



ALUMNI

LYMM HIGH SCHOOL

Play Your Part

Lymm High School is backing a community-led initiative to create a Performing Arts Centre in Lymm.

(See p. 4)

International Success

Another one of our former students has become a full Rugby international!

(See p. 20)



HEADTEACHER GWYN WILLIAMS

WELCOME

Dear Alumni,

Welcome to the latest issue of Lymm High's Alumni Newsletter. There have been lots of changes since the last issue of our newsletter, including our school shop moving online, our 3G Pitch being built (see p.12), and being recognised as a World Class School (see p.6).

We've also changed the structure of our Student Leadership Team and now have a Head of Student Leadership and two deputies. You can read about our new team on p.3.

We also have a new-look website, which you can find at www.alumni.lymmhigh.org.uk

Of course, the biggest changes we've had are those related to the COVID pandemic. It is extraordinary to look back over the last couple of years and reflect on all the challenges we've been presented with. It started with the surreal experience of having to shut the school with less than 48 hours notice, just as Year 11 and Year 13 were about to go on study leave: (quite rightly, students from that Year 11 have never forgiven me for breaking my promise to them that we'd have a Prom as soon as circumstances allowed – though, in my defence, at that time I'm not sure anyone expected this to last for the best part of 2 years!). We had to quickly establish a 'keyworker' school whilst also: providing

work for 1900 students at home; scrambling to put in place new safeguarding protocols; providing free school meals for those entitled to them; coming up with 'teacher-assessed grades' in lieu of exams; and all sorts of other things that we'd never done before. I am very proud of the staff for the fact we managed to move to delivering online lessons within just a few weeks of the start of the pandemic – and we are all used to Zoom and Teams now! Overall though, I think my lasting memory of the whole period will be the way in which our parents, students and staff pulled together to rise to all the challenges. I'd always known that the Lymm community was a special one, but never has that been more apparent than during the pandemic: we are all very lucky to be associated with the area.

I do hope you enjoy reading the newsletter. For various reasons, we haven't managed to get this going as regularly as we would have liked, but are more confident now that we've found a way of rectifying that. Please know that all alumni are always welcome to come back and visit at any time – I always enjoy taking ex-students and staff around the school and chatting to them about their memories of this great place.

Kind regards
Gwyn Williams
Headteacher

MEET THE NEW STUDENT LEADERSHIP TEAM

Head of Student Leadership

Emma Parkinson

“One of my main aims is to try and establish more links with the Lymm community and give back to those who have continually supported the school.

I also want to raise attainment, trying to provide more student-led support for academics.

I am a member of the Community Liason and the Life Programme team. Within these groups I hope to improve the school and ensure students feel supported and listened to.”



Deputy Head Students

Thomas Lea

“As Deputy Head of the Student Leadership Team I want to be able to make a tangible difference for my fellow students. In particular, I want students to feel comfortable accessing the wide range of pastoral support that is available to them during their time at school and give them a wider knowledge of the many opportunities Lymm High School offer.”



Jamelia Stewart

“By the end of my tenure I really hope to have left a mark on Lymm High School and the future development of all its students.

I can’t wait to see what is to come this year for not just the school but the students as well.”





PLAY YOUR PART

Plans for a new performing arts centre in Lymm, to serve all the local schools and the community, were launched this month.

The plans propose building a new purpose-built facility on the Lymm High School site equipped with a large performance space, drama, dance and music studios and practice rooms, and media facilities including a recording studio. The plans are based on a community-wide consultation in late 2021 which had over 200 responses, and on lots of discussions with existing groups about what they need.

The plans have been developed by the Lymm Performing Arts Working Group, whose members include senior officers and councillors from Warrington Borough Council, local MP Andy Carter, and representatives from local schools and from the Lymm Festival.

The centre will cost around £3 million to build and equip, and the Working Group is working with Warrington Borough Council to identify how the centre will be funded.

Kieran Walshe, a Lymm High governor, who has chaired the group, said: "Lymm has fantastic community performing arts but they are limited by woeful facilities. Many groups have to

go to Altrincham, Runcorn or further afield to find places to practice and perform. This new centre will enable the performing arts to flourish and expand with huge benefits for children, adults and the whole community. We've had fantastic support from everyone we have talked to about this project."

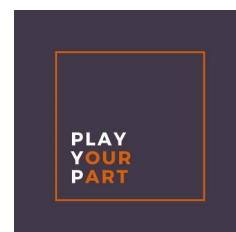
The full case for investment is on the Lymm Performing Arts [website here](#).

For more information, email info@lymmperformingarts.org.uk

Can you help?

Visit the website at www.lymmperformingarts.org.uk where you can:

- Find out more information
- Offer to help with fundraising, and
- Read our [Business Plan](#).





"EXPRESSING MYSELF
ON STAGE IS MY
FAVOURITE **PART**"

**PLAY
YOUR
PART**

*Help our campaign to open a new
community performing arts centre*

#PlayYourPartLymm

LYMM HIGH SCHOOL A WORLD CLASS SCHOOL



Three of the Sixth Form project team: Jack Powell, Evie France and Thomas Lea.

We always knew it, and now it's official!

Lymm High School was invited to apply for the World Class Schools Quality Mark (WCSQM) and we are extremely pleased to announce that it is one of just 12 secondary schools to have been successful in receiving the prestigious accreditation this year.

WCSQM is a UK charity that works to accredit the best non-selective state schools across the UK with the World Class quality mark accreditation.

Specifically, it is concerned with developing the skills, competencies and characteristics that young people need to thrive in an ever-changing global economy.

According to the charity, the starting point for applications is that schools "have a track record, data and evidence, internal and external, that indicates at their next Ofsted inspection they would be

deemed 'outstanding' by Ofsted".

However, a lot more than this is required for a successful bid. The arduous process involved a team of Year 12 students (ably assisted by Mr Hayes, Head of Halls and Ethos) spending weeks compiling a comprehensive report to demonstrate how Lymm High students are 'World Class'.

This involved looking at a wide range of areas, including things like: how highly literate students are scientifically and culturally; the extent to which students are excellent 'life-long' learners; leadership, including student leadership; preparation for higher education and future careers; and links with other countries and organisations.

The students also had to put together a video to illustrate how a typical week at Lymm High School facilitates the development of world-class learners.

Mr Hayes said: "The student team did an incredible job of leading the application process and are themselves a prime

example of why Lymm High School students are 'world class'."

Mr Williams said: "This is a significant achievement and we are all very proud of what it says about our school community. Particular thanks go to the students who did such a fantastic job of leading this bid."

'Being a WCSQM school will open up some great opportunities for both staff and students over the next few years.'

Having the accreditation gives the school access to the WCSQM framework that will help all students to develop and demonstrate world-class skills and characteristics across areas including learning, leadership, community and the workplace.

"The values of the organisation very much align with our own in terms of working to make sure that students leave us not just with excellent academic qualifications but also as well-rounded, socially responsible young people equipped with the knowledge and skills required to thrive in the modern world", said Mr Williams.





SUMMER CONCERT

Parents were treated to a spectacular showcase to celebrate the end of the academic year 2020–2021 when our young performers put on a summer concert of music and dance.

The annual event at Lymm High School gives students the chance to showcase their talent in playing instruments, singing and dancing in front of family and friends.

The 2019-2022 concert was sadly cancelled because of the Covid pandemic so it felt like a real treat to be seeing live performance again in the school grounds.

The audience of parents, siblings, staff and students were treated to the LHS String

ensemble performing 'Love Story' by Taylor Swift.

Directed by peripatetic tutor Mrs Leighton-Jones the Lower School String Group also performed.

The LHS Brass band, led by Mr Wyss, played 'The Entertainer' by Scott-Joplin as well as other pieces.

Year 12 dancers, Lottie and Ellie also impressed the audience with a 3-minute performance set to 'Libertango'.

Lymm High School's Head of Music, Mr Starkey said: "The talent of our students never ceases to amaze me, but it's also about hard work. These performers put in a great deal of effort and commitment over the weeks, months and years to get better and better".

"From relative beginners to accomplished musicians, it's very exciting to see talent developing and to see students' confidence grow the more they perform in public."

WINNING AT WORDS



Last year's Lymm Festival organisers asked local poets to share their thoughts on the theme of 'Freedom' and were delighted with the variety and quality of entries received.

There were two categories for entries: ages 11–15 and ages 16+. Lymm High School student Libby Dobson in Year 8 was the overall winner of the 11–15-year category with her poem 'On the ward'.

Joshua Calder (Year 8) and Esme Nevitt (Year 10) were runners up with their entries 'Freedom poem' and 'On the way'.

Miss Turner, our Head of English, represented the school on the judging panel (anonymously of course!) and was impressed with the high standards that were met by the students in both age categories.

"Their interpretations of 'Freedom' were truly inspired and demonstrated how mature and thoughtful some of the individuals are in both Lymm High School and the wider community. I thoroughly enjoyed judging the poems alongside the other panellists!", she said.

Well done to all the winners and the students who took part. Throughout the online Lymm Festival, the organisers' favourite poems were read daily by Sue Dodd and Fr. Michael Burgess.

'On the Ward'

Lily Dobson

Lifeless bodies lay in each bed,
Machines monotonously beeping next to each one.
Dozens of medical staff watching over them;
Checking vitals and charts, machines and medicine.

Small stacks of masks and gowns stood guarding
each door.

Reminding them why they were here;
Why they were fighting,
Who they were fighting for.

Every 3 or 4 hours people left,
And others entered.
Those leaving, escaping the fear and uncertainty
beyond the doors;
And being free from them for the next few hours.

Those entering, getting ready to help their patients
fight for their lives;
So they could get out of this place,
And to their families again.

Hoping they could do the same.

And be free from the wards...

SCHOLARS MAP OUT GRAVEYARD HISTORY



Students from the Scholar's programme have continued their excellent work from last year creating a catalogue of all graves in the graveyard at St Mary's Church, Lymm.

The project, which began as part of our Founders' Day celebrations last year will help people find the graves of relatives – including those dating from past centuries.

Many are very old; some inscriptions are very difficult to read and the location of some is also uncertain.

This makes it difficult for people looking for the graves of relatives – particularly old ones they might be seeking in researching family trees, etc.

Students worked with Reverend Beverley Jameson from St Mary's, to clearly identify and catalogue the graves in the graveyard.

The aim is to eventually present a catalogue to Reverend Beverley, including print-outs of locations together with names and dates of the deceased.

Leading the project was Associate Assistant Headteacher, Mrs McGahey who said: "It is a great example of our students contributing

positively to the local community. They have given up their own time and Lymm High School is very proud to have been able to help the local church in this way."

"This has been an invaluable service to the church helping the bereaved locate their loved ones", said Rev Beverley. "Such well-behaved, courteous and hard-working young people, I'm proud to be a Governor of Lymm High School".



1

JOIN OUR LOTTERY



2

BOOST SCHOOL FUNDS



3

WIN CASH PRIZES



It's As Easy As



- Tickets cost just £1 a week
- The easy way to help us raise funds
- Local cash prizes every week
- Chance to win the £25k jackpot

To start supporting, visit:

yourschoollottery.co.uk

and search for: **Lymm**

3G PITCH OPENED



(left-right) Gavin Laidlaw, Kirsty James, David Weir, Mr Williams, Kate Harrison and Julia Johnson.

Lymm High's FIFA-standard third generation (3G) pitch was officially opened in November 2020 by two professional footballers: ex-Everton and Scotland international David Weir and ex-student Ellie Fletcher (see p. 22).

The professional footballers were joined at the socially-distanced event by local football team representatives: Gavin Laidlaw from Lymm Rovers and Julia Johnson from Lymm Piranhas. Other invited attendees that also contributed towards the project included Kate Harrison from The Lane End Group, Kirsty James from

Lymm High PTA, and Liz Green, Chair of Governors.

The invited guests stood in the sunshine and watched Year 10 girls and boys play football on the pitch before the opening ceremony. Ellie Fletcher even had a kick around herself!

The Premier League, the FA and the Government's Football Foundation awarded Lymm High a grant of over £500,000 to help it install the full-sized, floodlit pitch. The school and its supporters raised over £100,000 with the 'Pitch In' initiative.

The state-of-the-art sports facility will be used by Lymm High students during the school day and the community of Lymm and its surrounding area during evenings and weekends.

The date of the opening was also significant as it marked three years to the day since Mr Hampton, Mr Hayes, Mr Chinae and Mr Mason took part in a sponsored climb of Mount Snowdon to help boost the 'Pitch In' fundraising. Other activities included summer fairs, PTA events, school Balls, whole-school Santa dashes and the annual Founders' Day activities. Students also held and organ-

ised a number of events in school, competing within their Halls to raise funds. There were also a number of dinners, raffles and prize draws, and Mr Williams thanked local businesses for all their support in donating items. Local contracting developers The Lane End Group were the initiative's major corporate sponsor.

At the opening ceremony, Mr Williams said: "Today is all about thanking those organisations, businesses and individuals that helped us reach our goal. Obviously, we are very grateful to the Premier League, the FA and the Government's Football Foundation for the grant, without which this wouldn't have been possible, but we could not have achieved this without the generous and continued support of parents and the wider Lymm community either. We always knew the bid was



(left-right) Mr Mason, David Weir, Ellie Fletcher and Mr Hampton.

a very strong one, built as it was on the strong reputation of our own PE department but also that of Lymm Rovers and Lymm Piranhas junior football clubs – both very well-run clubs with large numbers of boys and girls taking part on a regular basis. Lots of people in school have done lots of

work to make this happen but I particularly want to thank Patrick Hendrie and Helena Headon. It's still been a long, and sometimes difficult, process, but we are so pleased to be opening our 3G pitch at last and are incredibly grateful to everyone for their support."





REMEMBERING PAUL COOPER

A family fun run was held during the summer holiday at Lymm High School in memory of alumnus Paul Cooper. The event for the much-loved father-of-two raised over £61,000 for The Brain Tumour Charity. Paul Cooper was diagnosed with a glioblastoma multiforme (GBM) in 2019 and sadly passed away in January aged 47.

To remember him, more than 200 of his friends and family took part in the Coops' Barmy Army FUNdraiser at school, where Paul was a pupil in the 1980s and 1990s.

Runners dressed as superheroes and in Cooperman outfits to recognise his incredible strength during his battle.

The event involved an optional 1km, 5km or 10km run with medals for each runner and

prizes followed by a BBQ, bar and DJ with all money raised going to The Paul Cooper Fund in The Brain Tumour Charity.

Vicky Carr, Paul's sister, said: "We wanted to remember Paul and celebrate his life while trying to help others who suffer at the hands of this cruel disease." "It's incredible to have raised this amount. I hoped we could harness the love and support that so many people showed to Paul throughout his life into something positive following his death and this has really blown me away."

"I feel very emotional knowing how much people cared for Paul and the money raised can hopefully help others in the future suffering from GBM."

"Paul would have been incredibly touched and honoured that

so many people supported this event in his memory. He would have been absolutely over the moon."

"He would have loved the event too. He was incredibly sociable, loved running and dance music so it would have been right up his street!"

Paul grew up in Lymm, worked as an Associate Partner in the tax team at Ernst & Young and was married to Emma and has two daughters now aged four and seven.

He had many friends in Lymm and Warrington, many of whom rallied to help organise the event which was also supported by a number of local businesses including The Coffee House Lymm who donated cakes, Co-op Heatley Mere and Lymm who supplied the water

stations, and Fretus Group Ltd who provided First Aid support.

It meant every penny raised was able to go to The Paul Cooper Fund, set up in The Brain Tumour Charity, in July to help improve outcomes for people who suffer from GBM.

Vicky explained: "Only between one and three per cent of the Government's national cancer spend has gone towards brain tumours despite them being the biggest cancer killer of children and adults under 40."

"Only 25 per cent of GBM sufferers survive more than one year and only five per cent of GBM sufferers survive more than five years and there's been no meaningful advances in treatment for over 40 years."



Paul with his sister Vicky.

"More has to be done and 100 per cent of monies raised by The Paul Cooper Fund will fund vital research into GBM and hopefully improve the out-

If you'd like to show your support, you can visit [The Paul Cooper Fund webpage](#).

comes for GBM sufferers."

"We're looking to fundraise throughout the year and this can be done by anyone – whether it's washing cars, climbing Mount Everest or simply making a donation – every penny makes a difference."



If you have any suggestions for *A day in the life* column or *Where are they now?* stories, please get in touch with [Alumni](#) @lymmhigh.org.uk.

This is your newsletter and we'd love to hear your suggestions.



JOHN BERRY

We sadly lost a much-loved colleague and friend in May 2021. John Berry was our site supervisor. He passed away after suffering a sudden heart attack.

John worked at the school for well over 10 years and was a hugely significant figure within our school community. His warmth, good humour, kindness and capacity for hard work made him very popular with colleagues.

Nothing was ever too much trouble for John when it came to supporting others and he was the kind of person who nobody ever had a bad word to say about. Put simply, he was a thoroughly decent man and he will be sorely missed.

The school has also introduced the 'John Berry Award for Exceptional Service' in John's honour. The inaugural winner at the last Awards Evening in September was Sixth Form Student Support Advisor, Jan Littler.

RAY KELLY

At the end of April 2022, we lost a valued member of our teaching staff. Ray Kelly was a kind, quiet and decent man who had committed over 20 years to the Performing Arts faculty at the school. He played a vitally important role within the music department in particular, directing the big band, arranging music for various ensembles and supporting hundreds of individual students over the years as an instrumental teacher, music technician and an accompanist. In recent years, his exceptional musical talent was showcased in the school productions, particularly *Les Misérables* and *West Side Story*, events which could not have taken place without Ray's skills and expertise. Outside of school, Ray was well known within the Lymm community and beyond for his wonderful piano playing and his passion for live performances; he was a quintessential jazz musician. Many of you will be as shocked as we are and, of course, all our thoughts and best wishes are with his family at this time



CHRIS JOHNSON

We were extremely sad to hear of the passing of Chris Johnson, past Head of History at Lymm High School and Head of Arley Hall. The family would love to hear from any ex-staff members and pupils. You can add your memories of Chris by [clicking here](#).



PRETTY OARSOME



Former Lymm High School student Lucy Glover fulfilled her Olympic dream by joining the GB Rowing Team in Tokyo last year.

Lucy was in the stroke seat of the Women's Quad Scull. The first race took place on the 23rd July 2021.

The 22-year-old was introduced to rowing through a Project Oarsome partnership between Lymm High School and Warrington Rowing Club. She won a silver medal for GB in the European Rowing Championships last summer, and has gold and silver medals in the World Championships at U18 and U23 levels.

Currently, Lucy is based at Edinburgh University where she is studying for a Psychology degree.

"My dream of competing at the Olympic games has been within me ever since I was lucky enough to be introduced to the sport of rowing through Warrington rowing club's strong links with our School", said Lucy.

Staff and students joined together to wish Lucy all the best before she left for Tokyo. Unfortunately, Lucy and her squad finished fourth in the repechage to miss out on a place in the medal race.



Good luck Lucy from Lymm High School!

LYMM HIGH SCHOOL

PROM 2021

a night to remember

LHS students celebrate end of school with prom.

We said goodbye to some of our Year 11 Lymm High students at the end of their high school journey last July. They celebrated in style with a fabulous prom night held at The Courthouse in Knutsford.

Each year the majority of students choose to stay on and continue their studies in the Sixth Form. For those who choose to move on to new pastures, it was the final time they all came together before parting separate ways into further education or into the working world.

Photographer Andrew Collier was at the event to capture the special moments.

Miss Taylor, Assistant Headteacher said: "The sun shone brightly and students fully deserved their red-carpet treatment. They all looked amazing and we could not have been prouder of the wonderful young people they have become."





INTERNATIONAL SUCCESS



Alumnus Alex Mitchell scores for England on senior debut.

Last Autumn, Alex Mitchell, former Lymm High School student (2008–2015), became the second full Rugby international that Lymm High School has produced.

Following on from former

student David Strettle (1994–2001) who gained 14 caps on the international stage, Alex was selected as a ‘finisher’ for the Autumn Internationals against Tonga after he represented England versus the Barbarians in 2019. Having

represented his country at every age group from under 16s to under 20s, this was his first full cap for the Red Rose.

Coming on for his debut in the second half, we thought Alex crossed the white wash for his



*Playing for Lymm High in the 1st XV after winning the Cheshire 7s.
Alex can be seen third from left on the back row.*

first try but this was pulled back by the Television Match Official (TMO) for an offside. The disappointment was not to last when Alex rounded off the scoring with the 11th and final try for Eddie Jones' side as they swept aside the Pacific Islanders 69–3.

Alex began his rugby career at Lymm Rugby club before joining Lymm High School and was taken under Mr Atherton's wing in Year 7. He flourished for 2 years playing in a centre position alongside former students Mark Dixon and Luke Richards. Together, they formed the 'smallest' 10, 12, 13 partnership the school has ever seen; making pace, skill and vision the winner for that back line. It wasn't until Year 9 when Mr

Pickles moved Alex to 9 and Luke to 15 and loaded the midfield with 'bigger' boys, that Alex started to play scrum half.



With his brother James Mitchell doing well at age-grade international level and Sale Sharks Academy, Alex knew he had to perform to live up to the standards his brother was setting.

Alex signed professionally with

Northampton Saints when he left Lymm High School at the end of his studies.

The scrum half helped the school get to the quarter finals of the U15s Daily Mail cup and then for the 1st XV getting to two more quarter finals losing to Stowe, Dulwich and Oundle, where the Curry twins were in the back row.

They are now both plying their trade at Sale Sharks, Tom Curry being one of the best back rows in the world getting to a world cup final in 2019 and representing

the British Lions in South Africa in 2020.

Alex toured South Africa with the school in 2013 when he was Year 11, giving him some experience of playing in the southern hemisphere.

It is a fantastic achievement for Alex and the school, it just shows that you can change your position and as long as you keep trying and commit yourself to the game, you are able to achieve at the highest level.

You can discover more about Lymm High's Notable Alumni on our website by [clicking here](#).



COVER GIRL

Ellie Fletcher has had caps for England at U19 and U21 and played for Liverpool, Sheffield United and Blackburn Rovers.

Ellie left Lymm High in 2017, but was back to school to open our 3G Pitch (see p. 12).

She started her footballing career at Manchester United's Centre of Excellence. She then moved across to Liverpool in 2016, making five first-team appearances for the Women's Super League side.

Ellie made her Blackburn Rovers debut in a Women's FA Cup Fourth Round tie against her former club Liverpool.

On her debut appearance for Blackburn Rovers in September

2020 she appeared on the front cover of the Blackburn Rovers match day programme.

Ellie is now back in Liverpool playing Right Back for Liverpool Feds WFC.



LANCASHIRE

CRICKET COACH OF THE YEAR



Lymm High English teacher Luke Skilbeck has been named as Lancashire's Young Cricket Coach of the Year.

When not teaching, Mr Skilbeck, once of Ben Stokes' former club, Cockermouth in Cumbria, coaches juniors at Alder CC in West Derby and works with Academy North. He was nominated behind his

back for the honour by Wavertree mainstay Phill O'Brien. On receiving the title Mr Skilbeck said:

"Generally, cricket in Liverpool is just so healthy at the moment. It's just so positive – that's down to all the clubs, and a lot of volunteers, but it was nice to get an award and that recognition as well."

You can read a full article regarding Mr Skilbeck's recent achievement in the *Liverpool Echo* by [clicking here](#).

[Click here](#) to visit our dedicated Alumni website for more information, news and events.