



ALUMNI

LYMM HIGH SCHOOL

Oughtrington Hall

We take a look back at this iconic building's use during World War I (See p. 6).





WELCOME

Dear Alumni,

The winter term is always busy and there has been lots happening since our last newsletter in the autumn. As well as being the busiest time of the school year, we also had an Ofsted inspection in the run up to Christmas. Thankfully, staff and students rose to the challenge and we were pleased with the outcome (page 3).

We always mark Remembrance Day with a 2-minute silence and our musicians play the *Last Post*. Students are informed about the significance of this day during Form Time and in assemblies. This year, we were also proud to display a magnificent field of poppies (see page 5). Oughtrington Hall's contribution to the war effort is outlined on pages 6 and 7.

Beauty & the Beast was a particular high-

light of the winter term. This latest school production received rapturous reviews. We've included some photos on page 16.

We've also celebrated Chinese New Year and students have taken part in a range of special themed activities (see page 20).

We always like hearing from our past students, and were thrilled to hear Reverend Roberts' memories of Lymm Grammar School (page 18). 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

OFSTED REPORT

A team of Ofsted inspectors visited Lymm High just before Christmas. We have now received the final report and are excited to be able to share it with you.

The format and language of Ofsted reports these days might tend to be rather dry and formulaic, but make no mistake: this is an absolutely excellent report and all of us – students, staff, governors, parents and carers – can be very proud of it. We shan't repeat everything it says because you can read it for yourself [here](#), but we are especially pleased that it recognises how wonderful Lymm High School students are. For example, it describes them as 'exceptionally polite and

respectful' and says that they 'behave exceptionally well across school'. The report also makes clear that students in both the main school and Sixth Form achieve 'exceptionally well' academically, as well as how appreciative they are of the high quality of pastoral care and extra-curricular opportunities available to them.

Before we go any further, the grading probably needs a little explanation. This was an 'ungraded' inspection, which

means it was impossible for our existing grade of 'good' to be changed at this point – frustratingly, that is just how the current Ofsted framework works. However, crucially, you will see that the report also makes reference to the school being judged outstanding if a graded inspection were to take place. What this essentially means is that this team of inspectors felt the quality of education is now outstanding, so another inspection will take place fairly soon and this will be



a graded inspection (i.e. one where the grade can be changed). Our next inspection will now be within a year or two, as opposed to the 4–5 years that would apply to other ‘good’ schools. This particular outcome is highly unusual and is a great cause for celebration.

You may well have read some of the many stories in the press recently about how so many excellent schools are being downgraded under the current, extremely tough, Ofsted framework. It is really very rare at the moment to see schools moving ‘up’, which makes the conclusions of this Ofsted team even more encouraging.

One other thing that could cause confusion is the way the report talks about ‘pupils and students’. This is merely the standard Ofsted format, with ‘pupils’ referring to those in the main school and ‘students’ meaning Sixth Formers. As you

“It is lovely to have such an important independent organisation verifying the tremendous progress the school has made in recent years.”

can see, all the many positives highlighted by inspectors refer to the Sixth Form just as much as the main school.

The requirements of Ofsted have never driven what we do, and never will. Nonetheless, it is lovely to have such an important independent organisation verifying the tremendous progress the school has made in recent years. The report touches upon many different areas of school life and is very positive about all of them, which just underlines the fact that there

has been a lot of hard work by a lot of people over a long period of time.

We are sure you will understand that we would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge publicly the extraordinary commitment and moral purpose of governors and staff right across the school; we certainly couldn’t ask for more from them and are delighted that their work has been recognised in this way.

The report doesn’t actually contain any areas for improvement at all (again, this is highly unusual). However, rest assured that there is no question of us taking that to mean we are perfect. We remain as ambitious as ever and will continue working as hard as we can. There are plenty of different areas that we still want to improve to make sure that all our young people get the very best possible deal from us.





FIELD OF POPPIES

Any visitors to Lymm High School at the end of last year can't have failed to notice the striking display of poppies outside Reception.

The Visual Arts & Technology department created a stunning field of poppies for this year's Remembrance Day.

Forms of all year groups assisted in donating hundreds of old plastic drink bottles to be upcycled into poppies for the display. The DT and Art Ambassadors gave up time during their lunchbreaks to spray and paint the bottle bottoms in order to transform them into poppy heads.

The display was a huge success, only possible due to the huge number of plastic bottles donated by form groups and the help offered to the Art & DT technician with the construction of the poppies themselves.

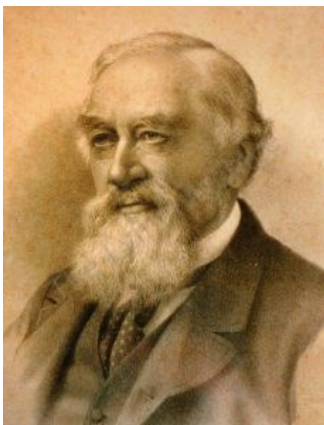


OUGHTRINGTON HALL



The original Oughtrington Hall sits in the middle of Lymm High School. It was rebuilt from a manor house in 1810 by George Trafford whose family owned the estate from the 15th century.

In 1862, Oughtrington Hall was bought by George Charnley Dewhurst a cotton manufacturer from Manchester. He made the Hall slightly larger and built St Peters Church across the road. This is where Lymm High has its annual Christmas Services.



When war broke out in 1914, Henry Ford (founder of the Ford Motor Company) wanted to help the war effort by opening a hospital for wounded soldiers. However, he was advised that this

was not allowed given the USA's neutrality in the war. Therefore, at the suggestion of his wife Clara they came up with a plan to create a settlement for Belgian refugees. Over 250,000 Belgian refugees had fled their country in the face of the German onslaught in the second half of 1914.

Oughtrington Hall had been bought 3 years earlier in 1911 by Sir William Lever, but was now lying empty. Percival Perry, a Lymm resident, who was chairman of the Ford Motor Company Limited and a family friend of Henry Ford, had relayed the plight of the Belgian refugees. He wrote to Clara Ford suggesting that he could negotiate a short-term lease on the building. With their authority, Perry leased Oughtrington Hall to accommodate

ninety men, women and children. Sir William Lever would take rent on the building from Henry Ford but would then re-donate it to the Belgian refugee fund.

Work quickly went ahead preparing Oughtrington Hall to receive the Belgian refugees. This colony was funded entirely by Henry Ford.

The Belgian community that lived in the Hall created their own chapel, Laundry, and sewing and repair workshops. They even had their own farm, including a Piggery and Stables. The ground surrounding the hall was used for part of the farm, which is now the school fields.

This is a school room for the children that were living there.



This was the sewing room.



More photos of Oughtrington Hall during this period can be found at the [Lymm Archive](#) and the [Henry Ford archive](#).



COULD YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO LYMM HIGH?

I'm getting in touch as a fellow 'old student', although one who left our school much less recently than you!, writes Rebecca Knowles.



As Vice Chair of Governors I still greatly enjoy being part of the life of Lymm High School (LHS). One of the missing groups that the governors would love to see represented on the Board is younger people; we want to ensure that we are capturing a genuinely broad and inclusive perspective of the community LHS serves.

I began my own journey as a school governor in another Warrington school in my twenties. I was interested in finding out more about the world of education, and in finding a way to put something back into my local community. It's been a great way to learn about governance, which is rele-

vant to so many areas of work and life, and has provided lots of opportunities to develop transferable skills that have stood me in good stead in other arenas.

It's a voluntary role to which you can bring your professionalism and know you're making a difference.

"We want to ensure that we are capturing a genuinely broad and inclusive perspective of the community LHS serves."

If you think you'd be interested in being co-opted as a community governor, please get in touch. You'll need to be open minded,

willing to learn and contribute, and available half termly to attend a full governing body meeting and another additional committee meeting focussing on one of the following: staff and student wellbeing, curriculum and standards, finance and audit, or buildings and facilities. Many employers will allow paid time off for social responsibilities of this sort.

To explore this role further, please don't hesitate to get in touch with Mrs Helena Headon, Clerk to the Governing Body (hheadon@lymmhigh.org.uk), to arrange an initial discussion and some advice on next steps. We look forward to hearing from you.



PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE LATEST

As reported in our last Alumni Newsletter, funding for the proposed Lymm Performing Arts Centre formed part of Warrington South's £3.4 million Levelling Up bid to central government. We were disappointed to learn last month that this bid was unsuccessful. Warrington South sadly did not secure any funding.

A third round of Levelling Up is yet to be announced. In the meantime, the Lymm Performing Arts Working Group will meet to discuss future options.

For further information on this project, visit the website at www.lymmperformingarts.org.uk, where you can read our [Business Plan](#).



CHALLENGING STEREOTYPES



On Tuesday 8th November, Year 9 students took part in our 'Challenging Stereotypes in Careers' activity.

We were joined in school by guests from a variety of industries who talked to the students about their career. The Year 9 students asked questions about their professions, but were not allowed to ask outright what our guests do for a living.

After they had heard from a guest about what subjects, skills and qualifications are required for their roles, each class discussed what they thought their jobs might be.

At the end of the presentation, each guest revealed their profession to the students, there were quite a few surprises!

Our guests included: a female structural engineer; a female army officer; a female airline pilot; and a female in the construction industry.

Our Year 9 students have been given a fantastic insight into these careers through this activity and we expect that some career stereotypes have been dispelled!



LYMM REGENERATION PROJECT WINNERS

Students across all Year groups were invited to present ideas to regenerate areas of Lymm, including the Sunken Garden, the Cross and Lymm Dam.

This exciting opportunity came to light through a collaboration with Steve Towndrow from Lymm Parish Council. Students were asked to submit their ideas in a range of formats including models, Power-Point presentations, computer-aided design and written work.

The number, and quality, of entries received surprised the Parish Council judges.

Entries were received from across all Year groups, including 7, 8, 9 and 13.

“This was a wonderful opportunity to develop skills whilst also having an impact on our local community, which could create a

real legacy”, said Mr Hayes.

The overall Lymm High winner, Jess Midgley, was awarded with a £50 Amazon voucher from school.

“The effort that Jess had gone to in her submission was phenomenal”, said Mr Hayes. Not only had she conducted site visits, she had considered a range of

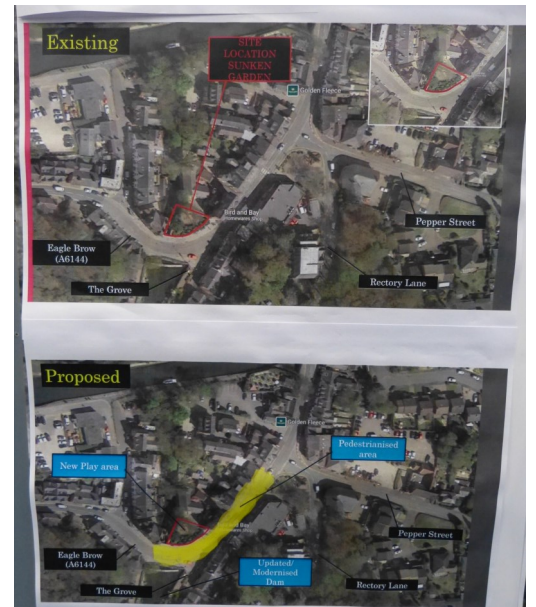
stakeholders and materials used within her design. Jess's Geography teacher Mr Iddon was delighted that she had managed to apply theoretical concepts to a real-life scenario.

Lymm Parish Council selected Seb Cowley as their winner at an Awards Ceremony held at Lymm Heritage Centre.



Jess being awarded her prize by Steve Towndrow and Mr Skilbeck.

Year 13 Danny Cornwall secured third place with his 3D design for the Sunken Garden.



VISITING ARTISTS

The Visual Arts & Technology faculty run a 'Visiting artists' programme in which they aim to have at least one visiting creative in school once a term to host either a talk or creative workshop. These experiences allow students to discover new techniques as well as inform them on possible future career paths.

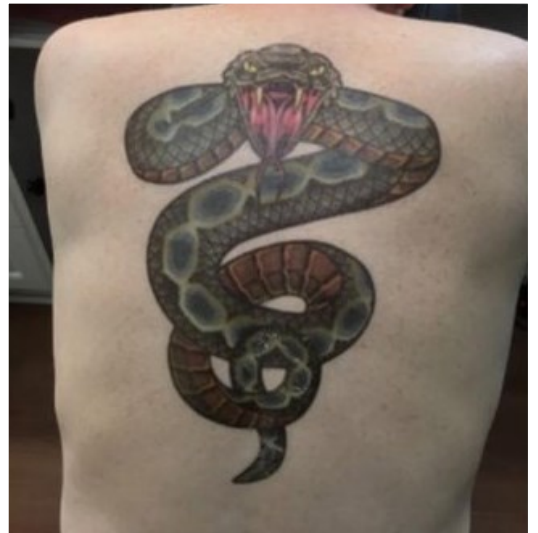
On Tuesday 29th November, the faculty welcomed Jo Adams into school to host a talk and a live hair and make-up demonstration to a group of students. The talk was open to students in all year groups that may be interested in a career in art

and design or simply just curious about what a career in hair, make-up and set design entails. Jo has worked on a huge number of exciting productions ranging from hair and make-up design for a Nikki Minaj music video to the most recent *James Bond* film. It was fascinating to hear about her experiences on set and the amazing locations her career has taken her so far. Jo spoke a lot about how valuable art and design skills are and how transferable these can be in any chosen career path, which students found very inspirational.





If any Alumni are interested in giving creative talks to our students, please contact Miss Simms on ksimms@lymmhigh.org.uk.





REMEMBERING FALLEN SOLDIERS

Last year, students at St Wilfrid's Primary School in Grappenhall ran a project to research the life and times of a fallen WW1 soldier that attended their school.

The team of students, led by Mr Chris Bent, a local historian, decided to enter a schools' competition, which was organised by the Western Front Association. "To everyone's delight, we were announced as joint winners", writes Mr Bent. They were awarded a prize of £500 last month and are going to spend it on a permanent memorial at the primary school for the fallen soldier, Thomas Fairhurst. His story will now be embedded into the school curriculum. In addition to the prize money, six students and Mr Bent were invited to the parade at the Cenotaph in London on Friday 11th November.

A ballot was used to draw out the lucky six students, who are all now in Year 7 at Lymm High School. The lucky students were:

- Delilah Wilson
- George Roberts
- William Anderson
- Edward Nicholls
- Sophia Bernstein
- Daisy Thomas



On Remembrance Day, the group met the Marshal for the event at 10am by the Cenotaph. They were then informed of what they needed to do during the parade, including the laying of a wreath, and performed a very brief rehearsal.

Mr Bent was fulsome in his praise of the students: "Yesterday was a truly remarkable experience, one that none of us will ever forget. I was so incredibly proud of the children who demonstrated how much remembering our fallen matters to them. They were so respectful throughout the day, a real credit to our school."

Later in the day they were delighted to see themselves on the BBC 6 o'clock news. "Daisy and George were our wreath layers and their faces shown on the News show such solemnity and understanding. Quite remarkable."

They then enjoyed a special invitation from Major Robbie Wilmont of the Irish Guards to Wellington Barracks, which is not open to the general public. This is the home to all the Guards Regiments and the base for when they perform their public duties. A



highlight here was stroking the horse that led the procession at the Queen's funeral.

The final element of the day was a brilliant tour of Parliament, which was thanks to an invite received from Andy Carter's Parliamentary Assistant James Parker.

"It was a truly stunning day. I have no doubt all this will have enriched the children's studies", said Mr Bent. "What an experience, one they and their families who came to down to London will remember forever."

BEAUTY

& THE

BEAST

When the school production gets a standing ovation on its first showing, you know it's going to be a good week!

Beauty & the Beast was rapturously received! The production played from 22–25th November and involved a cast and crew of over 100 students and 14 musicians. The comments on our social media sites were a joy to read:

"It was absolutely brilliant. You did your school proud."

"Just been to tonight's show and WOW! It was AMAZING. So many wonderfully talented children. It was easily London show-standard."

"I actually cried!"

"Congratulations to everyone involved."

"The music was outstanding."

Well done to everyone involved in this outstanding production.

To view the full programme, [click here](#).





Thank you to Year 13 Charlie Tomlinson for the excellent photography.



In the first of a series of articles focussing on past students, Reverend Maurice Roberts BA, BD writes about his fond memories of Lymm Grammar School.

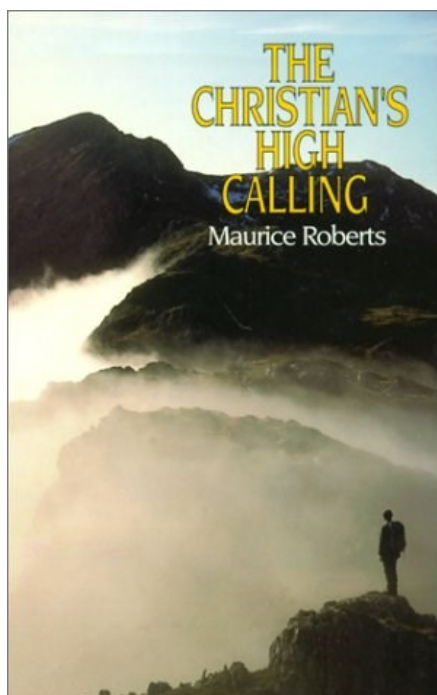


I count it a great privilege to be invited to give a brief account of my life and work after I left Lymm Grammar School. I had there a happy and profitable education. I took an active part in those days in the cricket and football teams.

After leaving Lymm I entered Durham University to study Latin and Greek with a view to becoming a teacher.

While there I was influenced by a fellow student who led me to become a serious Christian. I taught for a few years in an English Grammar School. I taught Latin; and also the Christian faith in a Religious Education Class. A number of the boys and girls took a serious interest in the Bible as I explained it to them.

In 1965 I married Sandra from the Island of Lewis in North West Scotland. We lived for a time in the Edinburgh area where we both worked as teachers. After a few years I trained in Edinburgh to become a minister in a conservative Scottish church. So I now left teaching and became a minister in a Scottish church.



My first congregation was in Ayr, South West Scotland, where we had a happy few years. I preached abroad as well as in the UK. I had the privilege of being editor at the time of the *Banner of Truth* religious magazine.

Sandra and I travelled abroad a good deal at this time of life. We were privileged to make many friends abroad in places where I was invited to preach. America, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand were among the countries we travelled to. One of the many lovely places we were invited to was Honolulu in the Hawaiian islands.

We had in these years the happy experience of meeting lovely Christians from Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and other far-off places. We have had the pleasure of keeping up happy friendships over the years to this day.

When it came to retirement we moved to live in Inverness, in North East Scotland.

Over the years it was my privilege to be invited to write articles on various religious subjects. I have done about ten small books which explain the Christian faith for those who seek to live wisely and to bring up their children to be obedient and God-fearing.

My wife and I had one child named Mary. She is now happily married to a very good husband and they have three children. They too live in the town of Stornoway in Western Scotland.

I am now over 80 and so I do not preach as often as before. But I am blessed to hear the good preaching of other ministers who explain the doctrines of the Bible in clear and faithful exposition.

Now that we are elderly my wife and I have a longing and a prayerful concern for the good of our beloved nation of Britain.

We believe that our forefathers taught their children to read the Bible as God's Holy Word so that our beloved nation would receive blessing from God. I believe that God blessed our nation in time past because the Bible was honoured and taken seriously both in church and at home and in the schools.

The great rule in life, I am convinced, is to seek first to honour and obey God as He teaches us in the Bible.

I have happy thoughts of Lymm Grammar School, as it was called in my day. May I, as an old preacher, lovingly wish you all God's gracious blessing as a school which I think of still after so many years.

Here is the golden rule of a wise and happy life:

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness."

Yours sincerely
Rev. Maurice Roberts



CHINESE NEW YEAR

Happy Lunar New Year !



Students have been enjoying a wealth of activities to celebrate Chinese New Year, which took place from Sunday 22nd January to Sunday 5th February.

This year it is the year of the rabbit. To mark this most auspicious of events in the Chinese calendar, students have been taking part in lantern making, Chinese calligraphy and paper folding workshops held by The Manchester Chinese Centre. We have also had a special

Chinese-themed lunch menu, and spring roll making and Dragon Dance workshops.

During the week leading up to Chinese New Year, Casey Sam and Natalie Wong in Year 7 shared their experiences of how they celebrate



恭喜发财 新年快乐



Chinese New Year with their families with the rest of the school in assembly.

Students of all years got involved at lunchtimes to help make as many handmade Chinese lanterns as possible. These were used to decorate the atrium. Miss Simms and Mrs Tasker were really pleased with how well the lanterns turned out and how many the students produced in the limited time available. "The decoration of the atrium space would not look as fantastic as it does without the students' efforts", said Miss Simms.

The Performing Arts department organised for all Year 7 students to participate in a Chinese Dragon Dance workshop on Thursday 2nd February and Thursday 9th February. The Dragon Dance is one of the most anticipated events of the traditional Lunar New Year

celebrations. It is performed on auspicious occasions and wards off evil spirits and welcomes good fortune. Dragons are legendary animals, but they are important to Chinese people who think of dragons as helpful, friendly creatures. They are linked to good luck, long life and wisdom. The Dragon Dance workshop is a fantastic opportunity for students to celebrate the Chinese New Year, whilst learning about Chinese culture and traditions, and will support the students with performance skills that are introduced through Year 7 drama and dance curriculum.

It was a really enjoyable and fun few weeks in school celebrating Chinese New Year and we would like to wish all of our Chinese families in Lymm High School and in the local community KUNG HEI FAT CHOI!



We understand that times are
tough, so we're extremely
grateful for your support

YOUR SUPPORT COUNTS

We're facing financial challenges too
If you can, please help our fundraising

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a week

WIN
up to
£25k



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