



### INTRODUCTION



Spring-time greetings to you all as we hurtle unerringly towards Easter. As I write, many are in the mid-Lent period, making personal sacrifices and looking forward to celebrating Resurrection, while others have begun the disciplined observance of Ramadan, excited for its culmination in Eid al-Fitr. Whatever our beliefs may be, the practice of self-denial in our consumerist and often selfish society can only help us in putting *self* to one side and seasoning our thinking with empathy for others, particularly appreciating family and loved ones.

This half-term has been exceptionally busy and crammed full of fun-stuffed learning experiences for our young people. At the Prep School, the Festival of Hockey was a wonderful showcase for the end of the competitive season and recently, Year 6 wowed a Senior School audience of pupils and staff at their first ever *Lunchtime Live* recital. Mrs Macallister will say much more in *Tales from the Turret*. At the Senior School (following the highly successful *Careers Week*), *Enterprise*

*Week* has been in full swing, with fund-raising and carnival style stalls at break times, Dragons' Den, Ted Talks with *8BillionIdeas*, and a host of other creative activities. The Maths Department has enjoyed *Pi Day*, which has seen some "deep dive" higher order thinking skills and also some actual pie (with various education-enhancing fillings, naturally) just one of the many ways in which we have celebrated STEM Week, not to mention rocket launches, egg drops and engineering design challenges.

We have seen our Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award candidates wild camping on Dartmoor in fiendish weather conditions, tremendously supported by wonderful teachers who love to invest in the futures of our young people. The football and netball seasons were also completed successfully, and my congratulations go to all those pupils who left the comfort of their duvets each Saturday morning to represent The Castle with pride and distinction. Thank you to all the parents who hugged the touchline when they would rather have been hugging a hot water bottle during January and February! *The Little Jazz Mass* and Music Scholars' Showcase concert transported us to an elevated and spiritual place.

This is also the "last lap" for Year 11 and Year 13 as they accelerate towards summer examinations and the "final sprint" up to study leave, before they take the plunge. I have been impressed with the level of seriousness and diligence from them all as they have been attending academic mentoring sessions, revision activities at lunch times and after-school, as well as planning their personal study schedules for the Easter vacation and beyond.



## Staffing

In my previous letter, I mentioned that I would keep you all up to date on our progress with appointing staff to positions for the new academic year September 2023-24. Following Mrs Blake's success in becoming the Head at Battle Abbey School, I am delighted to announce that we have appointed Mrs Bethany Hart to the role of Deputy Head (Academic) of the Senior School, commencing 1st September 2023, from a strong field of 29 applicants.

Mrs Hart holds a First-Class Degree from UCL in Mathematics with Economics and joins us from Surbiton High School, where she has been Head of Maths and a member of the Senior Leadership Team. She has been particularly focused on leading: whole school academic strategy; learning power initiatives; continuing professional development and pioneering a leadership acceleration programme. She has previously taught at Hampton School and Norwich School, and prior to that, trained as an Actuary at KPMG before seeing the light and heeding the higher call to education.

At the end of this academic year, we will be bidding a very fond farewell to both Mrs Bailey (Senior School Head of Learning Support/SENDCo) and to Mr Essenhigh (Director of Performing Arts). Mrs Bailey has given Ewell Castle over 11 years of dedicated service in supporting our pupils in accessing the curriculum and significantly enhancing their learning skills with a committed team of staff. We are grateful to Mr Essenhigh for the magic of the annual musical productions, disrupted only by Covid, and these, along with the Ewell Castle Performing Arts Academy are a legacy which are now well established within School life. We also say goodbye to Mr Nedjai who has been covering as Prep School Teacher with a specialism in Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) during the spring term.

We are delighted to be welcoming the following new staff to the Ewell Castle family:

- Miss Callaghan, Prep School Teacher (from September 2023)
- Miss Cockar, Prep School SENDCo (April – December 2023)
- Mrs Cornet, Learning Support Administrator (from April 2023)
- Miss Cummings, Teacher of Maths (September 2023 – August 2025)
- Mr Hadley, Academic STEM Tutor (March – May 2023)
- Mr Hargreaves, Head of Senior School Music (from September 2023)
- Miss Kutti, Senior School Head of Learning Support/SENDCo (from September 2023)
- Mr Makula, Prep School Teacher with a specialism in MFL (from April 2023)
- Mrs Malik, After School Club Assistant (March 2023)
- Mrs Nawaid, Lead Teacher of Physics (September 2023)
- Mr Tyne, Purchase Ledger Clerk (start date TBC)
- Mrs White, Cover Supervisor (March 2023)
- Miss Wood, Teacher of Maths (September 2023)

## Reflection

You all know that I am fond of a verse or two and on World Poetry Day (21st March), I was struck by the Laureate's new poem, *Plum Tree Among the Skyscrapers*, its blossom "fizzing with light and colour" which captures and "celebrates the annual renewal of the natural world... both ecstasy



and melancholy" (Simon Armitage). Spring has inspired many metaphors and images in poetry, but I recently became re-acquainted with *The Trees* by Philip Larkin, after watching the film *Empire of Light* (Sam Mendes), a bittersweet and poignant story about hope and rebirth that comes through the power of human connection.

## *The Trees*

*The trees are coming into leaf  
Like something almost being said;  
The recent buds relax and spread,  
Their greenness is a kind of grief.*

*Is it that they are born again  
And we grow old? No, they die too.  
Their yearly trick of looking new  
Is written down in rings of grain.*

*Yet still the unresting castles thresh  
In fullgrown thickness every May.  
Last year is dead, they seem to say,  
Begin afresh, afresh, afresh.*

However you may choose to spend your time this vacation, please do take a conscious moment to "Begin afresh, afresh, afresh" by immersing yourselves in the restorative and healing power of nature in all its richness and "fullgrown thickness."

May I take this opportunity to wish you, your family and loved ones a refreshing holiday, and I hope to see as many of you as possible at the Principal's Breakfast on Friday 28th April at 8.45am.

**Silas Edmonds**  
**Principal of Ewell Castle School**

## HOUSE COMPETITIONS

### HOUSE FOOTBALL

Congratulations to Dover House who nearly swept the board with their wins and came top of the leader board, followed by Carisbrooke. Some great football was played by all!



### PANCAKE DAY

Congratulations to Arundel House who were first across the line! Although everyone is a winner on Pancake Day!



### HOUSE POINTS UPDATE

1 <sup>st</sup> Place	2 <sup>nd</sup> Place	3 <sup>rd</sup> Place	4 <sup>th</sup> Place
<b>2005 DOVER</b>	<b>1576 CARISBROOKE</b>	<b>1575 BODIAM</b>	<b>1456 ARUNDEL</b>

## WORLD BOOK DAY

*Gu de* 𒂗𒂗𒂗𒂗 [Sumerian 3100 bce]

Blissfully lost in a world, unknown and unseen  
Where the sun shines bright and a gushing waterfall endlessly flows;  
A love so strong it mends your broken heart,  
Peace surrounds you, so comforting and calm.  
Creatures, machines, purple landscapes  
Extra-terrestrial adventures in galaxies far far away  
I travel the universe from the comfort of my armchair  
Drawn into a world filled with adventure, excitement and fear.  
New adventures and worlds, new heroes and villains,  
may it never end for us.

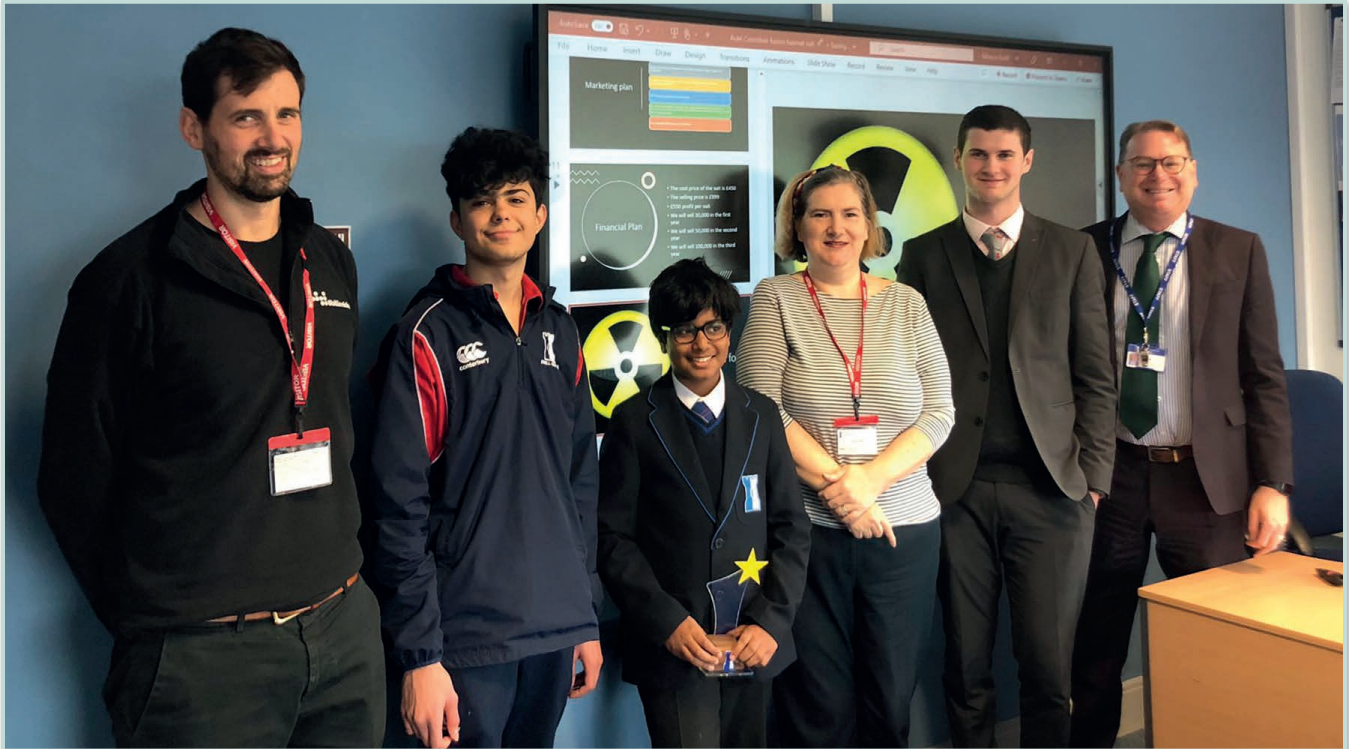
An astronaut studying his screen on his mission to space,  
The human rights lawyer, verdict delivered, a smile on their face.  
A teacher channelling knowledge to a young mind.  
The dedicated scientist pursuing their next bio-genetic find.  
The diligent doctor examining their patients' charts  
Seismologists analysing quakes to prevent more loss  
and broken hearts.

A small child being tucked into bed by a loving mum,  
The weekly meeting in the old church, coffee, cake and fun.  
A classroom full of giggles, excitement and exhilaration  
A shared experience, a new perspective, a common revelation.  
Powerful enough to start a war.  
Powerful enough to repair relations.  
Powerful enough to form new nations.  
We are all brought together,  
We are all members of one.  
It forms a community, a union, a tie  
A strong bond that one simply cannot deny...

Letters, words, sentences,  
paragraphs, pages,  
books, scripts, textbooks, all of the written pages.  
Reading is the heart of humankind throughout the ages...

**Lona Patel, Year 12**





## DRAGONS' DEN

Dragons' Den Enterprise Club is an amazing club! It teaches you many things through experience, not through sitting on a chair listening to a teacher. I have learnt the following skills: business ideas and creative thinking, financial skills, presentation skills, public speaking skills, and how to bounce back from a setback – I learned this the hard way by losing Dragons' Den last year by one point!

My idea was a hazmat suit designed for nuclear and biological warfare. There were many things that stood out in my suit such as a water-cooling system, radio, Giger counter and many more but the most important aspect was our inbuilt toilet.

Before the week of the presentation, I was aware that I wasn't practising my presentation enough. Yes, I was practising in Dragons' Den with my teacher, Mrs Rudd, and I was making changes to my presentation, but I did not really raise my game until the week of the presentation. For one week, I practised as if it was an addiction, until the presentation was near perfection.

My competition was a Year 10 Bodium pupil named Zacky Louca with his pitch, Zackeco. His business was an



ecofriendly customizable postcard business, and his pitch was good; I only beat him by 3 points.

I went into the final extremely nervous. To counter the feeling of being nervous I crossed my arms, and I told myself I was excited. This combined to make me feel a tad less nervous. However, as I was presenting, my nerves subsided, and I kept on going. When I was practising, I was prepping for much harder questions than the questions the Dragons threw at me and as a result, I was able to ace the questions.

When waiting for the results my stomach tensed but as Mrs Rudd was announcing the winner, Zacky was

saying, 'it's you!' and it turned out it was by only 3 points.

I was really happy when I won, especially due to the fact that I had lost in the final last year. I tried my best to contain it however it was obvious how happy I was.

**Aran Coombes, Year 8**



## THE BUSINESS OF FOOTBALL, CHELSEA FC



A trip was arranged for Year 10 pupils studying Business GCSE to visit the 7th best football team in the country, Chelsea. Football is one of the most popular sports in the world and generates billions of pounds due to its success as a global sport. Players have the opportunity to earn millions by joining a club and many people aspire to become involved in big football events.

As a person who saw the stadium, I must say it was an astounding experience. It was wonderful to see the pitch in person, even though the stadium is quite small with only 40,000 seats. We got to see the amazing press room, sat down in the press seats, and went through the players' tunnel. It was one of the best trips I have been on for years!

We had learnt valuable information about the club in advance during our Business lessons, such as how much revenue the stadium generates per

year, and how the Club can sustain such huge wages for the team players.

I would like to share with you the information I received.

*Revenue:* Chelsea generates £334.6 million a year, of which 43% of it comes from broadcasting alone, with a much smaller 21% of the revenue coming from matchdays. Over 36% of income comes from commercial (£122 million a year).

*Partners:* Chelsea has a rather large number of partners, ranging from Nike, Sure, and Beats whose sponsorship pays for Chelsea's growth in players.

*Tickets:* 95,000 tickets are sold annually, and hospitality at the lowest end of the market costs £600, compared to the most expensive tickets you can buy for £2,290. A VIP box cost £1,000,000 a year so this means matchday generates different price points for different target audiences.

*Players:* Chelsea own many top global players such as Conor Gallagher, Mason Mount and more. They get paid at least £300,000 a week.

*Trophies:* Chelsea have won a huge amount of silverware, although this season the Club is not in such a good place. We saw all of the bright, shiny, golden trophies. Let me just say they look beautiful!

I would like to say a big thank you to Mrs Rudd and Mrs Bonner for allowing us to enjoy and visit the stadium; these are memories that I am sure we will never forget and as the Chelsea Football Club has taught us, 'We're all together, and winning is our aim, so cheer us on through the sun and rain, 'cause Chelsea, Chelsea is our name.'

**Zacky Louca, Year 10**

## PUBLIC SPEAKING WITH 8BILLIONIDEAS

During EnterpriseWeek, 8BillionIdeas came in to talk about public speaking. The event was named 'Take a stand' and was all about writing and rehearsing a speech. The day was organized into 3 total sessions, planning the speech, writing the speech, and speaking in front of others.

Some of the key learning points of the day involved teamwork, creativity and learning different presentation skills such as the tone of your

voice and your posture. After a brief introduction, we advanced into the first session about planning and preparing our speeches. We learned how to structure a speech before starting to plan and write it. This was quite stressful as we had limited time and I tried to make my speech as detailed as possible. Soon after we started to practise and rehearse our essays. We had about half an hour to practise and memorise what we had written.

Next came the hardest part. After

being one of the five nominees in my form, I was voted to read my speech out again but this time to the entire year group against the other three winners of the other forms. I was nervous as I have never liked public speaking but the skills, I had learned helped me push through and win the competition!

Winning the competition was a great accomplishment and I was very proud of myself for this and now I can look forward to public speaking instead of fearing it.

**Lucas Whitehead, Year 8**

## TRIP TO THE EUROPEAN HEADQUARTERS OF THE UNITED NATIONS, GENEVA

On 19th January, Year 12 students were granted a tour around The United Nations European HQ, located in a palace just outside Geneva, Switzerland, as part of the trip to CERN. Known as the “Capital of Peace”, it is one of the four major offices of the United Nations (UN) where numerous UN agencies have a joint presence. The purpose of our visit was to learn what the UN are trying to achieve and support the Enrichment Programme within our Sixth Form where we hold our own version of the Model United Nations.



The UN has many aims, including: to maintain international peace and security, work to advance disarmament and implement the Sustainable Development Goals. A recent breakthrough was that Tatiana Valovaya became the first female Director-General in 2019. We were taken around the Palace of Nations and into various auditoriums and were able to view a live debate.

Our tour guide informed us on how every single person, not just the Ambassadors, work extremely hard to ensure everything runs smoothly. We learnt that when an Ambassador speaks, they must speak in one of six official languages of the UN: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian or Spanish. What was very interesting was that if a delegate speaks in one of these languages, and another delegate does not, the seats in each auditorium are equipped with a translation device that allows anyone to listen, in the language of their choice. This is only possible thanks to the translators that are working as fast as they can in real time.

Following our visit, I had gained a newfound respect for those working for the UN. Our guide, for example,



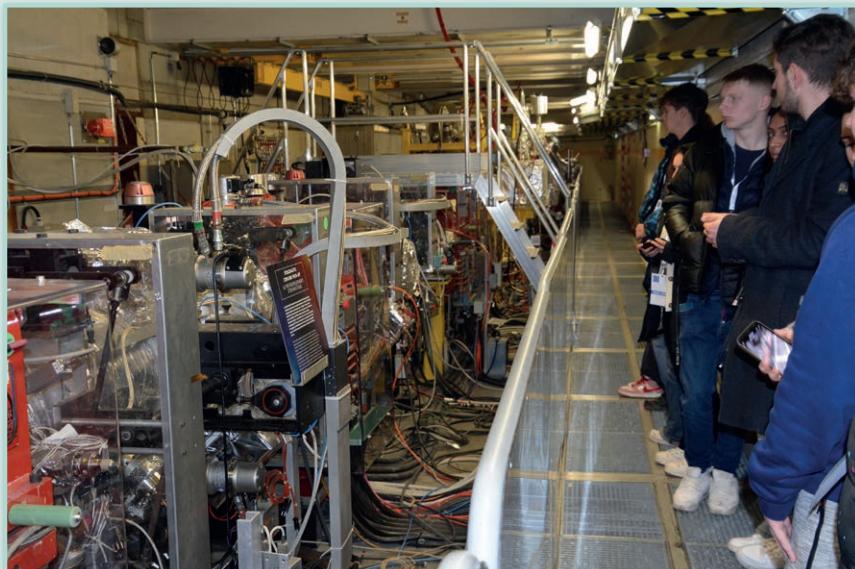
was fluent in six languages, and had a basic understanding of a seventh. When we take part in Model United Nations as part of Enrichment, the topics we cover are very different, normally taking a more comical route but still involving a serious debate which demands us all to engage in public speaking and having to argue distinct points. It is easy for people to criticise those working for the UN as it is sometimes questioned what they achieve however from what we saw, I personally think its role is admirable.

**Andrea Sterritt Hernandez, Year 12**



## TRIP TO THE CERN INSTITUTE, GENEVA

Recently, we had the unique opportunity to visit the world-renowned CERN Institute in Geneva, Switzerland. This is where the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) is located, the world's largest and most powerful particle accelerator. The job of the 2,660 scientific, technical, and administrative staff and the 12,000 users from institutions in more than 70 countries is to answer questions regarding the creation of the universe since the big bang. It first started up on 10th September 2008, and remains the latest addition to CERN's accelerator complex. The LHC consists of a 27-kilometre ring of superconducting magnets with a number of accelerating structures to boost the energy of the particles along the way. The purpose of the visit was to gain a deeper understanding of the complex world of particle physics and witness the cutting-edge technology being used in the field. Before the visit, we had learned in class about hadrons and leptons, the two main classes of subatomic particles. We learnt about their properties as well as how they interacted with each other introducing the fundamental forces that govern their behaviour, including the strong nuclear force, weak nuclear force, electromagnetic force, and gravity.



During the day, we were taken on a tour of the facility, starting with a brief history and explanation as to what type of research is carried out at CERN, focusing mainly on particle physics and better understanding our universe. We were taken to the CERN centre of data where we were shown developments in computer technology as well as the computer used by Tim Burners-Lee while he was creating the world wide web. We were shown the massive server racks used to house all the data collected from experiments.

We then visited the antimatter factory where we got to see and walk around the particle decelerator. We heard about how the particle decelerator is used to harvest antiprotons to aid in the creation of antiatoms which as the name implies, are opposite to ordinary atoms. It is believed that there was the exact same amount of matter than antimatter. However, matter and antimatter annihilate each other when they meet yet we are left with a matter dominated universe and the antimatter factory aims to figure out why this is the case.

It was amazing to see how the scientific community comes together at CERN to work on some of the most challenging problems in particle physics. The visit to the

CERN Institute has changed my understanding and appreciation of particle physics. Seeing the scale of the experiments and the technology used to study the smallest particles has given me a new perspective on the complexity and importance of this field. Being able to work alongside some of the brightest minds in the world, through an internship, would be an incredible opportunity to gain hands-on experience in the field and contribute to cutting-edge research. In conclusion, our visit to the CERN Institute was fascinating and enlightening. Thank you to Mr Visser and Mrs Rudd for making this happen.

**James Ralph, Year 12**





## DUKE OF EDINBURGH AWARD UPDATE

The winter is inevitably the quiet season for Duke of Edinburgh expeditions, but work is going on behind the scenes.

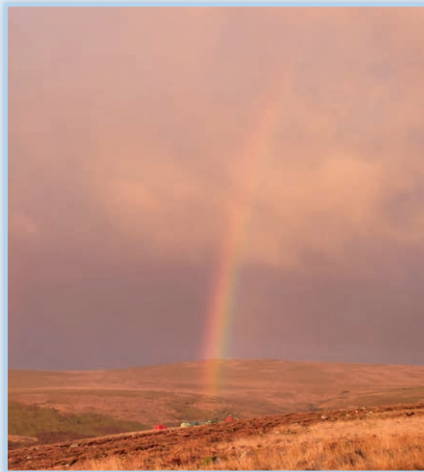
We have the highest uptake ever for Bronze at 98% and the pupils are getting on with their activities. We have launched a new environmental scheme meaning that pupils will have further opportunities to

complete their volunteering within the School. Cooking, music and sport are just part of the activities that are taking place. The pupils are all looking forward to their training week at the end of the summer term.

Silver uptake is also at record levels and Mr Skinner is preparing them for their practice walk on the South Downs next term.

Not to be outdone, Gold uptake is also at record levels. Mr Hall is training the students, and they completed their practice expedition on Dartmoor at the end of this term. The real expedition is in the Cairngorms, and it is the flagship event for Ewell Castle's Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme.

**Mr J C Blencowe**



*Highlights from the Gold DofE Practice on Dartmoor, in the face of seriously adverse weather.*

## GEOGRAPHY TRIPS: CREATING A SPLASH ON THE RIVER TILLINGBOURNE AND URBAN ADVENTURES IN EAST LONDON!

As part of the GCSE Geography course, pupils have to complete two fieldwork days, a physical and human fieldwork investigation. To facilitate this, Year 10 visited the River Tillingbourne and Year 11 went to Stratford in East London.

The experience of the investigation into a research question and completing the methodology, data analysis, conclusion and evaluation

for both is similar, but they take place in two contrasting geographical environments. Year 10 explored downstream changes, and how the velocity, gradient and bedload changes. Year 11 explored how regeneration has impacted local businesses and quality of life.

A rich learning experience for all involved, supplementing their curriculum.



**Miss S Earthrowl**

## MUSEUM OF BRANDS TRIP

On 3rd March, a small group of students who are studying Business BTEC and Design and Technology, visited the Museum of Brands in West London. The museum houses a wide variety of household branded items from the Edwardian era through to nowadays. It was fascinating to see how the packaging and graphics have changed, with a massive increase in plastic use since the 1980s. It was also interesting to see how some brands have barely changed at all, such as Lea & Perrins Worcester Sauce and Brasso Metal Cleaner, whereas others such as Cadbury and Bovril have changed hugely.



## VISIT TO THE MARY ROSE

On Friday 24th March, the whole of Year 8 travelled down to Portsmouth for our annual History Department visit to the Mary Rose.

The Mary Rose is a Tudor warship that keeled over and sunk in the Solent 478 years ago. It was raised in 1982 and the timbers and other artefacts were carefully preserved. It is an exceptional museum where you can see the half of the hull that was preserved in the Solent mud. They also have a wide range of artefacts from clothing, surgical kit, weapons, musical instruments and a host of other objects. They offer a complete insight into life in the mid-sixteenth century. The audio-visual displays were also impressive.

We then completed a workshop trying to work out why the sinking happened. Bad weather,



overloading, poor communications, and gunfire all paid a part. In reality, it was (like the Titanic) a combination of unfortunate factors all happening at the same time.

**Mr J C Blencowe**



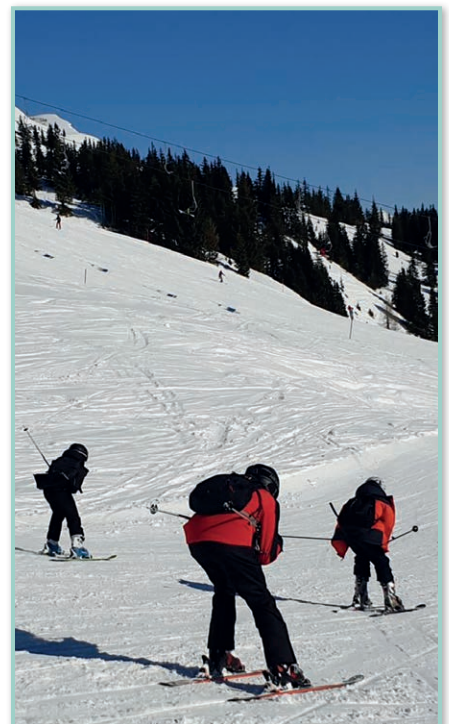
## SKI TRIP 2023

I recently returned from the School Ski Trip to Saalbach Hinterglemm in Austria and I really enjoyed it. We had many tiring but rewarding days of skiing where we learned the basics and skied many slopes. This was my first-time skiing, so it was great to have my friends around while I learnt. There were a range of engaging evening activities such as swimming and ice skating and a communal area to socialise.

Every day we would wake up at 7.30am and go to breakfast for 8.00am. We then would take a coach to the resort, meet the ski instructor and then ride a gondola up to the slopes and often take a chairlift as well. We skied for about two hours before having a lunch break, followed by another three hours of skiing. We arrived back at the villa around 5.00pm and could go to the nearby shop or shower and relax in our rooms. We then had an evening activity, dinner and bed at 9.30pm.

Overall, I really enjoyed skiing and would recommend it to any thrill-seekers and anyone who wants to have fun with their friends outside the School environment.

**Owen Linney, Year 9**



## NACE ACCREDITATION FOR THE SCHOOL

This term we have received an accreditation from NACE, which is a respected charity that supports more able students in education and stresses 'challenge for all'. The whole School was awarded the accreditation, and it is a huge accomplishment for all involved.

The process has taken three years of collating evidence found in areas such as delivering training on INSET days, observing pupils in learning walks and looking at pupils' books in work monitoring. In addition to delivering More Able & Talented Clubs and Academic Mentoring sessions (where we discuss higher order thinking skills, debate current affairs and public speaking), there have been many visiting speakers, Scholars' Lunches, trips out and

the use of the Challenge Handbook to support differentiation and the provision for stretch and challenge in the classroom and beyond. Our teachers have always been passionate and informed about different pedagogical initiatives and embed 'Building Learning Power' within lessons to integrate lifelong learning for pupils of all ages.

The NACE accreditor spent a day across all the School sites and praised the lessons she saw. The report references the comprehensive co-curricular programme on offer and the range of opportunities for pupils to follow their individual abilities and talents. We were positively assessed on celebrating our pupils' achievements and encouraging leadership within the pupil body



as well as congratulated on our strong ethos of self-evaluation and continuous self-improvement for staff. Various interviews with parents, staff and pupils that took place on the day demonstrated the love for the School. Thank you to all that were interviewed and contributed to this accreditation.

*Ms D Carrick*

## HEAD GIRL AND HEAD BOY GET TOGETHER

Recently our Prep School Head Girl Kiera and Head Boy Thomas, met up with the Head Girl Riona and Head Boy Ben from the Senior School. They spent a morning together, touring both School sites, discussing how their classmates were getting on and sharing ideas and gaining insights. It was a great way to develop their relationship and give all an insight into what it is like being a pupil in different parts of the School.



## MATHS FEST 2023

On 27th February, the mathematicians of Year 12 and Year 13 were invited to attend Maths Fest 2023, a festival held at the Royal Institution in London. Our host was Matt Parker, a 'stand-up' mathematician who often features on the massively popular Numberphile YouTube channel. The day comprised of a series of talks and lectures by mathematicians specialising in various fields, from neuroimaging and climate dynamics to time travel and juggling.

The festival also featured a 'Maths Village', which held a myriad of puzzles, prizes and books for students to enjoy, including a box of non-transitive dice that mysteriously make losing a probabilistic impossibility.

Sixth formers from other schools also featured in the Maths Slam competition, in which they had to present 3 minutes of maths that

they found especially interesting. The content of most presentations, both student-made and professional, far exceeded the scope of A-level mathematics, but were introduced in a fashion that encourages derivation and true understanding that would resonate with anybody, mathematician or not.

The probability of a sixth former being able to solve Navier-Stokes equations and compute local curl for oceanic currents is undeniably low, but the motivation for doing so was made clear, and the processes completed are universal across mathematics.

Overall, Maths Fest 2023 was a source of great inspiration and invaluable knowledge, I am sure the next Year 12s and Year 13s will continue to enjoy its delights in 2024.

*Alex Cridland, Year 13*

## MATHS DURING STEM WEEK

During STEM Week we focused on and learnt more about Pi in our maths lessons. We started learning about Pi on the Tuesday, which was Pi Day because it was the 14th March, which resembles the first three digits of Pi: 3.14.

We talked about and worked on the area of circles and the circumference of a circle, as well as formulas to work it out. We also covered circles as part of compound shapes. On the Friday, we had a Pi recital competition to see who could remember the most digits of Pi. One of my classmates, Seung Moon, managed to remember 213! However, some other pupils had commendable scores too, and a few also made it past 100.

*Henry Leigh, Year 8*

## STEM WEEK



# STEM WEEK



## MINDFULNESS

During the last two terms, we have had Mindfulness with Miss Carrick every Thursday morning. We have completed different exercises in each session, for example FOFBOC (feet on floor, bum on chair) or some breathing exercises like taking square breaths (breathe in for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds, breathe out for 4 seconds and hold for 4 seconds).

Mindfulness was helpful because it also helped us with anxiety or other problems that we were facing. We also learned about FFF (Fight, Flight, Freeze and sometimes Fawn), this was due to the amygdala and our past instincts when hunting for meals. Miss Carrick encouraged us to practise these at home when we were feeling pressured or unwell.

We also touched upon puppy training and how your mind is like a puppy, it can never sit still! Miss Carrick was able to teach us ways to keep our minds calm. Overall, it was a fun and insightful experience, and we hope to do it again in the future.

*Natalie Stoker, Year 7*

I really enjoyed Mindfulness because it taught us to calm down when stressed and worried. We learnt to be more patient and calmer in certain situations. It is important to enjoy the moment that you are in and be grateful for everything you have. Importantly, always think positively.

*Lameesa Goheer, Year 7*

I have rated Mr Oscoz's Mindfulness lessons as 9.4 as it is brilliant! Mr Oscoz is always looking for diverse ways to teach us and get us motivated. I have learnt a lot from him especially FOFBOC (feet on the floor, bum on chair) and it helps to keep me focussed and concentrate during lessons. It also teaches me how other people use mindfulness to help them when they are faced with challenging situations.

*Dylan Patel, Year 7*

## GIRLS' EMPOWERMENT PROJECT

As part of the School's Girls' Empowerment Project, this term we have welcomed a range of external speakers to come and talk to our girls and non-binary pupils about a range of topics; the main aim being to provide tips and advice and encourage them to become strong, empowered individuals.

Vicky Barker, a black belt martial arts instructor, came in to speak to Years 7-9. Miss Wilkinson wrote, 'Vicky's talk was brilliant. She not only demonstrated some Kuk Sool Won moves but also spoke about determination, following dreams and discipline. All these messages allow the pupils to feel empowered and teach lifelong lessons. The pupils were even demonstrating their new breathing techniques weeks later!' Vicky also provided demonstrations and invited the pupils to come to a free class if they wanted.

Another guest was Monica Bradley, owner of award-winning mortgage brokerage MB Associates who came and spoke about her experiences and setting up her own business. The feedback has been incredibly positive, and we look forward to continuing our

programme throughout the year. Here are some examples of what our pupils have fed back:

'I found the talk very inspirational, and it made me realise the types of jobs available, and the possibility of setting up my own business if I have a strong idea. I found it very helpful to talk to someone who is inspirational and who works for themselves. The talk made me think about what type of job I would like and I found it very beneficial.'

'Personally, I believe that these talks from external speakers have benefitted me because it has allowed me to understand that failing is okay. As 'Monica the Broker' mentioned, to be successful we must learn from

our mistakes. I found this inspiring because as someone who struggles in accepting their failures, this has helped me understand that nobody is perfect and that everyone will fail in life to achieve their best.

Additionally, what I have also learnt from these external speakers is that despite failing or being struck by something unexpected, you must always stay motivated, otherwise you will not be able to achieve your goals.

Overall, I found these talks extremely helpful and inspiring as I was able to learn from those who have already experienced what I am going through which gives me an extra boost of confidence.'



## SUSTAINABILITY

Having had a biodiversity report completed for the School, the pupil 'Wild Bunch' (Eco Club) have been researching the viability of the different recommendations to try and increase biodiversity of the School grounds. Working with the Site Team, pupils are investigating whether hibernacula or insect hotels will be the most beneficial, along with looking at the feasibility of re-wilding areas of the School grounds. This will encourage pollinators and wildlife, further increasing the School's biodiversity and carbon capture. All part of achieving net-zero!

To aid pupils with this research, a group of Year 12 students attended Surrey Wildlife Trusts 'Youth for Action' conference at Royal Holloway University. During the day they learnt about the importance of increasing our biodiversity to mitigate climate change, as well as increasing habitats for wildlife. Students participated in workshops where they prepared an area of grassland for rewilding into a meadow, pond dipping to investigate aquatic ecosystems, as well as learning about communications and campaigns to further educate and encourage community involvement.



Here are some comments from the students:

*'Informative and fun activities which have clear practical implications',*  
Year 12 Biology student.

*'Individual actions make a big difference together. Lots of what we've learnt can be applied at Ewell Castle.'* G Banham, Year 12 Geography student.

**Miss S Earthowl**





## MUSIC DEPARTMENT UPDATE

The Music Department continued to provide a vibrant and exciting programme of music and music tech lessons this term. Our GCSE Music pupils recorded the performance part of their Music GCSE, which counts towards 30% of their overall grade and a number of them were accompanied by our Sixth Form musicians.

We added three new visiting music teachers (VMTs) to our group of VMTs and they have taken on pupils with 1-2-1 lessons in violin, drum kit and Pre-Prep piano lessons. We have restarted our woodwind ensemble with two separate sessions for Prep School pupils and senior pupils. Our cantus (choir) group also recommenced in January, led by our vocal tutor. Our function band continues to thrive and meet weekly to rehearse and practise together under the guidance of our drum kit tutor.

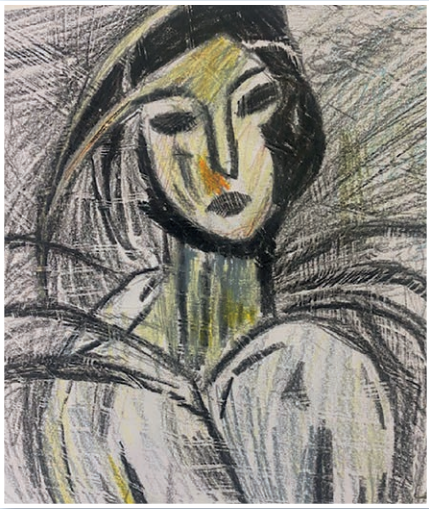
In January, a number of our music students sat their grading in Trinity Music exams. We were delighted with a 100% pass rate with most students achieving either merit or distinction. Our next crop of exam candidates are working hard with their VMT towards their Trinity exam at the end of the summer term. Other music students are sitting ABRSM music exams this month.

Our Lunchtime Live mini concert series continues each week and is well supported by pupils and staff; often with standing room only for the audience. Recent weeks have included performances from our function band, brass band, piano pieces by our pianists and a guitar themed concert from our guitar pupils. We were delighted that we had our Year 6 musicians performing in their own session too.

Towards the end of term, our chapel choir and Music scholars held a concert in St Mary's Church. Our Music scholars from Years 7-13 performed individual pieces on a wide range of instruments; violin, piano, guitar, trumpet, flute and voice. Our recently reformed cantus group performed *Shoshone Love Song*. The highlight of the evening was an outstanding performance by our chapel choir of Bob Chilcott's *A Little Jazz Mass*. The chapel choir were accompanied by a trio of professional jazz musicians who joined us for the evening. The audience were delighted and well entertained with outstanding performances from all involved in the concert.

***Mrs J McCallum***

## ARTISTS OF THE SPRING TERM



Arianne Freemantle - Year 7



Jangwon Moon - Year 8



Nivi Ladd - Year 9



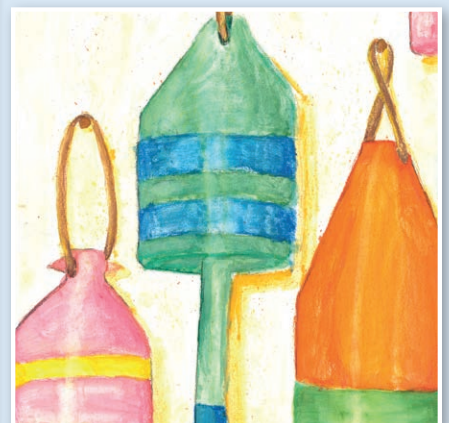
Nicholas Tank - Year 10



Tommy Michael - Year 13



Luke Davies - Year 11



Matthew Walmsley - Year 11

## SIXTH FORM MODEL UNITED NATIONS



conclusion was international conflict.

Perhaps a testament to our good will and our finer tastes in life, a solution was found in the shape of a scapegoat: The Republic of *[Redacted]* which now ceases to exist on the international stage. One could say the delegates were asking for it but as a speaker with no bias, I will not input either way.

The final peace settlement? Well *[Redacted]* was an obvious choice, but Netherlands and Japan had something special planned for everyone. What began as a form of compensation became a gift freely given out of the goodness of their hearts...

Slower on the uptake than previous Model United Nations sessions, many delegates took their time to find their voice, but when the ball started rolling, it was like watching an abominable creation come to life.

The theme was deceptively simple: should revenge be legislated? The initial speeches, particularly those made by delegates from the British Isles, were punchy and direct, leading the chair to believe that the inevitable

Though perhaps unorthodox, the diplomatic solution was almost unanimous, and the initial problem was solved (an outcome I admit I had my doubts about).

**Zac Fox, Year 12**



## SIXTH FORM CURRY NIGHT

On Friday 3rd March, the Charitable Works Committee (CWC) hosted a charity curry evening for the Sixth Form to raise money for the Lighthouse Pedagogy Trust, who run a local children's home. Over 70 people came along, including 20 members of staff and a governor!

Guests were treated to a delicious curry dinner, provided by local restaurant Cheam Tandoori. The highlight of the evening, however, was undoubtedly the games played – *Family Fortunes* and *The Price is Right*.

In *Family Fortunes*, students and staff were asked to name the top answer to questions such as 'Name a strict teacher' or 'Name a teacher you would never forget your homework for?'. In the months leading up to the event, students and staff were surveyed to ensure the answers were accurate! Meanwhile, *The Price is Right* saw participants attempting to



guess the prices of things such as the annual ski trip, a new Mont Blanc gold pen and Mr Edmond's car. Of course, the winning teams got some fantastic prizes including Costa gift cards and chocolate!

The event was a great success, raising over £800! I would like to thank Ms

Hoddell and the rest of the CWC for helping to run such a brilliant and fun evening. The Lighthouse Pedagogy Trust relies entirely on donations to operate, and these funds raised will make a real difference to the lives of the children living there.

**Harrison McLean, Year 12**



## CAREERS CAROUSEL 2023

On March 10th, the Sixth Form had the opportunity to participate in a Careers Carousel where we received advice on potential career paths. There were thirteen professionals from a wide range of fields, including: metal trading, civil service, orthodontics, forest school education, media and creative agencies, international development, TV production, real estate investment, financial modelling, engineering, editorial assistant, art and exploration, and architecture. They all engaged with small groups of students for seven minutes each, sharing their experiences, career paths, and advice to help students kickstart their careers.

One of the most emphasized messages from the speakers was the importance of interpersonal skills. They pointed out that while academic qualifications are crucial, employers also prioritise individuals with excellent communication and collaboration skills. Chartered engineer, Rob Vasek, highlighted that during the interview talk; employers are not only looking for someone who can do the job but also for someone who they would like to work with. This message helped students understand the significance of developing soft skills alongside academic achievements.

Another key takeaway from the event

was the importance of job satisfaction. Margarita Suntzeva, who completed a bachelor's degree in Mathematics at the University of Bristol, shared her experience of working in a bank and leaving after just a year because she was not enjoying the job, and now works as an editorial assistant in publishing. She encouraged students to pursue careers that they are passionate about, even if it requires a change of direction. Her story highlighted that a degree does not define one's career, and there are several paths that students can take to achieve their goals.

The Careers Carousel at Ewell Castle Sixth Form was a highly enjoyable and informative event that offered invaluable advice to guide students as they leave school. The speakers emphasized the importance of developing interpersonal skills and pursuing job satisfaction. Their stories and experiences will undoubtedly inspire students to consider various career paths and help them make informed decisions about their futures. The event was a significant step towards preparing the students for their transition to university and the workforce, and the knowledge gained will undoubtedly stay with them for years to come.

**Callum Danks, Year 13**



## PREMIUM DESSERTS

As a Sixth Form, we were tasked with the challenge of making a premium dessert in our form groups. We were given two hours of our Enrichment lesson to prepare and come up with ideas for our dessert, as well as the week leading up to the event. As a form, we decided to create a caramel cheesecake covered with a chocolate dome which the judges could break to reveal the dessert underneath. Alongside making the dessert, we had to prepare a pitch for the judging panel, as well as packaging. As we have quite a few Design and Technology students in our form, we were able to create really exciting and interesting product packaging. Additionally, we had to create a website to advertise our product successfully.

As a form, we agreed on the name *Pause* – French for 'break', because of the chocolate dome over the top of our cheesecake which the customers could break before indulging themselves in the luxurious premium cheesecake underneath.

The judges were two previous Sixth Form students: Patrick Alford, and Ethan Woolsgrove alongside a parent who owns their own bakery. The judges were very tough on all of the forms and challenged them a lot. My form won the competition because of our high-quality packaging and sustainable approach to the dessert competition.

The competition allowed us to get to know each other a lot better and understand each other's strengths and weaknesses in preparation for Enterprise Week in a few weeks' time. Our teamwork skills were very strong and we all really enjoyed the competition – especially as being the winning form meant we were allowed to keep the prize money!

**Ben Callaghan, Year 13**

## SIXTH FORM ENTERPRISE

As part of our Sixth Form Enrichment curriculum, we embark on an enterprise journey over four weeks, where we battle against other forms in the profit task to see who is the most business savvy, with the winners getting to keep their profits, while the other forms' profits are collated and donated to charity. We are given a starting amount of £30, and we have to work from there.

In the first week, we bid for items to sell such as hot dogs, pizza, doughnuts etc... as well as the location for selling such as under the umbrellas or the left of the Budgell atrium. In our forms we strategically plan as to what we bid for, as everyone wants that prime item and location, but only one team can have it! My form made a list from best to worst items to bid on, considering what most people would bid for, based on the knowledge the upper sixth students have from previous years. The bidding is always great fun, watching everyone try to run the price up for other forms. This year, one of the forms spent £53 on pizza as they fell victim to being run up on the price – however they managed to bag outside the sports hall for just £3, the question is, was this the right move for them as they are already knee deep in debt of £23.

With items and locations secured, we then move onto making adverts.



The ads have their own specific brief – must be no more than 2 minutes, with a fast-approaching deadline. For me, the ads are definitely a highlight, many creative ideas from all forms utilising different teachers from around the School – the innovative side of every student really excels here as the creative juices flow at full force! My form was advertising hot dogs, with our ad following an investigative route, it was incredible fun to throw hot dogs at teachers, or tie them up and put them in a car boot (with their consent of course)! These ads are shown throughout the School, in hopes to drum up interest for each item as well as preparing



pupils to bring in their money. Posters are also designed and put up around the School to keep pupils engaged until the day rolls around.

Sadly, as I write this article we have not moved onto the next stages, but I can outline the next steps.

We then sell our items during an extended breaktime, where we must set up and clear away thoroughly – as we are judged on how the location is left afterwards, as we don't want to infringe on the rules and be given a hefty fine. Forms pull out all of the stops for this, like fighting one another to book out the speaker system from the Music Department to keep pupils



around your area, making them buy more of your food as the aromatic smell is just too tempting to stay away, while the groovy music keeps them entertained.

After the selling is complete, forms must put together presentations where we list all of our expenditures, and we discuss the whole process, as well as what our profit margins are – in hopes that there are profits! The judging panel then watch these presentations, as well as everything else we have done, and decide who the overall winner is.

As of right now everyone is filled with anticipation as to which form will win... who will come out on top? I strongly believe it will be my form – not be biased but we are far superior!

**Lona Patel, Year 12**



## ENVIRONMENTAL FASHION SHOW

This year the Sixth Form took part in our own Environment Fashion Show during Enrichment. We looked at one of the largest problems society faces, climate change, and how we can make a positive impact by investigating the re-use of products. One key aspect that we looked at was microplastics. We thought about the number of plastic bags we consume weekly and how this number has decreased over the years. For the main event of this Enrichment session, we brought in plastic bags to use in the activity.

We were split into our form groups where we had a set period of time to design and make a ball dress out of plastic bags for a member of the form to wear. As well as wearing the dress, the model also had makeup applied by another member of the form. The fashion show was a fun and challenging activity as each form had to make their own unique dress. Many of the boys in the forms were selected to wear the dress and walk the catwalk. This meant that they also had to wear makeup which everyone really enjoyed watching as it was quite amusing.



Once the time was up and the final touches were added to the dresses, it was time for each group to come up with their catwalk name before the models went upstairs ready to walk down the stairs and the catwalk. Songs were selected and each model improvised dance routines and attempted their model walk. At the end of each walk, the models gave their name and a powerful speech about what they want to do to help the environment. Once all the models

had been through and pictures had been taken of the amazing dresses, it was time for the judges to decide the winner. It was a close call but 6DIS won the event.

This was a great Enrichment session, not only was it informative but also incredible fun. Every student thoroughly enjoyed every aspect.

**Samuel Freestone, Year 12**

## SENIOR SCHOOL NETBALL SPRING REVIEW 2023



This year has been Ewell Castle's biggest and most successful season. In 2013-14, when the School became co-ed in the Senior School, we began with a single netball team in Year 7 and two Senior teams playing a total of 27 fixtures with a 25% win ratio. This season we have had 10 teams play 92 fixtures and every girl in the School taking part, with two teams in each year group and a 50% win ratio – the highest of the three main School sports this winter/spring. Considering we have one sports hall netball court and just 5 members of staff who run these teams, the progress our girls are making is incredible.

### U12

So far this season the U12As have played 10 matches and won 7. And what a brilliant first season this has been! The girls have braved freezing temperatures and driving rain on many occasions and still come out smiling every time. The squad are super keen and full of energy; their 'end of match cheer' for the opposition will go down in netball legend! Immy has been consistently selected as Captain owing to being an excellent role model to the squad and a dependable and hard-working player. Sam has scored 50 goals so far this season. Notable wins were

against Epsom College on a frozen afternoon in January and another freezing North Surrey League win over Wallington High. A clean sheet against Tolworth Girls A team was also a pretty fun afternoon. Looking forward to next season already!

Played 7 Won 5 – Most successful team this season! Despite playing several matches before learning the rules or having any netball lessons, this team certainly tried hard to overcome their opposition through sheer determination. Giselle has been energetic and excellent as Goal Defence; Natalie is always so enthusiastic and has stepped in to play in any role she is asked to play. Natty and Chloe scored 50 goals between them, and Emily has been solid with her feet and tactical play. It has been great seeing them learn and work as a team and we look forward to seeing them playing again next year.

**Mrs J Jones – U12 Coach**

### U13A

This season the U13A squad have played 14 matches, won 11 and lost 3 with a win ratio of 78.6%. The main word I would use to describe the team this season is "Teamwork". This is the perfect word to describe our team, so

much individual talent but together through teamwork we are a force to be reckoned with. I would honestly say without one another we would not be the same team we are today. Our highest goal scorer is Camille with 111 goals scored in 14 matches – what an achievement! We have some superstar players this season and I believe our team is the best!

### U13B

The U13B squad have played 9 matches won 6, drawn 2 and lost 1 with a 66.7% win ratio which is incredibly high. Our squad is full of players who are determined to work together and ultimately win. Our squad is versatile with players who are happy to play any position to help the team out! Our top goal scorer is Vrutti with 8 goals in 9 matches an excellent achievement. Our Captain Defne has motivated this team from strength to strength we are only getting better and can't wait for our next match.

**Miss D Clarke – U13 Coach**

### U14

U14s have had a great season and made excellent progress in their skills and teamwork. They are a cohesive and versatile squad who can all play a variety of positions and work well together. Yasmin has been an excellent captain, leading by example with her hard work and positive attitude in matches. Highlights have been wins over Wimbledon High, Hurstpierpoint and Boxhill, where fitness and determination ensured victory in the final quarter of the match. Special mention to Francesca







for strong performances in so many different positions throughout the season.

The U14Bs have faced some tough opposition but always work hard and with a positive mentality. The squad are enthusiastic and have made so many improvements this year. An excellent win over HSW was followed by a tough match at CLFS where the teamwork and determination of the team was exceptional. Thanks to all the squad for their hard work and dedication to matches and training.

**Miss J Slinn – U14 Coach**

### U15A

So far this season the U15A have played 11 games and have won 2. Although this looks like the U15As have struggled, the girls have played some amazing netball and have come close to winning on a number of occasions. The U15As have grown massively in confidence and have developed resilience, determination, teamwork and a real drive to win as the season has progressed. Captain Sadie has led the team from the front by scoring 50+ goals. Grace has been brilliant in her movement off the ball to make space for the rest of the team. Stepping onto the netball court, Olivia completely comes out of her shell and dominates the WD position. Zoe has played a number of positions this year but has always been involved in counteracting play, as well as scoring a number of goals herself. Evie, Gabi and Liv have all brought bags of energy to our game and Ayla and Phoebe have both been solid in

defence and in their distribution of the ball. It has been great to coach this amazing team and I am very proud of how much they have developed this season.

### U15B

The U15Bs played one game this season against Thomas' Battersea and beat them in a 10-8. This means the U15Bs had an undefeated season with a 100% win ratio... the best win ratio in the entire school!

**Mr W Harding – U15 Coach**

### U15

#### 1ST TEAM

This team have been the fittest and most talented senior team Ewell Castle have ever had. With 17 matches played, 5 wins and 1 draw; this isn't reflective of how well this team has gelled as a group and the energy and drive they show each game, it is brilliant to see. Matching the opposition to the group of girls is a balancing act each year and this team have faced teams from schools who have 200+girls to select from. They have held their own and will come out of this season stronger, more resilient people. Particular highlights have been playing away in the North Surrey league at Sutton High School and after a shaky first quarter coming away with a 23-12 win. The Emanuel match was unforgettable too as we played in the pouring rain! The 10-10 draw against Hurstwood was a rapid, end to end and challenging match.

It's hard to mention specific players without commending the whole squad for all playing their part. Millie for scoring 118 goals despite being

injured for the entire season. Kate for overcoming all of the 6ft Goal Keepers to score over 130 goals! Tilly for learning to ignore the pain her legs in the last quarter of each match! Ellie for making progress each and every match (those leaps and drives) and having possibly the most powerful pass ever known in netball! Megan for all those intercepts and always being positive. Lily for jumping so high and running so fast in every game. Alana for pushing herself hard and making outstanding progress over the season. Oralie for playing and not playing and then playing again and scoring when we needed her to; and last but not least Andrea for never missing a match or training session and having the most solid footwork!

Well done ladies!

**Mrs J Jones – 1st VII Coach**

#### 2ND TEAM

This netball season we have seen amazing teamwork and cooperation with everyone putting in 100% effort in our matches. In every single match the team has high spirits and great sportsmanship; even in unfortunate times when the score doesn't go our way. We have learnt to communicate more effectively during matches, and this has proved great for our team morale in close games. Our recent game against Nonsuch is the perfect example of this where we came back to win by one goal! During our quarterly breaks we have had such motivating talks from Miss Materna which have encouraged us to do our absolute best throughout the game.

**Riona Syed, Year 13 – 2nd VII Coach**



## BOYS' SPORTS – SPRING UPDATE

The spring term at Ewell Castle School is the football term and we have seen a record number of teams representing the School this year. For the first time we have run an Under 12 A, B and C team alongside the other year groups, who all have A and B teams. The seniors have also seen a record return in fixtures with the regular ability to field a 1st, 2nd and 3rd XI throughout this term. Ewell Castle sport is certainly continuing to reach new heights and we once again thank all the pupils, parents, guardians and staff for their contribution to this achievement.

On the pitch the results have been mixed with several teams finding the quality of football from our opponents tough to handle. Learning how to win and how to lose are a part of sport and for those teams that would be placed nearer the bottom of the league (if we were to be in one!) the resilience shown and the thirst to improve is pleasing to see.

The U16 A team over a very short season have shown to be a formidable team. These group of boys contain three outstanding players who play for professional clubs and two of which play for England and Wales respectively. Although this team has only played two games and won them both, it was clearly evident that they are going places within the game. The majority of this team also plays in the School first team and this team has been one of the stand out teams of the season for football. With one



game to go in their season they have played six games, winning four of the matches. The highlight so far being a 7-1 thrashing of Dunnotar!

The U15A team is running close to the U16A Team and 1st Team as the team performing at the top of their game this season. Having played ten games, this group of boys have played the most football of all the pupils in the School and have danced rings around the poor weather and waterlogged pitches and been able to play more sport than most. On many occasions they have danced around their opponents and a 3-1 win against Christ's Hospital was a great performance.

Although football is the main game of the term at Ewell Castle, we have also been able to reinstate hockey at the Castle thanks to our partnership with Epsom Hockey Club. The pitch

at Old Schools Lane is a fantastic facility and playing under floodlights is something that all the pupils in the Under 14 mixed team have relished. We have played four matches and with the help of some strong club hockey players, won each of the games including one where we had to play with no goalkeeper for half a match! Wins against Emanuel, Glyn and Broomwood Hall showed that hockey is alive and well at the Castle.

With the season coming to a close, it has been a challenge with the weather, and it is always good to get out onto the pitches at the worst time of the year. Having been able to play over 70 matches this season, we are pleased with what our pupils have achieved. Onwards and upwards now to the summer term with cricket, tennis and athletics.

**Mr N Turk**

## EWELL CASTLE SKI CHAMPION

We are incredibly proud of Charlie who recently represented Ewell Castle at the British Interscholars Ski Championships in Pila, Italy. With 2 days of competitive racing, he was placed:

- 1st in Slalom U12
- 1st in Giant slalom U12
- 1st Overall U12

Well done Charlie!



## EWELL CASTLE TENNIS ACADEMY REPORT



Much has been happening with the Tennis Academy as we push hard to achieve the Number 1 position in the UK in one of the age groups. Having achieved a ranking of #5 at the Nationals at Nottingham in the 18U category, it was the turn of the 15U Boys age group who started their quest back in the summer of 2022. Playing their way through the group stages was relatively straightforward. The knockout stages, however, were a little more challenging. First up was a very strong Reed's team, now becoming a local derby. It was a really close match, but the strong team of Jesse Clarkson, Sami Sivinov, Harry McDonagh and Taiju Yuto fought their way valiantly to win 4-2 and become the Surrey Champions.

The next level was the regionals and first off was an easy draw against a team who had made it through a weaker pool in Sussex. The boys came through with a 12-0 win to set up a regional final against another big academy in the UK, Culford School. We knew this would be a close match and we were not wrong. It was a series of ferocious rubbers where some of the best players in the UK fought for a place in the National Finals. Yet again, the team spirit that binds these players every time they pull Ewell Castle kit on proved too much for the opposition. A fantastic win against a strong team established them as Southeast Champions and secure their place in the Nationals to be held at Bolton.

The time passed quickly, and the team worked hard with their preparations.

Jesse, Sami, Harry and Taiju were joined by Theo Turton who put in a herculean effort to secure the fifth place in the team as the Number 4 singles player. The National Championships were fought out between four teams from the four regions of the UK. We were the Number 2 seeds and were set to meet the Number 1 seeds, Millfield School, in the final. The script played out perfectly and we did indeed meet Millfield in the finals. It was a nail-biting match where we went into the doubles at 2-2. It could not have been closer and, having lost the one doubles match, we went into the second doubles on a tie break to pull the score to a draw. It was not to be this year and in spite of a huge effort on the part of the team we finished #2 nationally. The fact that the boys were so disappointed reflects the ambition of this academy and the expectation they place on their very young shoulders. To be ranked second in the UK is an incredible achievement and all those early morning starts in every weather show their commitment.

The winter proved to be very rewarding on an individual level. Several of our players achieved an international ranking; Jesse Clarkson, Robin McAlpine and most recently Sai Gandepalli who was also selected for an invitation doubles at the AELTC, Wimbledon. This was an incredible achievement as these young players are pitched against some of the best in the world. The most impressive of these was Year 13 James Beaven who secured himself ATP World ranking points in the Men's game at



the age of 17 years; an unbelievable achievement! Success doesn't just stop at the senior players. Keiju Yuto came runner up in a National Tour doubles tournament and recently won a Grade 3 in the 12U Regional Tour and is also ranked in the top 10 in the country for his age group. Louie Cruz won a grade 3 11U, Sammy Mhizha won a grade 3 12U Regional Tour and with George Lobb is building an impressive partnership in the doubles. Taiju Yuto was Middlesex County Champion this year, Harry McDonagh was Surrey County Champion this year, Sai Gandepalli won the 18U and Men's Grade 3 at Christmas and Robin McAlpine won the Super Series. We have strength and depth and there are many other players of note who are bursting onto the scene.

Following the Easter break, the competition starts with a vengeance, and we have many titles to defend. The hard work continues, as they prepare to work their way to the Nationals. We are very grateful to the strength and conditioning work of Jen Slinn which is needed at this level. Thankfully the weather is warming up, but it is worth sparing a thought for these players and our excellent coach, Tom Burn who are on the courts in the freezing cold at 7.30am with a punishing training schedule. Success comes with an incredible amount of hard work and commitment. Finally, I want to congratulate Raahil Hatimi on taking on the role of Captain of the Tennis Academy. He takes over from James Beaven who has been an excellent role model.

**Mrs E McManus**