

Windsor student believed to be UK's youngest female patent holder

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Xanthippe Barnes is most likely the UK's **youngest female patent holder**, at just eight years of age, when the patent application for her automatic snow clearing apparatus, RoboSno™, was recently granted. (The UK patent office does not record date of birth for inventors.) A pupil at St George's School Windsor Castle, Xanthippe designed her robot as part of an online DT lesson that took place during the covid lock-down, and then worked to develop it into an idea for a real product. The novel – or patentable – part of the invention is that it melts the collected snow in order to get rid of it.

"It was a snow day and we were doing home-school," Xanthippe explained. "We were told to design a robot to do with snow, so I designed the RoboSno™, which moves using tracks and helps to clear snow or leaves from gardens. It can do machine learning, so it can tell what it is collecting and where it's going, and it has a boot to kick balls out the way."

William Goldsmith, Headmaster at Xanthippe's school, St George's School Windsor Castle, is a passionate advocate of encouraging students to ask the right questions, define problems and propose solutions, and was particularly pleased to learn about her invention.

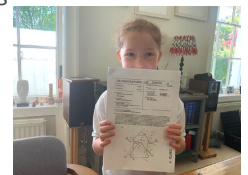
"Nurturing an inquiring mind and creative problem-solving skills are core to our approach as a school, so it is absolutely fantastic to see Xanthippe demonstrating these characteristics and pursuing her idea," he commented. Last year, St George's became the first standalone UK prep school to embrace the globally acclaimed International Baccalaureate (IB) 'Primary Years Programme' as its curriculum framework. He added, "Our students have really taken the IB ethos to heart and Xanthippe's successful patent is a great example of just what can be achieved."

The patent itself was drawn up by Philip Barnes, Xanthippe's father and owner of Barnes IP – a Windsor and London-based intellectual property firm. The company focuses mainly on patenting in software and electronics, with expertise in AI, robotics, cybersecurity and space technologies, so the RoboSno™ robot fitted in with this perfectly.

"All our research shows that she's most likely to be the youngest female holder of a granted patent in the UK, so we're extremely proud of her achievement," said Philip. "As an employer and a parent, I'm keen to encourage both girls and boys to consider STEM careers, following a science or engineering degree, since it may lead to them becoming a patent attorney in the future. We hope Xanthippe continues producing great ideas!"

If your child is interested in a career in IP, you can find out more at Barnes IP's 'World IP Day' event in Windsor on 26th April. For more information and to register, please visit www.barnesip.co.uk/careers

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