

VERULAMVOX

*Your school, your voice,
your magazine.*

HELLO

Messages from our new head
boy and head girl.

CREATIVE WRITING

Read stories created by
our amazing students!



VERULAM
SCHOOL

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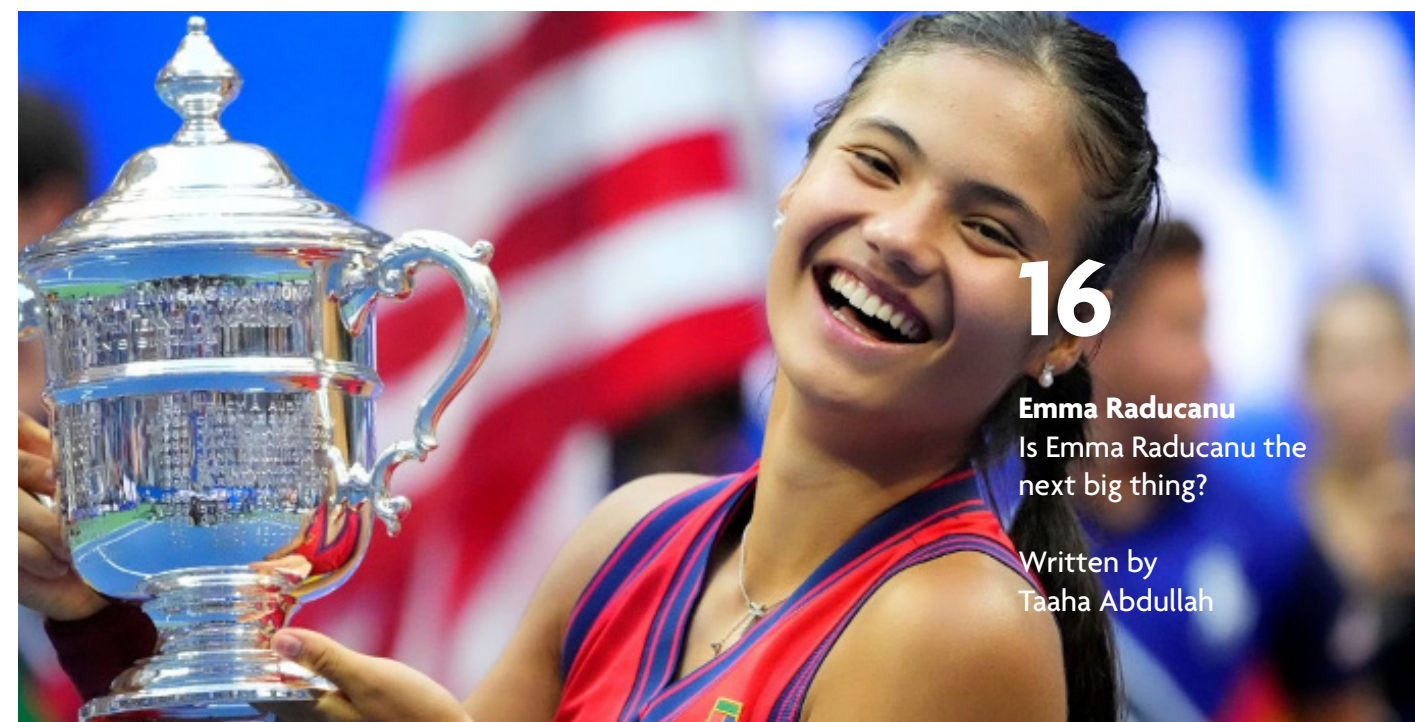
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WELCOME FROM THE HEADTEACHER

Dear Students,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the first edition of the Verulam Vox. Over the course of the year, you will receive three editions, each being published as we break up for a half term.

The Verulam Vox is a newsletter written for students by students, covering the topics that are important to them.

It's been a fantastic start to the academic year, with so many wonderful things taking place. I've been impressed with the maturity that you have all shown, wearing masks once again to reduce the spread of Covid-19 and with the way that you have engaged with the numerous workshops and visitors that we have hosted this half term.

I hope you'll enjoy this edition and that you have a well earned, restful half term break with your friends and family. Please switch off and treasure this time so that you come back fully refreshed!

Best wishes,
Miss J Richardson

WELCOME WELCOME

FROM HEAD BOY & HEAD GIRL

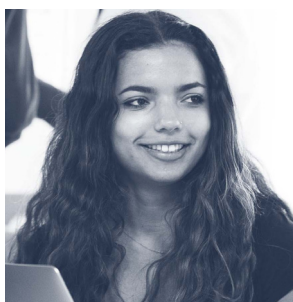
Hey Verulam, it's Owen. Welcome to the first ever edition of Verulam Vox, which is basically just a collection of articles from students talking about literally whatever is on their mind. I'm in year 13 studying Maths, History and Sociology and hoping to study Law at uni, but that's enough about me.

The first half term of this new year has been hectic to say the least, with an incredible amount of organisation being put into various events around the school. Open evening was a smash hit with every student getting involved, from speeches in the main hall to making DIY sparklers in science to spending 20 minutes looking at all the stuff on Mr Pettit's walls in history. On top of that, the Abbey Service came around at the end of the half-term, and while I'm writing this before the service has actually taken place, being involved in the charity and music side of the event has led me to believe it's going to be very successful. A lot of my time this half term has been spent in the music block, whether that be to practice with the resurrected Jazz Band after it was dismantled for a year because of the Rona, sorting through leads, testing amps or setting up drum kits. Although it has been a shaky start to the year, with the surprise re-introduction of masks near the end of the half term, I feel like Verulam has a renewed sense of pride as well as a team spirit that will make us stronger and better for terms and years to come.

Hi! I'm Myli and I'm Head Girl, welcome to the first ever student written Verulam Vox for the Autumn half term.

It has been a very busy and exciting month as we have had year 7 open evening, a professional athlete – Reuben Arthur come in to do inspirational assemblies about his journey to winning a Commonwealth gold medal and even national news has come to the school to document some recent, forward thinking changes to our curriculum. It has been an especially busy half term in the Sixth Form, with year 12s settling in and year 13s experiencing university open days, writing and finalising personal statements, and overall choosing what path to take next – for me that is university but there is such an interesting range of different opportunities for post Sixth Form life – such as apprenticeships, foundation years or gap years.

At Verulam there is such a wide selection of different beliefs and aspirations that should be celebrated, and we aim to highlight some of these within the Verulam Vox by giving creative freedom to any budding journalists, writers or people who want to share an article just because. In this edition of student led newsletter there will be a variety of students who have worked independently to write about a variety of their interests, I hope that you enjoy, Happy reading!



MEET OUR

SCHOOL CAPTAIN



Welcome to Verulam VOX! I'm Huw Dawson, School Captain here at Verulam and this is the first edition of the new student newsletter giving our students a chance to voice their opinions. I have been at Verulam since year

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7 and am currently in sixth form studying Maths, Economics and PE.

It has been a very busy start to the year, starting with the very successful open evening.

It has been great to see a return of school sport after this was greatly missed last year due to covid. Many boys have been involved in competitive fixtures throughout the years from year 7 all the way through to the senior teams in a range of sports, mainly Football and Rugby. Upcoming we have the great Verulam tradition which is Abbey Service which marks the end of a successful but tiring first half term giving students and teachers a much-needed rest.

There will then be many other great opportunities for students in the coming months such as a trip to New York for Sixth form students and I'm personally already looking forward to the Mills match which for those of you who don't know is a student vs Staff charity football match played at Clarence Park to help raise money for the important cause which is the Oli Mills foundation.

My main passion is football and currently play for St Albans City first team down at Clarence Park and it has been great to see lots of younger students down at matches supporting their local team and creating a great atmosphere. I highly recommend getting tickets and coming down to support if anyone is looking for something to do and hopefully enjoy some football!

Thanks for reading,
Huw Dawson, School Captain

EMMA RADUCANU -

THE NEXT BIG THING?

By Taaha Abdullah, Sixth Form

Each year the month of July marks the start the most prestigious ceremony in tennis, Wimbledon. The world tunes in to watch the highest level of competition, and 2021 saw the world number 288 seed Emma Raducanu climb her way to the fourth round before she was advised to withdraw after a medical injury. However, her departure from the competition was taken as a learning experience.

“

“Last night will go a long way to helping me learn what it takes to perform at the top. I will cherish everything we have achieved together this week and come back stronger! Can’t wait to see what’s next on my journey.”

Raducanu, 2021

Two months later and now 150th seed Raducanu entered the US open with the ‘usual nerves’ as she put it but she was ‘focused on the plan (I) was going to execute.’ (Otoway, 2021) After 14 straight sets, the 18-year-old brit became Grand Slam Champion winning a purse worth £1.8 million.

The events above took place over three months. A trajectory to fame at her magnitude has never been seen before! The traits universally agreed upon to become a successful athlete are an abundance of skill, protecting your brand and understanding the process. (Taylor, 2021). Raducanu is the second youngest Grand Slam winner. Martina Navratilova who is widely considered as the greatest female tennis player laid out her perspective – ‘It’s not hype.’ said Martina Navratilova. “It’s real. She is a superstar in the making. You don’t want to put too much pressure on her, but she’s got it. You saw it the first time you saw Nadal. You saw it the first time you saw Djokovic.

You saw it with [Carlos] Alcaraz, the new star. It’s just there.’ She has shown the skill and is recognised by

former athletes as ‘a superstar’ even compared to renowned GOATs Nadal and Djokovic, proving she can understand the process. When it comes to her ‘brand’ Raducanu has had heat on various social media platforms, Raducanu used Weibo (a Chinese media platform) and thanked the people of China, in

mandarin, for their support – the post had over 200 million views. Her Instagram followers jumped from 1.4 million to 1.8 million in under two weeks (all during the US open). With skill, recognition and global support Emma Raducanu has potential for prosperity.

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Raducanu, E., 2021. Instagram. [Online] Available at: https://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=8&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwiG8BE156zAhWnFwKHcYLDvAQFnoECA4QMQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.instagram.com%2Femmaraducanu%2F%3Fhl%3Den&usq=AOvYaw1rEzTVQ2_3ZO6AQeynDZJK

CREATIVE WRITING



AUDACIOUS AIDEN AND THE FIRST RING

CHAPTER 1 - THE BARRIER BREAKS

by Daniel Isiekwenagbu, Year 9

He yawned in exasperation, as he got down from his bed. The boy walked over to a mirror, and looked at it in a daze. “Grandma, are you awake?” Asked the boy loudly. An obvious sound came back from the corresponding room. To this, the boy just shrugged and smiled happily himself.

After going down the thick stairs, the boy made his way to the kitchen. He opened the blinds or the curtains or whatever you want to call it, and saw the moon still shining brightly. And while the moon discharged a glorious glow, he said to himself:

“Oh . The sun’s not up yet? Hmm.. Yes. Perhaps our lovely neighbour Mr. Willis would like a SPECIAL type of awakening.” He smiled devilishly to himself.

After getting himself a delicious snack, crunching it with delight, and licking his fingers slowly, almost enjoying it, he left the food room (laughing to himself maniacally) and stealthy made it to the store.

In the luxurious room was the most glorious stuff and the boy picked a few items: a piece of string, balloons, a cardboard box, some tin, and other mechanical things. He got some glue, and started to work. If an average person would have seen it, they would have been, “What the what?” The boy put normal pieces together, and strapped most parts with tape. It took him a whole three hours to finish his innovative invention.

“At last. It is complete.” He said, wiping sweat off his face.

Unfortunately for him, the sun was slowly rising from its temporary slumber. He needed to quicken his pace for his trap to work. He carried his little pieces that amalgamated to form a spectacular invention. He set each part to their right places, fixing in gears, and nuts, and tying knots. Finally, he finished - and heard the obnoxious sound of his alarm clock.

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“Aiden, are you here?” An old lady said, peeping through the door. Aiden Hart was a twelve year old boy, currently dressed in pyjamas. His hair was a mess, and his nose popped with freckles. Quite a neat young man.

“I’m here grandma. I’ve been here for the past years of my life. You know that.” He answered. He knew what was coming next and said, “Grandma, how could you suggest such? I would NEVER plan a trap. I’ve been here since last night.”

The old lady eyed him suspiciously, and muttered, “You know you usually do that. Come down for breakfast. I’ve made your favourite.”

“Bacon, eggs and beans?!!!!” He cheered.

Grandma frowned. “Oh, we do not want another... incident. No. I’ve made the next best thing.”

“Please don’t say vegetable salad. Please don’t say vegetable salad.” He prayed with his fingers crossed.

“We’re eating spaghetti...”

“Good enough.” He sighed with relief.

“...with vegetable salad!”

“NO!!” He cursed.

Downstairs, at the dining table, minutes later, Aiden was dressed for leisure and played with his food.

“Come on.” His Grandma said in between chews. “Eat up otherwise your food is going to get cold.”

“But I don’t want to.” He muttered

STORY CONTINUED >

Suddenly, the room froze. Time seemed to stand still as the septuagenarian's nice smile changed into a stern look.

"I will try this again. EAT UP!" She said

This time, with some little hesitance, he ate his spaghetti and salad without question. Every time his kind granny did that horrible stare, he always wondered how he could also achieve such power.

"Mr. Ford is coming today." Said Granny.

"Oh man." he whined

"What is 'oh man?' Mr. Ford is a lovely man.

A perfect man. He works as a miner, you know. As rich as any king himself. Always hard working. I think you could learn a thing or two from him."

"But he smells. Why does he have to come and visit?"

"My dear, I am sure YOU can handle it. It only stinks a little."

To this Aiden blushed.

"Don't worry," granny continued, "he's coming just for a little time. In the meantime, try not to get into any mis-"

Almost immediately, a cacophonous noise came from outside. It was so high, a bird dropped down on the ground.

"What on earth is that?" asked grandma.

Aiden said nothing. The both of them rushed outside to meet a soaking wet neighbour. He cleared his hair away from his hair. Grandma stared at him in awe. She knew what had happened, and turned her head to Aiden.

"Aiden... what did you do?" She said through gritted teeth.

The soaking wet neighbour looked at Aiden with fury.

"Mr. Willis. You look nice today." Aiden stammered.

"I should turn this - this brat into a toad. Using my love for felines, turning tins against me." Mr Willis yelled. "If not for you - your grandma I mean I would have animafied you."

Grandma was also mad.

"I am so sorry Mr Willis." She said apologetically. "Aiden promises he will never do it again. Would you like some tea with us?"

"SAVE YOUR SOBER SPEECH MARY." The angry neighbour yelled. At this, Grandma flinched. "Promise you will not do it again Aiden." She muttered

"I'll never say it again." He said with no regret. Saving herself from total humiliation, granny pulled her grandson from the increasingly angry neighbour, and went back home.

"Animafied. Tsk tsk. He should move on to something new." Aiden said casually. His grandma was still burning with anger... and shame. "Animafied" was a spell that could be performed by mythical creatures. Mr. Willis was an elf, and knew a lot about animals. It was part of his day job.

"Why do you have to disappoint me Aiden?" Asked grandma.

"Disappoint? Granny, he's a grumpy old neighbour. He needed some water. My pranks never fail to amuse me." He responded.

"Don't act like that. You know why he is like that. The protective barrier is getting weaker these days, and our kindly old neighbour is just anxious." Grandma told him.

"Oh great. Now you're supporting him over me. Thanks a lot." Aiden said sarcastically.

"Oh please. Stop being sarcastic, and be grateful. You don't know the half of what Mr. Willis does for you."

"Does for me? You are saying that grumpy grinch does things for me?"

"Yes. You just don't understand."

"Understand? What's there to understand. You are taking that man's side, just because YOU don't want to be turned into a racoon." Aiden said fiercely.

Grandma shuddered. "I've told you not to mention those horrendous vermin - and don't talk to me like that."



"Why? Because you're afraid?"

"No... because..."

"You think I'm going to scratch myself against their 'vicious claws'?"

"No... because..."

"I'm younger?"

"Don't push me far Aiden."

"Then why?"

"Because... because..."

"TELL ME WHY RACOONS SCARE YOU SO MUCH. TELL ME WHY YOU'RE ON MR. WILLIS' SIDE."

"YOUR PARENTS. OKAY"

"What?"

Before he got a response, a knock was heard. The two of them were snapped out of their conversation, and granny said, "I'll get the door. Must be Mr. Ford." As soon as she left, Aiden thought to himself. It was true that he never knew his parents. Frankly because of a supreme war. Not the normal weaponry type of war, but the magical kind. He always wondered what had happened that night.

Grandma came over to the door - and she shrieked, "Aiden. Get me my first aid kit. Now!"

Aiden thought about what was going on, but rushed to get what his granny had asked for. When he came to the door, he found a man lying down on the ground, trying so hard to splutter some words. He looked about 40, and had blonde hair. He was dressed in a business suit, and he had a strange birthmark on his forehead. His hand seemed to be missing a finger, and his body was slim. Lying on the ground was Mr. Ford. He managed to breathe a few words, before passing out into a dark sleep.

"Shield... city... weak... danger... sword... a-attacked."

Grandma- although old- picked him up like he was nothing, and took him inside.

Mr. Ford looked better by the time granny was done with him, but he was still sedated.

"Grandma, what did Mr. Ford mean?" Aiden asked

But granny was too deep in thought to answer.

"No. It can't be." She said to herself.

Aiden was thinking about what Mr. Ford was on about, when a resounding boom shook the sky and the ground.

"What was that?" He asked worriedly. Him and his grandma rushed outside to

find panicked and nosy neighbours on their porches. People were scattered like insects pondering on what was happening, when they saw one of their worst fears- the barrier that had protected them for years was slowly fading away.

"Oh no." Said a neighbour.

"It can't be." Yelled another one.

"It's the end of the world! Run for your life!" Screamed a worried friend. And when the alarm was raised, there was a total uproar among the neighbourhood. Granny rushed inside, while Aiden did nothing but watch. To make things worse, strange creatures started flying in through the barrier, to grab their anxious prey.

One by one people ran in fear, and one by one people were taken and dragged against their will into the air, and were feasted on by the malignant demons.

The creatures were muscular, and had two horns each on their head. Their mouths were filled with razor sharp teeth, and an evil tongue. To help them soar, they had wings, burning with fire, and their wings had holes. They were called drucils. One of them was about to take up an anxious Aiden, who had less than a second to hide, when suddenly, a big glowing sword came out of its back.

To be continued...

THE LOCKED DOOR

by Milo Hegarty, Year 10

We had recently moved into our new house. I Still haven't looked around every room in the house, I wasn't really bothered I new where the kitchen was and where the my bedroom was and the living room but I hadn't yet taken the time to fully explore the house.

Today was the day I decided to explore the rest of the house I was by myself and I cloud do whatever I liked. I decided that I would do a clean sweep of the downstairs then move upstairs.

The house is a very large building with lots of space for not a very big family. I decided that I would walk through the front door and then make my way around. As I entered the front door everything seemed very nice and tidy and the house was starting to fill up with our belongings. The downstairs was was large and I was pleased by everything that I saw but what I was more curious about was what lay in the upper half of the building. As I climbed up the crimson carpeted stairs I wondered about why we had Evan moved into this house it was homely but our other house was so much better. There was everything you could want inside it was fantastic. As I reached the top of the stairs there was a bright blue door to my left that I had never noticed before and I was suddenly intrigued to what was inside it. As I approached it the district smell of paint filled the air, that was something I had to get used to after the move. I had now reached the door and was almost to scared to pull the handle, this door has some form of control on me that I dint really feel comfortable with. After what felt like an age I finally plucked up

the courage to pull the the handle as I did I found something very surprising.

I pulled on the handle to find out that the door was locked none of the door had been locked! I tried again. Definitely locked! I had a closer look at the handle and I then saw in tiny hand written words "Behind this door is lays your future" It scared the life out of me.

by Oliver Ricks, Year 10

As Sam wandered through the empty mansion the smell of dust filled my nose. He was looking for something, but he couldn't quite grasp it. His shoes hitting the marble floor sent echoes out around him like a stone dropped in water with every step.

Soon he came across a reinforced wooden door, its jet-black hinges were like little fingers clutching the wood determinedly. Just below the corner of the door there was a worn and rusty handle.

He gave it a pull, but the door did not budge.

Sam wedged his shoulder into the door and pushed it with all his might. It still would not open.

Irrationally, the more the door would not budge, the more he was determined to open it. Soon he was trying to kick it down. His desperation was rising faster than a helium balloon. Now there was a little dent on the door from his many attempts to open it. One tiny dent. His knuckles were red from bashing the door.

He sank to the ground in defeat and rubbed his bruised shoulder.

Suddenly, he had an idea: he got up, grabbed the handle and gave the door a firm pull. Gently, the door swung open and he stepped through the threshold into a dimly lit and dusty room. Inside this room was a locked door...

by Bobby Norris, Year 10

Many people say that the most dangerous jobs pay the most; I disagree. Builders who work up high aren't paid nearly enough as they should be paid, and don't get me started on soldiers...

But that isn't the point.

When a man dressed all in black offered me a six-figure salary to simply guard an empty room all day I was sceptical. However, it was a lot of money...£120,000 to be specific. That's worth it. No matter what the task. He gave me and email address to make contact when I had made my decision as to whether or not to accept the job: I hit send...

The next day a black Cadillac picked me up; the driver seemed on edge. Stammering as he spoke, he gave little away. When we arrived I stepped out to be greeted by a foreboding looking warehouse. The door was already open...

'Good luck,' the driver said eerily.

I laughed a I thought it was a joke. How naïve I was.

I had been at this job around a week now, everything was fine. I didn't understand why the driver was nervous. The room was completely empty, except for a dim light that shone and a locked door. I never asked about the door.

It must have been around day eight when the driver silently handed me a key. I thought the driver was just weird and never questioned it. When I got to the warehouse that day I opened the

locked door with the key. Why did I do that?

My brother? I opened the door with no hesitation. Why did I have to be so curious? I saw my own brother...laying there...lifeless.

I called the police and a week later they called me...into the station.

'Take a seat, Mr Adams' the officer said sternly.

They revealed to me that there was no man in black; no Cadillac; no driver and no warehouse. They sent me for medical tests. They say I am ill; I know I am not. I know what I saw and what happened. They try to make me take medication, I try to resist.

They never do this to my roommate though, they don't say anything to him, they don't even acknowledge that he's there!

He does look familiar though. He always has glasses and a hat on, but the scar on his lip is familiar...my brother had one just like it...



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Service information

Date

Time WHY I LOVE BEING A TRANSITION MENTOR

THE QUALITIES NEEDED TO BE A GOOD TRANSITION MENTOR ARE: RESPECT FOR OTHERS, KINDNESS AND TO CARE ABOUT OTHERS. I THINK I HAVE THESE QUALITIES AND USE THEM IN MY ROLE ALL THE TIME. MY AIM IS TO BE A FRIEND TO THOSE WHO MIGHT BE STRUGGLING TO FIT IN AND FIND THEIR GROUP. I LIKE TO FEEL THAT I CAN MAKE A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE TO SOMEONE'S DAY BY BEING THERE FOR THEM, HAVING A CHAT AND A LAUGH SO THEY CAN RELAX AND KNOW THEY HAVE SOMEONE THEY CAN TALK TO.

By Billy Westhead, Year 8.

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Verulam School
Brampton Road
St Albans
AL1 4PR
01727 766100

verulamschool.co.uk
f @verulamschool



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