



The Abbey

Gateway

17 September 2021



Brighton Trip - T20 Cricket - Desert Island Discs

National Biathlon Success



Congratulations to a number of Abbey Senior School students who, after a remote qualification process in the summer term, have been selected to compete at next month's National Schools Modern Biathlon Championships.

This is a fantastic achievement - particularly qualifying under covid restrictions. They will compete in both running and swimming at the Championships, gaining points for each event, which when combined will give their total scores and positions.

This is the pathway to the Olympic discipline of Modern Pentathlon where the GB athletes were so successful this summer in Tokyo gaining gold in both men and womens events.

Congratulations again to the following girls and we wish them good luck at nationals.

- Upper II - Alice
- Lower III - Emily, Pippa, Araliya, Leila, Sarah and Evie
- Upper III - Isabella, Didi and Riya
- Lower IV - Grace, Lauren, Hannah and Ella
- Lower V - Carys and Matilda
- Upper V - Isabell
- Sixth Form - Libby and Lily



Historically, Biathlon has been a hugely successful sport at The Abbey, where combined strengths in the pool and on the track has culminated in podium places at National Championships.

Watching that enthusiasm and success continue on with students from Juniors to Seniors is also exciting and gratifying. More role models emerged for our students during this summer's Olympics – Team GB Modern Pentathletes showing the way for our students to follow.

Good luck to our Junior and Senior School students next month.

Heads: Connected

Shoot for the moon

A year ago to the day, as we completed our first full week of the autumn term, I was interviewed by a couple of our Lower III students. The questions they posed were wide ranging - an opportunity for others to get to know me and for me to share my values. One such question inquired who I would invite around the table at a dinner party - my choice was Michelle Obama, Mahatma Gandhi, Beyonce and Helen Sharman. The range of personalities and life experiences would surely make for an entertaining evening!

[Read more](#)

Welcome to Bodhi



What a cutie! Welcome to Bodhi - the new wellbeing dog who supports the emotional needs of Junior School students.

He made his first appearance at Junior School assemblies during Monday, and is already a popular member of the community.

For weekly events and reminders, please go to your [My School Portal account](#)

This week's Heads Connected: [Shoot for the moon](#) by Nisha Kaura



Upper VI trip to Brighton



On 10 September, Upper VI went on an amazing trip to not so sunny Brighton.

The trip was organised by the Sixth Form team to give students a relaxing and fun start to the year. Although the weather was not adequate for a swim, we enjoyed eating lunch on the beach by crashing waves.

After a satisfactory fish and chip lunch, we made our way to Brighton's famous Pier where we found out that, in the arcade, spending 2p coins to win other 2p coins was a most amusing experience.

Realising we had no hope of defeating the machines we decided to go on the rides. They were incredible! The first was bumper

cars which surprisingly went worse than I expected considering most of us now have a license. We then went on some rollercoasters which you could see Brighton city from therefore, enjoying the adventure and the beautiful view.

From the previous year group who also went to Brighton, I had heard great things about the Art. While walking around the town and digging through clothes in The Lanes, we found a lot of street art.

It was so fascinating as some of the art was completed for political declarations and others were intricate drawings with a variation of vibrant colours. This way we got a sense of not only the freedom of opinion but also the inclusion of diversity in Brighton.

The day was concluded with a refreshing chocolate milkshake, a bit of sunshine and a sing-along on the bus. I think I can speak for the whole year when I say we share a feeling of thankfulness for everyone who organised such a wonderful trip.



T20 Cricket

Last weekend Martha and Isabelle, Upper IV, were in the winning side at the Under 13 Girls T20 Blast Final.

Henley Cricket Club overcame Slough by 15 runs in the closely fought contest, on the last day of the season. The match was played in Hurst. Well done girls.

New facilities at Knell

Over the summer, Knell House was transformed - and is now the Early Years Centre at The Abbey. After building works were completed, we welcomed the youngest students within our community last week.

From the looks on their faces each day, it appears they have given the building a big thumbs up.



Alumna of the Week: Jana Hunter (2015)

Jana left The Abbey in 2015 to study a History degree and although she has studied in the UK mostly, Jana also studied at McGill University in Montreal, Canada. Jana has also been lucky to have the opportunity to spend time abroad for research at various archives.

When did you leave The Abbey and what are you doing now?

I left The Abbey in 2015, I then went to study History at Durham University, before completing my MPhil in Modern European History at the University of Cambridge. I am now a second-year PhD student (also in History) at the University of Oxford. My research maps Czech modernist consciousness in the cultural exchanges between British, German, and Czech travel writers during the second half of the nineteenth century, with a particular focus on the perceptions and experiences of time and space. This year I'm off to Prague and Vienna for research and archival work, which should be a lot of fun!

What do you miss the most about The Abbey?

I really miss the community the school offers. You always had friends and

teachers supporting you and helping you grow as an individual. I also really miss the mentorship the school offers - there are too many names to mention - but I know, for sure, that I wouldn't be where I am today were it not for some incredible teachers supporting me and believing in me and the academic path I wanted to follow. For that, I will always be really grateful.

What would you say is your biggest achievement?

Right now, my biggest achievement is receiving funding for my PhD at Oxford, without which I wouldn't be able to do what I love. I will always be thankful for academics seeing some kind of potential in my work and giving me such an exciting opportunity.

What advice would you give to current students?

I've learnt over the course of the last few years that life might take some strange turns - but it really isn't the end of the world. There will be constantly things that you wish went differently, but enjoy those unexpected changes! If you really want something, you will get there, it just might not be as straightforward as



you think - have faith because life's not meant to be easy. Somewhat ironically, this time almost seven years ago I got rejected from Oxford to study History for undergrad, yet here I am now being supervised by the very professor who interviewed me.

Aerobic Championships



Evie, Lower IV and Laura Upper III, recently competed at the British Aerobic Championships NAC Cup. Both students performed extremely well, and gained vital experience at a national event.

Senior School Library News

The library staff would like to welcome all the students back to the library this year – we have missed you.

Students can now visit the library to do research and private study, or to browse our impressive range of non-fiction and fiction.

Magazines and reference books are also available for use within the library and, in addition to books, DVDs can be borrowed.

Don't forget to check out new books and resources in our display area by the front desk or visit the Wellbeing area at the back of the library. We will continue to provide access to digital magazines, eBooks and to The London Library, which holds over a million resources.

Log-in details for these can be found in the library resources folder on the shared area and in the Google Classroom for each year group.



Netball Competition

Earlier this week saw the opening fixture of the year for The Abbey - and the 1st team were delighted to have entered the Sisters'n'Sport Netball Cup for the first time.

Well done to Didcot Girls' School on the win. The Abbey is already looking forward to their next match in the Plate competition.



Getting To Know You: Desert Island Discs



Our new staff profile this academic term is based on the classic radio show 'Desert Island Discs'.

For those of you not familiar with the show, the programme invites a guest, called a 'castaway' during the recording, to choose eight pieces (usually, but not always, music), a book and a luxury item that they would take if they were to be cast away on a desert island, whilst discussing the reasons for their choices.

Our first 'castaway' is Mrs Pettet - Teacher of Philosophy and Theology.

Top eight pieces of music:

Eagle-Eye Cherry - Save Tonight (my favourite song by a one hit wonder from the 90s)

John Williams - Theme from Jurassic Park (the most outstanding film score

of all time. Might scare me a bit though being alone on an island and imagining dinosaurs walking around.)

Backstreet Boys - Shape of My Heart (hard to choose just one by my favourite band of all time)

Oasis - Whatever (iconic song that I particularly like the lyrics to)

John Powell - Main theme from Chicken Run (this might help motivate me to escape the desert island)

'Stand up' from Made in Dagenham (being alone on an Island it might finally be my opportunity to play the lead in this fantastic show)

'You can't stop the beat' from Hairspray (this will keep me happy if I ever feel sad on my Island because it is so upbeat!) *

Pachelbels canon in D (music from my wedding and my favourite classical piece)

What book would I take?

Around the world in 80 days

This is my favourite stand alone book and it will transport me around the world away from my desert Island whenever I need it to.

Luxury item

My duvet. I might as well get some sleep whilst I am there



Hockey Training Juniors

Lower III students were full of enthusiasm to get back on the hockey pitch this week and even more excited to have 'Coach Mark' as their specialist coach.

Lots of good work was done on new and existing skills, plus the opportunity for some students to trial goalkeeping for the first time.

The after-school weekly training sessions are open to the whole year group and there was an impressive uptake, including six completely new starters. Well done Lower III for throwing yourselves back into school sport with such vigour.

Second Hand Uniform

The Second Hand Uniform Shop sells all items of current uniform. All stock is donated and in return prices are low.

There is a price list on the shop page of the school website. The Shop is run by a parent who volunteers assisted by Senior School girls who volunteer as part of their Duke of Edinburgh Award.

Orders can be placed by email to abbeyuniformshop@yahoo.com. They will be delivered to Junior/ Senior School Reception for collection.

Every effort is made to reply to emails quickly though at busy times it can take a couple of days.

PE programme

Students from both Juniors and Seniors have already got stuck into their PE lessons this term including swimming, dance and fitness.

Next week the co-curricular programme will commence, including lunch time and afterschool sessions, as well as a full fixtures programme, and we are looking forward to seeing students back being active and learning new skills.

European Gym Championships



And she's off! Good luck to Zoe in Upper V, who departed for Italy to compete for Team GB in the European Gym Championships.

We wish her all the best for today's competition.

Calling All Composers

The MusicFirst Young Composers Competition is an annual competition open to students in the United Kingdom ages 11-18 who compose their own original scores.

There are three categories: 11-14 years, 15-16 years and 17-18 years. If you would like to enter an original composition for this competition, please speak to Ms Bilkey, Director of Music, who will oversee the submissions.

Finalists will participate in a live, virtual Masterclass with renowned composer [Judith Weir](#) at 4pm on 18 November 2021, during which she will provide commentary on each of the finalists' work and announce the winner of each category.

For more information, including guidelines for the compositions, please [click here](#)