

Alumni et Amicitia Association



**For former pupils and staff of Leehurst Swan, La Retraite,
La Retraite Swan and Leehurst Swan Schools**

December 2021

Dear Alumni,

When I wrote to you last November, I was optimistic that we would get some way back to normality. However, as we all know, we began January 2021 with another period of remote learning. It was a challenging time for all schools as all students and staff had to undertake Lateral Flow Tests before they came back to school. An immediate testing programme was instigated, and the Headmaster and staff carried out multiple testings on site.

The first day back to face-to-face teaching on the 8th March really had a 'start of term' feel about it. It was lovely to hear and see the excitement of the children as they came back into school and I think we all now appreciate many aspects of Leehurst Swan life that we did not even recognise as special before.

As we progressed into the summer term, examinations yet again were impacted. Our pupils navigated through rigorous assessments in different subjects and produced strong evidence to justify the outstanding grades they received. We were all full of admiration for our young people who were exceptional in every sense of the word in what had been a very challenging GCSE journey. During the second half of the summer term, it was lovely to be able to release some of the restrictions under careful risk assessment as we mixed certain year groups outside for sport and activities.



Now we are in the autumn term, we have started to play fixtures against local schools again and what excitement this has caused after a year with no competitive matches! It does feel as though we are getting back to a more normal school, and this is exciting. Although as I write this, we all share the concern of the new variant Omicron.

Our pupils are valued as individuals and encouraged to develop their own talents in an environment that celebrates the importance of an holistic education where kindness, good manners and firm friendships are shown to all.

I hope that these words resonate for you and that they reflect your own experience of your time at school.

We have no doubt that our Alumni have been equally busy this last year across a whole range of projects; please do keep in touch and let us know your news. We look forward to hearing from you!

Beverley Smith

Note from the Headmaster

Dear Alumni,

I write at the end of another extremely successful autumn term; a term in which we have tasted and enjoyed a return to normality. Unlike many surrounding schools, we have escaped the trials and tribulations of high infection and transmission rates, so it has very much been business as usual!

Throughout both the summer and autumn terms, we have been grateful for the full resumption of extra-curricular activities, residential and day trips and competitive fixtures which, as I am sure you remember, play such a key role in the life of the school and pupils. One event that we are all delighted to proceed with, is our annual Carol Service in Salisbury Cathedral and I would like to invite you to join us on Friday 10th December at 9.30am. It is a great privilege to hold our service in this truly magnificent venue and I look forward to seeing you.

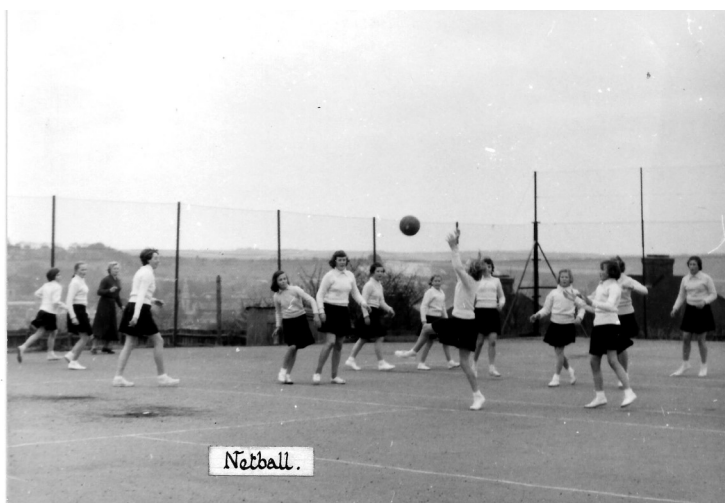
December is a month when many of us reflect and look forward to a new year, with hope and optimism in our hearts, and I feel certain that this will be of particular importance this year, as we move into an uncertain 2022. Leehurst Swan continues to look forward and in September we launched our new school uniform, including the introduction of trousers for senior girls, which has been very well received by pupils and parents. In September, we also unveiled The Walker Hall's transformation from performance hall, to a multi-use space, which we now predominantly use for sport and physical education. This has proved an incredibly popular innovation with our student body, especially now that we are in winter's grasp!



As I am sure many of you are aware, I will be departing from Leehurst Swan School at the end of the spring term, which means that this is my final Alumni newsletter. During my time at the school, I have been truly blessed with excellent pupils, supportive and loyal parents, a proactive board of governors and an outstanding staff team, that have dedicated themselves to ensuring that every pupil really does 'Find Their Voice'. It has been a great privilege to lead Leehurst Swan School and I leave with wonderful memories, more than a tinge of sadness and an overriding sense of pride in all that has been achieved during my time at the helm. American author, Augustine 'Og' Mandino is quoted as saying: 'The greatest legacy we can leave our children is happy memories.' I sincerely hope that this will be said of my time leading this remarkable school.

Terence RWJ Ayres

ARCHIVE IMAGES If you have any information regarding the photos, or any you would like to share, please email: registrar@leehurstswan.org.uk



Netball 1950s



Trip to London, late 1980s



Children In Need, 2014



Wassail, 2010



Form 11B, late 1940s



Twickenham, 2004

Alumnae Post-16 Pathways Talk

It was an absolute pleasure to welcome back alumnae Annabel, Immy P, Immy T and Grace from the Class of 2014



Huge thanks to all four who shared their personal experiences of their post-16 pathways (A levels, further education, extra-curricular hobbies and opportunities, and careers) to our Year 10s and 11s and gave them some great top tips.

Annabel is a clinical psychologist, Immy P is a graduate trainee for Coca-Cola, Immy T is a geologist and Grace is setting up her own business as a masseuse and acupuncturist.

Class of 2006



Our alumnae from the class of 2006, Olivia, Emily and Katherine were inspirational and full of great advice. It was an absolute pleasure to see them again!

We love what we do and it is our privilege to teach such wonderful pupils. Imagine how heart warming it was to receive a letter of thanks from our former head boy, Max!

Here are some snippets:

Dear Mrs Smith,

I hope all is well at Leehurst despite what we might be enduring currently... I trust every member of staff is well and I would like to reach out to Mr Ayres and send my kindest regards to him during these unprecedented times. I am certain he will carry the school forward with ease and dexterity.

My greatest appreciation to Mr Gamble, Mrs Bateman and Mr Willan - please send my personal regards - as I have continued to pursue their subjects further at A-level and, if it weren't for their passion for the subjects they teach, I may be doing different A-levels completely.

My greatest appreciation to Mr Ayres, who had such a profound impact on my role as head boy and the shaping of my character, as I move on to my next chapter in education.

I would like to start off with commemorating everything Leehurst has given me in my many years of attendance; the truly fantastic staff, the plethora of opportunities provided and an environment that has allowed me to develop fundamentally into who I am as a person today with all the critical aspects one should accrue through a lifetime of education.

I look back on my time at Leehurst with feelings of great elation; the memories will last a lifetime I would also like to wish the current Head Pupils luck in their GCSEs this year and I trust they are carrying out their roles with great appreciation of the position they hold, as ambassadors of the school.

Leehurst has truly played a pivotal role in who I am. I want to emphasise that point.

Leehurst will always be an intrinsic attribute to my character now and long into the future.

Yours Sincerely, Max

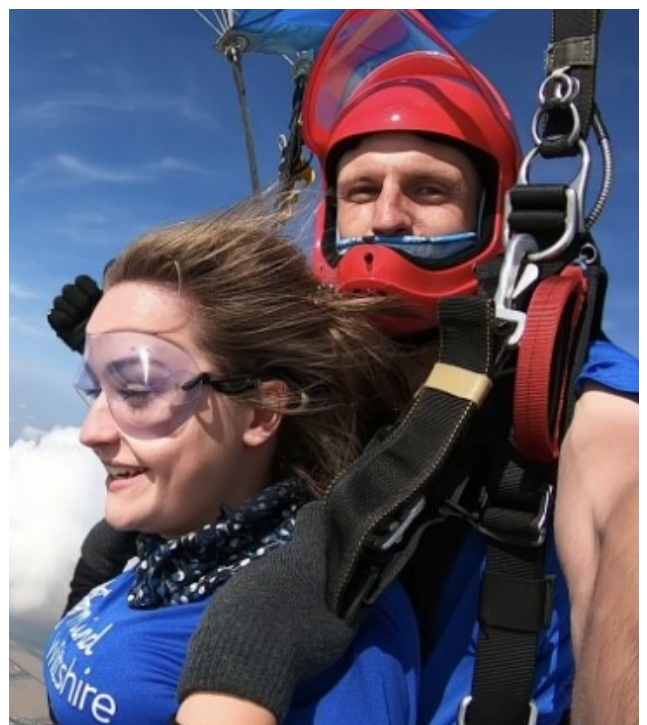


Ida Mundy

A former member of the La Retraite staff, Ida Mundy, who served for many years as a science teacher died of Covid at Salisbury hospital.

Ida will be known to many of the former staff and pupils as she was actively involved in Salisbury matters until very recently. She was a regular attender of Leehurst reunions and the annual carol service.

Congratulations to past pupil Emily Gale who completed a 15,000 ft. jump, which is the highest altitude you can jump in the UK, all in aid of Wiltshire Mind. Emily raised over £700. Thanks for sharing!





Our News

Live Online Lessons



RIBI Young Photographer Competition

George and Florence were the winner and runner up, respectively, in the senior category (14-17 years) of Salisbury Rotary Club's round of the RIBI Young Photographer competition!

The theme of this year's RIBI Young Photographer competition was *Wild Nature*. The judge commented that George '*used the light to draw one into his set of pictures*' that '*worked well together.*'



ISA Regional Art Competition



Leehurst Swan pupils came first in two categories and runners up in another two in the ISA south west regional art competition!

Maddy (Year 11) won the Key Stage 3 and 4 sketchbook category with an array of colourful and intricate drawings exploring the theme of contrast. The competition judge commented, *'This is a wonderful collection of artwork, cuttings, and notes – it shows a strong sense of drawing ability and I love the fact that every time you look at it, your eye finds something new to explore. Well done Maddy!'*

Amelia (Year 8) topped the Key Stage 3, 3D art category with her ceramic piece entitled 'The Art Cupboard Comes to Life!' The competition judge commented, *'I really like the sense of humour and fun in this piece of artwork. It shows great skill and imagination and brought a smile to my face. Well done!'*



New for 2021 – A fresh Approach to GCSE Options

Choosing GCSE options should be an exciting stage in a teenager's life: a time when they get to, perhaps for the first time, make decisions about their future. Yet, if teenagers are to be given genuine choice, shouldn't it mean more than selecting from a narrow list of options? With many schools insisting that their pupils take two or three sciences, a language and a humanity at GCSE, they are often left with a choice of only two or three subjects which are not always guaranteed with inflexible blocking of subjects.

That is why at Leehurst Swan, we have taken a fresh approach; maximising choice and creating GCSE pathways, alongside the compulsory core subjects of English language, English literature and mathematics. At Leehurst Swan uniqueness matters and we believe that education is not about forcing pupils to fit a pre-determined mould. As a school, we encourage all pupils to explore their passions, develop their potential and 'find their voice' in an ever-changing world.



All You Need Is Love

In February, during lockdown, after all the heart warming messages of support we received from our parents, we sent out a message of love, with a song.



Red Nose Day: Superheroes

We had an amazing day celebrating and raising money for Comic Relief's Red Nose Day. The classrooms and corridors were filled with colour and laughter. There were fictional (Ghostbusters and Spiderman), imaginary (Sky Slug Slayer Man and Enviro Girl) and real life heroes (paramedics and teachers) showing off their superpowers around school. Headmaster, Mr Ayres, partnered with another Clark Kent to produce a very amusing film sketch.





Ms Williams joined the team in April as Head of English.

Ms Williams has taught in a range of schools in Hampshire and Wiltshire, state and private, single and mixed sex, but already feels very settled at Leehurst Swan. She is proud to be part of the Leehurst family commenting that, *"I already knew what a positive and enriching atmosphere the school has due to my son's experiences, but I have been hugely impressed by the politeness and humour of the students, their keen interest in their studies and the engagement displayed in every aspect of their school lives!"*

Year 11s Duke of Edinburgh Silver Award

Tremendous resilience was shown as our Year 11s conquered hot sunshine and torrential rain to complete their silver assessed expedition for the Duke of Edinburgh Award. Mr Gamble remarked that he was *'so proud of them all.'*



Sing2G7 – Chamber Choir Sing to G7 leaders

Chamber Choir joined over 25,000 children around the world in wanting to put their voices at the heart of the G7 2021 Summit in Cornwall. They recorded their version of the Tim Rice and Peter Hobbs song to sing out their powerful message to the world and make the Summit relevant to their young lives and make the world leaders listen.



Prep children enjoyed a day out at Moors Valley.



Activities Week

Year 7 and 8 visited the beautiful, historic Stratford-upon-Avon which included Shakespeare's schoolroom.



Shelley, a clinical aromatherapist, gave a tutorial on different plants and essential oils before pupils made bath bombs.



Year 9 and 10 enjoyed a trip to Paulton's Park



Our Year 11s thoroughly enjoyed their well-deserved residential to Wales. After a challenging year they ended on a high; making memories with their friends that will stay with them for a long time to come.



Class of 2020-2021



From September 2021, Prep pupils have timetabled Forest School lessons throughout the academic year.

Our Forest School provision provides nurturing, positive outdoor learning experiences to support our children's well-being and personal development. Children learn about the natural environment, how to handle risks and how to use their own initiative to solve problems and co-operate with others.

All our activities are carried out in a safe and controlled environment and the activities that our pupils participate in depend on their age, ability and experience. Examples of Forest School activities include:

- Woodland management
- Environmental exploration
- Nature exploration
- Building dens and other structures
- Fire lighting and cooking
- Games and invitations for imaginative play and discovery
- Natural crafts
- Using tools



**Our New School
Uniform**

**Launched
September 2021**



**The Headmaster, staff
and pupils invite you
to our Carol Service at
Salisbury Cathedral on
Friday 10 December,
9.30am**

Photograph by Ethan Hemming



RVSP Beverley Smith e: patohm@leehurstswan.org.uk t: 01722 333094

Follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram



Our SOCIAL MEDIA pages are a way for you to stay in contact with the school and for us to let you know about any events that are coming up where you can meet your friends from school and learn about what the school is currently doing.



**Wishing you all a happy, healthy and merry Christmas
and a brighter New Year.**