



# LeysLife

Issue 14 - Lent Term 2024



## A Message from the Headmaster

Welcome to the Lent Term issue of Leys Life.

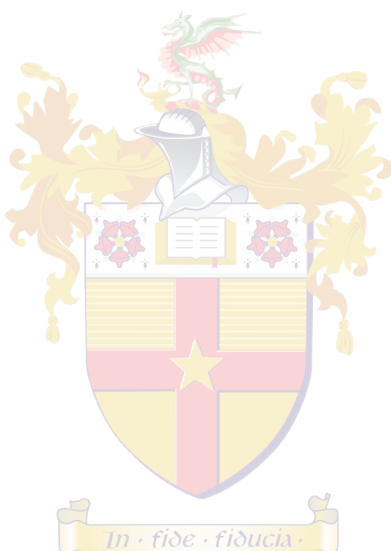
Each year the list of leavers' destinations is varied, and this year is no exception. There has been an increasing interest in university options overseas and we were delighted to hear that Upper Sixth pupil Neev G has been accepted to study at Brown University in the USA from September. Those considering alternative routes are also celebrated; we were thrilled to see Charlie RK accept his offer to complete a Degree Apprenticeship with AstraZeneca after being selected from a pool of hundreds of applicants.

Academic life at The Leys continues to thrive, with Leysians seeing success in a variety of fields. A special mention goes to Weng Ga C who received a Top Gold award in this year's British Physics Olympiad putting him in the top 6% of this elite competition. We have also been fortunate to host a number of high-profile speakers, including Old Leysians as well as other eminent professionals and academics. Highlights this term include Sir David King, a former Leys parent, who delivered a lecture on climate change, and Managing Partner of EY, Charlie Alexander, a current Leys parent, who spoke to our pupils about the career opportunities available in professional services.

This term there have been some notable achievements in sport. James P was selected for the England Rugby U17 Development Camp which took place on 2 March and he is hopeful of selection for the England U18 tour to South Africa this summer. The following day our U15A Rugby team successfully reached the Semi Finals of the RFU Schools National Vase. Despite missing out on a place in the finals by just one point, it was a wonderful performance, several times coming back from difficult positions in the match to retake the lead, showing huge resilience and team spirit. Our girls' cricket tour to Dubai was a huge success, and it is encouraging to see tours now back in the school calendar with our boys' Rugby and Hockey tour to South Africa taking place later this year.

As always, the Music, Drama and Dance Departments have all been busy. There have been a number of opportunities for pupils to perform on the stage in Great Hall, such as the recent live dance show, 'Hollywood', and the outstanding Year 10 play, 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'. Regular concerts have also continued such as 'Lunchtime Live' on Friday lunchtimes, and 'Live at Balgarnie's' which are very well attended.

On return from the half term break we were saddened to find that the Lebanese Cedar which sits outside the Headmaster's House had fallen. We regarded this majestic tree as a wonderful and integral feature of the school campus and, speaking personally, of our life here in the Headmaster's House. It's provided life, shade, beauty and birdsong since well before the School's foundation in 1875. Work is currently underway on how to memorialise this event as we look ahead to our sesquicentenary in 2025.



## FEATURED NEWS

### Top Gold for Weng Ga

Upper Sixth pupil Weng Ga C has received a Top Gold award in this year's British Physics Olympiad, placing him in the top 6% nationally. Ricky T also achieved a Gold award (top 16%), and Silver awards were received by Terry J and Martin P-S (top 36%).

Pupils sat the papers in November 2023 and the three hours of questions challenged their range of knowledge, preparation, problem-solving skills and tenacity. The aim of the Olympiad is to stretch and challenge the top young physicists in the country, preparing them for future study and giving them a deeper understanding of the ideas and applications of physics. The results were announced just before the half term break.



Mr Harmsworth, Head of Physics, commented: "As always, the questions required very different perspectives to get the measure of them. Time and perseverance were needed to master this challenge as they are not your everyday A Level Physics questions. This is our best crop of Physics Olympiad results this century and we are very proud of the effort they all put in tackling the papers."



### Cameron Selected for Royal Navy Wings Programme

Lower Sixth pupil Cameron M has gained a place on the prestigious Cadet Naval Wings Programme, sponsored by the Royal Navy. He spent February half term at the Ground School Course at RNAS Culdrose in Cornwall to gain his Bronze Wings, and the Silver and Gold courses will be completed later in the year.

The Wings Programme is highly competitive, with cadets applying from all over the UK, and only a small number are selected to complete their Bronze, Silver and Gold Wings. The programme immerses cadets in the world of naval aviation, teaches basic flight principles and navigation, as well as offering experience in aircraft handling. Over the course of the programme cadets have the chance to apply their knowledge of flight controls through simulation and practical flight under the careful supervision of Royal Navy instructors.

Cameron, who is currently studying A Levels in Maths, Physics and Computer Science, commented: "I feel extremely fortunate to have been given this opportunity. I am grateful to Mr Hill for his encouragement and support through the application process. I am so excited to gain knowledge from Royal Navy instructors and can't wait to fly a plane!"

Mr Hill, CCF Royal Navy Section Coordinator at The Leys, added: "Cameron has shown exceptional leadership in our RN CCF. The Wings Programme is highly competitive, so I am very proud of him and hope he enjoys the experience."





## FEATURED NEWS

### Neev to Study at Brown

Neev G has accepted an offer to study at Brown University from September 2024.

Brown is a leading research university based in Rhode Island, USA, a member of the prestigious Ivy League and one of the top ranked universities in the world. Admission to US colleges is a highly holistic process and Neev has been working towards this moment for the last two years. His application comprised essays on a wide range of academic and wider-curricular topics along with interviews and the submission of recorded speeches.

Neev, who is currently studying A Levels in Maths, Further Maths, Physics and History, commented: "It feels really good to have been offered a place at Brown. I am particularly keen on the open curriculum they offer as I am still undecided on which path to pursue in the future. I am really grateful for the help of Dr Black who has guided me through the application process and has been really supportive."

Dr Black, the new International University Coordinator at The Leys, added: "I'm delighted for Neev. His dedication, hard work and huge potential have been rightly recognised with this very exciting opportunity."



### Charlie Heads to AstraZeneca

Charlie RK has accepted an offer to complete a Degree Apprenticeship in Digital Technology Solutions with AstraZeneca, the global biopharmaceutical company headquartered in Cambridge, UK, from September. This highly competitive programme combines working and earning a full-time salary with a fully funded university degree.

Charlie was initially attracted to the programme following a Careers Fair at The Leys where he had the opportunity to meet one of the apprentices at their stand. The application process involved interviews, general ability and logic testing, as well as situational judgement tests where candidates were given scenarios and asked how they would respond. From the hundreds of applicants, Charlie was shortlisted as one of just three candidates and in the final interview he was asked to prepare a presentation on a given topic.

Charlie commented: "I am thankful to our Head of Design Technology, Mr Battle, for his help with preparing for the final interview, which was vital to my success in the process. I am over the moon to have gained this opportunity and can't wait to get started!"



## SCHOOL LIFE



### Japanese Exchange

On 6 January we welcomed pupils from Aoyama Gakuin High School in Japan to the UK as part of our annual exchange. During their time with us they shadowed pupils in their lessons, joined in with the Wider Curriculum and experienced life in our Houses, as well exploring Cambridge and immersing themselves in UK culture. It was wonderful to see this long-standing exchange continue to benefit all the pupils involved.

### Fergie turns 70!

On 12 January our Grounds team invited staff to celebrate the 70th birthday of Fergie, our trusty tractor. Still being used on a very regular basis, he has certainly become part of the fabric of The Leys. Here's to many more years to come!



### Medical Ethics Workshop

On Thursday 1 February 115 pupils, representing 13 schools and colleges from across Cambridgeshire, gathered in Great Hall to attend a Medical Ethics workshop. The workshop was led by guest speaker Dr Zoe Fritz, Consultant Physician and Wellcome Fellow in Society and Ethics, University of Cambridge, with the support of a team of volunteer medical students and doctors who facilitated the group case studies. Pupils took part in group discussions, debating real medical ethical dilemmas faced in practice, which led to some lively discussions. A wide range of topics were covered including whether doctors should use AI in their decision making.



### Model UN

On Friday 2 February, 11 pupils from Year 11 and the Lower Sixth attended the Model UN Conference held at The Stephen Perse. They each chose to represent a committee according to their own interests, and were then allocated a country to represent. They researched specific topics from the viewpoint of their appointed country, and spent the conference role-playing UN diplomats, trying to persuade other countries to adopt the solutions that they put forward, or working with allies to reach a workable accord.





## SCHOOL LIFE

### Rotary Engineering Tournament

In early February eight Year 9 pupils took part in the annual inter-school Rotary Engineering Tournament, held in Cambridge, alongside eight other teams from Cambridgeshire schools. The judges were distinguished engineers for both industry and academia.

An engineering challenge was set, which involved woodworking, electronics and application of the laws of physics. This challenge gave our pupils a taste of what engineering is like in the real world where they may not have the luxury of time, where there are tight deadlines and where budgets are limited. This year the brief involved being part of the Rotary Shelter Box relief team that had to design, construct and test a controlled vehicle to cross a crocodile-infested river on a suspended cable to deposit the contents of the box to the people on the other side.

Pupils were required to produce a portfolio of their design work as well as design, build and test it all with a limited kit of materials, in just three hours (whilst also having a working lunch!) All of the pupils did extremely well, but a special mention goes to the 'Karamel Koalas' consisting of Emily BT, Izzy B, Ross K and Barney M who won the award for Best Planning and Teamwork which was presented by the Mayor of Cambridge Cllr Jenny Gawthrop Wood! They did a fantastic job with their design, portfolio and implementation.

The 'New York Timers' consisting of Jacob F, Evgeni K, Saachi K and Beatrice M-K also completed the challenge successfully. Their design had great aesthetics and the judges gave them a special commendation. They all had to think outside the box, overcome several obstacles, take their designs through several iterations and deserve a lot of credit for their determination to succeed.

It was also wonderful for pupils to have the opportunity to meet former Headmaster of The Leys, the Rev Dr John Barrett, who was one of the judges!

*Dr S McAuley*



### UK Linguistics Olympiad

On 8 February, four pupils in the Sixth Form took part in Round One of the Advanced Level of the UK Linguistics Olympiad. UKLO is a language-analysis competition, encouraging pupils to study languages as objects of interest rather than simply as tools for communicating.



## SCHOOL LIFE

### Lunar New Year

This term our school community has been celebrating Lunar New Year, welcoming in the Year of the Dragon. There have been themed meals, including hotpot, with pupils wearing traditional dress, as well as decorations throughout the Houses. Thank you to the members of staff who made this all possible.



### Ulyana Gumenuiuk

During February some of our Lower Sixth artists were fortunate to receive a visit from Ulyana Gumenuiuk. She took them through the process of layering oil glaze on wood panels, using her extraordinary portrait of Catherine Parr as the basis for the workshop. Pupils explored traditional brushes, paints and techniques as part of the fast-paced afternoon! A huge thank you to Ulyana for sharing her exceptional expertise and wonderful work.



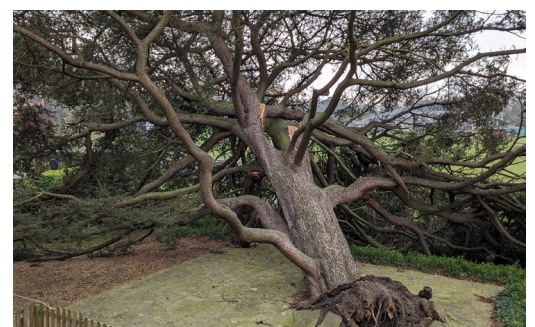
### Annelise Gray

On 27 February our Year 7 and 8 pupils were invited to a talk in our Library given by children's author, and former teacher at The Leys, Annelise Gray. Her popular series 'Circus Maximus' follows Dido, a young woman of the ancient world who dreams of being a chariot racer. In her talk, Annelise outlined her work and her life as a novelist to an engaged audience, and finished with a Q&A with some thought-provoking questions from our pupils.



### Lebanese Cedar

On return from the half term break, staff and pupils were saddened to see that the Lebanese Cedar, which has sat outside the Headmaster's House since before the founding of the school, had fallen. Past pupils will no doubt have memories of the tree, and work is currently underway on how to memorialise this event as we look ahead to our 150th anniversary in 2025.





## SCHOOL LIFE



### DT Greenpower Project

As part of the Greenpower project, pupils are currently looking at creating a new shell for our battery-powered car with the aim of making it more aerodynamic. Using 3D-printed scale models of the chassis and a wind tunnel designed and built in our DT workshop they have been testing a variety of concepts – such as teardrops and wedges – and refining their own designs.

### An Impromptu Visit...

It was a memorable moment for Old Leysian East Anglian Air Ambulance co-pilot Lee Kennedy when he landed the charity's helicopter in the Upper Quad earlier this year. The school field is the designated landing site, but Lee's inside knowledge meant that the crew could reach the person in need that much faster. As medics rushed to deal with the emergency at Lensfield Road, Lee (North B 1989-92) was given an impromptu tour of the B Houses by Senior Tutor Mr Davidson. Despite the many changes since his time at The Leys, Lee was pleased to see there was still a table tennis table! He said: "It was brilliant to be back. To receive a tour of North B, my former House, was very special."



### World Culture Evening

On Friday 4 March, we held our annual World Culture Evening. The event began with presentations and performances in Great Hall, followed by a chance to learn about different cultures from pupil representatives and to sample traditional food and drink. What a wonderful way to celebrate the international diversity at the school and what a valuable contribution this adds to everyday life.



### House Debating Final

The House Debating Competition 2024 saw all Houses compete against one another in a series of fiercely fought early rounds throughout the past eight weeks. The final was held in Great Hall with all pupils in attendance. The motion was 'This House believes that charity begins at home', with Bisseker speaking for the proposition and North A speaking for the opposition. Our judge from the Cambridge Union commended all pupils on their teamwork and research, but ultimately North A were declared victorious. Congratulations to all speakers who participated in Debating throughout this term.

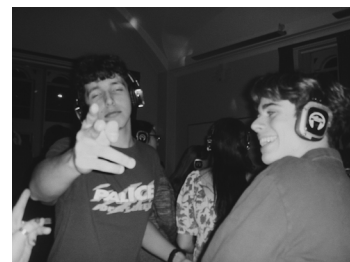


## SCHOOL LIFE



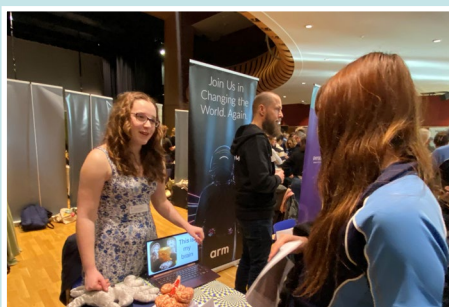
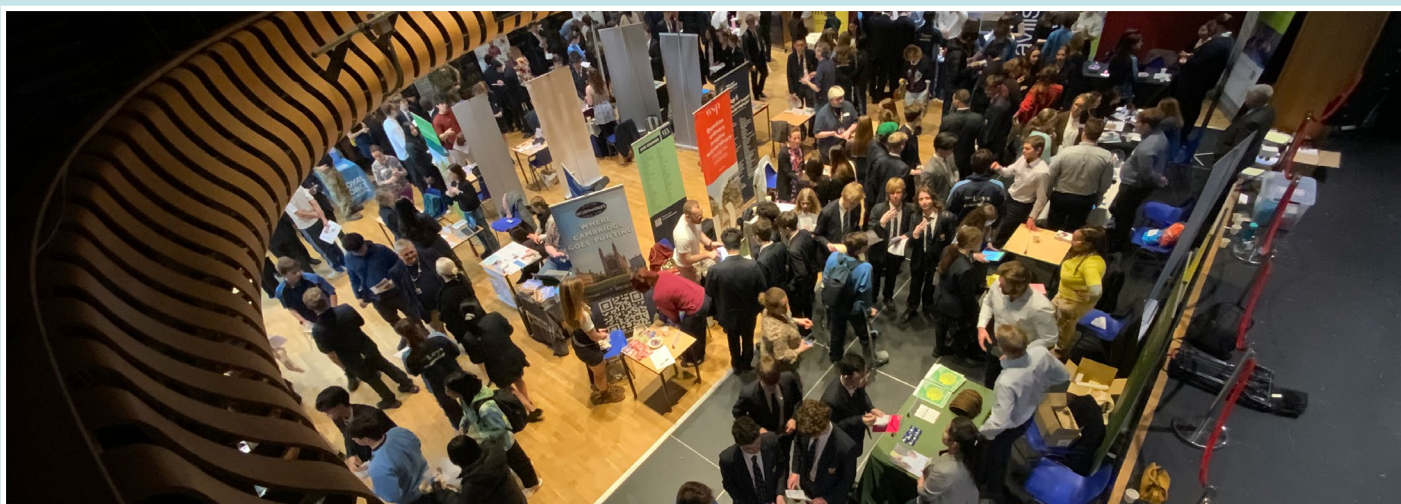
### Silent Disco

On Friday 15 March we held a Silent Disco for our Upper Sixth pupils which began in the Library and then spilled out into the Upper Quad! A great time was had by all. These fantastic photos were taken by Clare W.



### Careers Forum 2024

On Saturday 16 March we held a successful Careers Forum which was well attended with a steady flow of visitors (both our own pupils and external guests) throughout the morning. There was a positive atmosphere in Great Hall enjoyed by pupils as well as our 40+ exhibitors. A wide range of careers were covered from law, engineering, defence, research and finance to horticulture, psychotherapy, property and agronomy. We were very pleased to have a selection of Leys parents and OLs also there representing their respective industries.



### CCF Weekend

Members of our CCF took part in the Combat Cadet Competition which took place at the Beckingham training camp in Lincolnshire. They came away with a Gold Award and from a total of 18 ACF and CCF teams they finished in second place for CCF teams and third place overall, only two points below the top score. Our cadets performed extremely well throughout the competition and their success is due to their hard work and in no small part to Captain O'Hanlon's unceasing commitment to training our cadets to a very high standard.





## SPORT

### U19 Girls Netball Victory

A huge achievement for our 1st VII this term who got through to the U19 Regional Tournament on 28 January. Some amazing matches played against some brilliant oppositions; the girls should be extremely proud of themselves.



### Saracens Mavericks

Well done to Effie N and Nancy F who were selected to play for Saracens Mavericks in a regional tournament hosted by London Pulse. Both made a fantastic contribution in their games against very tough competition. It is great to see both players growing their skills, experience and confidence at this level.

### First Competitive Girls' Football Fixture

On 30 January we travelled to King's Ely for the School's first ever competitive girls' football fixture. Well done to the girls, some of whom were new to the game this season, and we look forward to seeing the team grow in confidence as the term progresses. Congratulations to Alice who was voted Player of the Match by the opposing team.



### Girls Cricket Tour to Dubai

During half term the Girls' Cricket Tour headed off to Dubai. They had plenty of opportunities to play and watch cricket, as well as finding time to explore, including trips to the desert and to the top of the Burj Khalifa. They also enjoyed jet skiing, yacht cruises and water parks. The tour provided a great opportunity for them to gain insight into a country renowned for its dynamism and youthful energy, as well as forging new friendships through a shared love of cricket. A special mention goes to Freya H, the first Leysian girl to score 100 overseas!





## SPORT

### U17 England Rugby Camp Call Up

Lower Sixth pupil James P was selected to attend the England Rugby U17 Development Camp, which took place on Saturday 2 March.

James' journey began following last year's Rosslyn Park Sevens tournament, in which he played a key role in taking The Leys' U16 team to the Semi Finals. His performance was noticed by the Northampton Saints who invited him to join their Academy, and he has since played in the Warwick and Malvern Festivals as well as two U18 matches this year. It is from these matches that he was picked up by England Rugby and invited to attend the U17 Development Camp. The camp is part of the England Rugby Pathway and a step towards selection for the England U18 tour to South Africa this summer.



James commented: "It feels amazing to be called up to attend the Development Camp and I am really hopeful to be selected for the South Africa Tour this summer. In the future I hope to pursue a professional rugby career and I'm really excited to be taking this next step towards that goal."



### National Vase Semi Final

The Leys School U15A Rugby team successfully reached the Semi Finals of the RFU Schools National Vase, which took place on Sunday 3 March.

The Schools Cup is the RFU's annual national school rugby tournament. With over 650 teams competing across the country at both U15 and U18 level, the tournament is one of the largest of its kind in the world. The competition offers chances of silverware at all levels through a four-tier structure (Cup, Plate, Vase and Bowl) and sees teams take part in fixtures all the way from September through to the finals in March.

The Leys U15A team had a strong start to the 2023-24 tournament, with victories against King's Ely, Langley, Wymondham College, The Perse and Solihull to progress to

the Quarter Finals against Calday Grange Grammar School, beating them 29-15. The run came to an end in the Semi Finals after a close game against Durham Cathedral Schools Foundation. The boys played some high-tempo rugby, putting themselves in the lead in the second half, however with one minute to go, conceded a penalty which Durham secured to take the victory 22-21.

Head of Rugby, Mr Clark, added: "Understandably, the team will be disappointed to get so close and not get over the line, but we are incredibly proud of their performances and their journey in this cup competition. To get this far in the Vase is no mean feat and a testament to their hard work and dedication. They have had a phenomenal season, and there is more to come from this group!"



### English Schools Cross Country

Well done to Amie R, Rose G and Cosmo B who took part in the English Schools Cross Country Championships in March. They all ran really well and special mention goes to Cosmo who finished in the top 20 in his race.



## MUSIC

### Lunchtime Live

Lunchtime Live continues to thrive. On 12 January we heard from many pupils who don't often get a chance to perform. As always there was a diverse range of repertoire including works by Bach, Albéniz and John Williams, as well as a rock cover of Pachelbel's Canon in D!

Lunchtime Live on 16 February focussed on our senior pupils who performed works by Albinoni, Gluck, Debussy and Paolo Nutini, and on 9 March the concert featured small ensemble performances from across the school.

Well done to all the performers, and it is always fantastic to see so much support from staff and pupils.



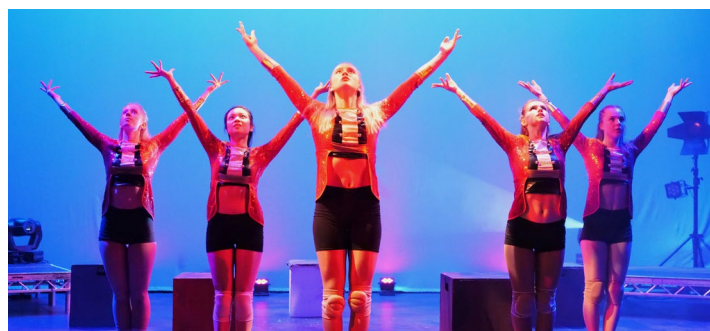
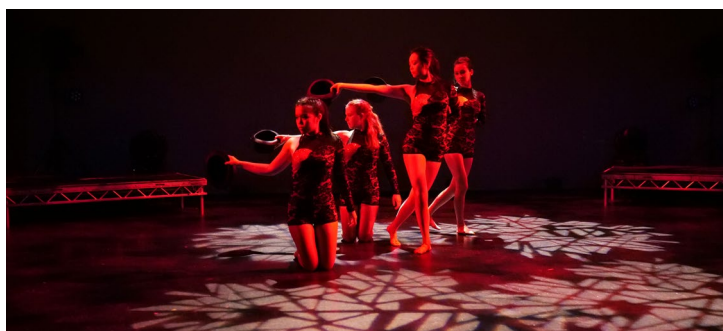
### Symphonia

On 25 January musicians from all year groups and abilities took part in 'Symphonia'. The day involved a series of workshops for the various instrument groups where pupils were encouraged to perform, listen, and discuss a variety of topics.

## DANCE

### Hollywood

Well done to all the dancers who took part in 'Hollywood' on Wednesday 20 March. The sell-out show involved pupils from Year 7 to the Upper Sixth performing in a variety of styles from hip-hop and street to ariel hoop and ballet.





## DRAMA



### Drama Scholars Showcase

Our Drama Scholars took to the stage on 23 January to recite poetry, prose, letters, plays and screen writing in 'Spoken Words', a celebration of the power of language. The performance brought together Scholars from Years 9-13 and was a treat for the invited audience, who enjoyed listening to a wonderful collection of words and music, curated and directed by Mrs Pulman-Jones and Mr Johnson.

### A Midsummer Night's Dream

In February the cast and crew of our Year 10 play, A Midsummer Night's Dream, took to the stage for their opening night. Set in the 1960s and 70s, the show was performed in several locations within Great Hall creating a fantastic immersive experience.





## GUEST SPEAKERS HIGHLIGHTS

### Sir David King

On 31 January we were delighted to welcome Sir David King to speak to pupils, staff and guests about climate change. Sir David is the former UK Chief Scientific Adviser and his lecture focussed on the strategy needed to repair our climate and sustain civilisation following the warmest year on record. We are very fortunate to attract speakers of this calibre to The Leys and it is fantastic to see them so well supported.



### Charlie Alexander

On 16 February we welcomed Charlie Alexander, a highly experienced global financial services professional, to talk about his career as a Managing Partner at EY as well as the increasing importance of technology-led transformation such as intelligent automation, AI and the opportunities they bring to the industry. His knowledge and experience provided an invaluable insight into the financial markets and the opportunities available within a professional services firm.

## CHARITY AND OUTREACH

### Little Princess Trust

Upper Sixth pupil, Bohdan M, has been growing his hair to donate to Little Princess Trust who provide real-hair wigs, free of charge, to children and young people who have lost their own hair through cancer treatment or other conditions. He donated 13 inches of hair which will make a real difference to children and young people affected by hair loss.



### Rowan Canvases

On 24 and 25 February one of our partner organisations, Rowan, held their 5th annual charity art exhibition here at The Leys. The exhibition, entitled 'The Journey', featured art works by sixth form pupils at The Leys as well as by Rowan's students. The weekend was a huge success, raising over £4000. Over 150 visitors attended and 32 canvases were sold. All proceeds will go towards Rowan's vital work, supporting adults with learning disabilities. This is just one example of the amazing public benefit work facilitated by The Leys. Click [here](#) to learn more.



# Follow Us

We are active on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn, and aim to post content about daily life at The Leys several times each week during term time. To receive our news stories in a timely way, and to be part of the conversation, please like our pages and follow our story using the links below.



@theleyschoolcambridge



@leyscambridge



@LeysCambridge



The Leys School





## COMMUNITY LIFE

### Our OL Community in Hong Kong

As part of the Lunar New Year celebrations, Old Leysians based in Hong Kong kindly sent over some beautiful, authentic decorations to adorn School House. Our thanks to Andrew Hao, East 1998-2000, and his wife who handmade some of the decorations, and Rob Stoneley, School 1980-85.



### Leysian for Life

Members of the Development team have been busy visiting Upper Sixth pupils across the various Houses, to talk to them about what it means to become an Old Leysian and circulate copies of our alumni magazine, OL News. From drinks events and reunions to sporting fixtures and careers guidance from a network of OLs across many industries, we are here for our Leysians long after they leave the School.

### 1<sup>st</sup> XI vs OLs Netball Match

On 8 January the 1st VII netball team enjoyed their first match of the season, against a side of Old Leysians. This was the first netball match at the school to take place between current pupils and OLs, and looks set to become an annual tradition. Emily H, VII Netball Team Coach, and Freya H, Vice Captain, provided a match report:

“With a high standard and fun atmosphere, the match was great practice for our 1st team, following a long day of pre-season training. The Leys side made a strong start, pulling away at the beginning to 7-0, before the OLs soon found their swing and started scoring goals. However, with a strong depth in the midcourt and skill and determination in the circle, we came out with a cracking result of 76-38, doubling their score!

“A special mention to Eni for her spectacle of four consecutive interceptions and to Freya and Charlotte for their exceptionally consistent shooting and movement in the circle. It was great to see old faces and catch up on and off the court, featuring a sisterly rivalry at Centre between two Hill girls.”

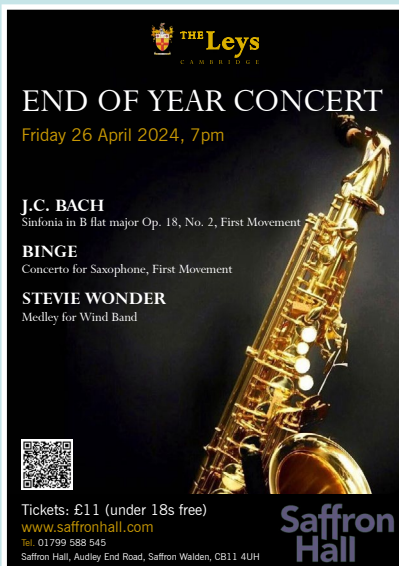


### The Gift of Education

A huge ‘thank you’ to everyone who has donated to our transformational bursary scheme in the last year. We know that there is an educational gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers, with more than 50% of children in the most deprived areas of the UK leaving school with less than a grade 4 (C) in English and Mathematics. The Leys has the experience and resources to offer a fantastic education and consistent environment to children who need it and you are helping us to narrow the education gap through the Gift of Education transformational bursary programme. If you’d like to know more about this programme, please email our Director of Development, Sarah Proud, on [slp@theleys.net](mailto:slp@theleys.net).



# What's On?



**End of Year Concert**  
**Friday 26 April, 7.00pm**  
Saffron Hall

[www.saffronhall.com/whats-on](http://www.saffronhall.com/whats-on)



## Great Expectations

Year 9 Play

**Wednesday 15 May, 7.15pm**

**Thursday 16 May, 7.15pm**

Great Hall



## Grimm Tales

Year 7 and 8 Play

**Friday 21 June, 7.00pm**

**Saturday 22 June, 2.30pm**

Great Hall



## Summer Cabaret

Drama | Music | Dance

**Wednesday 26 June, 7.30pm**

**Thursday 27 June, 7.30pm**

Great Hall



**Tickets for all events in Great Hall can be booked [here](#).**

The Leys School, Cambridge CB2 7AD

The Leys & St Faith's Foundation, Registered Charity No. 1144035

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