GAMERS

Miyoo Mini Flip – Video Game
Consoles (LITNXT)

By Jacob Prouse

Today I am reviewing the Miyoo Mini Flip, a handheld gaming device that takes clear inspiration from classic retro consoles, especially with its Game Boy-style clamshell design. The overall concept focuses on portability, nostalgia, and access to a wide library of retro games.

One of the biggest strengths of this device is its size. It is small, lightweight, and extremely convenient for travel. Whether you are going on a long car ride, a flight, or just carrying it in a backpack, it fits easily into almost any bag. The folding design also helps protect the screen and controls when not in use, making it safer to transport.

The game selection is one of the most impressive features. The device comes packed with a large collection of retro games across multiple classic consoles. Navigating through the system can initially feel overwhelming because there are so many titles and platforms available. Users simply select a console system and then choose from the available games. This wide compatibility gives players plenty of variety and replay value.

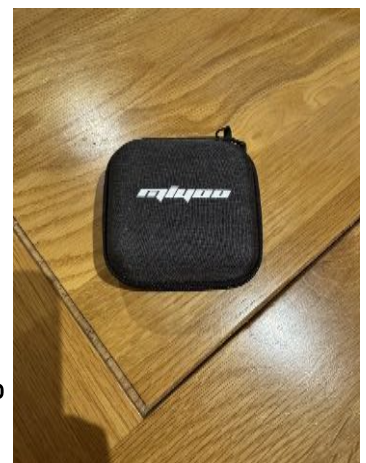
In terms of display and performance, the screen size is appropriate for the compact design. The visuals suit retro-style pixel games well, and the frame rate remains stable during most gameplay sessions. Because the system is designed primarily for retro emulation rather than modern high-performance gaming, it handles classic titles smoothly.

The design aesthetics are also a strong point. The device comes in multiple colour options, allowing users to choose a style that matches their preference. The build feels solid for its price range, and the controls are responsive. However, one downside is compatibility. Since the system supports multiple consoles through emulation, not every game works perfectly with the available controls. For example, certain games like Metal Gear Solid may be unplayable due to control mapping limitations or system compatibility issues.

Another advantage is the price. It is budget-friendly and significantly cheaper than buying older home consoles such as a PS2 or Sega system. For users looking for an affordable way to experience classic gaming, it provides strong value for money.

Final Rating: 8/10

I would rate the Miyoo Mini Flip an 8/10. Despite some compatibility limitations with certain games, it stands out as an excellent portable retro gaming device. It is ideal for anyone looking for nostalgia, affordability, and convenience combined into one compact console.



LITNXT – Reviving Retro Gaming for a New Generation

Founded in 2008, LITNXT has become a leader in retro gaming, dedicated to bringing the magic of classic video games to today's players. The company designs and produces a diverse range of **consoles, handhelds, mini PCs, and game sticks**, combining nostalgic designs with modern technology.



Devices like the **Miyoo Mini Flip** and **TrimUI Smart Pro** allow gamers to relive their favourite classic titles anywhere, with compact, portable designs, responsive controls, and sleek finishes.

LITNXT works with trusted technology partners, including **Miyoo, Anbernic, Retroid, and Trimui**, to ensure every product is **high-quality, durable, and reliable**. Their consoles feature **retro-inspired aesthetics** while offering modern enhancements such as **high-definition displays, smooth frame rates, intuitive interfaces, and long-lasting battery life**, giving both new players and longtime fans an immersive gaming experience.

The company also values **accessibility and affordability**, making retro gaming easy to enjoy for students, casual players, and dedicated enthusiasts alike. With devices designed for portability, users can enjoy nostalgia on the go — whether on a commute, at school, or at home.

Exclusive student offer: Use the code **Quill** to get **15% off** the Miyoo Mini Flip!

Beyond products, LITNXT celebrates a **community of retro gaming fans**, providing a platform where players can share experiences, explore classic games, and discover new favourites. Whether revisiting the classics or discovering them for the first time, **LITNXT** delivers the perfect mix of nostalgia, convenience, and modern gaming technology — all in the palm of your hand.

Zero40 Handheld – AMPOWN x Android Review (Gogamegeek)

By Milo McGhee

The **Zero40**, co-produced by **AMPOWN and Android**, is a compact handheld gaming console released on **June 26, 2025**, designed for **portable gaming and retro game fans**. It's especially suited for younger players who want access to a **wide variety of classic titles** in a single device.

Design & Build

The console has a **simple yet modern design**, with a metallic black finish that feels **premium and durable**. The controller layout blends elements from **Xbox and Nintendo Switch**, making it familiar and easy to pick up. Buttons are responsive, and the analog sticks are smooth, although players with larger hands may find long sessions slightly cramped.



Lightweight and sturdy, the Zero40 is ideal for travel, with a **bright, clear screen** that works well indoors and outdoors, though glare can be an issue in direct sunlight. Quick charging adds extra



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convenience for long gaming sessions on the go.

Performance & Compatibility

For a handheld device, performance is **solid**. Retro games and lighter modern titles run smoothly without lag. However, it is not designed for high-end AAA games, so players seeking console-level graphics may be disappointed.

A standout feature is **game compatibility**. The Zero40 supports multiple retro gaming systems through **RetroArch**, offering classic titles like *Mario* and *Mortal Kombat*, plus multiplayer functionality. Built-in **2.4G Wi-Fi and Bluetooth 4.2** make wireless multiplayer simple and convenient.

Usability

The interface is intuitive, making it easy to navigate games and settings. Overall, the Zero40 combines portability, versatility, and **fun retro gaming** in a single compact device.

Final Recommendation

I recommend the Zero40 for **kids and teens aged 8–14**, especially those who enjoy retro titles and need a travel-friendly console.

It's a great portable gaming device for casual play and multiplayer fun, but less suited for high-performance modern gaming.

Rating: 8/10 – portable, fun, and versatile, with excellent retro game support.



Company Profile: GoGameGeek

GoGameGeek is a forward-thinking gaming lifestyle brand dedicated to celebrating games of all kinds — from board games and card games to video games and puzzle challenges. Launched with the aim of bringing players together, GoGameGeek creates content, reviews, and community spaces where gamers can share their passion, discover new favourites, and connect with others who love playing just as much as they do.

At its core, GoGameGeek believes gaming is more than just entertainment — it's a way to build friendships, spark imagination, and challenge your mind. The company offers a mix of in-depth game reviews, fun opinion pieces, hands-on features, and recommendations for games that suit all ages and interests. Whether you're into strategy board games, tabletop RPGs, retro gaming, or competitive esports, GoGameGeek helps you find something you'll enjoy.

GoGameGeek also supports creators and smaller game studios by highlighting exciting new releases and hidden gems that gamers might otherwise miss. Their online community encourages players to share their own experiences, tips, and reviews — making every gamer feel heard and inspired.

With a focus on quality content, community engagement, and celebrating the joy of play, **GoGameGeek** is helping make gaming fun, inclusive, and accessible for players everywhere.



SOMETHING FOR THE...THINKERS

Stack 'Em, Meow 'Em,
Win 'Em: Kittin Is Purr
-fect Fun! (Alley Cat
Games)

By Poppy Spurway

The Alley Cat game *Kittin* is an addictive game where you must race to stack cats and become the chief cat before anyone else. It's a great game to play if you board or need a time filler. This fast-paced game tests you balancing skills and is themed around kittens.

This game is a great game to play with large or small groups as you can play with 2-8 player (note that 6-8 plays must play in teams). It comes in a small pocket-sized tin making it an easy game to bring anywhere. The

game itself comes with miniature balsam wood cats making them light for optimal cats balancing, the game also comes with small card telling you how to balance the cats. The game is also great for all ages over 6 as you can change the rules a little bit for older players who may find it too easy.

So, you may be thinking how you play the game well first set up is super easy and doesn't require a lot of time to set up .after you have randomly placed the cats in the middle of a circle of cards you can start playing, when everyone is ready the oldest player flips a card

and lays it on the flat surface where everyone can see it, then must everybody races to grab the cats and star stacking ,once the first player has finished there stack they shout meow after that others check that the stack matches the card if it does they win the card and once the first player gets 3 card they win and is declared chief cat cuddler

Overall, this game is a great travel games or time filler, the theme of cats makes it fun for younger kids however the balancing skills makes it fun for older players. My favourite part of this game is the adaption you can make so everyone is included. This game is a 5/5 and I would recommend.



Tinderblox (Alley Cat Games)

By Peter Hopwood

I recently got to try *Tinderblox* by Alley Cat Games, and honestly, it was a lot more fun than I expected for such a tiny game. The whole game comes in this small tin, which is super convenient to throw in your backpack between classes or bring to a friend's house.

The goal is simple: you have these little logs and flame cubes, and you have to stack them into a campfire without knocking it over. Sounds easy, right? But trust me, it's way harder than it looks. The tiniest shake of your hands or a distracted laugh from a friend can ruin your tower, which makes it both frustrating and hilarious.

I played it with a few classmates, and it worked really well as a quick break game. Rounds are short, so even if you mess up and your fire falls, it's not a long wait to start again. Plus, everyone



gets super competitive, and it honestly makes you laugh a lot.

One downside is that the pieces are really small. I almost lost a couple of flame cubes under the table, and the tweezers can be a bit tricky at first. Also, it's mostly about dexterity, so if you're looking for strategy, you won't find much here.

Overall, I think *Tinderblox* is perfect for students who want a quick, silly, and portable game to play with friends between classes, at lunch, or even during study breaks. It's not going to replace serious board games, but it's definitely worth having in your backpack for a fun distraction.

Rating: 4/5 – Fun, fast, and surprisingly addictive for such a small game.

"I thought Tinderblox was an amazing game. I'm 11 and I found it easy to understand. I love that it's small as I can bring it on school trips and play it anywhere.

I think its easy to bring to the table for a family games night. What a cool game!" – Evie Hopwood



Ally Cat Games – Fun, Fast, and Full of Purr-sonality!

Ally Cat Games is an independent board game publisher dedicated to creating **fun, fast-paced, and addictive games** that bring friends, families, and students together. Founded with a passion for clever, engaging tabletop games, the company's first title, **Lab Wars**, launched on Kickstarter in 2016. The campaign was a huge success, gaining international recognition in major publications like *The Wall Street Journal*, *Nature News*, *Science Magazine*, and *Vox.com*. Since then, Ally Cat Games has raised over **£2,000,000** through **Kickstarter** alone, with their games now sold worldwide.

The company is known for **portable, travel-friendly games** that are easy to pick up but challenging to master. Popular titles like **Kittin**, the fast-paced cat-stacking game, and **Tinderblox**, the addictive block-building challenge, combine fun themes with clever gameplay that appeals to players of all ages. Many of their games come in **pocket-sized tins** or with lightweight components, making them perfect for **game nights, travel, or classroom fun**. Rules can often be adapted for younger or older players, ensuring everyone can join in.

Ally Cat Games also values **community and engagement**, connecting with players through Kickstarter updates, social media, and playtesting opportunities. Their games emphasize **creativity, strategy, and replay value**, making each session a memorable experience. Whether you're a student, casual gamer, or tabletop enthusiast, Ally Cat Games delivers **quality, fun, and imaginative experiences** that are easy to love.

To find out more and explore their games, visit www.allycatgames.com.



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Doing Wadham Proud, Former students changing the world

Interview with former Wadham Student Molly Daniel.

1. When were you at Wadham School?

2014-2017

2. What memories do you have of Wadham?

My memories at Wadham include: Year 11 Dissection in Biology; Completing my Bronze, Silver, and Gold Duke of Edinburgh; donating supplies to the ones in need from Calais; and winning a place in the finals for the Big Bang Competition!

3. Who was your tutor?

Mr Cassidy and Mr O'nions

4. What subjects did you enjoy the most at Wadham and why?

I enjoyed PE the most and BTEC Sport. Miss Bolderstone and Mr Pryor were inspirational to me and have helped me to where I am today.



5. What did you decide to do post 16 and why?

After Year 11 I decided to stay on at sixth form and take Biology, Maths and Psychology. When I decided that wasn't for me, I went onto Yeovil College and completed my Level 2 and 3 Diploma in Supporting the delivery of Physical Education and School Sport. Then I went onto complete my Level 4 and 5 HND in Sport and Coaching.



6) What did you do after you left Wadham?



I had an apprenticeship at Merriott and Haselbury First School while completing my Level 2 and 3, then volunteered at Huish Episcopi Academy in PE for my Level 4 and 5 HND.

7) What job do you do now?

I now work as a PE Teacher at Somerset Progressive School at Hambridge providing all different sports for children with a wide range of different abilities and backgrounds. Outside of this I am involved in ladies team at Bath Rugby Club. I began my rugby journey with Crewkerne Ladies RFC in 2020, where I played for three unforgettable years before moving on to Bath Ladies. During my time at Crewkerne, I also represented Somerset and Bath 7s, and I had the opportunity to train with Exeter Chiefs during the Covid-19 period, which further challenged me and accelerated my development as a player. Crewkerne felt like a true rugby family — the support, knowledge, and belief within the team helped shape me as a player and deepened my love for the sport. Rugby is more than just a game to me; it's about teamwork, resilience, and constantly pushing myself to be better, which is why I love it so much.



I played predominantly at 13 (outside centre) for Crewkerne, developing strong attacking skills and game awareness. Now in my third season with Bath Ladies, I've transitioned into playing 15 (full back), embracing the responsibility and wider view of the game that comes with the position. Bath has quickly become a family too, offering the same support and togetherness that makes rugby so special. This season has been a standout one so far, having scored over 100 league points, and my next target is firmly set on reaching 150.

8) How has your time at Wadham helped you?

It has helped me in many ways through getting my grades I needed to get into college, meeting new friends and getting inspired to do a job I love doing.

9) How would you describe Wadham School in 5 words?

Enjoyable, engaging, supportive, educational and inspiring





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

Daniil Lyszyk, Cara Panter, Ella Priddle, Annabel Lamb, Laura Manning, the

students from Herne View Primary School, Winsham Primary School and Merriott Primary School, Papi Mariani, Otto Stahl, Lucy Martin, Laura Andrews, Jessie Vowles, Caitlyn Edwards, Poppy Spurway, Jonathan Margetts, Amy Grey, Poppy Best, Izzy Foster, Charlie Straker-Nesbit, Nolan Cassidy, Richard Burgas, Rose Goddard, Toren Radford-Hyland, Olivia Donohue, Luke Hodnett, Paige Hicks, Erin Kent, Evelyn Summers, Lily Norton, Cassian Roe, Arin Blackwood, Olivia Moncur, Nye Edgar, Rebecca Curtis, Rhiley Clarke, Abigail MacKay, Alice Henly, Alfie Holt, By Phoebe Curtis, JJ Taylor, Edward Oleen, Luna Grey, Charlie Gibson, Isabelle Coombes, Milo McGhee, Clarie Gutherie, Sarah Baker, Henry Hopwood, Fen Hopkirk, Jake Cox, Yasmin Hill, Meadow Curtis, Ewelina Hartnell, Aaron Adams, Jessica Curtis, Zuzanna Zrebiec, Cruz Holloway, Sam Hardwell, Andrei Radulescu, Lewis Taverner, Ellis Roughsedge, Bella Taylor, Evie Hopwood and Jacob Prouse.

***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

