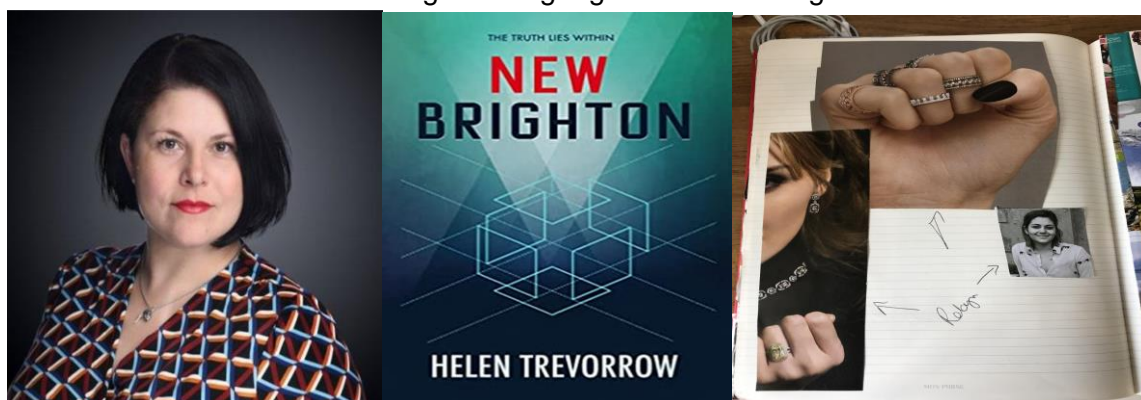


“Write Here, Write Now” - creative writing at Longhill High School

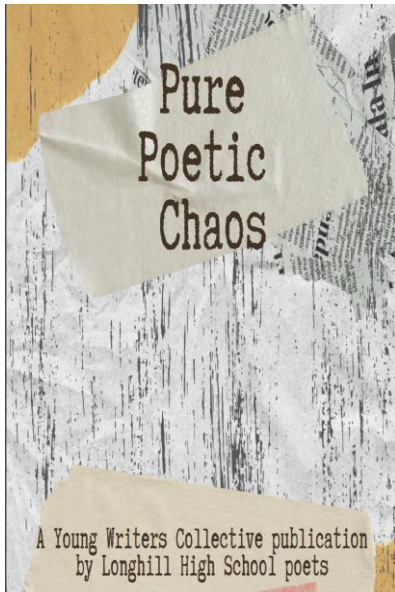
This year in the English department, a huge emphasis has been placed on creative writing. In particular, on events and extra curricular activities that complement our curriculum but also offer refreshing alternatives to the structure of formal education. From reading and writing for pleasure, finding new role models, and nurturing valuable exam skills, these experiences have been hugely beneficial to our students. This mammoth rejuvenation of creative writing in English is a new project, labelled “Write Here, Write Now”, and one that we are very excited about continuing and improving in the coming years.

Just before the exam pressure started ramping up for our Y11s in March, they were treated to a fantastic 2 hour workshop with local author, Helen Trevorrow. Framed by the release of her new dystopian thriller novel, ‘New Brighton’, this workshop involved the whole year group learning about Helen’s creative process involving story-boarding, developing a mood board for her characters and even developing personalised playlists for characters. Helen’s workshop inspired students to create their own character - perhaps some students were able to use their character in their English Language creative writing stories!



The second creative writing project we initiated this year was a 6-week run of poetry workshops with a Brighton-based writing collective called “Little Green Pig”. Longhill High School is the only secondary school that Little Green Pig has partnered with which makes us extremely grateful and proud of our involvement! Led by Birmingham Poet Laureate, Roy McFarlane, these sessions took place every Monday lunchtime and were attended by students from all year groups. This project concluded with a truly brilliant poetry slam where our poets performed their work in front of their teachers, head teacher and school community.

The feedback we’ve gained from the students who got involved has been overwhelmingly positive; all students saying they feel Little Green Pig provided a safe space for them to perform and write. The transformation we saw in their confidence, even in the short 6 weeks, was magical. We hope to continue these sessions with Roy and the team in September. Finally, Little Green Pig generously published and printed a pamphlet, titled “Pure Poetic Chaos”, containing original poetry from Longhill’s very own poets. Well done all!



Pink

Pink is a colour I am expected to enjoy.
Since I am a girl.
I am expected to wear pink dresses
And grow up wanting to be a princess.
To enjoy playing dolls and look pretty.
What if I don't want that?
What if I want to wear jeans?
And I want to be a writer?
To dislike dolls
And accept myself?
And what if a boy wants to wear pink?
I say, Do it.
We are who we are.



The racoon who went for a drink

He may look like a bandit
sorting through the bin but
don't be fooled for sure
that smile will definitely win.
So take him out for a drink,
order him a beer
and when the crowd all
sees him, you know they're
sure to cheer, 1 or 2 or
even 10.

the racoon starts getting dizzy,
a hangover in the morning.
It's a shame
that he is busy.

I never thought I'd write a poem
about a drunk racoon yet
here we are, my fuzzy friend,
underneath the strawberry moon.



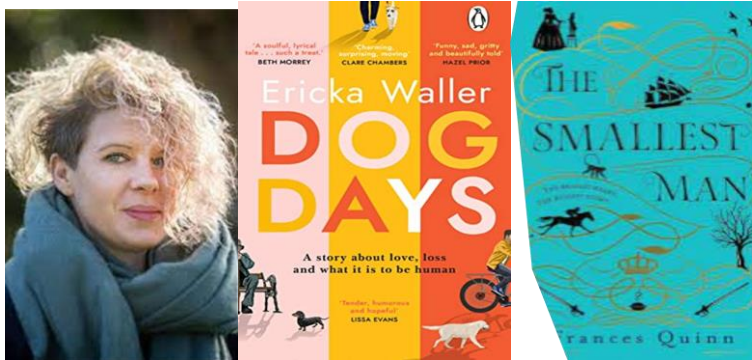
"the future is now
the future is how
you want it to be
so here's a secret between you and me
the future is yours
live it now." Maia, Year 9 poet

This collection features poems by 11 to 15 year old writers from Years 7 to 10 at Longhill High School in Brighton. The poems have been created in workshops engaging 35 students at lunchtimes and after school, facilitated by poet Roy McFarlane and Little Green Pig writing mentors. This is a Young Writers Collective publication created in 2022 by Little Green Pig. Made possible with funding from The Stephen and Laura Vakil Foundation.

The final week of term at Longhill is known as Enrichment Week, where students enjoy an enhanced timetable. This involves extra fun lessons that don't resemble typical curriculum lessons. The goal of this is to emphasise the importance of finding your passion for a subject, and remembering that learning is so much more than your exams. In the English department, we have invited wonderful members of our school and wider community to lead a Short Story Workshop with our Year 7 students. Ericka Waller and Frances Quinn are

published authors; each with their own path into writing, and their own wisdom to impart on the next generation of writers. In a four hour workshop, our Y7s formed a panel to interview these fantastic guests, and collaborated with them on short stories! With live feedback and encouragement, 45 students read out their creative writing pieces. The panel chose their top 5 favourites and Remony from Kemp Town Bookshop awarded the book token prizes to 20 students. The event was a huge success.

Ericka Waller, especially, has been a delight to partner with, and has shown our school huge amounts of support. From bountiful donations to the Library, to joining us for Enrichment Week, her enthusiasm is invaluable and she is truly an asset to our community.



We are also excited to share that we are working with the team at Kemptown Book Shop, who are donating prizes to our short story writing workshop with Yr7 and hosting a review competition with them over the summer. This is a great opportunity to extend a metaphorical hand into our local community and partner with inspiring people who believe in our students here at Longhill.

To conclude, “Write Here, Write Now” has been and will continue to be an exciting, innovative and refreshing celebration of creative writing. These lessons and extra-curricular activities enable our students to develop an array of skills and access wonderful opportunities, and we are proud to share the beginning of this new journey!