



King Edward's
WITLEY



APRIL 2025

LEARNING JOURNEYS

WELCOME

ANTHONY KIRK-BURGESS



Welcome to our Easter edition of Learning Journeys, our half-termly newsletter focussing on the academic life of King Edward's, Witley. In this edition, we highlight the academic and holistic benefits of learning beyond the classroom. While classroom learning provides essential knowledge and skills, educational excursions outside school and extended learning opportunities at King Edward's enrich pupils' understanding in ways that traditional methods cannot. These experiences support academic achievement, critical thinking and intellectual curiosity, making them a valuable component of a well-rounded education.

School trips provide pupils with direct engagement in their subjects, reinforcing classroom instruction through experiential learning. Our newsletter includes visits to historical sites in the City of London, allowing

pupils to step into the past, deepening their understanding and retention of historical events, in addition to our annual geography trip to Iceland, bringing our pupils very close to practical demonstrations of the theoretical concepts learnt in classrooms here at School.

Beyond reinforcing academic knowledge, school trips cultivate critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Exposure to new environments encourages pupils to ask questions, analyse information and think independently. Engaging in investigative activities, such as the learning opportunities at King Edward's we highlight in our newsletter, fostering curiosity and a deeper grasp of subject matter.

Additionally, these experiences foster intrinsic motivation to learn. Engaging directly with experts in various fields provides pupils with role models and first-hand insights into different careers. The excitement of learning beyond the classroom encourages pupils to take ownership of their education and develop a passion for continuous learning.

School trips and beyond-the-classroom learning experiences are essential for deepening academic knowledge, strengthening critical thinking skills, and inspiring lifelong learning. By integrating these opportunities into our curriculum, King Edward's provides pupils with a richer, more engaging educational experience. These real-world learning experiences not only enhance academic achievement but also equip pupils with the skills and curiosity needed to navigate an increasingly complex and knowledge-driven world.

Anthony Kirk-Burgess

Deputy Head (Academic)

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INSPIRING PUPILS WITH MUSICAL INDUSTRY INSIGHTS



This term our BTEC Lower 6th Music Technology pupils had the privilege of engaging in an online discussion with music industry professional Richard O'Connor. This insightful session provided our pupils with an opportunity to learn from an expert with extensive experience across various sectors of the music industry.

Richard's career began when he was scouted by Plan B as a bassist, and he later transitioned into the world of DJing, becoming a resident DJ at a London club, before finding his niche as a library composer. He currently works as an A&R Music Supervisor at 'The Nerve,' collaborating with TV and online content producers to source music for various projects.

During the session, Richard provided invaluable insights into his technical approach to music production, specifically his use of EQ templates when mixing tracks. Pupils gained an understanding of how industry professionals refine their sound and ensure high production quality. He also shared his journey through different roles in the industry, illustrating the many career paths available to aspiring musicians and producers.

Later in the discussion, our 4th Form Music pupils joined the session for an engaging exploration of Richard's own compositions. The conversation then shifted to the topic of royalties, with Richard offering a detailed breakdown of how organisations such as PRS (Performing Rights Society) and PPL (Phonographic Performance Limited) work. This was an invaluable lesson in how musicians can earn money from their work and navigate the business side of the industry.

This session was part of the BTEC course and Music Department's 'Links with Industry' initiative, designed to provide pupils with real-world connections to the music profession. The event gave our pupils a first-hand understanding of the skills, knowledge, and networking necessary to build a successful career in music, and they were incredibly grateful to Richard for sharing his expertise and inspiring our pupils in preparing them for careers in the ever-evolving music industry.



THE CURIOUS INCIDENT COMES TO LIFE



During the last week of our term, our largest performance space, Charter Hall, came alive with two performances of our latest School drama production 'The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time', performed to sell-out audiences over two nights. Mrs Plowman, our Head of Drama and Play Director, explained 'my journey with The Curious Incident began in 2008, when, as an Newly Qualified Teacher, I first introduced the novel to a Year 8 English class. The story's compelling perspective, and highlighting of neurodiversity, has stayed with me ever since. I have long wanted to bring it to the stage, and this year I finally had the opportunity, with a wonderfully neurodiverse cast ready to take on the challenge. At the heart of King Edward's approach to school theatre is student ownership. We believe that when pupils take responsibility for a production, they gain a deeper, more rewarding experience. From the outset, they have been instrumental in shaping this performance, not just as actors but as creative contributors across all aspects of the show.



One of our key teaching aims has been to use this production as a means of exploring theatrical conventions. In this show, live scene changes are essential, with the cast executing them seamlessly as part of the unfolding action. This approach keeps the energy fluid and ensures that transitions become an extension of the performance itself.

Behind the scenes, a dedicated props team worked from an initial spreadsheet of over 100 items, sourcing, organising, and managing each piece. Meanwhile, our projection team faced the intricate task of creating images, ordering, scaling, and learning to operate them live. Every element required precision, teamwork,

and resilience. Putting on a production demands commitment, adaptability, and hard work. Through this process, pupils have not only honed performance skills but also developed the invaluable life skills of problem-solving, collaboration, and perseverance. It has been a privilege to guide them through this journey, and I was thrilled to see their efforts come to life on stage'.

OLD WITLEIAN MASTERCLASS

BY CHEF HENRY HAMPSHIRE



Our alumnus Henry Hampshire returned to King Edward's in March to deliver an engaging and informative Vegan Master Class to our Level 3 Food Science and Nutrition Sixth Form pupils. The session focused on key aspects of food flavour layering, vegan cuisine, and plant-based protein.

Chef Hampshire expertly guided pupils through the principles of balancing flavours and enhancing plant-based dishes. The highlight of the session was a hands-on cooking experience, where pupils learned how to prepare a delicious mushroom risotto. Under Chef Hampshire's guidance, each pupil successfully crafted their own risotto, demonstrating impressive culinary skills and creativity.

The master class was highly enjoyable, providing valuable educational insights into vegan cooking and nutrition. Pupils left with a deeper appreciation for plant-based cuisine and the science behind flavour development; a key aspect within their level 3 studies.



AN ANIMAZING DAY FOR 1ST FORMERS AT KESW



Late in our term, our 1st Form pupils enjoyed a wonderful visit from 'Animazing', who provide bespoke educational environments on their visits to schools to encourage children to learn about some of the world's amazing animals through interaction.

Ms Street, who arranged Animazing's visit to King Edward's, explained 'the day was planned as a follow up to our 1st Form's making of animal and plant cell models in the Autumn term. The pupils saw and touched a variety of animals ranging from a Barn Owl to a Pygmy Hedgehog to a Royal Python. There were a lot of pupil reactions as they learnt how frogs absorb substances through their skin, the tremendous lifespan of Galapagos tortoises and how global warming is affecting the birth rate of male crocodiles. We look forward to welcoming Animazing back to King Edward's for return visits to inspire our pupils in future years'.



LONDON CALLING

OUR PRE A-LEVEL PUPILS

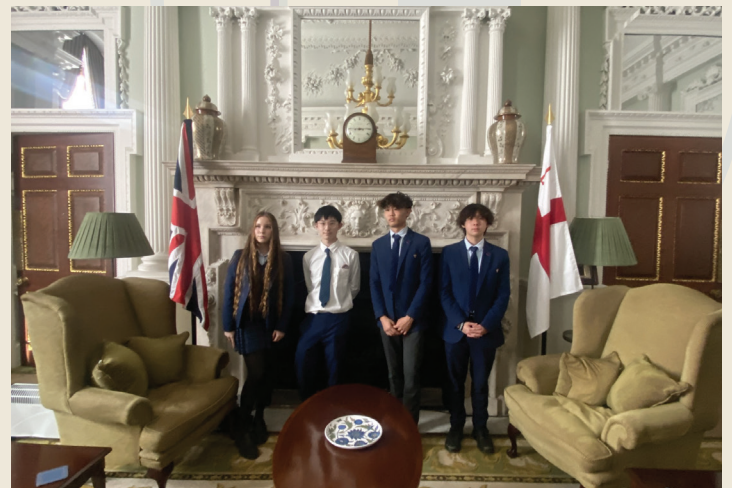


Mrs Hillage and Mrs Browning recently accompanied a number of our international pre-A level pupils to London to experience a day of British history and culture. As Mrs Hillage explained 'we started with a sunny journey up the Thames on an Uber boat. We spent the morning at The Tower of London learning all about the exciting history of this building and seeing the Crown Jewels. We were then lucky enough to visit Mansion House and discovered more about our school's links with the City of London. It was fascinating to explore the building that has been home to the City of London's Lord Mayor for centuries'.



Mariia, one of our pupils who took the trip to town by train from our School's Witley station, explained 'One of the highlights was our private tour of the Mansion House. It was amazing to see the room with gifts given to the Lord Mayors over the past 700 years; the history behind these gifts were fascinating. Overall the day was full of great memories and fun experiences'.

Reflecting on the day, Mrs Browning, Head of our English as an Additional Language department noted 'our pupils brought together presentations focussed on their day in London after their visit. These highlighted how the trip helped the group gain a greater understanding of British history, and the City of London's place within this history. They asked many interesting questions during our tour of Mansion House, helping to develop speaking and listening skills. All in all it was a great day out in our capital city!'



OUR GEOGRAPHY PUPILS OUT AND ABOUT



It has been a busy half term in the Geography department with a residential field trip for our Lower Sixth A Level Geographers and a day trip for the 4th Form, culminating in our biannual visit to Iceland. Fieldwork is an essential component of geography education, providing students with hands-on experience that enhances their understanding of key geographical concepts. It allows students to apply classroom knowledge to real-world environments and develops critical thinking, problem-solving, and analytical skills.



Earlier this term, our Lower Sixth A Level geography students embarked on a field trip to the Slapton Field Study Centre in Devon. This visit focused on investigating rural change, coastal processes, and management strategies in a dynamic coastal environment. A key component of the trip was a 7km coastal walk along the Southwest Coastal Path from Start Point, passing through the historic village of Hallsands. This village provides a poignant case study of coastal erosion and mismanagement. Once a thriving fishing community, Hallsands was tragically destroyed in 1917 due to extensive dredging of offshore shingle for naval dockyard expansion in Plymouth. The removal of this natural barrier left the village vulnerable to storm surges, ultimately leading to its demise. In addition to coastal studies, students conducted infiltration tests to examine the impact of human activity on the water cycle. This investigation helped them understand how land use changes affect infiltration rates, runoff, and water storage, linking physical geography concepts to environmental management.



In mid-March, Fourth Form geography students participated in a one-day field trip to Guildford to explore the characteristics of the town's Central Business District (CBD). This urban investigation introduced students to a variety of fieldwork techniques, including environmental quality surveys, pedestrian counts, and building height surveys. One of the key activities involved conducting questionnaires with members of the public. While many students initially found this daunting, they quickly built confidence and improved their communication skills. This experience not only provided valuable data on perceptions of Guildford's CBD but also helped students develop interpersonal skills crucial for future fieldwork and research.

FIRE AND ICE IN ICELAND



Over the course of five unforgettable days in March, forty pupils and four staff members set off on a geography trip to Iceland – a land of fire and ice, where volcanic forces and glacial power shape the landscape in extraordinary ways. Staff member Mr Downs has provided our report on an awe-inspiring visit.

‘Our journey began with a flight from London to Keflavík, where we were warmly welcomed by our brilliant tour guide, Thor. Not only did Thor safely guide us around the country, we were very grateful to him and his colleagues for bringing Iceland to life through his fascinating and insightful talks on its unique geography, history, and culture. From the moment we arrived, we were immersed in Iceland’s dramatic natural beauty and dynamic environment. Each day was packed with exploration. We bathed in the steamy waters of the Secret Lagoon, hiked to the base of powerful waterfalls like Skógafoss and Seljalandsfoss, and stood in awe of the geysers and tectonic rifts at Thingvellir National Park. We visited the stunning Reynisfjara black sand beach, where we experienced Iceland’s famously changeable weather – from sunlit skies to a sudden snow blizzard, all in one afternoon.



We also took a ferry to the island of Heimaey, (watching for puffins!), and explored the Elheimar Museum to learn about the 1973 eruption that transformed the island overnight. The Lava Tunnel tour gave us a glimpse beneath the surface, showcasing the raw power of past eruptions. Evenings were spent reflecting on the day’s adventures, sharing meals, and – for those brave enough – dipping into the outdoor hot tubs under the Icelandic sky. On our final day, we returned home tired but exhilarated, with new friendships forged and memories that will last a lifetime. This was more than just a geography trip – it was an opportunity to witness the processes we study in the classroom come vividly to life’.

