



# LeysLife

Issue 18 - Summer Term 2025



## Farewell to Martin Priestley

As the academic year draws to a close, we bid a heartfelt farewell to Martin Priestley, the tenth Head of The Leys. Joining the School in January 2014, Mr Priestley has been a pillar of strength and leadership, guiding the School through a transformative decade. His tenure has been marked by significant achievements across all areas of school life, fostering a nurturing environment for pupils and staff alike.

Reflecting on his time at The Leys, Mr Priestley shared his thoughts: "Serving as Head of The Leys these last dozen years has been the greatest honour of my professional life. Leading the School through Covid was probably the single most extraordinary challenge; it was strange and unnerving to run a school with virtually no pupils or teaching staff on site! However, I was consistently impressed by how our pupils and my colleagues adapted and by the resilience and positivity they displayed in such challenging circumstances.

"All in all, I am proud of what has been accomplished by the Leysian community in the last dozen years, and proudest of all of the Leysian pupils themselves. My thanks go especially to my colleagues, both teaching and support staff, to the parents for their engagement and encouragement, and to the Governors for their steadfast support and wise counsel not just for the School and for the wider Leys and St Faith's Foundation but also for me personally.

"I am delighted to be handing over to such an outstanding successor, Dr Clare Ives. In this our Sesquicentenary year, it is highly appropriate that Clare will become the first female Head in our history. She and I have been liaising and meeting regularly to ensure a smooth handover from September and, having worked so closely with her over the last year, I know that the School will be in very safe hands. More importantly, I know Clare will lead not just with undoubted strategic vision and insight, but with warmth, integrity and compassion.

"I am confident that The Leys will continue to flourish in its exciting next chapter and I wish Dr Ives and the entire Leysian community the very, very best for the future. Χαίρετε!\*"

Chair of The Leys Governors, Jeremy Gladwin, commented: "I have known Martin for the entirety of his service to The Leys: first as a fellow Headmaster and for the past three years as a Governor. Martin has struck a wonderful balance between leading the community, whilst getting in amongst the pupils and never ceasing to surprise with his ability and willingness to join in with pupil events.

"Above all he is a very caring and empathetic leader who gives all constituent members of the School community: parents and pupils; teaching and support staff; Governors and alumni his time. Amongst CEOs, school Heads are uniquely accessible, and Martin has thus been at the heart of the special community, which is The Leys. He has led the School through tumultuous times with the benefit of wisdom and experience, always putting the pupils first and foremost at the heart of his decision-making. I have enjoyed a strong working relationship with Martin who will be sorely missed."

We look forward to welcoming the School's eleventh Head, Dr Clare Ives, in September.

\*The word Χαίρετε is a word with which all Leysians are familiar: it features prominently in the eponymous school hymn. It is an ancient Greek word meaning "rejoice" or "be glad". In the context of the school hymn, it is used as a greeting; in some contexts, including this one, it can also mean "farewell".

## FEATURED NEWS

## 150 Years: A Leysian Journey

We are delighted to announce the publication of our 150 anniversary commemorative magazine, *150 Years: A Leysian Journey 1875-2025*. This 80-page project features spotlights on dozens of Leysians throughout the decades. It has been a real labour of love for the Development team, ably assisted by expert Leysian historian John Harding.

Editor Liz Walden explained: "The project grew from an initial idea to showcase Old Leysians working in a diverse range of fields, into something quite special. The history of the School is beautifully documented and intertwined with the lives of those who studied and taught here, alongside a timeline of Leysian, UK and world events.



"The earlier decades are brought to life thanks to a wealth of archive photographs painstakingly researched by Archivist Alison Lainchbury. As well as dozens of individual profiles, there are special features including family histories, Pitlochry, the Granta Girls, Moulton House and many more, making this a rich, multi-layered and – hopefully – highly engaging read."

The Development team thoroughly enjoyed engaging with everyone who has been a part of this project; it has been an absolute privilege to share their journeys, and we are so excited to share it with you all. The publication can be downloaded from the news section of our website.



## Jemimah Secures Apprenticeship

Upper Sixth pupil Jemimah F-O has accepted an offer to complete a Degree Apprenticeship in Digital Technology Solutions with Arup, the globally recognised and highly respected engineering and design company. Jemimah will be joining Arup's London office as a Network Engineer, contributing to innovative projects in infrastructure, transport, and sustainable development.

Jemimah's passion for engineering is deeply rooted in her commitment to sustainable development and her desire to help engineer a better future. Her interest in apprenticeships began

in Year 10 after attending an insight day at Irwin Mitchell law firm. Hearing an apprentice speak made her realise that although law wasn't the path for her, a degree apprenticeship — especially in engineering — could be. Initially focusing her applications on universities in both the USA and the UK during Year 12 and Year 13, Jemimah became fully committed to pursuing degree apprenticeships last October.

The application process for Arup was rigorous, involving interviews, general ability and logic testing, and situational judgement tests. Out of hundreds of applicants, Jemimah was proud to be the only apprentice selected from her assessment centre group. In the final interview, she was asked to prepare and deliver a presentation on a given topic, followed by a formal panel interview.

Jemimah commented: "Receiving the offer from Arup was a moment of real shock, especially as it came just after receiving a rejection email from WSP. I would like to sincerely thank Mrs Klockner, Mr Battle, and Mr Turner for their unwavering support and the real interview preparation they provided. I feel incredibly blessed to have this opportunity, and I can't wait to make an impact in the engineering field."





## FEATURED NEWS

### School Nurses Raise Funds for EAAA

On Saturday 7 June, School Nurses Skyler Moulder, Anna Webb, Georgie McMahon, Lauren Roberts, and Debs Thain successfully completed the East Anglia Air Ambulance (EAAA) Trek 24 event, raising more than £3,000 and becoming the top fundraising group across all EAAA Treks in 2025. They took part in memory of Graham Chapman, our School Porter who passed away earlier this year.

Lauren and Anna, along with their colleague Anne, were part of the first response from Leys School staff. Although the outcome was not as hoped, they were deeply impressed by the care and response from EAAA. This experience motivated them to support the charity by participating in Trek 24 – Bedfordshire, one of EAAA's flagship fundraising events. The event challenges participants to walk 24 miles or 24 km through the picturesque Chilterns countryside.



Anna, described by her team members as 'the driving force' behind their challenge, stated: "We wanted to honour Graham and show our appreciation to EAAA by channelling our emotions into something positive to drive change. It was a tragic incident that touched our entire school community and affected us as a team, but EAAA left a positive imprint on us.

"We saw EAAA's Trek 24 – Bedfordshire event advertised and thought taking part in the 24 km route would be a good way to remember Graham, fundraise, and help others. It's a meaningful activity to do as a team."



Lauren added: "The EAAA Aftercare team understood the personal side. We're a medical team, but Graham was a much-loved colleague. Their support validated our feelings and helped us process the trauma. EAAA wouldn't exist without public donations, so it's humbling that we can contribute by participating in Trek 24."

Dr Nicola Ebbs, EAAA Deputy Medical Director, commented: "EAAA now treats an average of six people in our region every day. We couldn't do this without the generous support from our communities. We're immensely grateful to the team from The Leys School and all those participating in Trek 24 – Bedfordshire. This support truly helps save lives in our region."



### Prefects for 2025-26

Congratulations to our newly appointed Prefects for 2025-26 who were announced in an assembly held on 17 June by Mr Priestley. A special mention goes to our new Senior Prefects, Sofi P and Archie N, who will be leading the team throughout the next academic year. We hope they thrive in their new roles and wish them all the best.



## SCHOOL LIFE

### Upper Sixth Leavers

Our Upper Sixth didn't disappoint with a fantastic array of fancy dress for their leavers' photo on the Upper Quad.

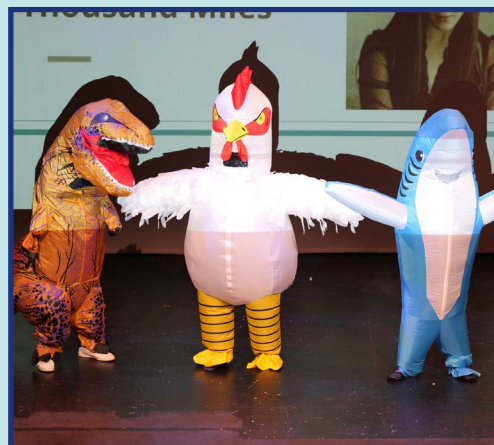


### Minerva Essay Competition

Congratulations to Pax Z, this year's winner of the Minerva Essay Competition. Named after the goddess of wisdom, the competition involves writing a 2,000-word essay and this year we had 11 submissions. Pupils proposed their own titles, exploring the connection between text analysis and a chosen subject. Honourable mentions also go to Mark M-A who came second, and to Aimie D who came third. Thank you to our judge, Dr Mark Wormald from the University of Cambridge.

### Masked Singer

Congratulations to the staff and pupils who participated in the West House Masked Singer event. The song choices showcased a wonderful variety, featuring artists such as ABBA, Bruno Mars, and Coldplay. Performances were enriched with video clips from West House and commentary from the compères, making it a truly enjoyable evening. All funds raised will be donated to the West House charity, Calm.





## SCHOOL LIFE

### Astronomy Society

This term, our Astronomy Society had the pleasure of hosting Dr Elisabeth Sola from the University of Cambridge's Institute of Astronomy for a captivating presentation titled 'Dance of the Giants: Galactic Mergers'. Dr Sola shared stunning images of various galaxies and fascinating simulations demonstrating how these cosmic giants merge over time. She also introduced them to the Aladin Sky Atlas and how to explore the incredible features of our universe. A huge thank you to Dr Sola for an unforgettable evening.



### A Visit from Titus

In May, the School's Explore Society welcomed OL and former Senior Prefect Titus Waldock to an event titled 'Am I more than my achievements?' - a pertinent topic with exam season approaching. After snacks and games on the main lawn, Titus spoke to the assembled Sixth Form pupils about his faith being the core of his identity, and how that positively impacts the pressure to perform well.



### Sustainability

This term the Sustainability Society have been busy with initiatives across the School. Pupils organised and ran the third Leys Clothes Swap before Easter, a popular event and an excellent way to prevent perfectly good clothes from going to landfill, with all unwanted items donated to the Arthur Rank Hospice charity. They have been working with the Grounds team to grow plants that encourage greater insect and bird diversity and have also been collecting unwanted textbooks from around the School. A total of 19 boxes of books are now being sorted and will be sent to schools in Africa through the Books2Africa charity. It is wonderful to see our preloved items making a difference to young people. Thank you to all the departments that made this possible.



### EPQ

At the end of term, we were delighted to welcome staff, parents and pupils to see the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) presentations given by this year's cohort. As part of the assessment process, pupils were required to give a short presentation to their supervisors, outlining the work they have undertaken, as well as having the opportunity to discuss their projects with their teachers and peers.





## TRIPS

### An Inspector Calls

In May, our Drama Department took 30 of our Year 10 pupils to see the tour of Stephen Daldry's ground-breaking version of 'An Inspector Calls' at The Milton Keynes Theatre. As a set text for both GCSE Drama and English, this was an invaluable experience for our pupils who were engaged, respectful and generous members of the audience.



### Gold DofE

Congratulations to all pupils who successfully completed their Gold DofE. Such a fantastic achievement and it was so wonderful to see them celebrating in the sunshine at Buckingham Palace.



### Year 10 DofE

Well done to all the Year 10 pupils who participated in the DofE Bronze Expedition! Despite facing challenging conditions in the Peak District, they demonstrated remarkable resilience and teamwork. Everyone had a fantastic experience and successfully completed the expedition. Well done!

### Year 9 DofE

This term, our Year 9 pupils headed off on their Bronze DofE Practice Expedition. After thorough training on the school premises, they then spent two days in Suffolk applying their newly acquired skills.



### Geography Field Trip

Pupils on the Lower Sixth Geography trip enjoyed a few days conducting fieldwork, collecting glaciation data and enjoying some sunshine.





## SPORT

### Boys' U14A Hockey Team Triumphs

On Thursday 24 April, the U14A Boys' Hockey team showcased their skill, teamwork, and resilience at the prestigious Tier 1 Plate final held at Lee Valley Hockey and Tennis Centre. The team faced Reed's School in a match that was as intense as it was exciting.

The final was very well matched, with both teams having multiple fast-paced breaks and shots on the opposition target. The first half ended in a stalemate, with the score at 0-0. Early in the second half, our boys took the lead with a goal from a short corner, making it 1-0. However, Reed's School quickly responded, levelling the score to 1-1. The remaining 20 minutes were filled with tension for the boys, coaches, and spectators, but the game finished 1-1.



The match then proceeded to a penalty shootout, with each team getting five opportunities. The shootout remained level, finishing 3-3 after the first five attempts each. This led to sudden death shuffles. After several shuffles, The Leys scored their 8th shuffle, and the opposition was unable to respond, securing the victory for The Leys.

Director of Sport, Ben Elston, commented: "The boys should be incredibly proud of their performance. Their progress this season has been remarkable, thanks to their dedication to the hockey programme. One of the most impressive aspects of today's performance was their ability to remain calm and think clearly in high pressure situations...while most of the crowd were a nervous wreck!"

"This victory is a testament not only to the players' hard work, but also to the tireless efforts on the training pitch and behind the scenes by Mr Rigden, Mr Coe, and the rest of the coaching team.

"It was a sensational game to watch, and credit must be given to both teams. Every player gave their all, and the match was contested in very good spirit. Well done boys – a massive achievement."



### James Signs Professional Contract

James P, Upper Sixth pupil at The Leys, has signed his first professional contract with the Premiership rugby team Northampton Saints. This milestone comes after representing England U18 in the Six Nations this year, earning caps for England U19, and leading The Leys to victory in the Uppingham Sevens tournament earlier this term.

James joined The Leys in Year 7, where he was introduced to rugby. Having previously excelled in football, he quickly adapted his skills and became one of the best players in his year, earning the title of

Year 8 Player of the Season. Despite the pandemic interrupting his progress, he played a key role in taking the U16 team to the semi-finals of the Rosslyn Park Sevens Tournament in Year 11.

His performance at Rosslyn Park caught the attention of Northampton Saints, who invited him to join their Academy in 2023. Subsequently, he was noticed by England Rugby and invited to attend the U17 Development Camp in 2024. Since attending the camp, James has been selected to play for England U18s in the 2025 Six Nations Tournament and has also been capped for England U19s, all while continuing to play in the Saints Academy.

James commented: "I feel elated to have signed my first professional contract; it is a dream come true. I am grateful for the support I've received from The Leys, from the coaching and mentorship of Head of Rugby, Mr Clark, to the academic staff and tutors who have helped me balance training with my schoolwork.

"I hope to continue playing for England, and my dream would be to be selected for the U20 World Cup this summer and the U20 Six Nations next year. In the meantime, I look forward to settling in with the Saints and continuing my progress."

## SPORT

### 150 Anniversary Cricket Matches

As part of our 150 anniversary celebrations, we hosted The Perse for two thrilling back-to-back T20 cricket matches. Our school's first competitive sports match was a cricket game against Perse School on Parker's Piece, held on 12 June 1875, which concluded with a resounding victory for The Perse. These matches commemorated this significant milestone in our history, and old scores were settled as our team emerged victorious in both games.



### OL Golf

An excellent 3-2 win for the Senior Golf team against a strong Old Leysians team at the Gog Magog Golf Club on the hottest day of the year! Callum K and Harry W fought hard for a draw on the 18th green against Scratch players Simon Cooper and Alex Smethers - a great achievement!

Hamish C and Ross K also played well to tie against Tom Williams and David Page, in a close match. The highlight was Jack C and Theo W who won 7 up with 6 to play, with some outstanding golf to beat Richard Bentley and David Maclean.



James H and Daniel D also won their match by two holes to confirm our overall win, against Chris Holden and Charlie Kidman. Ollie S and Zander W-J had a close match, but eventually lost on the 16th green, to Jack Thompson and David Maclean.

A very enjoyable day with the OLs being impressed by our play and the 'charming' sportsmanship of the School team - well done to everyone!

### MCC vs The Leys

In the penultimate week of term, our Boys' 1st XI played MCC on the main square. It was a wonderful occasion and there were some great performances all round. Well done to our boys who won by six wickets.





## SPORT

### House Athletics

There was a great atmosphere at the Wilberforce Road Athletics Track on 24 June as pupils from Years 7-10 and 12 competed in this year's House Athletics competition. A big thanks to Mr Coe for organising such a wonderful day!





## MUSIC AND DRAMA

### End of Term Concert at Saffron Hall

A successful End of Year Concert was held at Saffron Hall on the evening of Thursday 1 May involving pupils from all year groups. Highlights included a sublime rendition of the first movement of Grieg's Piano Concerto featuring Sharon D as the soloist, and the Grappell Trio's performance of *Work Song* by Cannonball Adderley. Congratulations to all the pupils who took part and thank you to our wonderful Music Department who made it all possible.



### A History of Jazz

A sell-out crowd enjoyed 'A History of Jazz in 90 minutes' on Thursday 8 May in the Winton Thomas Recital Hall. James Pearson (jazz pianist extraordinaire and Artistic Director at the world-famous Ronnie Scott's) and Tim Boniface (saxophones), took us on musical journey from ragtime, blues, the swing era and the Great American Songbook to bebop, bossa nova, hard bop and soul jazz. It was a fantastic evening of incredible musical virtuosity. This dynamic duo also gave a jazz workshop in the afternoon involving some of our pupils from Years 9-13.

### Summer Cabaret

Well done to all the performers who took to the stage for the two-night run of our annual Summer Cabaret. It was a really enjoyable evening of drama, dance, music and comedy, and a wonderful way to celebrate the last week of term.





## DRAMA

### Lord of the Flies

Pupils in Year 9 took to the stage on Thursday 15 May for their two-night run of 'Lord of the Flies'. Based on William Golding's 1954 novel, the play tells the story of a group of British school children stranded on a deserted island and their disastrous attempts to govern themselves.



### Mary Poppins Jr

Bravo to the cast of our Year 7 and 8 play 'Mary Poppins Jr', a delightful story of a magical nanny who brings joy and order to the Banks family in Edwardian London. Some fantastic performances from some of our youngest pupils.





## COMMUNITY LIFE

### The Pitlochry House Challenge

During the Easter holidays, to celebrate The Leys' 150th year, the Houses came together for this special challenge in aid of bursary places at the School.

Every House (with Granta and East combined to make them the same size as the others) was challenged to travel 855 miles 'to Pitlochry and back', raising money via sponsorship from friends and family. Pupils could walk, run, swim, cycle or row the miles - any self-propelled method of transport was valid!

Pitlochry was chosen as the small Scottish town where The Leys was relocated during WWII when the School grounds were taken over as an auxiliary hospital.

As an added incentive, bonus amounts and matched funding could be unlocked once certain targets were reached, courtesy of a generous donor.

The School community responded with great enthusiasm, rising to the challenge and raising an incredible £36,699.01 for much-needed bursary places at The Leys.

North A was the fundraising House winner, raising an impressive £1,750, with Barker a close second with £1,730 raised. The individual fundraising winner was Isabella Y, from Fen House.

Barker stormed ahead in the mile count, with pupils covering 1,867 miles between them. Bissekier took second place with 1,722 miles, and Daisy H from Barrett House won the individual challenge with 219 miles.

Director of Development, Sarah Proud, said: "We are so proud of how the Leys' community came together to support the Pitlochry House Challenge. Pupils and their families really got into the spirit and by doing so, raised more than £36,000 for bursary pupils to attend the School. What a fantastic result for our first school-wide initiative like this. And it got us all moving too!"





# Follow Us

We are active on Facebook, 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.



@theleysschoolcambridge



@leyscambridge



The Leys School



**The Leys School**  
2,936 followers  
2mo •

Our Upper Sixth didn't disappoint with a fantastic array of fancy dress for their leavers' photo on the Upper Quad this afternoon.





# What's On?



## The Black Dyke Band 27 September 19:30 Great Hall

With a heritage stretching back to 1855, the Black Dyke Band's pedigree is unrivalled. Over 350 recordings and numerous national and European competition titles have made the name Black Dyke synonymous with musical excellence.

## Moulton Concert Friday 17 October 18:45 Great Hall

## Autumn Concert Friday 14 November 19:30 Great Hall



THE Leys  
CAMBRIDGE

150  
1875-2025  
ACHIEVING THE EXCEPTIONAL

## Les Misérables School Edition 3 - 6 December 19:15 Great Hall



Winner of over 100 international awards and seen by over 65 million people worldwide, *Les Misérables* is an epic and uplifting story about the survival of the human spirit. In 19th century France, Jean Valjean is released from years of unjust imprisonment but finds nothing in store for him but mistrust and mistreatment. He breaks his parole in hopes of starting a new life, initiating a life-long struggle for redemption as he is relentlessly pursued by police inspector Javert, who refuses to believe Valjean can change his ways. Finally, during the Paris student uprising of 1832, Javert must confront his ideals after Valjean spares his life and saves that of the student revolutionary who has captured the heart of Valjean's adopted daughter. Arguably one of the greatest musicals of all time, this 'whole school' production will for the first time in a generation at The Leys involve pupils across all year groups performing together on stage.

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

The Leys School, Cambridge CB2 7AD

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