

# ELLESMERE EXCLUSIVE



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## Summer Solstice

As the summer season starts, communities all around the globe gather to celebrate the Summer Solstice, a significant astronomical event that occurs on or around June 21st each year. This celestial occurrence, marking the longest day and shortest night of the year, holds deep cultural and spiritual significance to a variety of ethnicities across the world.

In Scandinavian countries like Sweden and Norway, the Summer Solstice, also famously known as Midsummer, is a traditional celebration rooted in ancient pagan rituals. Families and friends come together, engaging in folk dances around maypoles decorated with vibrant flowers. The maypoles themselves also hold significance; the flowers and ribbons can be considered beautiful and feminine symbols, whereas the dance represents physical health and fertility. Bonfires release warmth and colour into the atmosphere, historically intending to boost the sun’s strength for the remainder of the crop season and ensure a healthy harvest. Traditional foods, like herring and strawberries, are also shared to mark the joyous occasion.

For cultures such as the Aztecs, Mayans, and Egyptians, the Summer Solstice holds strong ties to their architecture. Temples and structures were commonly designed to align with the rising or setting sun on this momentous day, representing their advanced astronomical knowledge and appreciation for celestial forces. Many indigenous cultures, such as the Native Americans and the Inuit, tells us that it symbolizes the growing season and the appreciation of nature's gifts. The day also has roots with the landmark ‘Stonehenge’, the structure was built to align with the sun on both the midsummer and midwinter solstices. As a result of this, thousands of people flock to the stones every year to see the first rays of sunlight shine into the heart of Stonehenge.



## |Coming up...

### WRITER’S NAME: ZOE FINNEGAN

In modern times, the Summer Solstice is celebrated in various ways. Festivals and gatherings take place in parks, gardens, and ancient sites worldwide, and people of all backgrounds come together to honour the sun and the beliefs surrounding it. The summer solstice presents an amazing opportunity to learn about and celebrate beliefs from all parts of the world, create a sense of community for many. It holds meanings for so many cultures, and still after many years holds an important place in society, along with a deep connection to the historic Stonehenge. Hopefully the occasion will still be celebrated in the years to come and that more and more people gather to watch this nature phenomenon.



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GLOBAL EVENTS

The Women’s World Cup 2023

WRITER’S NAMES: MAE BAXTER

The tournament of their lives; who will eventually take the trophy home?

As the 2023 Women’s World Cup approaches, the tension, excitement and suspense are rising. This year’s tournament is being held in Australia and New Zealand, and with more supporters and viewers than ever before, we are left hooked as to what this year’s competition will bring. The starting matches kick off on July 20<sup>th</sup> and end on August 20<sup>th</sup>, and from there will see 32 teams fighting for the chance to play in the final at Sydney Olympic Stadium in front of a crowd of thousands, and a TV audience of millions.

The favourites going into this tournament are USA, followed closely by England, Spain and Germany. However, with America having lost to all these teams in previous matches, doubts are starting to creep in and their path to victory may not be as straightforward as in the previous four tournaments. Years of triumph has brought them to the finals nearly every year, which has landed them at No. 1 in the FIFA Women’s World Rankings for the last 13 years (the longest consecutive top ranking of any team). With incredible players like Megan Rapinoe, Alex Morgan and Rose Lavelle lining the pitch, the USA’s matches will be filled with talent and excitement, apprehension and radiance. With their countless wins and infinite talent, this team provides many icons for young women across the globe, inspiring more and more females to join football.

“...Only time will tell who will eventually bring the trophy home.”

With past success powering them through, England are now the one of the biggest threats in the World Cup, with the victory of the Euros giving them the confidence and support of many more fans to possibly carry them to victory. However, the line-up has changed massively since the Euros, with some of their most essential players out because of injury. This includes players like Leah Williamson, who captained for England until an ACL injury ended her World Cup dreams, and Euros Golden Boot winning goal-scorer Beth Mead, who also suffered an ACL injury in 2022, which she’s still recovering from. With these crucial players ruled out of the World Cup, the future of the Lionesses is uncertain. After a disappointing warm-up game against Portugal, the starting line-up is still undecided and the manager, Sarina Wiegman states that, “I’m not any closer to deciding... We have to make decisions and in some positions it’s really tight.” Despite that, there are many players with ‘undeniable talent’ that will play a huge role in this team. With over 90 England caps, Lucy Bronze is one of England’s most consistent and talented right backs who will bring heaps of experience into the team. Another player to look out for is Mary Earps, who recently got awarded The Best FIFA Women’s Goalkeeper. This 29-year-old phenomenon only conceded twice in the entirety of the Euros, playing a huge role in England’s victory. With the World Cup only weeks away, only time will tell who will eventually bring the trophy home.

One team to watch out for is Australia. With the advantage of playing on home turf, this team will undeniably bring their determination, teamwork and talent that defines this squad onto the pitch. Competing at the World Cup on seven occasions, this team has never won the trophy, but that won’t stop them this year. Already ranked No. 10 in the FIFA Women’s World Rankings, they pose a threat that has undoubtedly risen after their successful games against England, France, Denmark and other highly ranked teams. Both players and managers will certainly be intimidated by their unstoppable performances and the fact that they’re playing on home ground in front of thousands of their fans. Their line-up includes Arsenal striker Caitlin Foord, Real Madrid winger Hayley Raso and Chelsea’s top scoring player, Sam Kerr. Although not expected to win, Australia has seemingly come up from nowhere and is determined to win that trophy and bring pride to their country.

Who knows what the World Cup will bring, but it promises a memorable experience with lots of exhilaration, passion and elation. Bringing people together from all over the world, we will watch in awe as these teams battle to bring the trophy home and make unforgettable moments for the history books.



World Cup 2019, with winners USA

MUSIC EXCLUSIVE

Music Exclusive

Festivals from all the across the UK; Glastonbury, Glasgow and our very own Ellesmere Park Life

WRITER’S NAME: ZOE FINNEGAN

GLASTONBURY

The much-anticipated Glastonbury Festival took place this year, with a rich history spanning over five decades, Glastonbury once again proved why it is one of the world’s most iconic and beloved music festivals. From June 23<sup>rd</sup> to June 25<sup>th</sup>, this festival presented a remarkable line-up of artists, with an atmosphere of joy and passion for music throughout. The Pyramid Stage witnessed unforgettable performances by some of the most popular artists of all time, with headliners such as Guns ‘n’ Roses, Elton John, and Arctic Monkeys who delivered brilliant sets that have provided so much joy for so many fans. Meanwhile, emerging artists showcased their musical talents across various stages, further establishing Glastonbury’s reputation as a platform for musical discovery.

GLASGOW

In addition, TRNSMT Festival also made its return this year, transforming Glasgow into an energetic city of music and unforgettable moments. From June 30<sup>th</sup> to July 2<sup>nd</sup>, music enthusiasts from near and far flocked to Scotland’s largest city to experience this annual celebration. With an incredible line-up, vibrant atmosphere, and a wide variety of genres, TRNSMT Festival 2023 was an undoubtedly successful celebration. The festival presented a diverse array of artists, spanning various genres captivating audiences throughout the three days. Renowned headliners such as The 1975, Sam Fender, and Pulp delivered captivating performances, leaving the crowds in awe. Emerging talents like Pale Waves, Lovejoy, The Amazons, and The Big Moon also took the opportunity to showcase their skills, leaving a lasting impression on all who got to witness their sets.

ELLESMERE PARK LIFE

On Saturday, 15<sup>th</sup> July, Ellesmere Park life was held in our very own auditorium. Although the rain stopped the festival from being outside, did not stop the performing arts department from presenting the passion and talents from so many of our peers. From 11am to 3pm, our stage held the abilities of musicians throughout all year groups, from solo acts to band performances, with music ranging from rap to rock and roll. Not only did the music provide entertainment, but there was also an array of stalls, selling things like jewellery, sweets, toys, face painting stations and bouncy castles in the sports hall; the school ensuring that there was something for all ages. This festival was an overall success and we cannot wait for next years, where we will see heaps of new musicians illustrating their expertise and enthusiasm.

GLOBAL EVENTS

Refugee Week

A week celebrating refugees, the journey they take, and the contributions they make to our society

WRITER’S NAME: MAE BAXTER

Refugee Week is a national event dedicated to celebrating and educating ourselves about refugees. It’s a festival wholly committed to recognising the resilience, bravery and courage of refugees, a festival that aims to inspire us to help people less fortunate than ourselves and appreciate the contributions they make to society. This year, the theme was compassion, and there was a focus on creating a shared understanding of what this is, so that we can better extend it to everyone around us. Refugee Week 2023 took place 19-25 June, and this year marked the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary – 25 years of ensuring refugees are listened to and respected.

I spoke to Mel Kakkar, a therapist councillor for refugees, to find out more about refugees and what we can do as a community to help. We might feel we understand some of the issues refugees face, but we cannot fully understand what they have been through. When asked what issues refugees might face that some of us don’t always know about, Mel answered with, “I think we need to understand that refugees don’t choose to move country; they don’t choose to leave everything behind; that they aren’t just moving homes because they fancy a change. It’s life or death. People run from extreme circumstances and go on dangerous journeys to find a safe place to live. We need to respect that.”

“...They don’t choose to move country; they don’t choose to leave everything behind...It’s life or death.”

I then went on to ask what we, as a school, could do to help refugees. “Respecting everyone’s rights and not questioning what happened” was her response. “There are a number of reasons someone could seek safety in our country. We don’t need to ask why, we just need to accept that they’re here now and they need us to just treat them like you would anyone else.” Mel also answered with, “I know everyone says this, but kindness goes a long way. It could make a huge difference in someone’s life.” Whoever it is, we need to respect them and make sure they feel safe in their new home.

I concluded this interview by asking her, if it were up to you, what would everyone know about refugees? Mel replied with: “They want the exact things we want. We all have the same needs. They want to be safe and connected to their family and society. From the people I’ve talked to, they say they are just looking for a fresh start and a good life. They have the right to be there, and we need to accept that and respect them. If everyone had the same starting point as them, we would want the same things and so we need to realise that everyone has the right to move somewhere safer.”

With the involvement of everyone, we should ensure a safe space for refugees and the promise of a fresh start. As Mel said before, they didn’t choose to flee the country, and they have the same basic human needs as we do, so we need to treat them as our equals. Even as this week has passed, the message still holds that we should respect refugees, no matter what time of year it is, and encourage more understanding and knowledge about them.



SCHOOL NEWS

EPHS Sports Awards Evening

WRITER’S NAME: ABIGAIL MA

On the 18<sup>th</sup> July 2023 the first annual sports awards evening was held. The event brought people from all years together to celebrate those who have excelled in school sports this year. Although only certain individuals were awarded, the true meaning of the event was to honour everyone - no matter your ability. “Even though certain individuals are recognised tonight, they are only successful because of their teammates”, is how Miss Smalley expressed it. With balloon arches, drinks and trophies, the night was a joyous and successful occasion that is hopefully the start to a long-lasting tradition here at Ellesmere.

An abundance of students participate in the many sports available at our school and this evening gives the PE teachers and teammates a chance to share their successes. We asked some staff at the event why they think it is important. Miss Smalley said, “I think it’s important that everyone who makes an effort to commit to sport is recognised for that commitment. Especially for the older years when you start doing your GSCES, it’s really amazing to still commit yourself to a sport since it takes a long time to practice and attend fixtures. I just think we really need to value that contribution that they are making to the school.” Some students attend 3 sports clubs and go to games, so as Miss Smalley stated, this awards evening was about showcasing them. Mr Davies also shared with us why he thinks this event is important, “I feel this is important because obviously lots of people take part in sporting events in school and sometimes don’t necessarily get the recognition they deserve for that, so this awards evening gives them the opportunity to be noticed for what they do and allow them to take pride in that.” Lastly our head teacher Mr Ross shared his views on the importance of the occasion, “It is important to always recognise every single achievement of all of our students, no matter what it is. Sport is something that really brings people together and is important for everyone’s personal development, so it’s important that we recognise every child’s involvement in it.”

Up until year 10, sport is a part of everyone’s lives at school and many go on to continue it for their GSCES. Whether you just go to your PE lessons, play at lunch or are a part of a team away from school, sports play a huge role in many students lives. That’s why we wanted to find out why our staff think sport is an important part of the curriculum. “Sport teaches something that a lot of other subjects can’t, like teamwork and resilience. Competitive sport is something that brings about real changes in individuals, it challenges them to step outside their comfort zone - they rely on their teammates to be the best that they can be. That’s why I want to offer as much as I possibly can to students and I try to do anything you would like to see done,” said Miss Smalley. Mr Bird, Deputy Head teacher at our school and a former PE teacher replied to our question with, “I think sport is massively important in schools because it builds confidence in young people, creates team spirit and you can make new friends. Also, as an individual it builds your confidence, and it also keeps you fit and healthy. Sport can have a massive positive impact on everyone and that’s why we believe everyone should give it a go.”



“There is always a sport out there for you, you just might not know it yet.” Mr Ross also said, “It’s incredibly important because it keeps us all fit and healthy and it gives you an outlet for all the things that might built-up inside you during the week. In addition, to play sport properly takes as much skill and talent as it does to write a good essay, just with a different set of skills and talents.”

The majority of all of the nominees were in attendance, and with everybody dressing up and having a good time, we asked a few of them what their favourite part of sports at Ellesmere is and if they could share some of their core memories. Lydia, a year 8 pupil and winner of netball team A’s coach’s player award, said, “You get to go on lots of trips and work as a team with your friends which is really fun”. Isla, winner of year 8’s netball team B coach’s player, shared that her favourite memory is, “going away on trips and getting to play against other schools”. No matter what sport you play or for what year, what this night made clear is that playing a sport at our school opens up so many opportunities and allows you to make long-lasting memories.

If you are interested in trying out a sport or joining a team some staff and pupils have shared their advice. Lily, team B’s year 8 netball player’s player shared, “I would definitely recommend it, especially if you have an interest in sport and it helps you with your teamwork skills”. Miss Smalley finishes our conversation with, “Please just come; even if you’ve never kicked a ball or picked it up before or whether you’ve done it outside of school, it literally doesn’t matter it’s all about being a part of the process and enjoying the experience that it gives.” So overall, the evening was a huge success that recognised many and inspired even more to carry on working hard in their sport.

INTERVIEW

Miss O’Meara interview

WRITER’S NAME: MAE BAXTER

As the end of the school year approaches, our teacher Miss O’Meara is unfortunately leaving. Miss O’Meara is a science teacher here at Ellesmere Park, and her teaching and lessons have inspired many pupils throughout the school; her fun and exciting lessons making it a memorable lesson we all look forward to. We decided to interview her, to find out more about her life and what she is going to do in the future.

Science is made up of lots of different aspects, from chemistry and learning about different medicines and mixtures, to biology and physics. We asked her what her favourite part of science to teach is and her response was that “I love to teach biology and learn about all sorts of diseases. I also find teaching about the organ and digestive system really exciting.”

When asked what inspired her to become a teacher, her reply was that “When I was younger, I actually didn’t want to be a teacher. I hated school, I got bullied and just overall didn’t have the best experience. When I was a bit older, I worked at a summer camp in university and that experience made me realise I wanted to work with kids.” To follow up on this question, we asked her what she was interested in when she was at school and what her aspirations were. Her answer was that “When I was younger, I wanted to become a fashion designer but then as I got older, I wanted to become a children’s doctor”. She then told us more about her family and her overall love for science. “My parents were both doctors, but the stress of the process was scary and stressful which is a shame because I loved it, but I always knew science was the way to go. I always wanted to travel; I loved the beaches, water sports and I overall just loved exploring new places, which is why I’m choosing to move to Australia.”

Our next question was what she loved most about teaching here at Ellesmere. “My favourite part of teaching is that I get paid to have a bit of fun! Sometimes, obviously teaching science, but I think my overall favourite part is the relationships you get to make with the students.” She continued on to say, “I love them small moments when a child confides in you and is comfortable enough to talk about anything they’re going through. I think that’s really important.”

Once Miss O’Meara has left, she is travelling to Australia and we wanted to find out more about what she might get up to there. “I’d be going there to teach and also do lots of water sports because I love the ocean. I did weight boarding for a while, so I would love to do that. I’d actually also love to do some acting – it gives me such a thrill!”

We finished this interview with a message from herself to the students. “My message is to always be yourself. When I was younger, I wasn’t confident and didn’t do that, and that’s why I chose teaching I think, to encourage students to be themselves and feel confident with themselves.” We are certainly going to miss Miss O’Meara, but we are forever thankful for the contribution she has made to our lives, and we wish her all the best of luck in the future!

INTERVIEW

Mr Weir Interview

WRITER’S NAME: ABIGAIL MA

Mr Weir is head of ICT here at Ellesmere Park and is an enthusiastic teacher to many students, so we wanted to find out what made him want to pursue this career.

“I graduated from university and got recruited to join the marines as a communicator, but I dislocated my knee 4 times during training. I had to think what else can I do? My mum recommended I try teaching and I thought I may as well do it for a year since you can get a job anywhere with teaching. Then I actually liked it, I liked changing people’s lives and helping them.”

With around 55.3 million people working in the IT field in 2020, the business of computing and technology is ever-growing and is extremely appealing to lots of the next generation of workers, so we asked Mr Weir what his advice is for students wanting to go into the vast line of work. “I would advise you to pick IT or computer science, maybe business studies, for yours GCSEs. Also decide what area you want to go into so you can choose your college course earlier.”

Our school offers a wide range of opportunities for anyone wanting to have a career in IT and we wondered if Mr Weir was given those same opportunities when he was in school, “I didn’t do IT when I was in school. We only did Maths, English and science so it wasn’t an option for us.”

With so many different students and lessons, teaching is filled with different aspects, but we asked Mr Weir what his favourite thing is about being a teacher. “The interaction with students, especially when you see the real engagement from a student who is enjoying the topic” Finally, we asked Mr Weir what he likes to do when he’s not teaching the students at our school, “I do a lot of work at home, but IT isn’t a hobby. I go out in nature a lot; I also go to the gym and play football.”



