



Caistor Focus



New Year , New School

From building the Newbolt Centre, undergoing more site improvements and participating in eco-friendly activities, Caistor Grammar has undergone some major changes these past few months.

The biggest, most obvious change the pupils have seen in their everyday school lives is the Newbolt Centre. With work beginning in November 2022, our return to the school after the summer holidays saw a new building (with heating!) which took the place of the New Hall. Annual events such as House

Music and our GCSE and A Level art exhibition have already taken advantage of this modernised space. The original aim of this project was to replace the old New Hall as it was not useful, considering it was previously built on a swimming pool. Our Deputy Head, Mr Croft, assured us that their goals were achieved in the Newbolt Centre: "It was clearly a successful change as it has provided a better venue for whole school events, significantly the drama and music which has been evident in the past month." Students have described it as a "technical advance within the school" and comments from House Music

prove it to be a definite improvement for the school community.

Carrying on with the theme of renovations, the sixth formers' communal area, Casterby, also received a new look. The walls have been covered with similar bright designs to the school cafeteria and has replaced the outdated style that made up Casterby.

You must be wondering: Are the renovations finished? Well, the answer is no! Caistor Grammar is always changing and adapting to the needs of the students. As Mr Croft mentioned, "We still have the finishing touches to complete on the new building and our

facilities will never be fully perfect or finished. We are always looking to improve the learning environment for the students." In addition to the student's desires, the Senior Prefect Team have created a rotor for Key Stage 3 to encourage tidiness around the school. Every Wednesday, one of the lower school forms use litter pickers to go around the site and pick up any rubbish that may be laying around. This is a great idea that is encouraging to be cleaner (and greener!)

By Anna Miroshnikova 10Z

Our modern Picasso!

By Ashi Allamsetty 10Y

Our school has the pleasure of welcoming the well loved Harry Giles onto our staff team as a skilled Arts Technician. From taking A-level art, he has pursued his passion and joined the school in the same field. His favourite thing about the school is the “warm environment, with children and staff that are a joy to be around”. He specialises in the Art department, but does work around the whole school – improving the site in general. In the future, he plans to go into musical theatre full-time! Everyone in the school environment is grateful to have him with us and are excited to see where his career leads. As for hobbies, he has a strong interest in painting, running a KS4 art club on Thursdays with Mrs Porter.

He is described by fellow staff members as “Supportive”, and assists in and out of the classroom – what would the staff do without him?! Due to his immense expertise in A level art, he is able to also help students in projects and work opportunities. He wishes to make a positive impact towards the world, especially on social and environmental issues. He hopes to be someone people can talk to— a symbol of happiness. With experience in arts, such as painting backgrounds for the fantastic school production; Evita, his work set the scene for a successful performance. We hope he can continue to aid the school—go Mr G!



Magical Miss McCann!

By Elysia Priestley, 7Z

With her love for music and kindness towards staff and pupils, CGS is proud to receive Miss McCann as the Music department’s Performing Arts Technician. She was instrumental in organising the House Music (which was amazing this year) and conducted the Sixth Form Arts Captains. She also worked a lot in preparing the choir and helping with people’s confidence for Evita, this year’s performance. She can play the piano, ukulele and guitar and likes musical theatre, as she has been musical since primary school, and starred in a vital role in last year’s play, *Anything Goes*. She is naturally bubbly and smiley and is usually found in the Music department, either teaching music or chilling.

Mrs. Thompson says this: “Miss McCann is a naturally musical delight, and is incredibly talented, extremely organised and fantastic with students. She has a rare natural ability to teach and is one of the best technicians I have ever had.” She is an amazing member of the Music department, assisting Mrs Thompson daily. Being a great teacher, as well as a lovely staff member—Ms McCann is an all-round talent! Kevin Lin 10Z says “I think she is really nice. She is supportive to the pupils and is helpful to GCSE students. She is becoming a well-loved and respected member of our CGS staff”. Thanks for everything, Miss McCann!



Guten Tag, Lars!

By Elysia Priestley 7Z

Our new German University student, Lars, helps with our German department as an enthusiastic assistant in the German lessons, and usually speaks a lot of German to help us learn and understand the pronunciation of the language better. Dr Wilton says that Lars is, "Excellent, a big help working with the sixth formers, giving them an extra lesson every week to help them work on pronunciation, which is beneficial and not a common thing. We are very lucky to have him."

Before coming to Caistor, he lived in Germany and likes sport like fencing. He previously coached fencing and worked in a voluntary position at a sports club and a theatre in his hometown. He also likes the

"normal stuff" like reading and watching movies.

He always wanted to come to England and stay here. He chose Caistor as it seemed like a good school for him. He loves the school, especially the people in it, and he likes teaching and talking to all the teachers and students.

He likes the general environment, as it is nice, and works a lot with Mrs. Turner and Dr. Wilton. He says they are great and engaging and they look out for him if he makes an error and helps him to improve his teaching." He also enjoys working with the P.E department with Mr. Shutes and Mr. Maloney.

Anna Miroshnikova, 10Z says, "Lars is very helpful, useful and enthusiastic to help out in lessons and he tries to upgrade our knowledge in German."



Trendy Thomas!

By Arnav Mongolu 8Y

Having joined CGS at the start of the school year, Thomas has helped to support the language department at our school. From doing fun French activities with pupils during lessons to helping the French teachers, Thomas has been an asset to this year's French lessons. When asked about him, students have described him as a very enthusiastic and hardworking person who has a passion for talking to and bonding with students.

Coming from Perpignan, France, Thomas is currently a university student who came to CGS to help with his studies and coursework: this is so that he can fulfil his lifelong dream of becoming a French teacher in England. Thomas lived in Perpignan for 2 years and currently studies French and

English translation there.

About a month ago, Thomas went with us Year 8s on a nine-day long trip to France. During this trip, we visited famous tourist attractions such as Le Mont Saint Michel. Furthermore, we were also able to participate in fun activities including bread making, aero ball, and archery, just to name a few. When prompted, Thomas confidently said that his favourite part of the trip was Le Mont Saint Michel but added that the goat cheese farm was a close runner up. Not to mention, Thomas' favourite part about France is the food, with his favourite food being le blanquette de veau, a French veal stew.

During his free time, Thomas enjoys learning new languages .



Pud-C G S!

By Austin Priestly 10Y

On Friday 17th November 2023, the school dressed up again for Children in Need. Ultimately, we raised £800.00 for the charity through both a bake sale, non school uniform and the most glamorous fancy dress competition the school has ever seen!

Last year, over 460,000 young people were aided by the organisation; they have helped individuals living in poverty, provided emergency support for those in crisis to make sure that they can feel safe and secure again.

At lunchtime, students from across the school went to the Newbolt Centre to battle for the title of best group or best solo costume. On this special occasion, we were transported through Gotham city with Batman and Robin to the Jurassic era before finally landing in the world of Men in Black.

Many participants fought in this prestigious competition but the imaginative dalmatians were victorious in winning the group contest. Although rivalled by many, Jenna Shields fought her way to be crowned the victor for the solo portion of the event.

Natalia Clarke 10Z reported that she enjoyed the fancy dress competition — especially the costumes of a group of year 11s who were dressed as cheeky cheerleaders. Mr Wood announced ‘It was great to see people donating and taking part. The solo and group efforts were brilliant this year!’ Lois Davey 7X, who came dressed as a crayon, exclaimed ‘I really enjoyed it! It was fun dressing up and it was nice to raise money for children in need.’

This day brought the usual excitement and showed us all how the CGS spirit truly outshines when coming together to help others in need.



Year 7 social success

By Austin Priestly 10Y

On Friday 8th September 2023, Year 7 returned after school for a night of fun and enjoyment to bond with fellow classmates.

The point of this exciting opportunity is so Year 7s are given the chance to make friends and meet new students in their year they may not had the chance to speak to. This evening developed and secured people's skills such as resilience, problem-solving and communication. The timetable was packed with students from the year playing games and working through difficult tasks as a team.

There was the opportunity to enjoy a quiz in which the general knowledge of Year 7s was tested, and they proved their strengths in various topics to one another.

Fun games were also had in the middle court by following the instructions of Mr. Moloney in which students competed as both teams and houses. Some games they played included passing a hoop around a group of themselves, whilst in a circle, without letting go of each other.

More activities included the 'floor is lava' and some house activities in which Rawlinson won. A Year 7 student stated 'I think the Year 7 social evening is a great way to bond with fellow classmates.'

Pioneering skills were tested as the students were asked to create structures made of bamboo canes, string and plastic bags to protect eggs from breaking. Mr. Robinson tested these amazing structures from the balcony on Casterby.

Another team building game was used to prove the determination of the students where the year sevens had to find pieces of string to create the longest piece of string as a team.

This was fun and the year sevens clearly enjoyed it. Andy He 7Y said, "It was fun, and we could meet with friends". He enjoyed the challenges greatly, notably the egg protection exercise. The students had also indulged themselves in a task to make them ordered into a line following some commands. This was difficult yet not impossible as they successfully accomplished it without a sweat.

After the trials, the canteen staff generously prepared a meal for everyone—they enjoyed pizza and chips followed by ice cream to keep

their energy up for the evening ahead. It was on to the lights of the gym for a disco to round off the evening before finally heading home. One year 7 stated: 'It was good, it helped me make a few new friends and there were a nice range of activities.' Evie Webster had found that the food was good, and she enjoyed the quiz.

Overall, the Year 7s clearly had a memorable experience, and it is something the school will hopefully continue to do for the Year 7s in the future because it assists Year 7s in making friends and getting to know the school staff and site through fun and interesting puzzles and activities that boost confidence in the students and encourages them to discover success as a group.



A ‘Splendickens’ Performance!

By Ellie MacDaniel 8X

On Tuesday 14th November, Y8 settled down in the brand-new Newbolt Centre to watch a production of 'A Christmas Carol' (originally written by Charles Dickens), performed to them live by acting group Box Clever Theatre. The classic tale began with a modern twist, with Scrooge making his debut with a laptop, compared to how Dickens originally portrayed him 180 years ago. The 3 talented actors interacted with the audience, including getting a student to play a parrot from the books of Scrooge's childhood, doing the Macarena at Fezziwig's ball, and using members of the audience to play the Cratchit children, making it an excitable morning, with everyone eagerly putting their hand up to have a chance to act as Scrooge at the

beginning and end of the book. The creative set up of the stage and the few, well-planned props made for an immersive experience for the students. The simplistic costume changes (such as just adding a pair of goggles for Marley's ghost or an apron for Bobby Cratchit) paired quite well with the changes in lighting, creating tension, excitement and wonder for the enthralled students. Bella Shanahan, a student from 8X, said, "I thought that the utilisation of the wooden box was amazing, especially how it could be used for so many purposes. It was clearly very well-rehearsed, and every line was said with precision - the movement of the actors reflected the personality of the characters very well. It was an amazing performance and I would definitely recommend to future years!"



Bonjour, Normandie!

By Kevin Lin 10Z

On Friday 3rd November on a cold wintry morning, 40 students got up and arrived in Caistor to start their exciting trip to Normandy, France. The journey consisted of a 4-hour coach to Portsmouth, before a 5 hour ferry trip landed on the French coast, Omaha Beach, famous for where the D-Day landing occurred. All the students and staff stayed at Chateau de la Baudonnière, a beautiful castle in the countryside. Throughout the trip everyone took part in activities such as bread making, archery, aero ball, circus skills and meeting animals in the mini-farm. The students also visited a British War Memorial and a cemetery, to commemorate those whose lives were lost in wars. They also had the opportunity to try several

French delicacies, such as escargots (more commonly known as snails), and some more familiar foods, commonly associated with France, such as croissants and pain au chocolats. Though many of the Year 8s wished the trip didn't have to end, they finally returned home at 3am on Tuesday 7th November. Several of the tired members of the trip bravely returned to school the same morning or lunch, and the rest came in the next day, excitedly talking about the brilliant memories they'd made. After asking several students, they all said it was an immersive and helpful experience for their French speaking skills, helping them also to understand French culture better. The trip was a success and there will hopefully be many more like it for our future Year 8s.



Guten Tag, Bavaria...

By Matilda Waterhouse 9Z

For the second part of our annual exchange, our GCSE German students enjoyed 6 days and 5 nights in Bavaria, Germany. Known for being the best valued trip that CGS has to offer, students travelled by plane and were accommodated by their German exchange friends that they met in June. The 19 students started their adventure in Germany on

Thursday 19th November, excited to see Eichstätt, the home of our partner school, the Willibald Gymnasium, where students there also had the opportunity to come to Caistor. During the weekdays, some mornings were spent in school, taking lessons with the German students. One of the days was dedicated to exploring around Munich, putting their German skills to the test and

submerging themselves in German culture. In eastern Bavaria, the Year 11s spent another day visiting the medieval town Regensburg, however, if you were lucky, on the weekends, your family could tour you around Germany, a popular destination being the Alps and lakes. One of the student's families took Annabel Peart, a student in 11X, to Zugspitze during the weekend, where they climbed

to the top of the tallest mountain in Germany, Zugspitze, at a towering 2962m tall! Another student, Daisy Cook in 11Z, described the trip as 'a really good experience' and 'very interesting to see the German culture'. This has obviously been a huge success and I am sure that future Year 11s will love this amazing trip!



Making the most for Macmillan ‘23!

By Amelia Crompton-Howe
13VS.

On the 29th of September, CGS hosted another heart-warming Macmillan coffee morning, raising an impressive £852.82 in support of the charity, as well as resulting in lots of happy faces (stuffed with cake) as parents and members of the town came to donate.

Arrays of brownies, cakes, and flap jacks were laid out on freshly set tables with bouts of coffee and tea to quench the thirst of many.

The event, orchestrated by dedicated Year 11 students, demonstrated their commitment to generosity as they selflessly helped out despite looming MOCK GCSE exams.

Mr. Davey, a passionate in-school advocate for the charity, shared his sentiments “It’s

always a really nice event to have in school. I think it shows the kind of community that we have— where people are willing to come together and help others in need. I’m very proud of everyone.”

This highlights the significance of fostering a supportive and compassionate community within the school.

The charitable initiative not only showcased the kindness within the school but also embraced the invaluable contributions of our own students— once again the success of this years Macmillan coffee morning is a testament to the collective effort and sense of community prevailing Caistor Grammar School.

It is evident that every year we continuously top the previous with our huge movement of charity for families and individuals needing support.



Actions ‘peak’ louder than words!

By Isaac W. Packer 9X

This year Holly Smith and Annabelle Peart embarked on a walk to raise life changing money for Macmillan and cancer research.

The two girls walked an impressive 127 miles in total, Annabelle kitted up to push herself and other family members to walk 105 miles over 4 days up and across the towering Ben Nevis (a

staggering 1100m of total height gain). The family walked through all conditions no matter what, it was quoted to be “muddy, boggy, slippery, and very rainy” The family walked 10 miles on the first day and 30 miles on each of the last days to reach their goal they all thoroughly enjoyed it.

Holly Smith walked 23 miles and raised £230 from friends and family by walking

through the beautiful countryside of ‘Edale skyline’ in Derbyshire. She took the 20-mile route around the peak district. From the start they made their way to Win Hill, then Lose Hill, Mam Tor, Brown Knoll and Kinder Low the scenery was said to be pretty and admirable. The pair have been recognized for their actions and praised highly for their contributions towards helping the millions of people affected by cancer.

Annabelle and her family’s ambitions are to help others, they are “going all out to find even better ways to help people with cancer, helping to bring forward the day when everyone gets life-transforming support from day one.

Family and friends should never be alone whilst going through this; Annabelle raised

an extraordinary £430+ for Macmillan.

Holly stated “the second half of the walk was quite difficult compared to the first.” She also said it, “it was my first time doing such a long walk but had past experiences.” At the end of the walk she felt “tired, proud of herself and enjoyed it very much.” The walk for both girls was an emotional experience and themselves, peers and other family members are all extremely happy for them. The two girls should be an inspiration for anyone wanting to help the cause or support others .

The word admiration would be an understatement when describing the thoughts and feelings that are held towards the two girls.



Evita



**‘My biggest fear in life is
to be forgotten’
- Eva perón**

The best show in town

By Evie Webster 7y

The eye-catching *Evita* is a play about Eva Perón (Ayla Jafri) set in Argentina between 1934 and 1952. She rapidly rose the social and political ladder and was considered a spiritual leader, according to Ayla, 'in her own evil way.' We start this journey with Eva as a promiscuous young lady at the age of 15, she engages in a love affair with the tango singer Augustin Magaldi (Jayden Cheung). She is desperate to go to Buenos Aires with the singer, she continues her singing career as well as utilising her feminine power with anyone and everyone to get to the top. Eva meets Colonel Peron at an event and the two had an instant spark, she soon realises this man can benefit her immensely. Eva quickly removes anyone in her way, and due to this the upper class begin to acknowledge her

derived from their fear of a lower-class girl becoming so close to power. Peron's power has formed an unbeatable power couple, Eva begins to gain more popularity than her husband, she is an icon figure despite the disapproval from the upper class. After taking part in charitable work for the lower class to cover up her money laundering, she admits that she has fallen terminally ill and realizes the love between her and Peron is authentic. She chooses to run for vice president, but the army is fed up with her power, Peron wants her to put her health first as her illness is slowly taking over her body. She declares her love for the people of Argentina, before she soon passes. Her body is stolen for 17 years.







The day before the ‘night of a thousand stars’

By Lydia Middleton 9z

Evita was challenging this year; it required more practice and dedication than any other production before. To make it look as spectacular as you saw, it took immense effort to transform Caistor's beloved town hall into the gorgeous Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Before any of the complicated things were even considered, Mr. Harris, the director, had to be consulted. Casting is a tedious process, however in Caistor Grammar, there are countless options of talented students to choose from. The real problem is assigning the right role to the right person, we want all students to have equal opportunities, but this

can become difficult once casting starts. Mr. Harris said he loved the cast atmosphere, as everyone was equally important and supported each other. Rehearsing any play is stressful, but everyone was there for each other, year groups bonded, and we all had a fabulous time, making lifelong memories to treasure.

The costumes were tailored to perfection, our very own head of the costume department, Mrs Jago (along with help from the irreplaceable Daisy Cook), and director Mr. Harris were particularly impressed by the execution of the dressing scene, where Eva is picking out what to wear for the “rainbow tour.” Each costume was carefully

handpicked either from the school's stocks, hired from elsewhere or especially made for the actors. Altogether there were around 100 costumes for the entire cast, Eva wearing around 6, they were all negotiated so no one was left feeling uncomfortable. However, in Mrs Jago's eyes, hiring costumes was a bit of a hassle - there were a lot of costume changes in this one! Despite all of this, the full ensemble looked incredible. Now it would not be a play without the cast, the fact that they put in hours upon hours of work shows the value of dedication. Not just the leads, like Ayla, Arun, Lucas, and

Jayden, but the smaller parts as well.

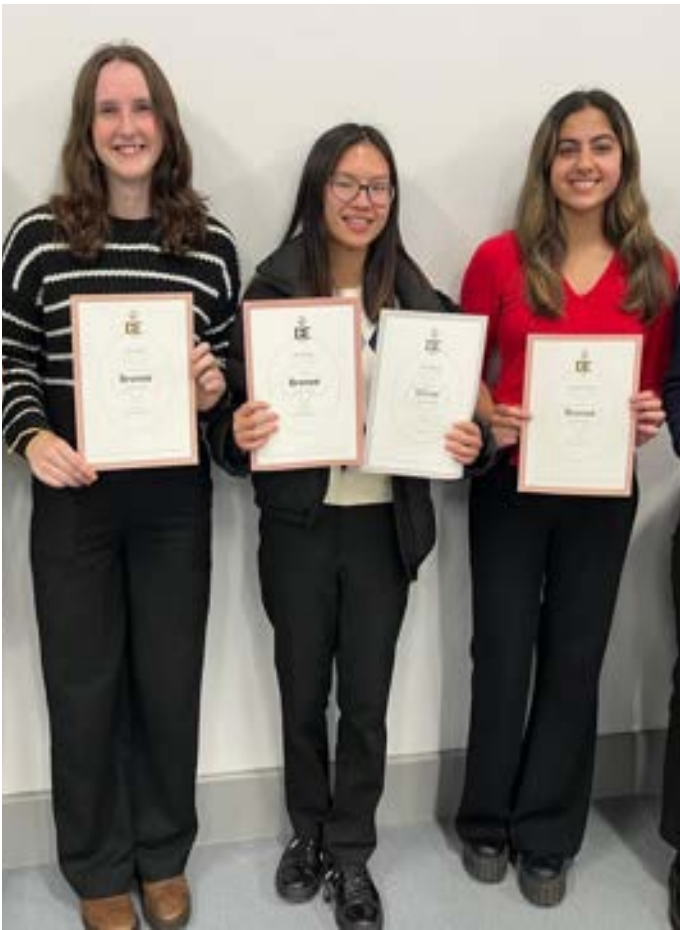
Ayla, who was the lead, Eva, said that her character was ‘a very controversial character’ but she loved that Eva had an evil side, and was a very driven woman. Ayla found it hard not to lose her voice, as she performed 30 songs back-to-back for three nights straight but she did us all here at CGS proud with her vocal skills. Many thanks to Mr. Harris, Mrs Thompson, Mr. Robinson, Miss Allan, Alison Riley, Mrs. Donoghue, Mr. Donington, Miss Porter, Harry Giles, Miss Banks, Miss McCann, Daisy Cook, Eve Foster, Jack Dowthwaite, Meg Allison, and everyone else who took part.

Happy campers!

By Isaac Packer 9X and
Amelia Crompton-Howe
13VS

The Duke of Edinburgh this year is one to remember for years 12 and 13 with many awards claimed this October. "It was challenging but rewarding" claimed a Year 13 DofE awards student and I am sure many would agree with that statement. The Duke of Edinburgh is a youth development program designed to push students to the limit. It has been a well-respected tradition in the UK every day. It is designed to help students improve their teamwork, problem solving, and aspects needed to progress and develop through life, quoted to be "a brilliant experience to add to my personal statement." Everyone on the night collected their

respected reward being either bronze, silver or gold certificate. Everyone worked very hard for their awards—pushing through tough climates, tricky inclines, and committed volunteering for over 6 months. Students volunteered in charity shops, local schools, and groups; whilst others tried new hobbies within the world of sports or creative arts. It cannot be denied that the school is proud of the students accomplishments, and their commitments to not only themselves but the world around them. The certificates they held with pride and smiles on their faces act as a physical reminder of their resilience and excellence as succeeding Caistor Grammar School students.



Brains and brilliance.

By Harry Bradley 9Y
Dusting off the trophies for another year of triumphs for the students of CGS, this year's Awards' Evening was arguably one of the greatest Awards' Evenings we've had. Students were recognised for their

efforts over the course of the 22/23 school year with awards given to all year groups as students were recognised for their uniquely wonderful skills. Year 11s and Year 13s were recognised for their spectacular results in their GCSEs and A Levels as well as their



contributions to other activities. There were many Year 7, 8, and 9 students winning prizes for excelling in their best subject and competing for our school at a higher level. There were many awards given out such as The Jacques Prize for Junior English, The Art Award for Outstanding Achievement, The Boys' and Girls' PE Cup for Excellence, and many more brilliant awards. Caistor Grammar School competed in many sporting events throughout the year, including Cross Country, Football, Netball, and Cricket. Every year we challenge each other in the house challenges and we all come together at awards evening to celebrate the winning house. There have been many house challenges this year like the interhouse Chess competition or the Drama challenge. Overall

Ra-Ra-Rawlinson won this year in great style. There were many awards for the Year 13s, looking back on their wonderful time at Caistor Grammar School after their final A-Level exams. Students in Chemistry, Biology, and Maths challenges; with fourteen students achieving gold awards across the different challenges. As well as their many accomplishments, we had a look at what our wonderful Year 13s have achieved and what is next for them., moving on to the next chapter of their lives and achieving bigger and better things. Every single student within our school has made us extremely proud this year. With the 2023 awards evening as proof of how successful our school truly is and allows us to shine a light on the value of appreciation.

Opinion and Editorial

Wonder or Nintendo Blunder?

By Joe Lawrence, 9Z

Super Mario Bros Wonder is the first Mainline Mario game released in 6 years and it's the first original 2D game in 16 years. There are many different opinions on it: is it good or was it a waste of Nintendo's time? Are the graphics good or does it come off as childish? Is Elephant Mario's move set unique and powerful or is he just a bit goofy? Today, Super Mario geek Joe Lawrence, will finally answer the question if Nintendo has wasted their time.

Nintendo's biggest new addition in Super Mario Wonder was the Wonder Flower. Touching it will affect the stage in ways like pipes being sentient or everything

being silhouettes or Mario being a slime ball. According to an interview done by the BBC, these Wonder Effects are scrapped ideas that Nintendo has saved over the years. However, this can be looked at in another light: each level has its own gimmick and very few appear more than once.

Another thing I want to talk about is the badges. Badges can alter your movement or give you help in a level. Which badge is the best is a topic for another time, but there are some great ones. You can triple jump, spin to increase your jump, backflip, jump out of lava unscathed, become Spiderman and launch a vine, swim faster, get more coins, hear Wonder Seeds or get any powerup you want when you pick up a mushroom.

The only problem is that you can only equip one at a time, but then it becomes strategic to pick the best one possible.

I also want to talk about the power ups. Nintendo introduced 3 brand new ones: Elephant, Drill and Bubble. Elephant Mario can hit enemies with his trunk or spraying water in his trunk. Many people say that an elephant is a weird thing to turn Mario into, but in his almost 40 years, he has turned into a cat, tanuki, penguin, frog, bee, rabbit and many more so he was going to be an elephant sooner or later. The drill power up enables some very creative level design, as he can go into the floor. The bubble power up is fine, until you realise you can gain infinite

height by jumping on a bubble while spawning another.

Finally, I want to talk about the online features. First, it's very smooth (unlike a certain Mario Maker game I could talk about). Nintendo also made it so if you help another player, like giving them a power up or bringing them back to life, you get rewarded with heart points to show to your friends.

In conclusion, I think the game is very fun. I agree with why some can see it as childish or unneeded, but I see it as entertaining, a good way to relax and will definitely replay it in future.

COP28: Clash of the Philosophies

By Umar Javaid, 8Z

The world has gathered in the UAE for what is arguably an odd event. The UN summit for climate change and environmental preservation in the UAE, one of the world's greatest oil exporters, with an oil boss as the president. What!

COP stands for Conference Of the Parties and invites world leaders and activists to share their voice and stand for the environment. Environmental protection is a growing need in the world, and with many skeptics of human impact on the planet, the COP Summits are there to produce deals and change the minds of the disbelievers. The summit brings activists, public intellectuals, leaders and indigenous peoples

to a single place, and allows voices to be heard. This year, the summit is hosted in the Dubai Expo Village.

The UAE is a tiny country on the Arabian Peninsula yet is one you have probably heard of. The country is known for oil drilling, the cities of Dubai and Abu Dhabi, and rich sheikhs. It is a confusing choice for an environmental summit. The President of the COP this year is Dr Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber, an Emirati politician and minister who may be slightly controversial in the role, considering he is the President of ADNOC, the UAE's premier oil company. Dr Al Jaber believes we do not need to stop the usage of fossil fuels, and that oil allows us to reach sustainability goals. Although

environmentalists believe that Dr Al Jaber becoming president of the UN's climate fund is abhorrent, others believe he can convince the fossil fuel industry to turn a new leaf. Among the politicians and magnates this year is our own King Charles III. Charles has been passionate about the environment for years, even before the COPs were even started. He gave a speech in Dubai to Dr Al Jaber and his colleagues at the Expo Auditorium, warmly received by both the public and politicians.

One thing that has been missing from COPs every year is indigenous voices. The last COP in Sharm El Sheikh on Egypt's Red Sea coast took a turn for the better, and created an Indigenous Voices Area, for First

Nations people from around the world to discuss the threat to their livelihoods. Anyone who has met me in the past will instantly remember my love and adoration for the American linguist and intellectual Noam Chomsky (that man is a living oracle to me). Chomsky often campaigns for the rights of indigenous peoples and the threats they face. He writes 'So, at one extreme, you have indigenous, tribal societies trying to stem the race to disaster. At the other extreme, the richest, most powerful societies in world history, like the United States and Canada, are racing full speed ahead to destroy the environment as quickly as possible.' It appears that Chomsky has predicted the situation for years to come.

Opinion and Editorial

Rethinking, rewilding

By Umar Javaid, 8Z

Rewilding. Reintroductions. Lots of other scientific words beginning with 're'. The UK Government's Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has announced they will no longer focus on rewilding or reintroduction of species. But to start, what is rewilding?

Rewilding is the concept of returning land to nature and allowing species to return. The idea was advanced by famed Dutch ecologist and environmentalist Frans Vera, who produced a formula, stating that ecological systems relied on every animal, great and small. He specifically advocated large herbivores and

predators. He then bought land in the Netherlands, creating the Oostvaardersplassen, a wetland reserve relying on greylag geese to sustain the systems. Vera's plans became the basis of Knepp, a 3500-acre project in Sussex that I recently visited. While there, we observed English Longhorns, fallow and red deer and Exmoor ponies being used to maintain the flora. Thanks to this, species such as purple emperors have been able to thrive on the estate.

A possibly more exciting thing is the status of reintroductions. This involves putting a species into an environment with hopes it will breed. The plan at Knepp is to reintroduce beaver to the area on the River Adur, which

flows through the site. Although it may sound ambitious, this is not the first rewilding project in the UK. Beavers are being trialled on the River Otter in Devon, and bison! The first wild bison in the UK were released last year in the forests outside of Canterbury, with immense success. A bison calf was born and recently turned one year old. More recently, an intrepid project to release crayfish (a cute little lobster) on the Isle of Wight has begun. The project aims to release the crayfish in the streams of the Isle, to boost numbers of the endangered species in the country.

Rewilding has become more and more popular through the years, and more controversial. The world-famous Durrell

Wildlife Conservation Trust recently bought a huge estate in the Cairngorms National Park with aims of rewilding and reintroducing species such as wildcats. Rewilding is controversial in the Cairngorms and around Europe, as many farmers and agricultural workers view plans to reintroduce species as dangerous. The aforementioned beavers on the River Otter were originally met with dismay from farmers in the area, from fears of chewed up trees. Now, farmers love the impact of beavers on the Otter, citing an increase in river cleanliness, renewal of favourite species, and healthiness of the landscape.

The Pink Tax

By Alice Robertson, 12DW

Men and women need the same everyday products: shampoo, toothpaste, razors; list goes on. Yet in a time of economic turmoil, why is it that women are paying on average up to 32% more than men on these basic hygiene products? The answer is simple- pink.

This hidden non-governmental tax has been around since the concept of marketable consumerism, making the never-ending list of daily female oppressions even more relevant. The tax is so: products that are pink are more expensive than products that are branded blue or green. Many may say that it is down to the fact that the pigmentation

in the chemical makeup of the plastic or packaging may mean that the companies have to make up for it in the price, yet wouldn't that be applicable to products that need blue pigmentation or even red?

The cost difference between these necessities may seem insignificant in a weekly shop- a few pence here and there- but throughout a lifetime of buying haircuts and razors and jeans, it adds up significantly, making it one of the 'contributing factors as to why is harder for women to accumulate savings' says period poverty campaigner Molly Fenton. These differences may be demonstrated through Gillette disposable razors (£0.28/razor for men and

£0.55/razor for women) or even facial moisturizer (a 50ml female tub costing £10.77 on average whilst the male equivalent is £8.02). Along with this, the pink tax is also applicable for the young girls of today, with school blouses costing on average 2.72% more for girls than for boys and the DCA finding that toys such as board games, action figures and cars cost a whopping 55% overall for girls than for boys.

Despite this, in 2020, the Houses of Parliament released a statement saying, "This House highlights that it is unacceptable that in 2020, women and girls pay more than men for basic products, including toiletries, clothes and haircuts." And following this,

the tampon tax, which classes period products as luxury items was abolished, scrapping the 5% VAT rate on tampons a year later- with shops believed to have lost £10 million per year from the tax change according to the Guardian. But, since the change, the products have worked out about the same, if not more, in costs due to the cost-of-living crisis and the increase in energy prices to produce these items, making So, will the pink tax ever be stopped? Well, with 63% of women unable to buy products they require when on their periods, it isn't looking likely.

All the Singles, Lady!

By Lois Davey 7X

Everyone gathered in the Newbolt Centre in November for the first performance of the Junior House Music in a brand new venue. To start the afternoon of music, Ronnie began with Ayscough's vocal solo, singing "A Sign of The Times". She sang beautifully and supported her other soloists excellently. Hansard's vocal solo, Maria, was on next. 'A thousand spotlights' were on Maria as she sang "Never Enough" from 'The Greatest Showman'. She projected her talent brilliantly. Rawlinson finished off with Tia, singing "I'm Good Without". She didn't 'come off too strong'. She sang softly and brilliantly. In the end, Ayscough won with 19 out of 20.

After that was the Instrumental solos, and the first person to play their instrument was

Becky, from Ayscough, on the piano. We received a very good performance from her and were blown away. Next was Luke, from Hansard, playing the guitar. A bit different to the other two soloists, but still a great performance. The last soloist was Rawlinson's soloist Stanley playing the violin. An amazing performance performed very professionally. In the end, Rawlinson won with 19 out of 20.

Last to finish the first part of the show were the piano duets. First was Becky and Alice for Ayscough. They played beautifully and looked like they were having a great time. Next was Hansard with Kartik and Arnav. Such a great piece. Finally, Rawlinson's duet, Eddie and Henry. They were a very good pair and played incredibly well. In the end Rawlinson took gold and won the piano duet.



"Like that song from Minecraft?"

By Joe Lawrence 9Z

At our school, we are gifted with dozens of House Events yearly. However, House Music has one of the most positive reactions from students. The talent of lots of people brought to the stage exceeds the talent of many professional musicians, as well as your expectations. So, what wonderful songs were we gifted this year?

The afternoon for the Year 8 and 9s started with Group Instrumental. Ayscough performed a very impressive string adaptation of Sea Shanty classic "Drunken Sailor". For those of you that have been living under a rock since the 19th Century, "Drunken Sailor" is a traditional sea shanty. It was sung onboard sailing ships at least as early as the 1830s. In my opinion, the way they combined 3 of the same

instruments to make very different parts of the music was very impressive.

Hansard performed a wonderful arrangement by Dylan Ho of Sweden by C418 from the song Minecraft. Minecraft is the No.1 best-selling game of all time, selling over 300,000,000 copies. Its music is well known for being slow and relaxing. People who played Minecraft when they were younger are likely to feel a lot of nostalgia when listening back to the music, because no matter what they did in the game, it was there. The idea of performing a song that most people in the audience would shed a tear to is great, and I have an inkling that it worked. Rawlinson performed the Game of Thrones theme. The Game of Thrones theme is one of the best Orchestral songs of all time. With over 70 million

streams on Spotify, it holds a reputation hard to meet.

And Rawlinson and went and did it. Every note was perfectly executed. The songs flowed perfectly and sounded like you were immersed in Season 6 Episode 9.

Now onto the Vocals! Ayscough performed a rendition of Disney song "Let It Go" from Frozen. The song is currently the 4th most famous Disney. So, would I listen to Ayscough's cover of it 881 million times? Sure. Ruby and Lukas, the Heads of Art for Ayscough, specifically made the amazing musicians sing parts of the song individually, instead of all together. This really let each and every one of them have their own moment in the spotlight, as well as being blended together in the chorus. The final note by Lydia Middleton was excellent and made many people surprised at

how good a couple of kids could be.

Hansard performed a very good cover of "You've got a Friend in Me" from the film "Toy Story". Alex Tuite, despite being the only male in the group, did a very good job at leading and surprised a lot of people with the vocal range of his voice. Everyone on stage looked like they were just having a good time rather than performing for the House Shield, taking a lot of the pressure off.

Finally, Rawlinson performed a cover of I Want You Back by Jackson 5. I was genuinely surprised at the vocal range some people at this school have. I will honestly be surprised if the people I saw up there don't make music a part of their future life, because I think they have the talent to get quite famous and their music to be well listened to.

Seniors Take The Stage!

By Bella Genney 10Z

House Music is one of the most celebrated events on the school calendar, and this year proved to be no different. Our House activities are made possible by the enthusiasm, talent, and leadership of our Sixth Form House Officials, guided by our Heads of House: Mrs. Cooke (Head of Rawlinson), Mr. Kay (Head of Hansard), and Mr. Markham (Head of Ayscough). Working in collaboration with the Tech Team and Mr. Robinson, the Heads of House play a crucial role in the success of the system, and we extend our heartfelt gratitude for their valuable contributions and dedication. The talent in both group and solo performances in Years 10-13 was astounding and a delight to watch. However, there had to be a winner, and overall, we saw Hansard, led by

Jayden Cheung and Asmita Yogachandran, taking a rewarding victory, placing themselves on top and claiming first place in Senior House Music 2023. Personally, I believe this was reliant on the fabulous introductions we received to performances, which enhanced the entertainment value and embraced the humorous side to the occasion. Many hours were invested in the event, and we must praise all students and teachers who took part and their dedication to making House Music such an enjoyable experience for those watching. There were a variety of compositions and songs shared with the crowd, ranging from classical to rock, and even Taylor Swift made a cameo. It was impossible for people to not find something they enjoyed during the competition.

Anna Miroshnikova, 10Z, stated that “the variety of genres we got to listen to changed how I felt about the event, and I think a lot of people will now be inspired to involve themselves in the musical opportunities around school after witnessing House Music.” Our solo, duet and group acts were all nothing short of amazing. We were impressed by Beth Crowther’s “No Body, No Crime” by Taylor Swift, which surprised the crowd and created familiarity for people who knew the song All Too Well. We were not the only ones, as she found herself claiming first place and bringing her Wildest Dreams to life. There was no Bad Blood between the competitors and all three of them had Bejeweled performances, although I am sure they were all Breathless afterwards.

Ayla Jafri, 12FG, who had a large involvement in the preparation for House Music this year for Rawlinson claimed that the environment was stressful, as “the Year 12’s had to do a lot more than they previously had”, but it was an “eye-opening experience that prepared us for next year.” Charlotte Phillips, a Hansard from 12FC, decided that the event was “very fun to be involved in due to the impressive house captains who took charge and made the experience at as low a stress level as possible.” A crowd favourite was “Hey Lover” played by the Hansard Senior Band, which brought smiles to many faces and excited the mass of people watching. I can’t wait for what next year’s House Music has in store for us.



20th November, 2023

To Everyone at Caistor Grammar School,

The Prince of Wales has asked me to thank you for your lovely letter, in which you told His Royal Highness about the school fringe festival taking place in July, 2024.

The Prince was heartened to learn of this wonderful charitable event, and was greatly encouraged by the school's commitment to helping end homelessness by raising money for The Nomad Trust.

It was most thoughtful of you to take the trouble to write as you did. His Royal Highness would have me send his very best wishes to everyone at Caistor Grammar School, along with his hopes that the event is successful and enjoyable for all involved.

Yours sincerely,

Future Fringe Festival

By Rhianna Mckie 12JK

With the successes of the previous Fringe Festivals, next year Mrs. McNeilly is once again up to the challenge of organizing the event; this time on the theme of Homelessness. The strapline of the event - "Another Day in Paradise" - is taken from the song by Phil Collins with the same title - which urges people to be compassionate towards homeless people - a heartfelt sentiment that will be at the centre of the festival. During the festival there will be a variety of events going on such as drama, music, film and art. The festival will highlight the struggles and resilience of those who find themselves without a roof over their heads and to get people to begin thinking about the problems of homelessness.

This year there will be two competitions available for all years to participate in for those interested in art and music. The art-related competition aims to transform the area underneath the Lindsey building into an underpass filled with art relating to homelessness. Art for the competition can be explored in any medium and can be submitted to either Ms. McNeilly, Mrs. Porter or Mr. Giles. The music-related competition is all about writing an original 3 to 5-minute original ballad or instrument which will then be performed and voted on. If you are interested, please contact Mrs. McNeilly or Miss McCann for more details. Submissions for both competitions are due on Thursday 28th March. Make sure to make the necessary preparations if you wish to take

part in these competitions and good luck! During the summer addition of Caistor Focus we will have a work in collaboration with the social enterprise The Big Issue, an excellent charity that aims to give people help beyond a "hand out" and instead gives them a "hand up" in order to give people the agency to make a legitimate income which for the case of the homeless can be a starting step for reintegration back into

society. The collaboration will allow Caistor Focus journalists an opportunity to spend a day at their office to see how their editorial process works and an outreach session, where Caistor Focus journalists will get the chance to listen to the stories of homeless people. If you are interested in volunteering for the Fringe Festival - please contact Ms. McNeilly to see if any additional roles need filling.



Year 11 public speaking victory

By Harry Bradley 9Y

Year 11 students Claire Tun, Shahnaz Anwari and Rebecca Mathews all represented the Caistor Grammar School at the annual ESU Churchill Public speaking competition and won the regionals meaning they will now move on Round Two. We asked Claire how she first got into public speaking, and she told us the story about how she first started acting from a young age and found out when she was good at public speaking through performance and would find enjoyment in participating in competitions such the balloon debate. She's been practising ever since and you can definitely see the practice paying off.

When we interviewed her, she showed great gratitude towards her parents for encouraging her to participate in past public speaking events as it gave her more assurance to go up on the stage to speak publicly, which can be very intimidating. Her parents were also the ones that got her into acting and really motivated her to do public speaking. Since Covid made us all more familiar with video calls, the first round of the English Speaking Union competition has been held online, and this year was no exception. The CGS team delivered their speech to the judges on a videocall, which may have felt a bit artificial but it did nothing to dampen the enthusiasm of the team. They beat several very strong teams

from other schools with a passionate and thoughtful collection of speeches, and they were praised for their inventive arguments, passionate delivery and great teamwork. When we asked Claire what her relationship was like with her fellow public speakers, she said that they were close with each other, which helped them out lots in the competition. Her group did a speech on the topic of 'Human rights' being a 'figment of imagination' and they picked this topic as they all agreed that it meant a lot to each over. Claire's speech lasted five minutes while the whole thing lasted 14 minutes. Claire, Rebecca and Shahnaz said it was a great experience as they got to express their passions and views with other

great speakers. Claire stated that Caistor Grammar School helped her realize that she was a very talented speaker and gave her the opportunity to speak at a top level. When we asked her if she would like to continue with public speaking and performance, she said that she still enjoys acting and likes to get involved with house plays. She said that she would like to carry on public speaking in the future life. With her current success, we see Claire with a bright future in public speaking. We wish Claire Tun, Shahnaz Anwari and Rebecca Mathews the best for Round Two.





Focus Sport



One hill of a sport!

By Erin Ingham 10Z

On Wednesday 22nd of November, students ventured down to the school field to participate in (arguably) the most challenging house event of the year: cross country. Excitement and tension lingered in the cool air as we piled our way onto the courts, ready to race. Despite the constant bitter wind cracking in our faces, team spirit and the competitive ethos were at an all-time high. It was only a matter of time before Ayscough, Hansard or Rawlinson would be crowned winners!

Challenged with running the demanding course as fast as possible, all athletes completed the event with extreme commitment and determination. Staff, Sixth Formers and fellow house peers' cheering and support rung loud throughout Caistor. First up to attack the

gruelling course were the Year 7s, where Thomas Pribul and Hermione Illingworth claimed victory in each of their races. Next up were the Year 8&9s, where two very closely battled races saw Olivia Hotchin and Alex Tuite cross the finish line first in each of their events. To finish, Year 10&11s took to the course with some excellent performances, resulting in wins for Mollie Grant and Elliot Smith.

And so... the results were in. It was announced that Hansard had taken the victory, with Rawlinson in 2nd place and Ayscough in 3rd. Many thanks to the PE Department for organising and well done to those involved!

Do we ever get bored of cross country? Never! Two days later, the top 8 competitors from each division in the house cross country travelled to Louth to compete in the Superzone

competition. While the House competition may have been for the tough, this was for the toughest. Howling winds and thick mud tried (and failed!) to slow us at every turn, and hills that "seemed to be bigger than Everest." (commented Yvie Bailey 10Z) certainly tested us all!

However, these conditions seem to be the optimum combination for our team as we came away with some great results! The results were as follows: year 7 girls 1st, year 7 boys 3rd, year 8&9 girls 1st, year 8&9 boys 1st, year 10&11 girls 1st and year 10&11 boys 2nd. Well done to everyone that took part, especially those who finished in the top 16 in their races to qualify for the next round in Stamford! Special mention to Mollie Grant, who won the year 10&11 girls race.

Superzone Success!

By Summer Swinden 9Z

The under 14 netball team have had a fantastic season leading to a County-level competition in Stamford. To qualify for this, our team (consisting of year 8 and 9 girls) had to place top 2 in the Local Superzone competition, which was held on the 17th of October. Out of 5 other schools CGS managed to place 2nd! Players' and manager's player were both awarded to Summer Swinden, who played centre.

The County competition was played on Saturday the 11th of November and coincidentally, this was Remembrance Day. All of the teams lined up in silence to pay their respects before any matches. Caistor won some, drew some, and lost some, overall placing 8th. To say the team had only previously played with each other once, reaching 8th was an excellent achievement in such a challenging competition. Players and managers player was awarded to Matilda Waterhouse who was playing goalkeeper (despite this not being her regular position she did a brilliant job).

Mrs Ellerby and Mrs Kelly both commented on how well the team had progressed. We cannot wait to see what this team will bring in the future!