

memo



Arts for everyone
Staff reflect on the
power of participation

Farewell to
the Fosters
One family, five
children, 22 years

Space Race
To infinity and beyond
with Chris Pearson

*Flying the flag for
performing arts*

The big reveal - a performing
arts centre fit for the future

The magazine for LGS, LGHS and GSAL alumni

ISSUE 11 AUTUMN 23

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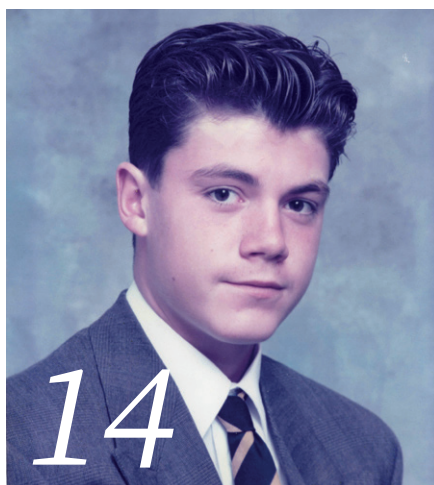
School of Rock

Famous faces from our creative alumni

The Grammar School at Leeds
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Space man

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Update your details, contact preferences or unsubscribe at www.gsal.org.uk/alumni/update-my-details or alumni@gsal.org.uk

Welcome to

As we embark on the build for our new Performing Arts Centre, you'll notice a well-deserved nod to music, drama and performance in these pages.

From celebrating our famous alumni in the arts to acknowledging the power of participation, this edition of Memento explores how the arts are a revolutionary force for change, and can empower us all.

When we reached out to alumni for their memories of performing arts at school, we were overwhelmed by the response. We've only been able to include a limited selection of these in our article Notes of Nostalgia, and they certainly make for entertaining reading. Alongside the fun and the laughter however, many of those who volunteered their stories also spoke more seriously of the creativity, confidence and friendships their experiences fostered. Whether backstage or in the spotlight, plenty of our former students are convinced that their involvement with the arts has prepared them for - and, in many cases, helped to shape - their future, both personally and professionally.

Our staff agree. On pages 10 and 11, teachers past and present make a compelling argument that the arts are for everyone, whether pupils are backstage or in the spotlight. I particularly appreciated Andrew Wheeler's message about his inclusive approach as Head of Music at LGS and GSAL, and his recollection of a boy telling him he would never be able to sing in the chapel choir. Their subsequent exchange perfectly sums up the impact teachers have on young people and their potential. Chris Pearson's (OL92) interview also pays tribute to the power of teachers to change a life. Of his 25-year career in the space industry, Chris claims he wouldn't be where he is today without the education he received at Leeds Grammar School, and the encouragement of teachers like Derek Fry.

Like Chris, I am testimony to the impact inspiring educators have on young people. I spoke recently at The Heads' Conference



(HMC) about my own headteacher, Mrs Clare. Mrs Clare was a role model; more than that, she was an inspiration. She instilled a confidence and belief that I could be anything I wanted to be. In my role as HMC Chair, I have to be realistic about the challenges we currently face in the sector: the mental health crisis, persistent pupil absence, the impact of AI - the list goes on. But in the face of these pressing circumstances, it is also my job and the job of all educational leaders to remember that our values of care, support and hope for our pupils are eternal; they transcend all context. My message for HMC was that we must rise to the road ahead and lead into the future - and we will.

I left the conference with the words of Pericles: "What you leave behind is not what is engraved on stone monuments, but what is woven into the lives of others." Our lives and learning, our work and leisure, our goals and successes - they are not great for the sake of achievement alone. Rather, their power lies in the connections they allow us to make; the way that they enrich our lives and those of the people around us. An important and powerful message for us all, not just headteachers.

Sue Woodroffe, Principal

NOTES OF *nostalgia*

Alumni recall their performing arts roots

L-R Jordan Bickerdyke, Callum Kenny, Daisy Mackay, and Chloe Rose (Bottom's Dream, 2008).



L-R Hannah Woodhouse, Elisabeth Cysarz, Alex Mason, Anne Smith, Fiona Best, Bethany Hill, Penny Connel and Rosemary Smith (Hansel and Gretel, 1979)

As we eagerly await completion of GSAL's new Performing Arts Centre, we're sharing some recollections from LGS, LGHS and GSAL alumni on what the performing arts have meant to them during their schooldays and beyond.

For Amanda Gillham, née Thomas (OG79), her love of music and performance became her life's work. "At school, I loved the larger concerts performed as joint productions with LGS. We performed an amazing repertoire including Bach's St Matthew Passion and Verdi's Requiem."

Amanda was awarded a B.Mus. (Hons) from Sheffield University in 1982, and has travelled the length and breadth of the country as a busy professional violinist since. Her portfolio is hugely varied, spanning symphony orchestras, string quartets, choral society shows,

operas, and pop and rock concerts. As well as numerous TV and radio appearances, Amanda's career has taken her to Australia, the USA, Spain, the Far East, the Amazon, Panama and the Caribbean.

Amanda also heads up the Orchestra in Residence at Nottingham Trent University and teaches piano in Sheffield, where she thinks of herself as the Mrs Hare equivalent - "although could anyone live up to her reputation?"

Hun Sik (Mark) Lee (GSAL16) remembers being involved "anywhere and everywhere a violin could be included!" Mark performed in the school orchestra, string ensemble, chamber groups and other productions and shows. He also learned to play the viola in ensemble sessions rather than in one-to-one lessons - "a complete



Amanda Gillham née Thomas (OG79)

trial by fire, but it ended up being incredibly useful in my career!" Later, he took on leadership roles within ensembles, developing "confidence, communication, collaboration and resilience" - skills which have proved vital during his professional life.

Mark says his experience at school was the gateway to a successful career as a classical violinist working with incredible musicians and artists such as Dmitri Sitkovetsky, John Rutter,



More memories

Sarah Youell remembers playing the scarecrow in the Wizard of Oz production at LGHS in 1975 – although she suspects the casting decision might have had something to do with her “out of control, straw-coloured hair!”

Jonathan Straight (OL83) shares a story of rebellion: “The housemaster was Mr Jackson, who resembled the character Crocker from the TV detective series Kojak. Crocker was, of course, his nickname. I called my piece for the house music competition ‘Crocker’s Revenge’ and hundreds of programmes were printed up. Of course, this was spotted ahead of the competition, and I had to offer a grovelling apology. I was asked to choose another title and I settled on ABC Rocker. The programmes were reprinted. Read it again closely...my revenge after all!”

Angela Hey (OG71) recalls feeling so sick with nerves that she almost didn’t make it to school for the dress rehearsal of The Happy Prince – “The music director Donald Hunt even offered to drive 11 miles to my home to pick me up!” Thankfully, the show could go on – at school, she headed straight for the sick room and was revived by the contents of the medicine cupboard.

Fiona Whitaker née Best (OG84) has fond memories of a Hansel and Gretel performance with English National Opera North in 1979. The headdresses (pictured far left) were fitted with tiny lightbulbs. “We did shows in Leeds and then went on tour, including to Stratford upon Avon. We were incredibly lucky – it was an amazing experience.”



Richard Kilgariff (OL87) remembers band night in 1987 (pictured on page 10) and performing as Skin Deep. “Afterwards, we did one tour – to Uppingham School – where we did our set twice to bemused pupils who foolishly asked for more...and got the same again. Fortunately, we retired before we got picked up by a pop svengali and made to wear lycra on talk shows. Happy days!”

Ellie Andrews (OG01) remembers being involved in a school production of Fame, and credits being involved in the performing arts at school for building her confidence and creativity. “I went on to study theatre design at Central Saint Martins and worked briefly in the theatre industry, before returning to Leeds to set up my own arts and bakery business. Throughout my career I have been involved in lots of creative, performance-based and artistic events – whether organising, hosting, designing, catering for or sitting on the board of a live arts organisation.”

Errollyn Wallen and Rick Wakeman. Currently retraining in medicine, Mark still maintains a freelance music career. He recently brought his two passions together by performing at The Royal London Hospital as part of a concert series for visitors and patients.

Chloe Rose (GSAL12) now works in publicity, but recalls performing in school productions as some of the happiest times in her school life: “I found some of my best friends through those productions. I’ve always loved the theatre, and being in school productions gave me a creative outlet for my energy.”

She remembers taking part in Roald Dahl’s *The Witches*, playing the lead character, Luke, when she was in year 7. The following year, she was cast as Mrs Snout in *Bottom’s Dream* and later played Dee Tergent in *Return to the Forbidden Planet*.

Chloe adds: “I’m not really involved in the performing arts now sadly, but I do think my background in the arts scene has helped in my work life. And I still watch a lot of theatre, and I love musicals!

The Foster family - five siblings who share a passion for creativity, music and performance - could be described as The Grammar School at Leeds' answer to the Von Trapps.

A *family* AFFAIR



2011

From left pictured on the LGS headmaster's chair: George, Rachel, David, Andrew, and Sally.



2023

Memento spoke to mum Helen Foster about 22 years of Fosters at GSAL.

For over two decades, GSAL's practice rooms, stages and sports fields have featured a Foster or two. However, in summer 2023 David, the youngest of the five Foster siblings, received his A-level results and moved on to the Liverpool Institute of Performing Arts to study songwriting, ending an incredible 22 years of Fosters at GSAL.

The family - Andrew (GSAL12), Rachel (GSAL14), Sally (GSAL16), George (GSAL19) and David (GSAL23) - are all creative, explains mum Helen, a GP. "Andrew is now 29 and works as a product specialist for a healthcare company, but

he still plays piano - he has done since he was four," she says. "Sally and George are very much into jazz, and David plays piano, guitar and sings too. And although her first degree was in sport science, Rachel has rediscovered her creative side after doing a patisserie course and starting her own bakery business. She recently toured with The Killers as their pastry chef."

While at GSAL, all of the Fosters made the most of the creative and sporting opportunities that came their way, supporting each other on the pitch and the stage. "In Andrew's final year, he played Adele's *Someone Like You* in a school performance and Sally, who's a keen singer, accompanied him," says Helen. "And after dabbling in the violin and saxophone, Rachel



David Foster, the youngest of the five Foster siblings, is now studying at Liverpool Institute of Performing Arts.

While at GSAL, all of the Foster children made the most of the creative and sporting opportunities that came their way, supporting each other on the pitch and the stage.

discovered netball, and her team won the national championships. I don't think I've missed a single show or a match in 22 years - although I do remember one particularly mad dash from Rose Court to Junior School to make two recitals!"

The two youngest Fosters, George and David, are particularly musical - "I think they more or less lived in the music department," laughs Helen. George's first part was as Prince Charming in a nursery show, and he continued acting, singing and playing music throughout his time at GSAL: in the choir, the barbershop group, as Fagin in *Oliver!* and at jazz evenings. George recently graduated with a double first in physics from the University of Cambridge, but his love of music and performance continued throughout his undergraduate studies. "At Cambridge, he was in two bands, and has even played on the same billing as Boney M. He's now taking some time to pursue his music - in fact, he's looking for a jazz band around Leeds he can join," Helen says.

David, like George, plays piano and guitar. "His Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) was about the

musical patterns that comprise a typical James Bond theme song - then he used his research to write one of his own," says Helen. "And for his DT project, he actually made a guitar - he managed to get music into everything." In the school's recent production of *Les Misérables*, David played the bishop. "It was incredible," Helen enthuses. "The music and the choreography was so professional. There wasn't a single detail missed."

As a family, the Fosters have even combined family holidays with choir tours and music trips, including jaunts to Prague, New York, Dublin and Amsterdam. "Some were planned, others were a case of finding a last-minute flight. We've seen the children perform in some incredible places and venues. I'll really miss it," Helen admits.

But although their time at GSAL might be over, the Fosters love of music still continues with regular visits to concerts, music festivals and the opera. "We've been to see the Rolling Stones together, and we had a real treat of a trip to London recently where we saw *Hamilton* on the Friday and *Phantom of the Opera* on the Saturday," says Helen.

It's time to celebrate our creative alumni, whether they've found success in the spotlight or behind the scenes.

SCHOOL OF Rock!

Plenty of former students have gone on to find their name in lights - or perhaps in the production credits. From Hollywood director Emily Cheung (OG99) to Cirque du Soleil Vice President Duncan Fisher (OL86), and from theatre company founder and producer Olivia Burgin and artistic director Jess Frieze (both GSAL15) to CEO of Leeds Playhouse James Brining (OL86), so many GSAL, LGS and LGHS creatives discovered their passion for the arts while at school.

So let's celebrate our school of rock (plus jazz, musical theatre, scriptwriting and so much more) with a very special theatre programme packed with just some of our Leeds-bred talent.



Barry Cryer (OL53)

Best known for: Sadly Barry died in 2022, but his status as a star of British entertainment lives on.

Other starring roles: Radio quiz panellist, chat show guest, comedy writer.

While at school: Honed his comedic talents while presiding over *The Bovril Sandwich Society*.

Career highlights: Sharing a stage with Bruce Forsyth; writing for *The Frost Report*, the Two Ronnies and Morecambe and Wise; delivering laughs in *I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue*.

Words of wisdom: "I haven't had a career, just a series of incidents. I've been dogged by good luck all my life."



Thelma Ruby (OG39)

Best known for: Legend of stage and screen.

Other starring roles: Entertaining British troops in hospital during WW2.

While at school: Played Danny, the wounded soldier, in J M Barrie's *A Kiss for Cinderella*. "A lady walked up to me at an Old Girls' Club meeting and said 'I remember you in *A Kiss for Cinderella*'. Well, I couldn't believe it!"

Career highlights: Performing alongside Orson Welles and Judi Dench; playing Lily Dempsey on *Coronation Street*; touring the world for eight years in the play *Mamma Gilda*.

Words of wisdom: "There is no greater pleasure than making an audience laugh."



Ricky Wilson (OL96)

Best known for: Kaiser Chiefs frontman, songwriter, radio presenter.

Other starring roles: Teacher at Leeds College of Art & Design, *The Voice UK* coach, TV and podcast presenter.

While at school: "Art was my favourite subject. I was the kind of kid that called the art teacher by his first name." Ricky also excelled in music, winning the Best Conductor award in years 12 and 13 for Nevile House.

Career highlights: Winning three Brit awards with the Kaiser Chiefs and NME's Best Dressed Award 2006; notching up more wins than any other *The Voice UK* coach.

Words of wisdom: "If you think you're not supposed to be somewhere, you're pushing the limits of what you should be doing, so you're probably in the right place."



Amara Okereke (GSAL15)

Best known for: Playing Eliza Doolittle in *My Fair Lady* in London's West End.

Other starring roles: Cosette in *Les Misérables*; Wendla in *Spring Awakening*; Becky Fox in BBC Three horror series *Red Rose*.

While at school: "I did school sports, gymnastics, athletics. But dance was the thing I liked the most." The teacher who cast Amara in a year 6 production remembers her as "wonderful even then".

Career highlights: Winning a 'Best Actress in a Musical' award from The Stage for her debut performance in *Les Misérables*; winning a Black British Theatre Award for *My Fair Lady*; featuring on the cover of *Tatler* in 2022.

Words of wisdom: "My whole life I've been fighting for my space in the industry - proving to people that I deserve to be here."

Simon Gillis (OL00)

Best known for: COO and Executive Producer at Academy Award, Emmy and BAFTA-winning television and film production house See Saw Films.

Other starring roles: Trained as a solicitor and worked as a senior lawyer for Disney.

While at school: Played Josif in a school production of *The Government Inspector* (one reviewer said he "skillfully created much of the humour in the script") and acted in *Lear's Fool* with The National Youth Theatre.

Career highlights: Executive producer for titles including Francis Lee's *Ammonite*, Jane Campion's *The Power Of The Dog*, John Madden's *Operation Mincemeat* and Thomas M. Wright's *The Unknown Man*.

Words of wisdom: Gillis says his career in the creative industries has been "more of a squiggle than a straight line" - and that's OK.



William Galinsky (OL90)

Best known for: Director of Programming and Impact at JW3, the Jewish Cultural and Community Centre in London.

Other starring roles: Artistic Director Norfolk & Norwich Festival, Festival Director Cork Midsummer Festival.

While at school: "When I was 16, LGS opened its new theatre and, over the next two years, I began to cut my teeth as a director and producer." William was LGS's first recipient of school colours for the arts.

Career highlights: *WALKING* - a three hour part-meditation, part-immersive theatre experience in rural Norfolk featuring angel guides in yellow cloaks. Also *HERD* - a "musical and sculptural odyssey of epic proportions" involving a giant musical sheep.

Words of wisdom: "Dream big, follow your nose, enjoy yourself."



Lucy-Anne Daniels (GSAL20)

Best known for: Jazz vocalist.

Other starring roles: Member of the National Youth Jazz Orchestra; Birmingham Conservatoire graduate.

While at school: Played Nancy in *Oliver!* and a ghost in *A Christmas Carol*.

Career highlights: Playing iconic jazz venues including Ronnie Scott's in London and Dizzy's Jazz Club in New York; sell-out debut show at Cheltenham Jazz Festival; reaching the semi-finals of the BBC Young Jazz Musician of the Year awards.

Words of wisdom: "I've gained so much more confidence in terms of being able to entertain a crowd and keep them going. It's been really fun to explore new ways of interpreting a tune and witness my own growth in music."



Amanda Gillham (OG72)

Best known for: Violinist.

Other starring roles: Orchestral fixer, string quartet founder and piano teacher.

While at school: I remember joint productions with LGS - *A Beggar's Opera* by John Gay and *Oh What a Lovely War*. In Upper 6th, I remember coaching a younger girl to sing Kate Bush's *Wuthering Heights* in a variety concert - she sang very well!

Career highlights: Playing every major UK concert hall; touring the world; founding an orchestra.

Words of wisdom: "My time at school gave me such a solid grounding for my music career."



Jeremy Dyson (OL84)

Best known for: Co-creator of *The League of Gentlemen* comedy series.

Other starring roles: Writer for TV, theatre and film; author of several books; keyboard player in the band Rudolf Rocker.

While at school: "I never thought of myself as a writer, but I did have a fascination with production and making film and TV - partly fuelled by *Dr Who*."

Career highlights: Winning a British Academy Television Award for *The League of Gentlemen*; being shortlisted for the Macmillan Silver Pen award for *Never Trust a Rabbit*; adapting Roald Dahl's *Tales of the Unexpected* for stage.

Words of wisdom: "I don't think you can do it [write] unless you have a slightly masochistic taste for rejection - you almost need it!"

“The ARTS are for everyone.”

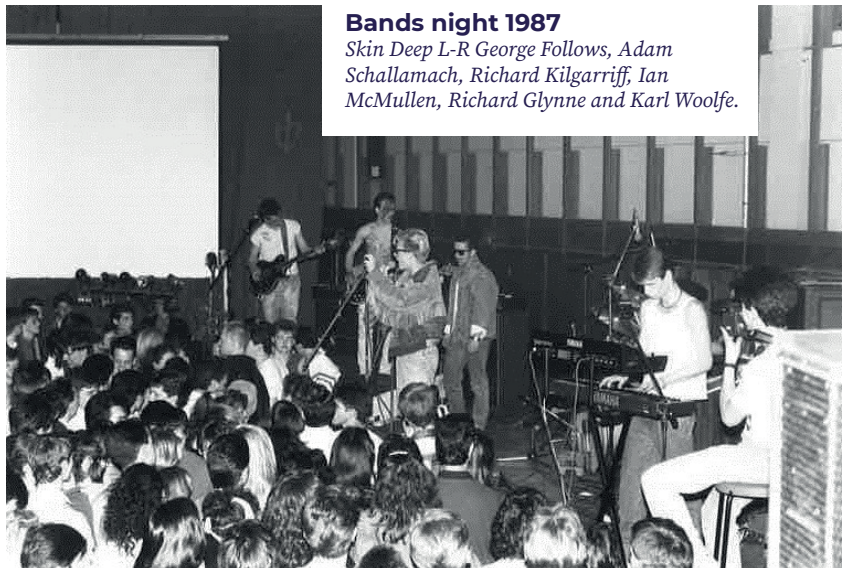
As The Grammar School at Leeds prepares for a new state-of-the-art Performing Arts Centre, current and former staff reflect on an inclusive approach to the arts at GSAL and its founding schools.

When Andrew Wheeler arrived at Leeds Grammar School (LGS) in 1989 to teach music, he was impressed by what he found. “The music was of a very high standard, but it was quite elitist,” he recalls. “I thought ‘What about our grade 1s and grade 2s?’ I saw my job as being to promote music, make the department vibrant and welcoming and celebrate success at all levels - not waiting until pupils were at grade 8.”

Under Andrew’s tenure, a second and junior orchestra was introduced and ensembles were encouraged. Andrew recalls the work that went into reframing music as open to everyone. “I remember a boy saying to me, ‘I’m never going to sing in the chapel choir’ and I said ‘Would you sing in a chamber choir?’ He said, well, yes - so we renamed it.”

Staff at LGS and Leeds Girls’ High School (LGHS) remember lots of collaboration between the two schools, as well as separate school events where every pupil was encouraged to get involved. Infamous House Music events took place at LGS, and at LGHS there were regular concerts, Speech Night performances and biennial form plays.

Judith Kerr, who was Head of English at LGHS, remembers how the girls were expected to write, produce and perform with minimal staff intervention. “They did everything - costumes, directing, lighting and so on - all by themselves. There were plenty of rifts and fallings



Bands night 1987

Skin Deep L-R George Follows, Adam Schallamach, Richard Kilgariff, Ian McMullen, Richard Glynnne and Karl Woolfe.

out, but it was a really great team-building exercise and they loved it. Even the parents got involved - I remember them bringing in three piece suites and all sorts of things for the sets!”

Nigel Day, who taught English at LGS from 1988, describes House Music as “fabulous tribal occasions” allowing pupils to demonstrate their creativity, passion and house loyalty regardless of their musical talents. “As a teacher, it was amazing to see the older pupils’ ability to organise and enthuse their younger peers. The hall would be packed - these were pre-health and safety days - and people would photocopy tickets to get in!”

LGS and LGHS also produced a



The Jungle Book

Joint LGHS/LGS production, 2001. Pictured L-R Matthew Dalingwater, Katherine Maslin, Sarah Ahmed, Nadia Manzoor, Holly Jones and Amira El-Turabi.



Oliver! 2018

Lucy-Anne Daniels (GSAL20)
and Rhys Gannon (GSAL19)

Being part of a big production helps students “grow in confidence, they develop friendships, they’ve got a place where they can go and feel a sense of belonging,” says Roz Bendelow, Head of Drama at GSAL

lengthy list of big-name shows, teaming up for some of the productions. “I remember so many stand-out shows at LGHS and in collaboration with LGS: *Twelfth Night*, *Bugsy Malone*, *Grease*, *The Jungle Book* to name just a few,” says Judith Kerr. A student write-up of *Guys and Dolls*, a 2001 joint production between the two founding schools, noted that the atmosphere backstage was “frantic”, with helpless shouts of “What if I can’t rip my skirt off in time?” echoing across the rehearsal rooms.

“The panto is another great way of emphasising that the arts are for everyone - including staff”

The tradition of the ‘big production’ still continues, as well as another much-loved convention: the staff panto. Packed with puns, in-jokes and silliness, the tradition stretches from the first

Cinderella in 1974 with Peter Jolly playing The Fairy Godmother to the present day. Most recently, GSAL staff helped launch Leeds’ 2023 year of culture with a hilarious homegrown production of *Dick Whittington* in January written and directed by Simon Knowles, Head of Geography.

“The panto is another great way of emphasising that the arts are for everyone

- including staff,” says Judith. Nigel, who led an a cappella singing group for a number of years during his teaching career, agrees: “I’d advise anyone new to teaching or to GSAL to get involved in some kind of creative activity outside the classroom - the children see you in a different context, and it’s a fantastic way of building relationships.”

When it comes to engaging young people in performing arts, Roz Bendelow and Scott Reynolds, the current heads of drama, are clear about the benefits they’ve witnessed. “We see students grow in confidence, they develop friendships, they’ve got a place where they can go and feel a sense of belonging and camaraderie,” says Roz. Scott agrees. “They learn focus and organisation, too, and their progress is rewarded. We make sure that effort and dedication is acknowledged at all levels - a little encouragement and praise goes a long, long way.”



Staff panto, *Dick Whittington*, January 2023

Anna Rusbatch (Alice) and
Simon Knowles (Idle Jack)

centre

Principal Sue Woodroffe reveals the vision for the new GSAL Performing Arts Centre (PAC), and her hopes that it will inspire a passion for the music, drama and performance in future generations of students.

“The Grammar School at Leeds and its two founding schools, Leeds Grammar School and Leeds Girls’ High School, have a powerful and vibrant legacy of enriching the lives of young people through the performing arts.

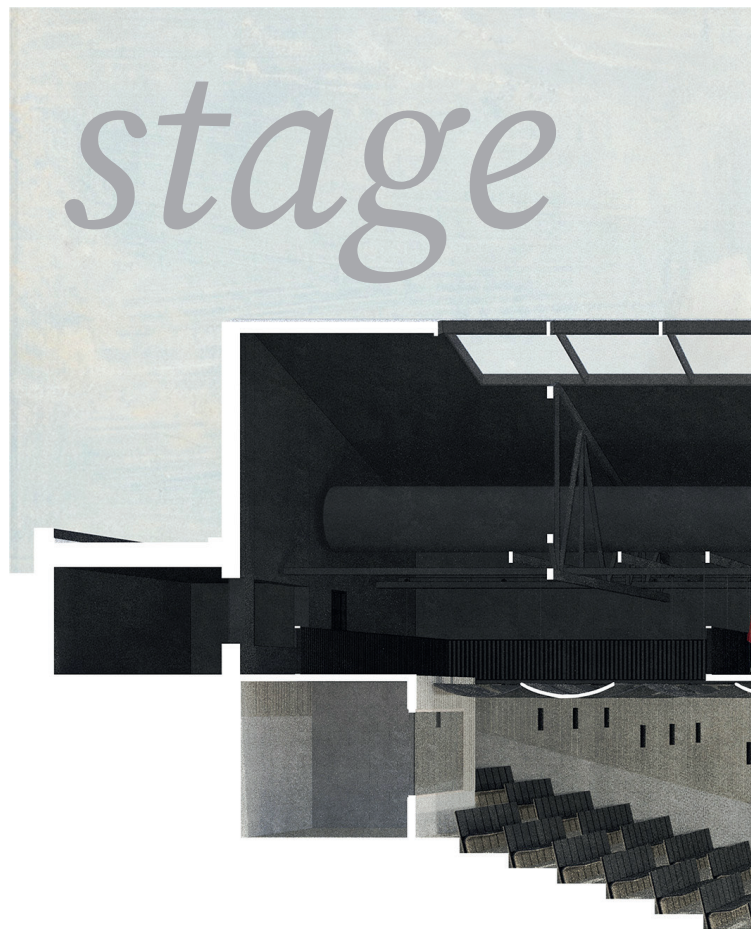
Our pupils past and present often tell us how much they value the friendships they forged in the practice rooms and rehearsal spaces at school. How they learnt essential life skills working as part of a production team: how to communicate, to grow in confidence, to collaborate, to stay curious.

Most importantly, they speak of how a love of the arts has remained with them, and continues to enrich their lives beyond the school gate. No doubt you’ll read some of these accounts in this performance arts-packed issue of Memento.

When GSAL’s founding schools physically merged in 2008, a professional performing arts space was always part of the vision. However, after years of joint productions and collaborative performances between LGS and LGHS, competing demands and unforeseen hurdles meant that plans for a new facility had to be put on hold.

Now it’s time for our vision to become reality. Our purpose-built, state-of-the-art Performing Arts Centre is due for completion in 2024-25, and will be a dedicated hub for music, drama and performance of all kinds. I know that it will inspire a passion for the arts in the next generation of GSAL students and prepare them for their futures - whatever they might hold.

The PAC is being built on the site of the former drama theatre, which will be extended significantly, and the current theatre foyer will provide its dramatic entrance. A 350-seat auditorium with flexible seating is at the heart of our plans, complete with oak-panelled stage and walls and optimised acoustics. The auditorium will also feature the latest audio technology and LED lighting, giving backstage teams the experience of operating professional-standard equipment.

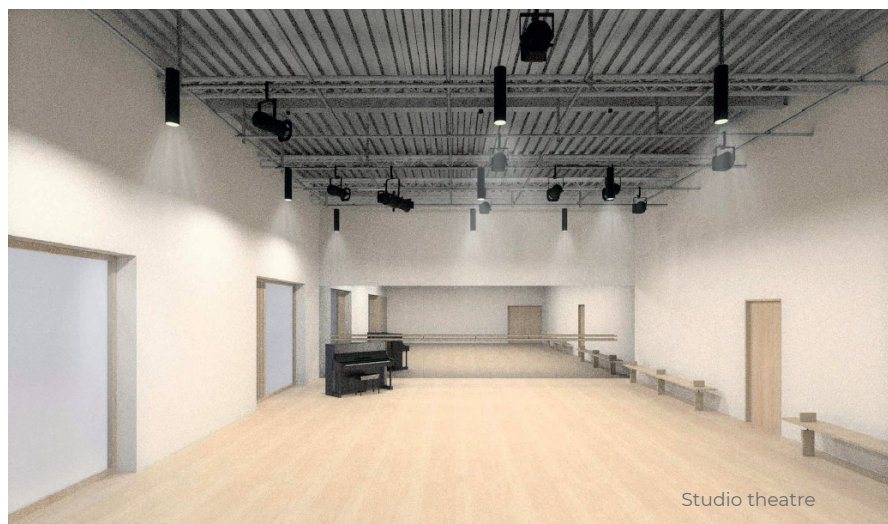
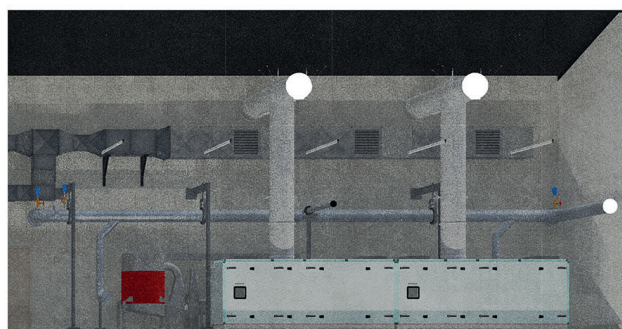


Side view

At The Grammar School at Leeds, we’ve always inspired amazing performers...now we’re building a stage for them.



Auditorium



Studio theatre

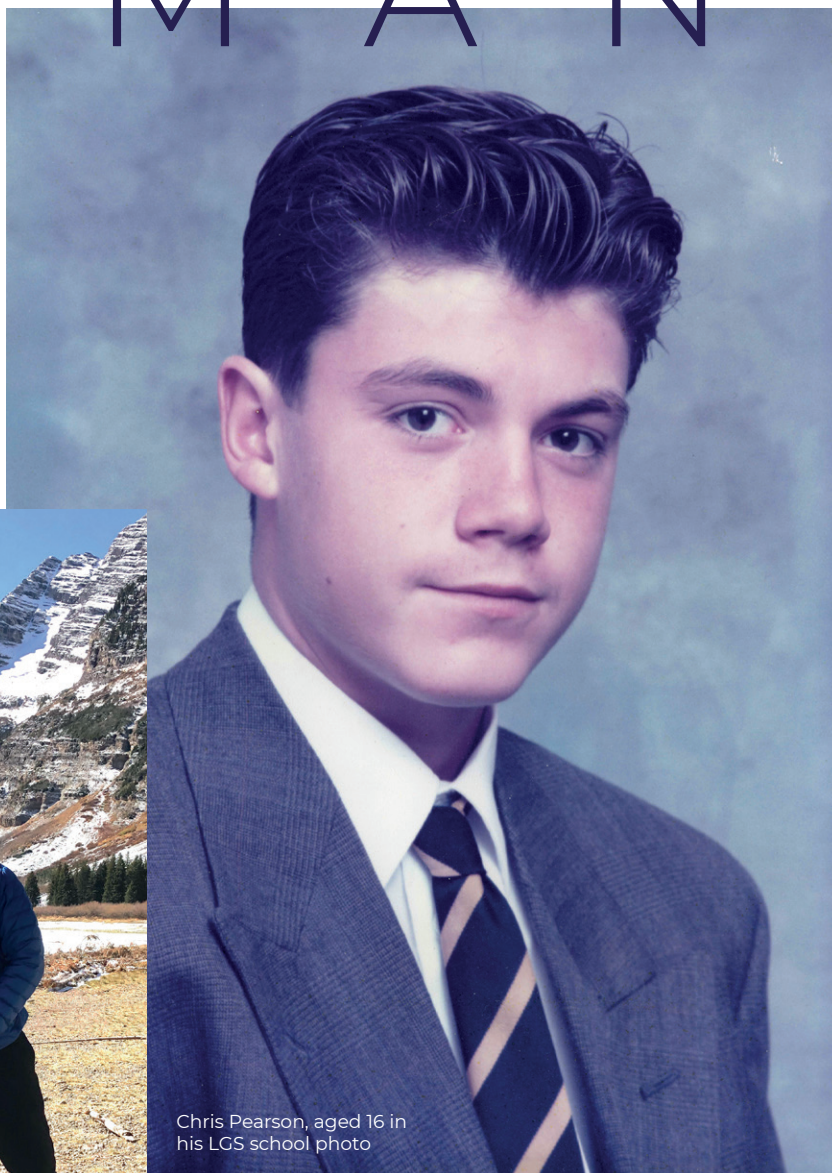


Location

The studio theatre will be ideal for teaching, with classrooms, workshop spaces, changing rooms, rehearsal and costume storage close by. Elevated windows let the light in and keep distractions out, creating an inhibition-free zone for performers to experiment and take risks.

Every day at GSAL, I bear witness to the way that an arts-rich educational offering ignites pupils' imaginations and inspires creativity. And whether it's through one-off showstopper performances or in the way music, drama, dance and performance are embedded in school life, I believe the arts have value for everyone."

S P A C E M A N



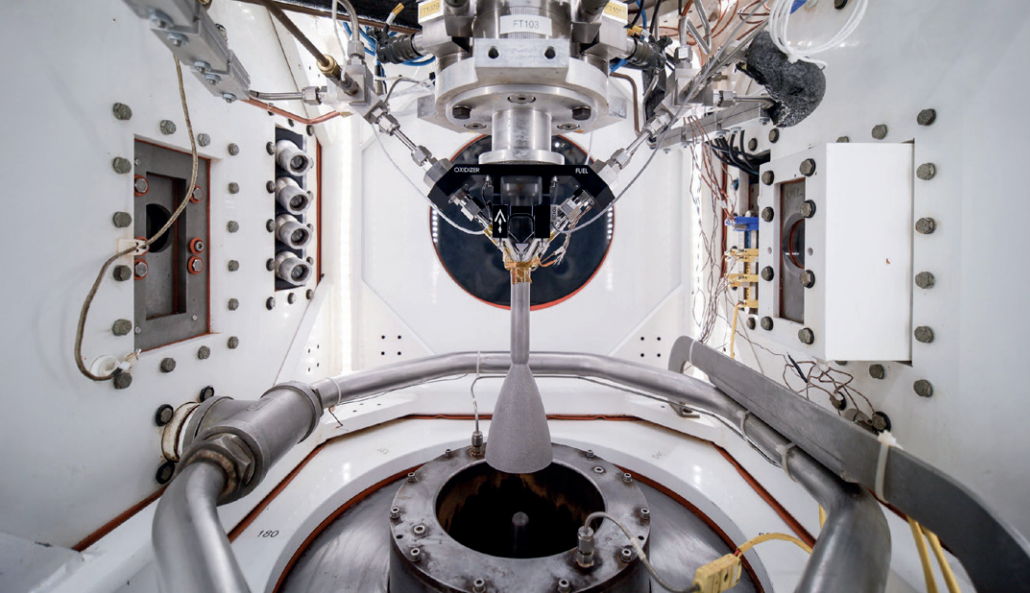
Chris Pearson, aged 16 in
his LGS school photo



Chris and his family now
live in Boulder, Colorado

Chris Pearson (OL92) reflects on an accidental career, the impact of inspiring teachers and the importance of people skills alongside academics.

A thruster developed by Agile Space Industries which will help guide two NASA moon missions in 2025.



Chris Pearson's (OL92) 25-year career in the space industry almost didn't happen. "I had a fantastic education at Leeds Grammar School, and I remember something clicking around the time I was in fourth year - I definitely found myself more attracted to the sciences and maths," he says. But after finishing his maths degree at the University of Manchester - "I listened to a lot of Stone Roses and played plenty of football," he says, smiling - Chris found himself unsure of the next step. While his peers found jobs in finance and insurance, Chris moved to London and worked at TGI Friday's in order to save up to go travelling. Being a maitre d' in a busy Covent

"I know I wouldn't be where I was today if I hadn't gone to Leeds Grammar School."

Garden restaurant taught him a lot - arguably, as much as his degree: "You don't learn people skills in a classroom," he says.

It was during a stint at home in between travels - "I'd been to the Middle East, then went to the US to work in a ski resort in Arizona" - that Chris spotted a newspaper advert for a PhD in automotive engineering at Cranfield University. When the prospectus arrived, however, it was a Masters in space engineering that caught his eye. "I didn't even realise it was a thing, but I was fascinated," says Chris. There were two scholarships available, and Chris discovered that the person making the decision was a keen amateur Egyptologist. Using the people skills he'd honed in London and overseas, Chris sent him some Egyptian postcards from his travels. "I got a scholarship," he says

with a grin.

Studying space gripped him immediately: "Here I was learning about Cold War politics, and space was in the middle of all that. For the first time, I felt really passionate about what I was doing," he says. Chris' passion translated into top marks, before a job with the European Aeronautic Defence and Space Company (EADS) Astrium subsidiary looking after eight satellites. The learning curve was huge. "My team members were older than me and the environment was pressurised. It was as much about people management as it was about tech," Chris says.

Fast forward a few years and Chris, who had started work for ABSL Space Products specialising in lithium-ion batteries for space suits and tech, was given the chance to set up a sales office in the US. Chris's girlfriend - now wife - was a nurse and had spent two years sitting her exams to practice in the States. The couple settled quickly into American life, making the move to Boulder, Colorado, after one year. "We just love it here," says Chris. "It's so beautiful."

His career hasn't been without its pressure points. Under private equity investment, Chris was tasked with trying to grow operations during the 2008 recession. "We were six weeks away from closing the doors several times," says Chris. However, NASA helped them through. "We won a contract to upgrade the old battery tech in spacesuits," says Chris. It was a high profile job, Chris recollects: "If the batteries don't work, someone's life is at risk." But they delivered, and the company went from six people to 50-60 people in three years.

Chris found his next niche a couple of years later: taking space industry start-ups to the next level. His most recent position, CEO of AGILE Space Industries, sees him specialising in in-space propulsion - rockets which help tech move around in space - and follows successful senior roles at two other space start-ups: Surrey Satellite Technology US and Rocco. "We had some rough times," says Chris, recalling the federal government shutdown of 2018-19. Rocco had been selected for a handful of large government contracts, but no contracts were being signed. "We bootstrapped the whole thing," says Chris. In 2020, however, the cash finally came through, and Rocco was sold. "It did well financially," says Chris. "For me though, it's all about the journey and going through the scrapes. And seeing a space walk and thinking "That's my battery" or whatever - it never gets old."

So do more start-ups await? "I have to admit, I'm tired," says Chris, who says he got his work ethic from his hardworking GP mum. "My kids are getting older - my daughter's just got her first Saturday job and it reminds me of being at school and learning to balance priorities." Chris has fond memories of one teacher in particular: Mr Fry. "He took a real interest in me. He made me feel like I was able to do more than I thought I could."

"I was never brilliant," says Chris. "But he made me feel like I could achieve something. I know I wouldn't be where I was today if I hadn't gone to Leeds Grammar School."



Leeds' oldest library has a makeover

Modern study skills meet tradition as the Lawson Library - the oldest library in Leeds, opened in 1692 - is refurbished.

The Lawson Library was initially housed in a 'new apartment' added to Leeds Grammar School in 1692 by alderman and former mayor, Godfrey Lawson, and was open to the citizens of Leeds as well as LGS students. An apocryphal story suggests that in the Lawson Library's early years, the trustees of LGS - now known as governors - were worried that lessons would be interrupted by members of the public wishing to use the library so they restricted access to 2.00-4.00am on Sunday mornings!

Original catalogues from 1692 list around 200 library books, with Godfrey Lawson contributing the first six titles: *Pepys' Memoirs relating to ye state of ye Royall Navy of England to 1688, Dr Stamp's Spiritual Infatuation, History of ye Pope's nephew, Cumberland's Jewish Weights and Measures, Christian Prudence, and Isaacson's Cronologie*. Newspapers and magazines were added from around 1904, although the teaching staff were discerning and "only



Author Katherine Rundell cutting the ribbon in the newly refurbished Lawson Library

admitted works of recognized merit"!

Over the years, the Lawson Library has moved to various locations, including its third floor location at Moorland Road and its current home at Alwoodley Gates. And now in 2023, the Lawson Library has had a modern makeover - although one that pays homage to its rich heritage. Current students and visitors can find chairs upholstered in the LGS and Leeds Girls' High School colours, plus an archives corner with artefacts, a beautiful Mouseman chair, and other features from different eras of the Lawson Library and the LGHS library.

"The refurbishment has made the library brighter, spacious and more contemporary. It meets the needs of modern teaching and learning, individual study as well as collaborative work," says Hana Oldman, Head of Libraries and Information Services. "And in terms of resources, students can access books, journals, e-books and audio books as well as the expertise of our library team. Since the Lawson



The Lawson Library in the Moorland Road era with its 'Great Window'

Library has reopened, we've welcomed guests including Baron Finkelstein and the award-winning author Katherine Rundell. It's the best of both worlds - technology and books at their fingertips, while also providing a beautiful, quiet place to read and study."



A Mouseman chair from Leeds Girls' High School

Luke wins national teaching award for pastoral care

Luke Ramsden (OL96), Deputy Headteacher at St Benedict's in Ealing, has been named Pastoral Leader of the Year by a national educational body.

The National Association for Pastoral Care in Education (NAPCE) cited Luke's development of "outstanding safeguarding and pastoral practice at St Benedict's" plus his work with The Safeguarding Company, which specialises in safeguarding products, planning and training. And in addition to his prestigious award, Luke has also been appointed Chair of Trustees for the Schools Consent Project: a charity which aims to normalise conversations about sexual consent through lawyer-led workshops.

"So far, we've managed to reach over 30,000 young people. We're doing work with Boardmasters Festival and the English Football League academies, and we're also working with schools in New

"So far, we've managed to reach over 30,000 young people."

York. We've even consulted on the issue of consent for a storyline for *Coronation Street* - that's how pervasive the topic is," says Luke.

Despite his award, Luke, who studied history at University College Oxford, claims he didn't initially want to go into teaching. "My grandfather was Head of Maths at Leeds Grammar School, but I quite liked the idea of being an academic," he says. However, the idea



of imparting his passion for history to students won him over, and Luke is now in his seventeenth year of teaching.

So what's next for this award-winning teacher? "Well, I'm also a schools inspector, and I write for the Times Educational Supplement - discussing school leadership and student wellbeing," says Luke. "And my children are starting sixth form and GCSEs which will keep us all busy."

Kate's super-realistic sketching goes viral

Kate Hunt's (GSAL11) astonishing flair for photorealism has received worldwide recognition when a film of her drawing the latest Mercedes-Benz EQS model went viral.

Kate's collaboration with the brand became Mercedes' highest-performing Facebook post of all time, with a reach of 45 million, 228k reactions and 16k shares in just 24 hours.

Photorealism is an ultra-realistic illustration style which can be difficult to distinguish from photography. "It definitely requires an

eye for detail and a lot of patience!" Kate says. But between her role as a footwear designer for Adidas and a successful freelance illustration career, she has numerous opportunities to practise her artistic skills. "I particularly enjoy drawing cars," says Kate. "From a design perspective,

I love the fluid lines and elegant shapes; the shiny surfaces and intricate details make them the perfect technical challenge."

Kate graduated from Loughborough University's Industrial Design and Technology course with

first class honours. Since 2021, she has been based at the Adidas Creation Center



in Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam. "The opportunities are endless and being at the heart of manufacture and development is really exciting," Kate says. And with 50.7k Instagram followers and commissions for brands including Vue Cinemas and Soho House Bangkok, there's no risk of getting bored.

"I still remember my fantastic art teacher, Miss Hartshorn, guiding me through GCSE art and our trip to London in 2011 to visit all the famous galleries," says Kate. "Art was always my favourite subject, and it's incredible to have a career which allows me to draw every day."



A return to tours



Tours returned to GSAL after a three year hiatus, with two groups of students travelling to South Africa and Amsterdam in July 2023.

133 students and 14 members of staff flew to Cape Town for an action-packed two-week sports tour. Rugby, football, netball and hockey all featured. As well as some sporting performances to be proud of, students visited Table Mountain National Park, went surfing, enjoyed some coach karaoke and traditional dancing. Pupils said their highlights ranged from “just talking to kids our age about how they live their daily lives” to “going on safari and seeing two cheetahs right next to the car.”

The music tour to the Netherlands was equally memorable for the students involved - particularly the

spontaneous, informal performances on the tour boats in Amsterdam, in their hostel in The Hague and on board the Rotterdam ferry. “The students were writing songs, exploring new harmonies and composing unique arrangements all week,” said Anna Rusbatch, Director of Primary Music. Alongside their musical explorations and performances, the group also visited the Straat Museum to learn about street art, the Nemo Science Museum, Zaanse Schans to see the authentic Dutch windmills and Anne Frank’s house - a visit which inspired many thoughtful conversations and moments of reflection.

Reunion Fever

A successful OG92 reunion, which saw 25 OGs reminisce and celebrate 30 years since leaving school, has encouraged a number of other year groups to organise their own get togethers.

The OG92 reunion, which was organised by former Head Girl Penny Allen (OG92) and attended by former teachers Mr Brindley and Mrs Kerr, took place at Malmaison in Leeds. The group had a wonderful evening of sharing memories and news. "It feels like coming home in lots of ways," says one attendee. "It's a supportive group in troubled times - and we celebrate the highs too," said another.

Hot on their heels, OG93 will hold their 30 year reunion at GSAL in November, and OG04 is already booked in for September 2024. Could your year



group be next? Let us know if you're getting together - we'd love to hear about your plans (and can help you track down members of your cohort.)

Drop us a line on alumni@gsal.org.uk.

Childhood sweethearts



Congratulations to Lydia Munns (GSAL12) and James Beresford (GSAL14), who married in August 2022. The couple started dating when they were both in year 10 at GSAL. According to Lydia, James first asked her out in a cloakroom on a school trip - how romantic!

Judges fall for Emily's romantic fiction

Television journalist and author Emily Kerr (OG04) has won a Romantic Novel Award from the Romantic Novelists' Association for her feel-good romantic comedy Take A Chance On Greece.

The book was awarded the Jane Wenham-Jones Award, which is given to "consistently funny" romances set in any time period.

Emily set the judges' hearts racing with her book, which she wrote during the pandemic when travelling to Greece felt like an "impossible dream." On writing *Take A Chance On Greece*, Emily said: "It was a joy to be able to travel there in my imagination instead, and I'm so glad that the book has struck a chord with readers. It's a real privilege to write stories which hopefully provide some feel-good escapism and put a smile on people's faces." The Romance Novel Awards were established in 1960 and are judged entirely by readers.

Emily juggles writing alongside her day job as a television journalist. She studied classics at the University of Oxford followed by an MA in broadcast journalism.



2023 LEAVERS' BALL

IMAGES BY SIMON DEWHURST
PHOTOGRAPHY LTD

GSAL's leavers' prize-giving and graduation ball took place in July, and was, as always, one of the most hotly anticipated events of the year.

The black-tie event, which took place in a marquee against the stunning backdrop of the school's cricket pitch, welcomed students, parents, staff and governors to celebrate the many achievements of students during their time at GSAL. Prizes were distributed by Sue Woodroffe, Principal, and Charlene Lyons, Vice Chair of GSAL's Governing Body.

The address was given by Dr Graham Purves, Vice-Principal and Head of Senior School, and guests were entertained by a musical ensemble comprised of Ashaz Hossain-Ibrahim, Fredlin Morency, Ollie Smith and Matthew White. Finally, after the parents had left, it was time for the main event: the graduation ball.

We extend a warm welcome to the newest members of our alumni community - the GSAL23 cohort - and wish them well as they start an exciting new chapter beyond Alwoodley Gates.





Alan receives BEM honour for services to Scouting

In recognition of almost five decades of selfless commitment to the LGS and GSAL Scouts, Alan Naylor (OL72) has been awarded the honour of Medallist of the Order of the British Empire (BEM).

Alan was named in the King's first birthday 2023 Honours List in recognition for his service to young people. He received his award in September 2023 in a ceremony at the residence of the Lord Lieutenant of North Yorkshire in Bedale alongside a number of other recipients selected for their outstanding community commitment.

"Alan's sister, Jayne, nephew, Tom, Assistant Group Scout Leader, Sandra Bavill, and I were delighted to have been part of his special day," said Annette Jones, Assistant Explorer Scout Leader. "It was a wonderful, uplifting and happy occasion in beautiful surroundings." Congratulations to Alan - and many thanks for your unstinting commitment to all things Scouting!



Alan pictured with Jo Ropner, Lord Lieutenant of North Yorkshire

Five go back to school

GSAL welcomed five alumni back to its staff team.



Vicky Hart (OG92) joined GSAL's support staff as our new alumni relations officer, and Georgie Grant (GSAL13) begins her exciting new journey as she moves from teaching English to a digital marketing officer.

Three of the new cohort will be heading back into the classroom: Ariella Rivlin (GSAL18) is teaching classics, while Simone Baxter (OG93) is joining the Individual Needs department. In January, Matt Livesey (GSAL10) will take up a teaching post in the biology department.

Snapshots of joy

The Covid-19 pandemic was a time of reflection for many - but for one GSAL alumnus, it was the catalyst to turn his passion for photography into a career.

George Carr (GSAL11) left his job as a sales account manager at a chemical company in February 2020 to travel around Australia with his girlfriend, Sarah. "The day job was rewarding, but I'd always had this underlying desire to get out and explore more of our beautiful planet outside the usual 9-5," says George. When Covid turned their

planned six-month trip into a three-year adventure, George embraced the change.

"Over the three years, we travelled to every state, and I fell in love with the wildlife and landscapes that Australia had to offer." George started to capture creatures and landscapes with his first Canon DSLR; since then, he's learnt to scuba dive, worked as an underwater

photographer on manta ray and whale shark tours, and has been commissioned for personal portraits.

George has spent the last seven months in British Columbia, Canada, working as a black bear guide and photographer



capturing images of grizzly bears on Vancouver Island during the famous 'salmon run'. "I love the fact that wildlife and landscape photography allows me to raise awareness about our rapidly changing natural world and conservation issues," says George.



See more of George's work: www.georgecarrmedia.com

Events 2023-24

For more details or to book tickets for any of the events listed below please contact alumni@gsal.org.uk or visit www.gsal.org.uk/events

Jeremy Dyson (OL83) event, hosted in conjunction with Milim

Wednesday 29 November 2023, 19:00
The Grammar School at Leeds

Jeremy Dyson, the writer, musician and screenwriter, will be interviewed by Jonathan Straight (OL83).

Winter Concert

Thursday 30 November 2023,
18:30 – 21:30

The Grammar School at Leeds

Save the date for our annual winter concert featuring GSAL's music ensembles.

Service of Nine Lessons and Carols

Sunday 10 December, 18:30 – 20:30

The Grammar School at Leeds

Join us for our annual traditional service – the perfect start to the Christmas festivities. Alumni are also invited to join the choir. Rehearsals take place the day before. Please email sara.shackleton@gsal.org.uk if you would like to join the choir.

Little Shop of Horrors

Tuesday 19, Wednesday 20 and Thursday 21 March 2024

The Grammar School at Leeds

Alumni are warmly invited to our annual Senior School musical production. Bookings will open in early 2023.

GSAL Futures Conference

Fri 22 March 2024, 08:30-16:00

The Grammar School at Leeds

Alumni representing various sectors and professions share their experiences and advice with students.

Spring Concert

Wednesday 26 April 2024

The Grammar School at Leeds

Our annual spring concert featuring GSAL's music ensembles.

OG Golf Day

Fri 3 May 2024

Wetherby Golf Club

Organised by Sue Jacklin (OG70).

Summer Concert

Thursday 20 June 2024

The Grammar School at Leeds

Our annual summer concert featuring GSAL's music ensembles.

LGHS 20th reunion – OG04

Saturday 21 September 2024

The Grammar School at Leeds

Organised by Katherine Hunter and Emily Kerr (OG04)

Thinking of hosting a reunion?

If you would like to organise a reunion our alumni team are very happy to help. We can contact your cohort on your behalf and have a range of venues and a catering service at school if you wish to hold it at GSAL. Please contact Vicky Hart, Alumni Relations Officer, alumni@gsal.org.uk for more information.

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FOND *farewells*

Geoffrey Wilson (OL40)

1924-2023

Geoffrey Wilson at the time of his death on 21 August 2023, aged 99, was quite possibly the oldest surviving OL. When the OLA organised a Black Tie dinner at the Leeds Club in 2020 on the centenary anniversary of the founding of the OLA, Geoffrey was the guest of honour on the top table alongside Dr Mark Bailey, Sue Woodroffe and other distinguished attendees.

Geoffrey was born on 21 May 1924, the son of Ernest, a compositor and printer, and Ada, a teacher. The family home was in Hyde Park, and he attended Queens Road Council School before coming to LGS in September 1935. One of his fondest memories of school was being given a lift by Anthony Fairfax (OL38) up to the playing fields at Lawnswood in his red MG sports car. In 1940, he took his School Certificate exams and left from Form LSc.VI. He was adept in many subjects, but especially maths.

He joined the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve and undertook his basic training from where he was sent to his flight training school to train as a pilot on the Stirling bomber and light aircraft. However, the RAF recognised his mathematical skills and trained him as a navigator. He served with distinction in Bomber Command until his Lancaster aircraft was strafed by some Messerschmitt 109s over the intended bombing target in Germany and he was badly wounded. With three



Geoffrey Wilson second from right (OL40)

One of his fondest memories of school was being given a lift by Anthony Fairfax (OL38) up to the playing fields at Lawnswood in John's red MG sports car.

of the aircrew out of action, the raid was aborted but the aircraft was able to make it back to Britain.

After the war, Geoffrey attended Brincliffe Training College, Sheffield (1947-1950), one of many emergency teacher training establishments set up to provide qualified teachers in response to the raising of the school leaving age from 14 to 15.

There is a lovely story that, at about this time, Geoffrey was caught speeding in his MG car and was required to appear before the magistrate, who just happened to be Dr Terry Thomas, his erstwhile Headmaster. Geoffrey did not expect, and did not receive, any leniency.

Geoffrey became a teacher of woodwork and metalwork. In time, he was promoted to Area Principal at Kirklees Education Authority. He retired in 1989 and enjoyed life in Shadwell. He became actively involved in his local community, chairing the Parish Council, running the Shadwell Good Companions for many years, and later serving as a parish councillor up to the time of his death.

He is pictured here by the Fairfax window from the LGS chapel with Neill Hargreaves, school archivist and former LGS librarian, and Laurence Wilkinson, GSAL CCF Commander. The Fairfax window is named after Anthony Fairfax, who was killed on active service in 1941 at 21 years of age. Tony, as he was known to Geoffrey, although a few years above him at school, was a good friend and a key influence on Geoffrey's own military career.

Written by Neill Hargreaves, School Archivist

Edward Marshall Baker (OL65)

1946–2021



Edward Marshall Baker, Head Boy, front row, third from the right, next to the Headmaster EE Sabben-Clare.

After joining Smeaton House in the junior school, Edward moved up to the senior school at Leeds Grammar School and into Neville House. An enthusiastic sportsman, he represented his house and school in rugby, winning the Ilkley Sevens in 1965.

Edward was appointed as Head Boy in 1964-5, and his sister Elisabeth, who was in Lower VI at LGHS at the time, described her year as “official Head Boy's sister” as the best year of her life!

Edward encouraged his sister to make costumes and makeup for the actors in the Neville House play, for which she was awarded house colours in 1965. She was presented with a House Tie – in reality, Edward's old one – at House Prayers, and was amused by the reaction of Miss Sykes, Headmistress of LGHS, when she asked for permission to come to school late on the last day of term so that she could attend House Prayers at LGS.

After leaving school, Edward initially read medicine at the University of Leeds, but later changed courses, opting instead for a degree in statistics and psychology. Following this, he joined Bradford Management School where he took a diploma in industrial administration.

Edward taught for a short while before becoming an accountant. A qualified football referee, he also refereed rugby matches at university. Unfortunately, a cardiac problem – identified in his mid-20s – put a stop to a lot of his sporting activities with the exception of umpiring cricket. He later became the author of the periodical *Down the Decades*, a publication of the YCC Supporters' Club.

Edward died on 7 October 2021.

Jonathan Bamforth (OL86)

1968–2023

Jonathan was a hugely popular and a keen sportsman, representing Sheffield in both rugby and cricket. After leaving school in 1986, he went on to read law at the University of the West of England in Bristol.

Jonathan is fondly remembered

by colleagues in the practices in Leeds, Bradford, Harrogate and York where he worked after his admission as a solicitor in 1994. He joined Minster Law in 2009 as the lead solicitor representing clients with spinal injuries.

Widely respected throughout the personal injury industry, Jonathan was an enthusiastic supporter of many charities, including Headway and the Spinal Injuries Association.

A colleague remembers him as “a gentle giant of a man, who passionately believed in making other people's lives better.” Dedicated to his clients, whose lives had been devastated by catastrophic injury, he acted not only as their legal representative, but also as a trusted counsellor and friend.

A keen golfer, Jonathan loved to play at St Andrews, Ganton and Royal Birkdale. He won the Sandmoor club championship after moving there from Wike, before moving on to join Moortown.

Following a diagnosis of cancer, Jonathan's death on 23 January 2023 came as a huge shock to all who knew him. He is survived by his devoted wife Dianna and children Lexi and Ted.



Margaret Williams

1926-2023

Margaret taught religious studies at Leeds Girls' High School from 1972 to 1980. A champion of women's education, she was an active member of The Yorkshire Ladies' Council of Education, the British Federation of Women Graduates and a former president of the University of Leeds Ladies' Club.

After leaving Leeds Girls' High School, she went on to become the Head of the Senior Boarding House at Clifton High School, before returning to Leeds when she retired in 1986.

Margaret's health deteriorated following a stroke in 2019 and she moved to Sussex to be close to her daughter. She died on 8 June 2023. She is survived by her daughter Rose Edmunds (OG80), and grandson Peter.



Former LGHS teacher Margaret Williams, photographed at an LGHS reunion in 2008.



Eshana Dasanjh (GSAL22)

2004-2022

During her time at The Grammar School at Leeds, Eshana proved herself to be a warm, kind and encouraging friend. She had secured a place at University of Cambridge to read English Literature, where she would have undoubtedly continued to flourish.

Eshana was a gifted student of English literature and a talented writer. In 2019, she won the Wilbur and Niso Smith Author of Tomorrow Award. She was also shortlisted for the BBC Young Writers' Award in 2022 with a bold and relatable story, rich with imagery.

Her extraordinary ability to write in a way that captured her readers' hearts was a result of the way she cared for and listened to others. However, when asked about her writing aspirations, Eshana said that she needed more life experience before she could really say important things. Humble and wise beyond her years, we can now only imagine what she could have gone on to achieve.

Friends remember Eshana as "thoughtful", "funny" and "loving", brightening a room with her smile. An inspiration to others, she will be deeply missed by her peers, who describe her as the "best friend anyone could wish for."

Eleanor Kempley (GSAL17)

1999-2022



Warmly remembered for her infectious giggle and bright smile, Ellie grew up in Harrogate with her two elder brothers, James and Ben, and younger sister Abigail and spent her nursery years at Rigg Farm Montessori.

At Junior School Ellie was a school council rep and enjoyed the trip to Cranedale. In Senior School, she formed strong friendships and many happy memories of learning new skills, school trips abroad and playing hockey for the school team.

During sixth form, Ellie was known for her electric blue Mini (and for treating it “like a dodgem car!”), and she left GSAL with treasured memories and friendships for life.

A love of children inspired Ellie to take a three-year programme in childhood studies at Manchester Metropolitan University. Afterwards, she joined the Maria Montessori Institute in London to become a Montessori nursery teacher. Her career choice was inspired by her summer stints working at her own childhood nursery at Rigg Farm. She adored her work, and had secured a full-time position at Rigg Farm for when she completed her course.

A thoughtful and caring young woman, Ellie adored her family. She had a bright future ahead of her, with plans to move to Spain with her boyfriend, Ryan, to fulfil her ambition of opening her own Montessori nursery. Ellie’s family describe her as “full of life, living it to the full”, and they will miss her for eternity.

Brian Lofthouse (OL68)

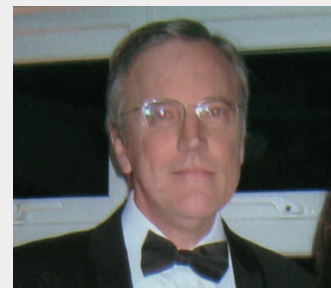
1951-2023

Brian was a pupil at Leeds Grammar School from 1962-1968, where he formed some very strong friendships and was appointed to the position of sub-prefect.

After leaving school, Brian went on to study architecture at the University of Nottingham and then completed his studies at the Polytechnic of the South Bank, London. He joined an architectural firm specialising in restoring historic buildings, before going on to become a partner.

His friend Michael Pitt (OL69) describes Brian as “a very good friend and a kind man.” He has very happy memories of walking the Pennine Way with Brian in 1970.

Brian is survived by his wife Margaret and his sons Tom and Matt.



John Barclay

1949-2023

A Swansea graduate and qualified teacher, John joined Leeds Grammar School in 1976. In contrast with earlier year groups where history could not be offered, Mike Dickenson, Chris Templeman and John routinely presented all boys for history at O-level.

John was crucial to the expansion of a thriving history department and, with limited resources, he produced an outstanding study of the Jacobite Movement 1688-1745. By the time LGS moved to Alwoodley, history was amongst the three most popular sixth form subjects.

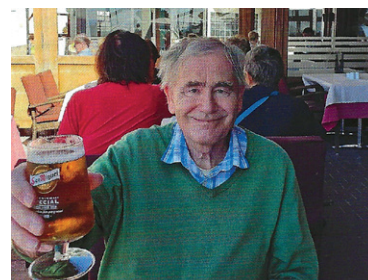
A-level history options shifted continuously and the new GCSE brought more change concentrating on both World Wars, much post Second World War material, and a focus on the US and Russia: a change which suited John’s particular expertise.

The Battlefields Trip to Ypres, the Somme and Verdun in 1988 was the first of 21 such tours, and JB took care of the boys’ pocket money at ‘Barclays Bank.’ During later trips, the highlight was a debate between John and John Davies, with the motion ‘Was the 1916 Somme offensive a great triumph for Haig’s strategy or Lions being led by Donkeys?’ For JB, Haig was the Devil Incarnate, whilst JGD opposed. At certain points, the boys feared they would come to blows.

With dogged persistence and against all odds, John persuaded the “powers that were” to introduce football for upper school and in 1982 the school team won the Merit Table. He served as 2nd XI cricket coach, Clarell tutor, Thoresby master and senior housemaster. He enjoyed the farces of staff dramatic productions and his Mr Brownlow in *Oliver!*, 1979 was a memorable success.

Self-effacing, he would have shunned this tribute, but his professionalism and overall contribution to school life were simply outstanding. It was a privilege to work with him.

Extracted from Chris Templeman’s eulogy at John’s funeral, February 2023.



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