



THE PRIORY ACADEMY

**LSST**

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# Political News

Rebecca Rylatt

## My Experience on Question Time

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of December, one of the most popular politics shows in the UK, with audience figures peaking at 8.3 million, came to right to our Drill Hall in Lincoln. As always, this was presented by Fiona Bruce, and the panelists included Conservative Shadow Secretary for Business Kevin Hollinrake, Labour Lord and former Home Secretary Jacqui Smith, leader of Reform UK Nigel Farage, and political commentator Alastair Campbell.

Fortunately, I was one of many invited to attend and participate in the audience, a collection of people chosen to be proportional to the outcome of the latest election. As a viewer for many years, it was quite surreal to see and engage with in person, and the atmosphere in the room just before filming, with similarly passionate people preparing to debate and be on air, was intoxicating. The debate in the room bounced around topics such as the environment, immigration, Brexit, Labour's 'honeymoon', and the incoming Trump Presidency.

Though I didn't quite get to ask the panel a question myself, it was an experience I am very grateful to have had, the only downside being that you can only do so once every five years!

# Environmental News

Rachel Ballantyne

## Finland's green city plan

Finland is a very environmentally conscious country, slated to be carbon neutral by 2035. This puts it fourth in the world: Bhutan in South East Asia is the world's first carbon negative country, Suriname in Northern South America is carbon negative with 93% of land forested, and finally Uruguay in South America is aiming to be carbon neutral in 2030 with 98% of its current energy renewably sourced. A recent change in Finland, to help it stick to its ambitious goal, is the 2030 Green City Plan – its 10 largest cities, home to approximately half of the population, have committed to specific and measurable targets to protect urban biodiversity. This is a multifaceted improvement – prioritizing and increasing green spaces won't just help to slow Finland's contribution to global warming by absorbing more carbon dioxide, but it will boost biodiversity, and potentially provide protection against natural impacts of climate change as green spaces often do. The targets of the cities vary based on what is most needed in an area; the city of Oulu aims to restore 500 hectares of peatland, which acts as a carbon sink. Tuku aims to convert 30% of its lawns to wildflower meadows in order to boost pollinator populations such as bees, as well as increasing forest canopies to 50%. Tampere, the second largest city, wants to plant 100,000 native trees to establish wildlife corridors between its major parks, strengthening population connections and sustainability. Helsinki, the capital wants to establish 20 urban wetlands for amphibian populations alongside increasing urban greening by 15%. These goals tie in with the country's larger aim of stopping biodiversity loss by 2030, then going on to reverse it. With such specifically tailored goals to increase accountability, this should hopefully be a very successful decision!

# School News

Isaac Eccles

## What is dangerous weather?

Recently there was a snowy day at our school, and many people found it difficult to get to the academy due to slippery roads and greater traffic. The question that arises from this is: should schools be closed in snow?

At school snow can cause many arguments, due to snowball fights. Regardless, should this be expected as there is a cost to everything? Is it truly rational behavior to discourage play and remove fun from the joys of life? Other forms of dangerous weather are also occasionally ignored such as minor flooding (of course the school is on a hill but it is still worth mentioning). At the end of the day it is up to the school, with advice from local police on road safety, to decide whether or not it is in the best interests of its students to attend in times of difficult conditions. Some schools in the surrounding area of Lincoln did close due to heating or travel problems. Other forms of weather that often cause closure of schools, and sometimes services (such as shops), are flooding, storms, strong winds or hail.

To conclude, if weather is dangerous or not is subjective, and up to the school or other services to decide if it is best to close or not due to the disruptions. This means that there is no point in being annoyed that you have to go to school because officially you have no say, so why not try and make the most of it?

# Film Review

Jihanabelle Slavin

## Lee (2023)

This film, based on the life of war photographer Lee Miller, is intense and moving. We follow the American artist as she leaves behind her career as a model in order to pursue photography for Vogue magazine during the second world war.

Based on themes of loss, art, and humanity in the face of atrocity, 'Lee' offers a look into the honest work of an iconic woman – one who redefined femininity with bold, rebellious intent. Throughout the film, we see her document the horrors of war with an unflinching eye, recording the poverty, suffering, and death inflicted on millions during the conflict.

Kate Winslet, powerfully conveying Miller's character, paired with the vivid artistic direction of Ellen Kuras, provides an eye-opening viewing experience – one which older students won't want to miss (certificate 15).

# TV News

## Gregor Wallace

### **Gregg Wallace steps down from MasterChef over allegations**

Gregg Wallace is a TV star famous for hosting programs such as 'Inside the factory' and 'MasterChef'; however, recently some allegations against him have arisen. He has been accused of making inappropriate comments towards a range of women, dating back close to two decades. Because of this, the BBC has paused airing of MasterChef for now, and Wallace has apologized for his remarks since the allegations, but is this enough? The inappropriate comments have spanned over 19 years, with the majority happening in the last decade. Some of the women involved reported feeling quite 'sexualized' and 'uncomfortable', and so Wallace may be in too deep.

Overall, some TV celebrities may have an innocent image, but maybe, in their past, they weren't quite as they appear on screen.

# Film Review

Emily Dove

## La La Land film review

As Film students may know, one of the A-Level films that we are required to study is 'La La Land' (certificate 12A); this film is one of the few on the curriculum that was released recently. 'La La Land' was released on the 9th of December in 2016 and was directed by Damien Chazelle. It stars Ryan Gosling who is recognized for being in films like 'Fall Guy' and Emma Stone who is best known for her work in 'The Favorite', and the Spiderman films.

From this, Damien Chazelle won an Academy Award, a British Academy and Television arts award, Golden Globe awards and Director Guild of America Award.

Peter Bradshaw from the Guardian said, "Ryan Gosling and Emma Stone shine in a sun-drenched musical masterpiece" (for context, Bradshaw is a very critical and hard to please British writer and film critic)..

Personally, I believe 'La La Land' is a masterpiece in terms of the acting and the music. The acting brings the film to life and immerses the audience, making the happiness of it contagious. The music adds to the joyfulness of the film, making the audience want to dance along despite not knowing the words.

# Environmental News

Rachel Ballantyne

## **Avoiding extinction; recent species wins over the globe**

Over the course of the last few weeks, a handful of endangered species have made impressive recovery milestones in different countries.

The Takahe bird, native to New Zealand with spiritual significance to the Māori tribe, was thought to be extinct for a period of 50 years after British colonialism led to an influx of unsustainable hunting. Although a small population was eventually found in 1948, recovery has been slow as the birds only reproduce once a year, and as a pair generally only have two offspring. The recent milestone that was reached was in the breeding population on Motutapu, as the global number of birds has been brought up to 500.

A species that has reached a different type of milestone is the bobcat. Native to North America, they were nearly hunted to extinction in 1900, but since then the population number has increased by millions. An important species in preventing the spread of disease from animals to humans (eating successful disease vectors such as rodents whilst being poor disease vectors themselves), they are currently illegal to hunt in California, but this may be up for debate in 2025 due to the prospering population size being considered unthreatened.

In the 1800s, Scotland was home to one of the world's largest oyster reserves, until they were farmed to local extinction in the 1900s. Last year, approximately 30,000 oysters were reintroduced to 4 local sites alongside seagrass plantings, and now early reports are saying that there was an 85% success rate. As oysters can prevent the buildup of algae ... (continued over)



# Environmental News

Rachel Ballantyne

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...(known as algal bloom), and oyster shells can fuse together to form biodiverse reefs, this is very beneficial for marine diversity.

In Wales, the hazel dormouse is one of seven vulnerable mammals. Having seen a decline in the UK by 70% in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, habitat loss has had a very negative impact on population size. In a national park in Pembrokeshire there are just two woodland sites known to house them, and as they are just five miles apart, conservationists are making efforts to join the habitats and populations, to create a larger, more genetically diverse group. Recently success has been found in one of the stages, as a nesting box in the in-between area was found to have been used – now it is known that the mice can travel between the areas, more efforts can be made to fully combine the two populations.

Finally, in India, the pygmy hog has been reintroduced to its native home in the Assam forests. The world's smallest wild pig species, having undergone 28 years of continuous breeding programs and conservation efforts, is now up to a population of 200, the majority of which were born in the wild. By protecting and rejuvenating the wet grasslands they live in, a knock-on effect of habitat protection could have the potential to benefit other species as well!