



# LeysLife



## A Message from the Head

We've made it to the end of term. And what a term it has been. When I joined The Leys, what struck me immediately was the warmth, inclusion and genuine care that defined this community. The culture is one of deep respect and a genuine sense of fun. And that culture powers everything else. It's been an extraordinary term, dropping into lessons and watching activities around campus, I've been impressed by the genuine sense of participation and engagement that pupils here, show.

So my message to all members of the community: thank you for your warmth. I love speaking to you, hearing your stories and about the connections you've built, which makes your experience so enjoyable.

In this 150th year for The Leys, it's an honour to lead this remarkable community. I pledge to work with colleagues to ensure that The Leys thrives for the next 150 years and beyond. And wherever you are, whatever you're doing over the holidays, have a wonderful festive season and see you in 2026.



## FEATURED NEWS

### The Leys Achieves Its Highest-Ever National Ranking

We are thrilled to share that The Leys School has been ranked 67th among top independent schools and 84th among all independent and maintained schools in the UK, in this year's Sunday Times Parent Power guide - our highest position on record. We are proud to be the top ranked co-educational boarding and day school in East Anglia and the East Midlands.

This prestigious ranking reflects the exceptional academic standards and holistic education we provide. The Parent Power guide is widely regarded as the most authoritative survey of the country's leading schools, offering parents a comprehensive comparison of performance at local and national levels. It evaluates schools based on academic results and provides a fully searchable database of over 1,000 schools by name, location, and postcode, available online [here](#).

Dr Clare Ives, Head of The Leys School, commented: "This achievement is a testament to the outstanding teaching and learning that takes place every day at The Leys. Our goal is not only academic excellence but also the development of well-rounded individuals, who will make a positive impact on the world. I am immensely proud of our pupils and staff for their dedication and enthusiasm."

This recognition reinforces our position as one of the UK's leading independent schools. We look forward to building on this success and continuing to provide an exceptional education for all our pupils.



### Pupils Excel at UKMT Challenge

Five pupils from The Leys have been recognised for their participation in this year's UK Mathematics Trust (UKMT) challenges. The UKMT is a charitable organisation that offers opportunities for young people across the UK, to engage with mathematics through a range of national competitions.

This year, The Leys entered pupils into both the Mathematical Olympiad for Girls and the Senior Mathematical Challenge. In the Olympiad, Abby L and Sharon D were each awarded a Distinction, placing them within the top 25% of participants

nationally. In the Senior Challenge, Hazel P and Rosie Y received Merits, while Natalia S earned a Distinction, also placing in the top 25%.

Ms Evans, Head of Mathematics, commented: "Our pupils have done outstandingly well, and I am especially proud to see so many high-performing female mathematicians representing The Leys. Their success is a testament to their hard work and passion for the subject."

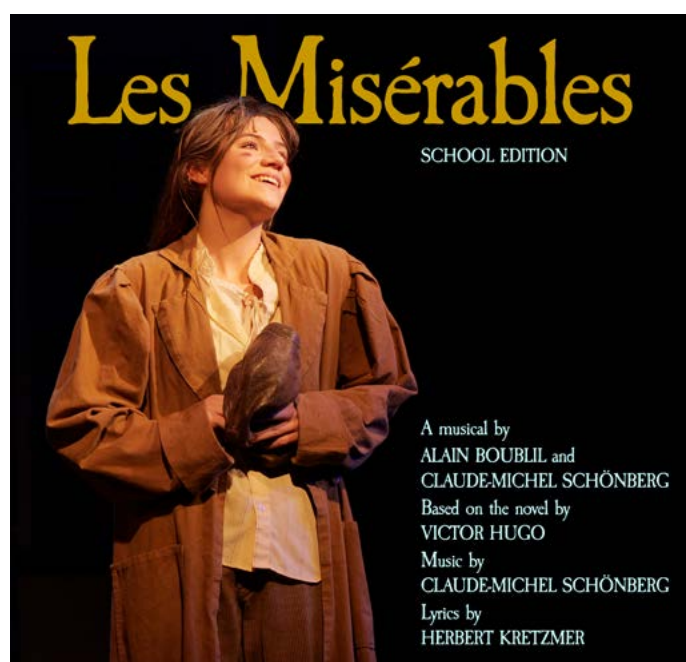


## FEATURED NEWS

### Les Misérables at The Leys

As we bring our 150 anniversary year to a close, The Leys marked the occasion with an extraordinary achievement: a sold-out, four-night run of *Les Misérables* from 3 to 6 December 2025. Celebrated as one of the greatest musicals of all time, this ambitious whole-school production united more than 70 pupils from every year group, a collaboration not seen on our stage for a generation.

The show portrays Jean Valjean's epic quest for redemption in 19th-century France, with every scene reflecting the creativity, commitment, and talent of our pupils. From the precision of the backstage crew to the powerful performances under the spotlight, months of preparation culminated in a series of unforgettable evenings. For those lucky enough to secure tickets, it was an experience that will be cherished for years to come.



## SCHOOL LIFE

### A Warm Welcome

The sunset over the Upper Quad (pictured right) by Ms Girling, marked the close of a quieter week on site, ahead of welcoming all staff and pupils back following half term break. Pupils returned with a renewed focus and energy.



### Three Peaks Challenge

We wished Alfie R, Joseph S, and Jack E, from Barrett Upper Sixth, the very best of luck as they took on the 'Three Peaks Challenge'. This demanding 24-hour challenge began at 12:00 on Wednesday 29 October with Ben Nevis, followed by Scafell Pike, and concluded with Snowdon by 12:00 on Thursday 30 October.

The pupils showed incredible determination in taking on this challenge, all in support of the Barrett House Charity: Macmillan Cancer Support. They completed the challenge in 22hrs 45 minutes, exceeding their target, raising over £2000, for the charity.



### Celebrating Your Success

In the final instalment of our GCSE reflections series, members of the Lower Sixth shared their thoughts on opening their results.

They reflect on how their time at The Leys equipped them to succeed and offer insightful advice to the next cohort. Their stories highlight not only academic achievement, but also personal growth and the key to a supportive community.

Watch the video [online here](#)





## SCHOOL LIFE



### Senior Cadet Instructor Course

Three of The Leys' Cadets participated in the Senior Cadet Instructor Course held in Northampton. This intensive programme equips senior cadets with the skills and techniques needed, to effectively teach and mentor junior cadets.

Throughout the course, our cadets embraced every challenge with enthusiasm, whether meeting new people or learning new skills. They represented The Leys CCF in an exemplary manner.



### Christmas Giving Tree

The Christmas giving tree made its festive appearance in the School Shop - and it served a very special purpose. Pupils and staff were warmly invited to pick a tag from the tree, with suggested items to donate to Arthur Rank Hospice Charity, the chosen charity of Bisseker House.

This thoughtful initiative is led by Shop Manager Sarah Williams, inspired by the John Lewis 'Giving Trees'. If unable to collect a tag but still wishing to contribute, donations were also gratefully received.



## SCHOOL LIFE



### Remembrance Day

On the morning of Tuesday 11 November at 11am, the whole school community gathered around the Upper Quad to observe the annual Act of Remembrance. Our Chaplain, the Reverend Simon Coleman, conducted a brief service of prayer, which was followed by a two-minute silence and the sounding of the Last Post and Reveille, played by Lower Sixth pupil Nico C.

The School's war memorial nearby, on the east side of the Chapel, bears the names of the 149 Old Leysians who died in the First World War and 88 Old Leysians who died in the Second World War. More than 900 Old Leysians joined up and many won honours, including 20 DSOs and 68 Military Crosses. Today we honour their sacrifice and all members of the armed forces, who have died in the line of duty.



### Día de los Muertos

This term our Year 9 pupils enjoyed a cultural lesson about Día de los Muertos (the Day of the Dead). They learned interesting facts, took part in quizzes, and decorated their own Catrina figures, including creating vibrant masks. It was wonderful to see so much creativity and enthusiasm!





## SCHOOL LIFE



### 'This House Believes That Schools Should Ban All Pupil Relationships'

We had a fantastic turnout for our debating competition, where pupils showcased and strengthened their debating skills. The motion, "This House believes that schools should ban all pupil relationships," sparked interesting discussion. Both the proposition and opposition delivered well-reasoned arguments, demonstrating confidence and critical thinking. After a thorough exchange of reasoning, the opposition were voted the winning argument.

### Visit to St Faith's

In late November, we were warmly welcomed into St Faith's School, where our Lower Sixth pupils led discussions with those in Year 6 - 8. The subject of which centred on 'If you could create a perfect society, how would you design it?'

This was a fantastic opportunity for our older pupils to engage with the younger years and help widen their thinking. The conversations created as a result, were thought provoking and showcased strength in leadership and individual thinking, from all involved.



### Moulton Prefects

Congratulations to our newly appointed Moulton House prefects: Samuel W, William E, Tommy U, Margaux de F, Elizabeth H and Emily H. A great opportunity for our younger pupils to develop their leadership and communication skills, within The Leys community. We wish them every success as they take on their new responsibilities.





## SCHOOL LIFE

### Barrett Charity Hot Chocolate

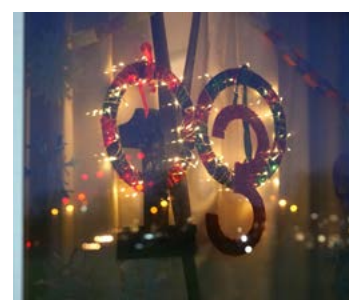
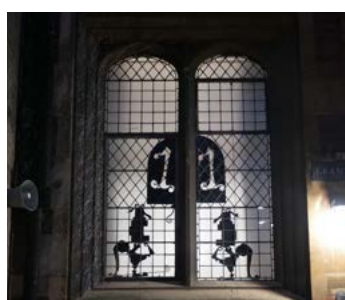
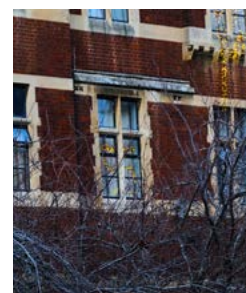
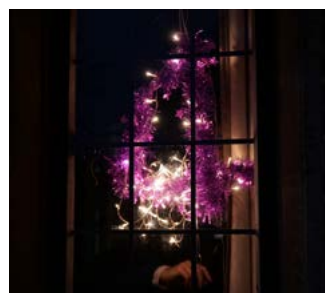
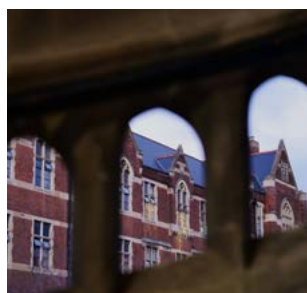
This term, Barrett House was raising money for their chosen charity of Macmillan Cancer Support. Across two days, they set up under the Queens building, serving winter warming hot chocolates, to both pupils and staff looking to support the effort. The pupils ran a great service, each taking up their roles within the team, including some wonderful marketing efforts to drum up orders.



### Christmas Countdown

As our pupils got closer to the Christmas break, areas around The School were brought to life with decorations. Festive touches appear around the boarding houses and wider site. A big thank you to all the Houses, for creating such a warm and festive environment.

**Day 1** - Dale House, **Day 2** - Bisseker House, **Day 3** - Barrett House, **Day 4** - Moulton, **Day 5** - Barker House  
**Day 6** - Fen House, **Day 7** - East House, **Day 8** - Pastoral Office, **Day 9** - North A, **Day 10** - The Head's House  
**Day 11** - Granta House, **Day 12** - School House, **Day 13** - West House





## TRIPS

### Geography Snowdonia Trip

Our Year 8 pupils travelled to Snowdonia for their annual Outdoor Education and Geography Residential. Over three activity-filled days, they began in Llanberis with geography fieldwork, a scenic lake walk, a visit to the slate quarries, and a picturesque picnic.

The group also explored the Conwy Valley with a gorge walk and visited Llyn Idwal to observe glacial landscapes. The highlight of the trip was the ascent and summit of Snowdon, with a fortunate break in the weather offering clear views and even a touch of sunshine. Pupils returned home tired, but content after a successful and memorable trip.



### Tokyo Partner School Trip

For two weeks this term, Lucy H., Kaylee W. and Jasper C. travelled to our partner school in Tokyo, Aoyama Gakuin, hosted by their exchange families. The pupils experienced a range of opportunities - from Japanese lessons to calligraphy, to a formal tea ceremony: including making traditional Matcha.

Whilst away, they also visited the Meiji Temple, hosted an international sweet festival for fellow pupils, and explored the Kabuki theatre exhibit. The trip was an enjoyable experience for our pupils, and we are very grateful for the warm hospitality and the enriching programme of activities available.



### IIMR Public Lecture

Our Upper Sixth Economics pupils had the privilege of attending the IIMR Annual Public Lecture "Monetary and Fiscal Policy since 2007: Could We Have Done Better?" For pupils this was an inspiring evening of economic insight, lively post-lecture discussion, and exceptional academic enrichment.

The event was hosted at the prestigious Royal Automobile Club in Pall Mall, London, with the lecture being delivered by Lord Burns - former President of the National Institute of Economic and Social Research and Vice-President of the Royal Economic Society.





## TRIPS



### Latin & Greek Reading Competition

The Leys attended the Senior and Intermediate Latin and Greek Reading Competition at the University of Cambridge Classics Faculty, where pupils Arabella M, Pippa G, Violet H (Year 10), Hugo F (Year 11) and Felix JG (Lower Sixth) performed strongly against tough competition from local schools. Special congratulations to Jet JG (Lower Sixth), who earned a high commendation for his Latin reading from Virgil's Aeneid 8; Judge Prof Chris Whitton complimented the rhythmic reading of the passage. Furthermore, a second prize was received from his Greek reading from Herodotus' Histories, where he was praised for the expressive, yet accurate delivery.

### Accidental Death of an Anarchist

Nine A-Level Drama and Theatre pupils watched the performance of Dario Fo's 'Accidental Death of an Anarchist' at the Corpus Christi Playroom in Cambridge. This lively adaptation of Fo's celebrated political satire, delivered superb moments of farce and sharp comedic timing, leaving the audience both entertained and provoked to think critically about themes of justice and authority.

Educational theatre trips provide pupils with invaluable experiences, and so following the performance they had the unique opportunity to meet with the director and the actor portraying The Anarchist. They explored staging choices and interpretative decisions behind the production, gaining insight that will support their A-Level Component 3 written exam.



### COP30 Seminar

Our Geography and Physics Sixth Form pupils joined a seminar where experts discussed COP30, following its conclusion in Belém, Brazil. Hosted by Cambridge University's Engineering Department - it was the final event of a series, where the principal theme was Climate Repair.

The panel drew the conclusion that the pace of change by the COP process is not yet adequate, but there are numerous positives, growing in their impact and has therefore reduced the severity of change required, compared to before the Paris Agreement introduction, ten years ago this month.





## SPORT

### Hockey and Rugby Edinburgh Tour

For our U15 Hockey and Rugby players, they travelled to Edinburgh for a tour. Highlights from the weekend included:

- Access to the world class facilities at Oriam (including a hydrotherapy and ice bath session)
- 2 fixtures against local clubs for each team
- Training
- Sightseeing activities (including Edinburgh castle and the Royal Mile)
- Live ice hockey at Murrayfield Ice Arena
- Tenpin Bowling
- All you can eat buffet

It was a jam packed few days, but pupils had a great time.



### The Leys vs The Perse

It was an excellent block of rugby versus our old friends The Perse. Lots of close and competitive games, played in great spirit. Well done to all those involved.

Congratulations to both Reuben T (The Leys) and George C (The Perse) on being awarded the Tommy Dann Cups for their performances in the 1st XV contest!

A massive thank you also to The Leys Grounds team, for the poppies for Remembrance Sunday and paying tribute to Tommy on the playing fields this weekend.





## MUSIC AND DRAMA

### Muriel de Vinny Concerto Competition

The Muriel de Vinny Concerto Competition took place in early November, adjudicated by Iago Nunez, Head of Academic Music at Bishop's Stortford College. The performances were of a high standard, featuring a diverse selection of concerti performed by pupils, from across the School.

Congratulations to Anna T and Lara M, who were both highly commended for their performances. A special well done to Kaka C, who won the competition with the second movement of Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto and will have the exciting opportunity to perform at Saffron Hall next year!



### Autumn Concert

On Friday 17 November, the Great Hall was filled with music, as we celebrated our annual Autumn Concert in the evening. Pupils from across the school took to the stage to perform.

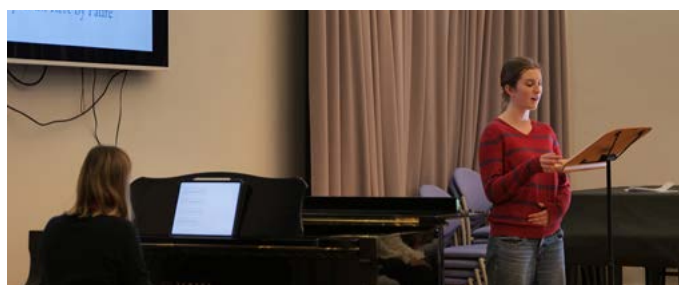
The talent on display was wonderful to see, and the atmosphere made even better by the incredible support from parents, staff, and fellow pupils. Thank you to everyone who contributed to making this event such a memorable occasion!



### Lunchtime Live

Our Lunchtime Live is always a wonderful celebration of pupil talent, and the latest event was no exception. Audiences were treated to an impressive variety of performances, including piano, saxophone, and vocal solos. The quality and diversity of music on display were a joy to experience.

A huge thank you to everyone who came along to support their fellow pupils, and congratulations to all the performers.





## MUSIC AND DRAMA

### Balgarnies Break Time Music

During this term, we enjoyed one of our informal break time concerts in Balgarnies on Friday 28 November. These pupil-led sessions provide the opportunity for our musicians to gain experience in front of an audience. There were fantastic performances, including School House, with their rendition of Wonderwall (Oasis), to a full audience, it was lovely to see so much support.





## VISITING GUESTS & WORKSHOPS

### Screen Acting Workshop

Our drama scholarship pupils took part in an exciting screen acting workshop this term. After some energising warm-ups, they explored the key differences between stage and screen performance, learning how to adapt their techniques for the camera. The workshop gave pupils valuable insight into the craft of on-screen performance and how to bring authenticity to their roles.



### Charles Wide KC

It's always lovely to be joined by Old Leysians and The School had the pleasure of welcoming back Charles Wide KC, who spoke to a room full of pupils about his distinguished career, discussed recent legal/political developments and participated in a Q&A session.

The talk was a fantastic opportunity for current Leysians to engage with an OL who was, until his retirement, a judge at the Old Bailey. Pupils enquired into the importance of juries, the relevance of the ECHR and cases that have impacted Charles - the audience was left with a clear sense of how complex and interesting the practice of law can be.

The Leys is thankful to Charles for returning to his alma mater, to give such a unique insight into the world of law.



### James Albery

We also welcomed Old Leysian James Albery, GB Hockey player and Olympian, to speak with our Performance Academy group. He shared his experiences from international competition and provided valuable insights into high-level performance and preparation. A fantastic opportunity for our athletes.

### Careers: Working Lunch - Jane Burke

Pupils in Years 10, 11 and Sixth Form attended the first session in our new 'Careers: Working Lunch' series. Jane Burke shared insights from her extensive career in government, reflecting on her experience during periods of financial turbulence, political change and media scrutiny. From roles in HM Treasury and HM Revenue & Customs to shaping tax policy, managing compliance teams and contributing to the London 2012 Olympic Games, Mrs Burke offered a fascinating perspective on leadership, law and public service.





## COMMUNITY LIFE

### Hong Kong

As part of our 150 Anniversary, Clare Ives, along with colleagues, travelled to Hong Kong in October. They were thrilled to catch up with OLs and current parents at the magnificent Island Shangri-La Hotel. A special thank you to the Hong Kong OL community, who provided a very warm welcome and to current pupil Caleb C who joined in for the Q&A session.



### Wesley's Chapel Festive Celebration

It was lovely to see some parents at Wesley's Chapel in London for our annual Festive Celebration, accompanied by The Leys Chapel Choir, on Friday 28th November.



### Upcoming Events

We are delighted to announce our next event for parents: an evening of Wine Tasting & Cheese Pairing on Friday 13th March 2026, in Great Hall.

Our expert sommelier will guide you through six exquisite pairings, all in support of bursaries at The Leys. These events are always popular and space is limited, so early booking is advised.

[Parent Wine Tasting & Cheese Pairing - The Leys](#)

### 150 Campaign Update

For the Development Team, the 150th anniversary year has been incredible. Parents may remember our £150k for the 150th campaign that we launched earlier this year, with the 150 Parent Ball and the Pitlochry House Challenge supporting it. We are now just £22,928 off target! Every penny is going towards supporting bursaries at The Leys, and will be doubled thanks to our match donor!

If you would like to help us close the gap, you can donate online at [www.theleys.net/donate](http://www.theleys.net/donate)



# 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.



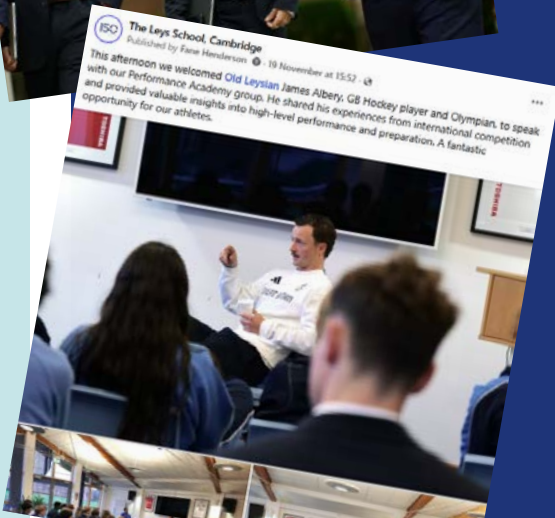
@theleysschoolcambridge



@leyscambridge



The Leys School





# What's On?

**Drama Scholars' Showcase**  
**Wednesday 21 January**  
**19:00** (*By invitation only*)  
*Great Hall*



**Symphonia Festival**  
**Thursday 22 January**  
**16:30 - 18:00**  
*Winton Thomas Recital Hall*



**Global Goals Lecture: Prof Hugh Hunt**  
**Wednesday 28 January | 19:00** | *Great Hall*

**Royal Geographical Society Lecture: Toby Savage**  
**Thursday 29 January | 19:30** (*Tickets from RGS*) | *Great Hall*

**Talk for parents – Nutrition for Teenagers by Zoe Kirkby**  
**Wednesday 4 February | 19:00** | *Old Gym*

**Year 10 play: The Crucible**  
**Wednesday 11 - Thursday 12 February | 19:15** | *Great Hall*

**Dance Show**  
**Wednesday 25 March | 19:15** | *Great Hall*

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

The Leys School, Cambridge CB2 7AD

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

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