



THE GRIFFIN

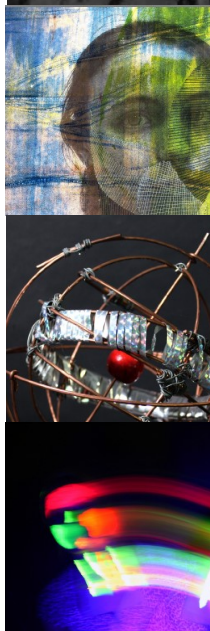
ISSUE 6: JULY 2021

MESalumni@maidenerleghtrust.org

Wow! What an academic year this has been... Coming from Blackpool, it would seem appropriate to refer to the roller coaster ride that has been 2020 – 2021. It seems so long ago that I was writing to parents about plans for September 2020 and welcoming the students back following the first lockdown. However, out of all the darkness this year has brought there have been some exceptional highlights. We have zoomed, loomed and used many other platforms to ensure our students get the best education possible. The compassion, support, friendships and determination our young people have shown is to be commended. This year has been full of some incredible highlights. We have managed to hold virtual open evenings, virtual careers days and STEAM days. Our Foundation students took part in the ultimate school trip where they were able to experience the sites and cultures of Japan, Italy and Iceland, and our Year 10 students took part in an online Shakespeare's Globe workshop. Many incredible things have been going on behind the scenes for the whole academic year, despite all the challenges schools have faced, and I couldn't be any prouder that we are all part of #TeamMaidenErlegh.

Mr Paul Gibson — Headteacher

Art Department



Our incredibly curated Peacock Gallery hosts varied exhibitions of work by local and nationally known artists and is usually open to the public. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19 restrictions, it has been unable to showcase any of the amazing artwork that our students and the local community have created. In one of the many positive outcomes of the current pandemic, we have great pleasure in sharing the new Art Department [website](#), which has enabled us to provide a virtual tour of the A-Level Art and Photography Exhibition, as well as a gallery of selected work from students in Key Stages 3, 4 and 5 and a video of the Art Open Evening, 2020. We hope to be able to open the Peacock Gallery again, but in the meantime, please visit the website and enjoy the work our students have created in what can only be described as exceptional circumstances.



The Covid-19 pandemic may have caused delays to our timelines, but not to our enthusiasm, and work has continued behind the scenes with our many exciting projects. Maiden Erlegh Trust currently has two new free schools approved and in the pre-opening stage – River Academy and Oak Tree School.

River Academy will be a new 1,500-place 11-19 secondary school located in the heart of Reading. It is scheduled to open in September 2023. Maiden Erlegh River Academy will be a high quality, inclusive school for students of all abilities and aspirations, and from all backgrounds. Through the school's rich and broad curriculum, we will provide opportunities to study a range of GCSE and vocational courses. The school will not only equip students with skills and qualifications that will enable them to access high quality post-16 study or apprenticeships, but will also prepare them for a range of career opportunities both locally and further afield. Finally, it will also increase parental choice in north Reading and address the current shortfall in secondary places within the borough.

Oak Tree School will be a new all-through special school providing 150 places for children with complex needs, including SEMH and ASD and is scheduled to open in September 2022.

The Trust is also relocating **Hamilton School** from its current site on Christchurch Road to a part-new, part-refurbished building on Hamilton Road – adjacent to Maiden Erlegh in Reading. Work started on the site in October 2020, slightly delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The school is currently due to relocate in April 2022 giving the school modern facilities, a beautiful expanse of outdoor space and will facilitate additional students than we are currently able to support due to the limited space. It is based on the refurbishment of the now-closed Hamilton Road Children's centre and incorporates a brand new hall, canteen and kitchen which is being built alongside the older building, and benefits from a state of the art design.



@MaidenErleghTru

@OakTreeSchool1

@RiverAcReading



BERKSHIRE TEACHING SCHOOL ALLIANCE

[Berkshire Teaching School Alliance](#) work in partnership with Wokingham Borough Council and Wokingham Federation, to support Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) over the course of their first teaching year to become fully endorsed qualified teachers. The 2019–2020 cohort of trainee teachers completed their training in unique circumstances this year. This cohort have demonstrated flexibility and resilience in the unique circumstances caused by the Covid-19 outbreak. They have skills and experience that will be invaluable to schools as they have become newly qualified teachers (NQTs). Our NQT programme supports NQTs by providing tailored support and professional development to each individual. Current NQT **Elysia** is enjoying the programme and said:-

“I am absolutely loving my first term at Maiden Erlegh School as an NQT. It’s been a very unusual first term, but busy none the less (I’m not quite sure where the last few months have gone!).

My fellow NQT colleagues and I have all been assigned a tutor group, which has been a great way to build a pastoral rapport with students. We have had half-termly observations and meetings with our mentors, and received constructive feedback each time, as well as receiving lots of guidance from departments. Despite it not being ideal, the opportunity to teach online lessons has also been a great learning experience.

We have also engaged in a variety of NQT conferences, some within the Maiden Erlegh Trust, and others extended to the Wokingham Borough. These conferences have covered behaviour management, supporting SEND, teaching & learning, and the use of data. Whilst it has been a shame that we have not been able to meet up with other NQT’s in person, it has still been great to share experiences and pick up tips for the year ahead. Thank you to the members of staff within the school and Trust who have delivered these sessions, we’re all looking forward to the conferences in the new year.



MAIDEN ERLEGH
INSTITUTE

***The Maiden Erlegh Institute will replace Berkshire Teaching School Alliance from September 2021.**



Maiden Erlegh School Student Senior Team

Mrs Garner, Co-Head of Year 12 and Mr Gibson interviewed some wonderful students and had a very difficult decision to make to set up the Student Senior Team for 2021–2022. After much deliberation, we are delighted to confirm the Student Senior Team are:-

Student Leader – Zoe G

Student Leader – Rhys W

Deputy Student Leader (student council) – Joseph H

Deputy Student Leader (house captains) – Ben A-B

Deputy Student Leader (student council) – LM

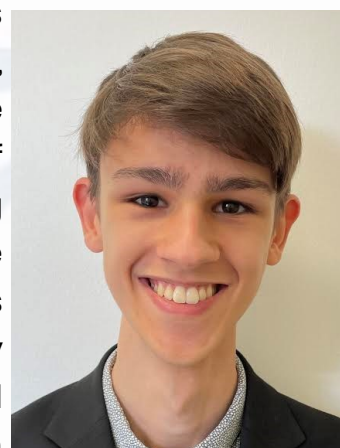
Zoe G



I am thrilled and honoured to be on the Senior Team and have the position of Student Leader. We are a passionate and hardworking group who want to bring a positive change to the school and help our community bounce back after the pandemic. The Senior Team and I aim to be approachable, friendly faces to all year groups who have ideas to implement to the school. We want to highlight the unity there is in diversity and celebrating all people from all backgrounds. We intend to implement initiatives to help both the student body within #teammaidenerlegh and the wider community of Reading. I am so excited to see what this year entails!

Rhys W

I am honoured and excited to be appointed as Student Leader and I am looking forward to working alongside our amazing Senior Team. Our goals for this term can be summarised in three key groups: Welfare, Post-MES, and Community. These three areas we believe are paramount to the student body especially after the woes of COVID-19 and grow back stronger as a school after jumping back and forth between physical and online learning. We hope to re-unite the student body through various house events building on the re-launch two years ago, celebrate the diversity within the school community and equip the students with useful skills once leaving MES. With all of this, we aim to foster an open and transparent relationship between the Senior Team, staff and students with all being able to approach us with ideas on how we can better the school.





Alumni Profile

Bleu Irvin (2018)

My fondest memories from Maiden Erlegh are with Drama and English Literature, which I studied both at GCSE and A-Level. I had always been interested in art and storytelling, and theatre gave me the freedom to express my creativity and develop my confidence and collaborative skills. I was similarly able to further my narrative skills in my literature studies, understanding how stories have the power to influence and educate.



In Sixth Form, I realised that my interests no longer lay on stage or in front of the camera, but behind them. I wanted to write and direct compelling stories and translate them visually, so I applied to study film production at various universities in 2018. I had never studied film or media before, but I eventually ended up at the University of Gloucestershire with an unconditional offer.



Throughout my time at university, I have written a number of films, including experimental films, dramas and horror films. Despite my love of writing and directing, I found myself more and more drawn to production design, creating the various sets and props we see in our favourite movies.

I spent the first two years of my degree learning about the art of production design and teaching myself the basics of visual strategies and construction, whilst also learning how to produce a film from start to finish. I was also able to get work experience in scenic design in theatres and even design immersive escape rooms for the public.

In my final year, I was the production designer, assistant director and co-writer for 'Quiet Moments (2020)', an LGBTQ+ short produced during COVID. The film follows Anne and Cora as they navigate a romantic relationship whilst struggling to keep their farm afloat amidst financial difficulties. The film has so far won 'Best Student Film' at 'Sappho Film Festival' and was an official finalist for a number of others, such as 'Best Indie Film Award' and 'The Lift Off Sessions'.





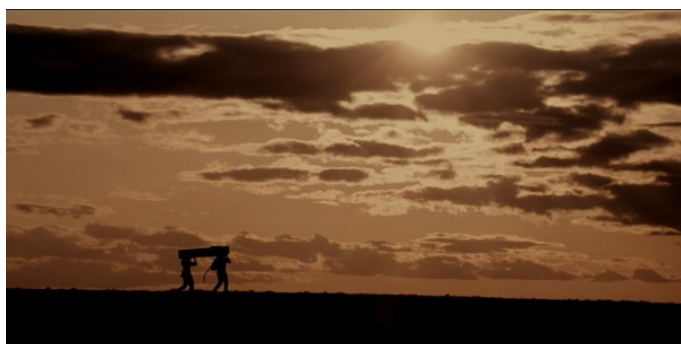
My graduate film, 'Darling Sons (2021)' was also produced in lockdown and was arguably my most ambitious. The 1930s psychological horror shows two Romani brothers who carry their dead mother's body across the countryside to bury her. Our crowdfunding campaign amazingly raised over



£3,000 yet I was required to handmake a lot of the things you see in the film. These items include: a functional coffin, a dead bird, a mass family grave, litres of fake blood, a bedroom in the middle of a forest and a campfire that had to burn consistently for twelve hours. I won't give any spoilers but the film is due to enter festivals in June 2021. After graduation, I hope to gain more experience in production design for both film and theatre and eventually break into the industry. I am also interested in lecturing for film when I am older as I think that education is such a powerful tool, as Maiden Erlegh exemplified for me.



Maiden Erlegh has taught me so much about myself and my capabilities, and I will always be thankful to the various staff who helped support me throughout my education and teenage years.



Keep in touch

Email: mesalumni@maidenerleghtrust.org

We enjoy hearing from all our Alumni and would love to hear from you. Please email with any memories of your time here, or any news of what you are doing now and you could be part of the next issue. **@MaidenErleghSch**

#TeamMaidenErlegh



Maiden Erlegh Trust Higher & Further Education Fair Friday 1 October 2021

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we felt the need to provide our students with a new event— **MET Higher Education and Further Education Fair**, on **Friday 1 October 2021**. Students have not been able to explore further and higher education opportunities due to lockdown restrictions and we felt that we could help bridge the gap by inviting representatives from a variety of institutions to speak to our students during the school day.

With over 80 invited representatives from universities, colleges, apprenticeship providers and gap year organisers, we hope to be able to offer our Year 11, Year 12 and Year 13 students the opportunity to ask questions, and explore their different options post-16 and post-18.

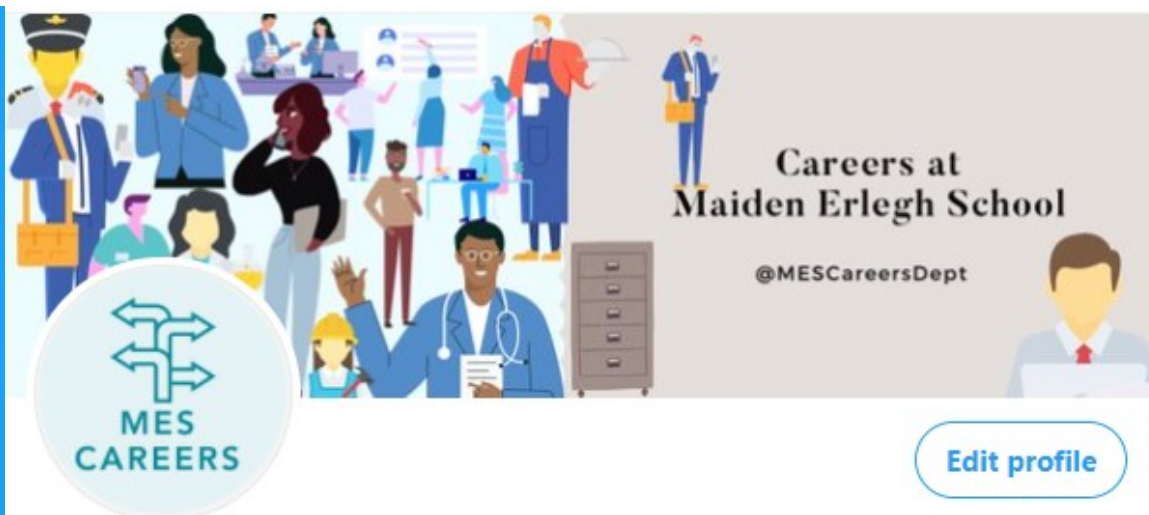


And this is where we need you! If you are available, and would like to speak to any of our current students from the perspective of an MES Alumni, please email mescareersdept@maidenerleghtrust.org.

The event will be a open fair, with students choosing to approach and talk to any representatives they are interested in. There won't be a need to deliver an assembly or give a talk or a speech! Please get in touch, as we know how valuable it is for our students to hear about your experiences!

Year 11 Mock Employer Interviews

After a year of disruption, we decided to deliver the near impossible— a 30 minute virtual careers interview for every student in Year 11! With students still undertaking home learning, and the lockdown still in place, we had to quickly adapt our existing in-person format, and ask over 60 representatives to volunteer for up to 8 sessions and carry out a mock employer interview with a Year 11 student, via Zoom. Students were asked to prepare a CV and some questions to ask their interviewer. Interviewers were also given a list of questions that the students had prepared for—as well as a bespoke question of their choosing. Read about Thames Water's experience [here](#).

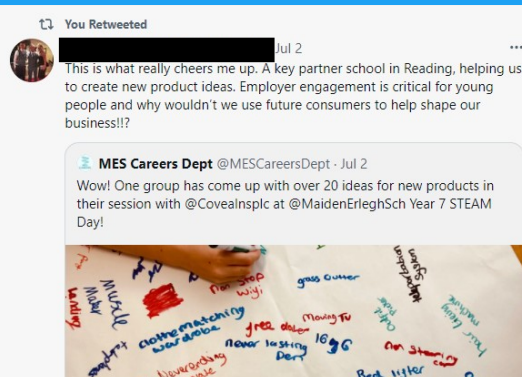


MES Careers Dept

@MESCareersDept

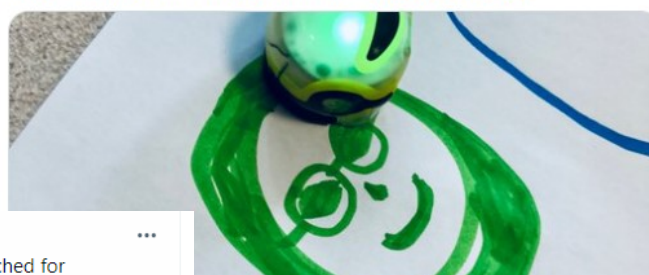
Follow us for the latest updates from the Careers Department at Maiden Erlegh School.

Join the Careers Department on Twitter to keep up to date about other ways you can help current students with your experience!



MES Careers Dept @MESCareersDept · Jul 2

This is amazing - one of our Year 7 students drew themselves and got an Ozobot to follow the pattern...so creative! @MaidenErleghSch



MES Careers Dept @MESCareersDept · Jul 7

We have had such a diverse range of careers being researched for @MaidenErleghSch Year 9 Careers Inspiration Day! From Armed Force Handler to Architect, Graphic Designer to Investment Banker, Football to Food Scientist! Sheena's Architecture presentation is fantastic..



MES Careers Dept @MESCareersDept · Jul 2

Liz is discussing the chemical composition of fatbergs with our Year 7 students - they are loving the fact that they can apply what they've learnt in Chemistry this year! Thanks @thameswater @MaidenErleghSch @MesSciences





The Arts Society Wokingham Grant for Arts Education in School



The Art, Music and Drama departments were delighted to receive a generous £750.00 grant from **The Wokingham Arts Society** in order to promote Arts Education in school.

Together with the Arts Society, Maiden Erlegh School discussed the need to prioritise and promote Diversity and Ethnic Heritage across the Arts Curriculum and find new ways in working with inter-connected curricular themes.

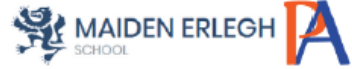
The **Music department** purchased some more world music instruments, which replaced some older well-worn ones and added some new additions to their collection. This will enable students to experience the sounds from diverse ethnic cultures.

The **Drama department** purchased some culturally diverse plays for the students to study. This will enable students to experience play scripts from other cultures and work in groups on a collaborative piece to experience this together. Drama also purchased more LED lighting to update their old rig.

The Art department bought some more cultural artefacts that students can draw, photograph and explore the ethnic heritage of these objects. These objects from other cultures, provide the stimulus to share discussion and understanding of other cultures. These objects provide the content for projects in all year groups but they are especially significant in providing a stimulus for GCSE work.



**YOUR
SCHOOL
LOTTERY**



**TOGETHER
WE WILL
GET THROUGH THIS**



**PLEASE
SUPPORT OUR LOTTERY**

We need you now more than ever

- MESPA has just donated more than £6,000 to the school
- The money will buy equipment to teach children while keeping them safe
- Help your child's school - join the lottery. Tickets cost £1

Support Us Now

Supporters must be 16 years of age or older.