



Mane attraction

‘Sense of pride’ at school’s 10-foot puppet at festival

A STUNNING 10ft puppet lion created by Earl Mortimer College students was the centrepiece at Leominster Festival.

Working in partnership with artists from Fetch Theatre, the youngsters gave up their free time to finish the puppet in time for the grand unveiling.

The puppet was inspired by a fabled meeting between a monk and a lion at the site of Priory Church in 660 AD.

The little-known legend is the inspiration for the lion emblems scattered across the town including the logo of Earl Mortimer College.

The puppet lion was a whopping 10 feet long and made with an aluminium base with papier mache-like material for the skin and varnish finish. It took a 20-strong team of students and artists working day and night to finish in time for the family fun day.

Head of Arts and Music Mrs De Sondberg said: “It was a real team effort with the brilliant artists from the Fetch Theatre who were great teachers for our students. There is a real sense of pride at a job well done. It was great to see the lion in its natural habitat at the festival.”

Student Harley said: “I really enjoyed working as a team on such a huge project. I’ve never done anything like it before so it was good to be involved in something different.



The 10ft-long puppet was assembled by a 20-strong team

“It was great to have been part of putting on a show for the people of Leominster. I am proud I have been part of an amazing project that others enjoyed.”

Cindy Watson from Fetch Theatre said: “It

is really important that the young people in this town are valued for their amazing contribution.

“The students at Earl Mortimer College have really impressed our artists with their commitment, dedication and talent.”

Silent Witness star's shout-out

A SUPPORT teacher who helps students with their mental health has been publicly thanked for her hard work.

The heartfelt message was read out on Twitter by Silent Witness star Emilia Fox as part of National Thank a Teacher Day celebrations.

Learning support officer Ms Davies-Buften says she was shocked and moved when she saw the video on social media. Ellie has no idea who wrote the message as they are sent anonymously.

It reads: "Thanks for your care, compassion and connection with students. The most vulnerable young people feel well supported and able to attend school because of the work you do for them. Their families also feel the benefit of that support."

Ms Davies-Buften, who has a degree in clinical psychology, runs mental health

interventions at Earl Mortimer College.

Each year students, families and colleagues are encouraged to write cards showing appreciation and gratitude for school staff.

Ms Davies-Buften said: "I work with three groups of students running mental health interventions and I really love what I do."

"I was really shocked when I got sent this message because I did not expect to be thanked for what I do, as I do it because I love it."

Principal Ms Banner said: "I am very pleased that Ellie is getting the recognition her outstanding work clearly deserves."

"Supporting students' mental health is a crucial step in creating a warm and welcoming learning environment where students can thrive."



Ms Davies-Buften was praised for her work on mental health



PICTURE PERFECT: Students showcased their exceptional creative talent at the college's GCSE art exhibition this term



THE VIP TREATMENT: Students walked the red carpet as family and friends cheered for the school prom

Celebrating in style for prom

YOUNGSTERS worried about the cost of prom dresses and suits will be able to go to the ball thanks to a new recycling initiative at Earl Mortimer College.

The idea was the brainchild of Teacher Mrs Neil who donated the dress her daughter sadly never got to wear due to the event being cancelled because of Covid in 2020.

After she posted about her gift on social media, she was inundated with offers for nearly new suits and dresses from proms gone by.

She has also received shoes, jewellery and other accessories with contributions coming from across the country and as far afield as Cyprus with army wives sending gowns and suits. They even had bridal dresses sent in from a local shop due to close down as well as freebies from local charity shops.

The expensive gear will be given to students

who cannot afford to buy clothes for the prom or those who wish to be sustainable with their evening attire.

The school has collected more than 50 dresses and gowns and nearly 20 suits in a variety of styles and fashions (*pictured below*), amounting to thousands of pounds in donations.

Mrs Neil said: "I have to say I was very surprised at just how much this has taken off. It started with a small post on social media that just kept getting shared.

"It just snowballed from there and we now have thousands of pounds worth of donations in just a few weeks, with more coming in every day.

"We initially thought that it would be a big help for those families who would struggle to meet the cost of prom but it has become so much more."



‘So pleasing to hear kind words spoken about our students’

Principal Ms Banner (*above*) reflects on the end of another academic year.

It is a great privilege to greet you at the end of what has been yet another term jam-packed with successes of all types at Earl Mortimer College.

This school continues to be successful because of the exceptionally hard-working teachers, support staff and students.

Behind every success, whether it be sporting or academic, invariably there is a teacher or member of staff who went above and beyond.

Our students' contribution to the community is something we are particularly proud of at this school.

There was the Leominster Festival, where they showcased their artistic talent and hard work to create a truly striking centrepiece.

They also performed at the church fete, which was incredibly well received. As Principal, it is so pleasing to hear kind words spoken about our students.

This term, we say goodbye to our Year 13 students. It is a bittersweet moment because you are sad to see them go, but also excited for the next step on their journey. They have been a lovely group, showing resilience and courage through difficult times.

We hope to celebrate Year 11 and Year 13 exam results in August knowing that these groups have revised hard, and shown commitment and perseverance.

It just remains for me to wish you all a restful and happy summer break. We will see you in September.



'The expectation to perform, the pressure... it can be tough'

Assistant Principal Mr Wharam (pictured above) on the importance of wellbeing as the school marked Mental Health Awareness Week.

Working in a school, you are acutely aware the impact wellbeing and mental health can have on a child's capacity to learn.

Like for us adults, when there are stressful situations young people find it hard to concentrate. It can definitely interfere with their capacity to learn.

We are very proactive as a school at supporting young people's mental health. Never is managing stress more important for students than when they are taking their GCSE exams. The expectation to perform, the pressure... it can be tough.

If you do not feel at your best it is not easy to relax in the exam hall, so we must help students feel comfortable during this time.

Mental Health Awareness Week was also about letting people know what mental health issues are and how they might impact them, even if they don't realise it.

It can be hard for people to talk about their wellbeing, so creating awareness around the issues really does make a difference to our students.



Students took part in the sessions at the theatre

Helping to deal with the drama

STUDENTS have been learning how to harness the power of drama to support their mental health during workshops with the Courtyard Theatre.

The wellbeing sessions are run by

performers at the theatre to encourage students to open up about challenges they might face.

Student Flora said: "It was good because we were able to work in pairs to do the activities in the workshops."

Charity gives support with Mind matters

TIPS were given to students on how to improve their mental health and support others at a workshop.

The school is working with charity Strong Young Minds to support students' academic and emotional wellbeing.

It supports youngsters with a range of issues such as cyber-bullying, low self-esteem and body image.

The group, run by a team of trained

professionals, helps students become career-ready with tailored employability skills.

Student Joe said: "The workshop was really interesting because all the things they talked about are the things that lots of young people are impacted by.

"It felt good to open up and be given tips to not only help yourself but help others as well. They focused on being able to spot if someone else was struggling."

'Amazing' new £25k gym opens

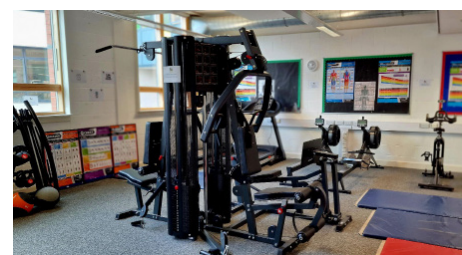
STUDENTS are boosting their fitness and mental health thanks to a new £25,000 state-of-the-art fitness suite at the school.

Youngsters have been inducted to the gym (pictured right), which includes running, bike and rowing machines, benches and weights.

'Year 8 student Gracie said: "I use the gym

once a week to work on my fitness to support my football. It is amazing that we have such good equipment in the school.

Casey said: "Most schools don't have access to such incredible facilities on the school site so we are very lucky. The PE department gives us training and support, so it is really good."



MP Wiggin is probed over plans for town

OUR students got the chance to quiz MP Bill Wiggin (pictured right) on his plans for Leominster during a visit to the school this term.

The Conservative Member of Parliament for North Herefordshire was asked about his role representing his constituency, his path into politics and alternative careers.

The interviews are featured on our latest series of podcasts and are available from our website and social media pages.

Student Harley asked what he would be

doing if he wasn't an MP. Harley said: "He said he would probably be a farmer because that is what lots of his family are involved in. It was really interesting to talk to him because he has a lot of power over what happens in the town and so it is important, we have confidence he is doing a good job."

Year 7 Lucas said: "I asked him about his plans for the town and he said that it needs to be brought to life and made nicer to look at. He was really friendly and answered all of our questions."



Faye and Bethany were treated to pizza for their fundraising efforts

Page-turning pair raise funds for hospital

STUDENTS Bethany and Faye were top fundraisers for the Earl Mortimer College sponsored read for charity.

Bethany from Year 8 raised £60 while Year 9 student Faye raised £50. Both were

treated to a delicious pizza lunch for their stirring efforts.

The school raised a total of £217, which will be spent on buying books for children in hospital.

Assistant Principal Mr Wharam said: "A big thank you to all the students who took part. Faye and Bethany did exceptional well and were deserved recipients of their pizzas."



The storyteller treated students to a live performance

Author Cat Weatherill points the way forward

AWARD-WINNING author and storyteller Cat Weatherill treated students to a live performance during her visit to the school.

The tale of the prince and his evil stepmother enthralled our Year 7 students and motivated them to create their own work. They were also inspired to create

abstract similes in homage to Cat's work on the theme of friendship and to read their work out to their peers.

The Wild Magic author said: "I had an absolutely fantastic day with the wonderful students at Earl Mortimer College. They produced stellar work."

Student Matthew said: "It was so much fun because the author really brought the story to life. It was the best lesson ever".

English teacher Mr Quigley said: Hopefully we will see Cat again in the not-so-distant future, so she can work with more of our budding writers."



Students are in harmony for gig

YEAR 7 students showcased their musical talent at a concert. They have been learning a new instrument this term and the showcase was their first chance to show off new skills.

Year 10 hospitality and catering students made scones and cake and served tea and coffee at the event.

Assistant Principal Mr Wharam said: "For most of these students, it was the very first time they had performed in front of an audience and they did a fantastic job.

"Thanks to our hospitality students who helped at the event and were great role models, and prefects Elinor and Kiera, who were marvellous hosts."



Students sing at the Priory Church fete

Greatest day for choir

THE school choir left the stage with rapturous applause ringing in their ears after putting on a fine performance at the Priory Church fete.

The Year 7-10 singers went with their repertoire of modern hits including a spine-tingling rendition of Take That song *Greatest Day*.

Year 10 Sofiya said: It was an amazing feeling to sing in front of a crowd especially when you are doing it with all your friends. We sang seven songs and it went really well with us all getting a huge round of applause at the end. Afterwards, people were coming up to us to say well done."



The bench has been set up in the Year 7 playground

Creating a safe space

A BENCH in the Year 7 playground has become a focus point for students needing extra support at school.

The Prevent Bullying Now (PBN) student team has created the safe space for anyone feeling lonely or in need of a chat. The bench was built by the parent of the anti-bullying group which has about 30 members.

Year 9 Flora said: "For some people it is hard to have the courage to come out and say you need help but by sitting on the bench people know you feel like you need support.

"There are about 10 PBN members in Year 7 so there will always be someone there to help. The message is that you don't have to feel alone."



ON THE AIRWAVES: Students used the school's radio studio to spread the anti-bullying message this term.

The Prevent Bullying Now (PBN) student team interviewed teachers including Mrs Gummer and Mr Burren for podcasts on the importance of having a strong stance against bullying.

Student Flora said: "It is very important to talk to the teachers about our message because they can also spread it around the school. We say bullying will not be accepted in our school and we have to try to tackle it wherever it is found."

STICKING UP FOR OTHERS: Year 9 students Flora and Faye have been selected to be our new Prevent Bullying Now lead representatives

Sweet singalong marks 70 years of royal reign

The school celebrated the Queen's Platinum Jubilee with a series of events around the school this term.

Students dressed in red, white and blue at a school disco with a stirring singalong to Neil Diamond's Sweet Caroline chosen by listeners of Zoe Ball's BBC Radio 2 Breakfast Show as a 'song of togetherness' for the jubilee.

Students walked three laps around the school field to raise money for charity.

Students tucked into a delicious afternoon tea of sandwich, sausage rolls and jubilee cupcakes as the school marked Queen Elizabeth's 70 years on the throne.

Year 7 Joe said: "We are all very grateful to the Queen for the way she has served the country for so many years. It has been an amazing reign.

"Our way of saying thank you was by celebrating her Platinum Jubilee, which everyone really enjoyed doing."



The school disco; inset, the sight of cut-outs of the royal family greeted visitors



Students take in the sights at Liverpool's art galleries

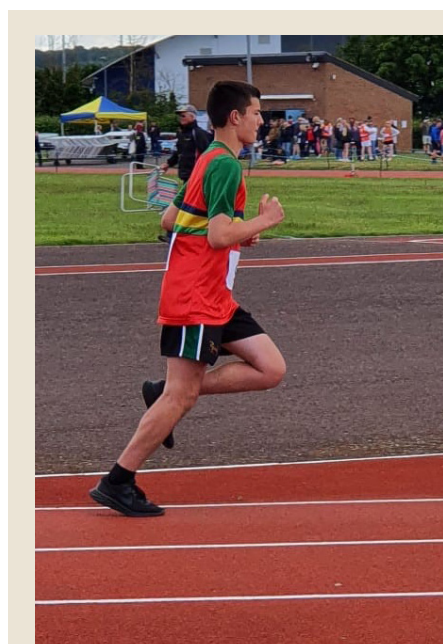
In the gallery

PHOTOGRAPHY students from Year 10 took learning beyond the classroom when touring top art galleries in Liverpool.

They saw the Radical Landscapes' exhibition at the Tate Gallery and spent time at the Walker Art Gallery.

Student Keira said: "My best bits were seeing the individual art works. They were so diverse and covered a huge range of subjects. My favourite was Back to the Fields by Ruth Ewan. I will always keep this amazing memory of sitting at the Albert Docks in the sunshine having a good time with friends and enjoying art."

Hattie said: "I enjoyed going into the Tate Gallery and seeing all the different exhibits and how they were set up. The trip was a great experience. The trip out and looking at the art face to face is much better than seeing it on a whiteboard screen."



KEEP ON RUNNING: Jack of Year 10 finished second in the 3,000m at the Hereford and Worcester Championships



Jordan Hart puts students through their paces

Olympic hopeful serves up a treat

A TOP athlete aiming for success at the Paris Olympics in 2024 taught students the secret to success during a visit to the school.

Badminton star Jordan Hart, who has represented Team GB at the European Championships, told youngsters she trains six hours a day. She talked about her victories all over the world, the struggles with funding and how she broke into the world's top 100 players.

She showed her dedication by putting students through gruelling fitness sessions as well as demonstrating her talent on the courts.

The visit was part of the Sport for Champions programme, which provides students the chance to meet top UK athletes.

Jordan said: "I honestly can say I enjoyed every minute of my time spent with the students at Earl Mortimer."

"I was able to talk about my experiences, share knowledge and hopefully inspire them to be the best version of themselves possible."

"As an athlete of a sport that is not widely publicised in the mainstream media, this was so amazing."

Student Harley said: "I found her talk really inspirational because you really don't think of sports such as badminton as being so competitive. It shows you that you have to be 100 per cent dedicated to whatever it is you want to succeed at, otherwise you won't make it."