



The Abbey

Gateway

24 September 2021



Helen Sharman visit - Abbey Interludes - Chessington Trip

The Abbey Parent Society (TAPS)

TAPS is intended to help bring the whole community together and generate and support a sense of fellowship among all Abbey families. There will be events and discussion, connections between parents and between parents and the school. We are also looking to create a TAPS parent hub at the Junior School site, potentially with an office and occasional cafe.

All parents will be members of TAPS, but we are now excited to invite any parent who wishes to play a specific role to register their interest.

Parent links

We're hoping for two parent links for each year group in the school. They will liaise in their own year group, help organise events, and ensure new families are welcomed. Together they will form a body of 30 parent links, who will meet together occasionally for wider discussion.

Committee members

Committee members will be nominated annually from among the parent link group. We envisage the structure below - but this will be finalised in the first parent link meeting.

TAPS Management Committee

Meets regularly each term: min. 3 per year

Chair - Advice group - Welcomes and socials - Careers - Secretary

Committee and parent link meetings will also be attended by the Head, Head of Junior School and other key staff.

Registering your interest

If you would be interested in acting as a parent link please [complete this form](#). The form also gives you a chance to register your interest to be part of the management committee.

We would love it if as many parents as possible register their interest! It would be wonderful to work with you to ensure the warmth and strength of The Abbey community continue to flourish. If you know you would like to be involved, or think you might like to be involved - either way please do let us know.

Some key questions

What if there are more than two volunteers from any one year group?

This would be a lovely situation to resolve! Broadly we welcome as much involvement as possible. Some year groups might have bigger link teams, in which case two might attend larger meetings on rotation - but we would love to have as much involvement as possible. If there is huge interest from any one year group we might suggest parents take turns termly but we will work with volunteers to resolve.

What if no-one signs up from a year-group?

We will warmly encourage involvement (this is not code for twist arms fiercely, of course...). We'd love to have all year groups equally represented and will do all we can to enable this.

How long is the commitment?

We'd want parent links to be in post for a year, though of course if circumstances change we would be fully understanding. Some parents may want to continue their involvement longer, which would be welcome too. We propose that three years would be the maximum length of service on the committee and we would encourage new links to come in regularly to ensure the greatest diversity of voices, ideas and experience among the group.

Heads: Connected

Opportunity

I lay in bed, lit by the starlight coming through the window, and thought how amazing it was that I was there to see that light: that I had this opportunity. From the Mars factory in Slough to being in space as the first British astronaut.

The line above is paraphrased from Helen Sharman's speech to the School when she visited us last week. There's a full report in this week's Gateway.

[Read more](#)

Lower III Trip to Oakwood



Earlier this week, Lower III students enjoyed a fun packed day at Oakwood Youth Challenge.

Students nurtured their leadership and teambuilding skills across a range of disciplines - and this will help with their additional responsibilities at the Junior School this academic year.

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

This week's Heads Connected: [Opportunity](#) by Will le Fleming



Helen Sharman visit to The Abbey

Richard, Jeff and Elon may well be pleased with their latest space exploits but we at The Abbey got to meet a real-live British Astronaut of some fame last week. Helen Sharman gave a 45 minute talk with slides of her time in space on MIR - 30 years ago this year - to our Senior School students.

Inspiring, fascinating, informative and pretty amusing at times. Our students lapped up her stories, the science behind the trip and the stunning pictures taken in orbit. This was followed by some pretty penetrating questions posed to Helen by our students and staff.

Helen then went on a tour of our Physics, Chemistry and Biology laboratories ending up at the Museum space for a light lunch with 10 of our top student scientists. The excitement was palpable and Helen was an amazing, calm and considerate guest of honour.

We walked up to the Junior School to meet with Nisha Kaura. Julia and Ishita toured Helen with aplomb around the new spaces, the Fab Lab, the Junior Science lab, the computer room and ended up at The Space where the Lower III's performed a song for her. Then it was into the Junior School hall for a short talk to the whole school followed by some extremely enthusiastic students posing questions. Once again, the excitement was palpable and everyone was so happy to meet the first British astronaut in space.

The official opening of the Junior School SPACE Project followed with the great and good in our community, our Governors, Fellows and representatives of the builders, architects and contractors - along with a few parents - in attendance. Helen said a few words and then officially 'cut the ribbon' to mark this auspicious occasion. A plaque was unveiled in the reception area too. (Earlier this year Miranda Krestovnikoff (1991) opened these same facilities 'virtually' and so a plaque was unveiled outside the Fab Lab to mark this occasion).

All the VIPs were invited in to sample the amazing space-themed cakes and refreshments. All VIPs were afforded a tour of the new facilities and a number of staff and students stayed behind to make sure that this experience was properly showcased and enjoyed by all.

Helen so enjoyed her time with us and was one of the last guests to depart. She wanted us to thank everyone involved in the planning of her visit and left with fond memories of her interactions with our entire community.

Mr Andrew



The Halls are alive with the Sound of Music

This week saw rehearsals starting for our many and varied ensembles.

Bright and early on Tuesday morning the Staff Singers met in the Richards Hall for the first time in 18 months and although socially distanced, sang with delight.

At lunchtime the Hardcastle Hall came alive to the sounds of the Concert Band with their renditions of classic favourites such as Glenn Miller's *Moonlight Serenade* to more contemporary pieces like *Senorita* which topped the charts in 2019.

After school The Abbey Symphony Orchestra dazzled with their lively and exuberant playing of Strauss' *Radetzky March*.

Ms Bilkey



Live Performances

Florence is the Cello teacher at both the Junior and Senior School, but she is also an extremely gifted performer.

Her group, Ensemble Hesperii, will be performing concerts this term, and they are excited to be playing in front of a live audience once again. Below is a list of events you may be interested in attending.



12 November, 2021: English Music Festival "Full of the Highland Humours"
[Click here to book](#)

13 November, 2021: 7.30pm: London International Festival of Early Music "Battle of the Kings: Chamber Music from the Courts of Louis XIV and Charles II"
[Click here to book](#)

29th November, 2021: Temple Music Series

Join us for a concert celebrating the lives of musicians who lived and worked near the Temple Church in the 1700s.

The programme will feature a set of jigs composed for each of the four Inns of Court and a sparkling trio sonata by Purcell, alongside some lesser known, but no less intriguing, Scottish composers.
[Click here to book](#)

Abbey Interludes



In the middle of the busy week, an oasis of calm could be found in the Music department.

The Abbey Interludes weekly recital series was launched by four of our fantastic senior musicians. The audience were treated to wonderful performances from Tara (violin), Jennifer (clarinet) Helena

(harp) and Louisa (guitar). We are already looking forward to next week's recital.

Ms Bilkey

Summer Holiday Fun

The summer holiday already seems like a distant memory, so to help, Margaret in Upper I, tells us about her remarkable summer of fun.

"I had a really fun time in Stafford. Visiting princesses at Wonderland, golfing with friends, feeding penguins at the zoo and going into a winding sunflower maze, what

an amazing start to the summer holiday.

"In the midst of the countryside I had a blast den building, taking calligraphy lessons and visiting a Victorian Town at Blists Hill. It was a really interesting week.

Up north in Edinburgh, I was busy visiting the Camera Obscura, Go Ape and Monkey

World, and I think that I learnt how to climb like a monkey too.

I closed my summer holiday by taking part in a workshop at Royal Opera House. - and it was one the best activities I had done over the summer.

GCSE Art Exhibition



After a difficult and restrictive year for all, the Abbey Art Department and our GCSE students are excited to share details of their 2021 Exhibition.

The showcase highlights students' independent coursework derived from a 'museum' project brief.

We look forward to welcoming everyone back to the gallery to view this wonderful artwork and celebrate the students success. They most certainly deserve it.

The Art Department

GALLERY HOURS

Friday 8 October 4-5
Monday & Tuesday 11 & 12 October 12-1
Wednesday & Thursday 13-14 October 4-5

OTHER TIMES POSSIBLE BY APPOINTMENT
Email Liz: mackerethel@theabbey.co.uk



Swimming

Swimming is a life skill and so it has been vitally important for us to ensure that we get it back on the curriculum in a safe way.

It is great to be back in our lovely 25m School pool and for everyone to be rebuilding their water confidence and enjoying their swimming again.

It was also exciting this week to have our first fixture competing against LVS School, away in Ascot. Our older students dominated their races and this served as great practice for some of the biathletes competing soon at the National Championships, and it was wonderful to

be starting up inter-school competition again. Everyone enjoys the camaraderie of travelling away as a team to an event with different aged girls; allowing an opportunity for the Lower III students to show some leadership and nurturing towards those in Lower I and Upper I.

Pippa & Araliya, the swimming captains thanked the opposition for 'hosting a great gala' and went on, with another Lower III, Ipek, to express how lovely it was to be back in the water; with the squad, and how they hoped there would be more galas to come.

Mrs Orr



Gold DofE Final Expedition

In the last week of the summer holidays we set out on one final adventure to complete our Gold Canoeing DofE.

Our expedition was four days and three nights of laughter, determination and a whole lot of singing. It's fair to say that we sang for over half of our 110km journey.

Despite only cooking on a Trangia, we managed to cook up five star meals every night. From stir fries to curries, and porridge for breakfast, we unleashed our



inner Gordan Ramsay. Capsizing on the first day with a flooded canoe made us question how the next three days would be possible. But after overcoming that hurdle, it was only up from there.

We were blessed with good weather, good campsites and all round good vibes. To anyone who is thinking about doing DofE, there is only one answer -do it!
Lexie & Imogen, Upper VI (Year 13)



Alumna of the Week: Lucy Reynolds (2011)

Lucy Reynolds left The Abbey in 2011 and now works for the National Nuclear Laboratory in Post Irradiation Examination. Lucy will be giving an ASPIRE webinar to students from Years 10-13 after half term.

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

I left in 2011 and went to study at Swansea University. I started off doing Mechanical Engineering but hated it (and did really badly), luckily my university did Materials Science and Engineering, so I swapped to that. I felt like Materials was an applied mix of Chemistry and Physics, something I hadn't really known about in School.

When I finished my undergraduate I wasn't totally sure what I wanted to do, so I applied to a real range of jobs including Haribo. In the end I decided to extend my student life and do a PhD at Imperial, I was quite lucky as I found one working on new jet engine materials with Rolls Royce as a sponsor.

Now I work for the National Nuclear Laboratory in Post Irradiation Examination (PIE) at Sellafield, specialising mainly in microscopy and metallurgy. PIE is basically looking at parts coming out of different types of nuclear reactors to see if they've behaved as expected, and make sure they'll be okay in long term storage.

What do you miss the most about The Abbey?

A few things. I miss getting to spend the whole day with my friends, I'm grateful

to have kept so many from my time there but I definitely miss all the fun we had together.

I remember one time when pretty much our whole year played hide and seek in a free period which was hilarious.

I also miss how many opportunities and facilities the school has. I feel like you could so easily try anything out that you wanted to and there were so many different school trips you could go on. Even going swimming was a chore back then but now I'd do anything for that to be a standard part of my day. Definitely the banoffee pie too.

What would you say is your biggest achievement?

Getting a first in my degree. I didn't do so well in my A Levels and I remember thinking that I was always destined to do badly, but when I started Materials and got into my groove, I never looked back.

What advice would you give to current students?

Don't give up. Try as many new things as you can and you will find the things you really enjoy - if you feel like you're not good at anything, you probably just haven't found your 'thing' yet.

Think about and play up all the strengths you have – sometimes it feels like you need to be purely academic but it's the non-academic skills that will make you versatile. I was the Leavers' prefect, I did it mainly because I love to organise a party but the experience I gained



without realising it has been invaluable in interviews and work.

Always ask questions...I feel like this applies to all areas of life. Asking people what they think, how something works or even the 'stupid' question you have will teach you things, and those things you learn may come in useful later.

Finally, when you apply to university, think about the lifestyle. I got into Swansea through clearing and later I realised I hadn't even considered whether I wanted a campus university. I was so lucky I ended up there because it turned out to be everything I had wanted but not thought about/realised. University is about growing as a person, so look for the one that will help you grow in the ways you want to.

Art Lunchtime Lecture

This year Upper IV Art students will be focusing on the theme of Endangered Species by creating two and three dimensional artwork.

As part of their research they were lucky enough this week to have the opportunity to attend a lunchtime lecture from the Education Manager from the David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation.

Jo Elphick spoke in detail to the students about the artist David Shepherd and the work of the Wildlife Foundation that he set up, as well as the theme of Endangered Species.

It was a brilliant, informative lecture and certainly made all the students and staff think about why it is such an important topic and what we can do to raise awareness.

Miss Harris



Birthday Kindness



This year, I decided to ask for donations to Launchpad instead of presents for my 9th birthday.

I chose to do this because I wanted to help lots of people who don't have a home and have to live on the street. In total I was able to raise £290 for Launchpad.

Deepti, Upper I (Year 4)

Getting To Know You: Desert Island Discs



This weekly feature gives us all a little inset into The Abbey staff, and our next Desert Island Disc 'castaway' is Ms Brunskill - Assistant Head Operations and Partnerships.

Top eight pieces of music:

Mud Slide Slim and the Blue Horizon, James Taylor

My Dad and I have always listened and sung along to James Taylor; this song (and album) is a favourite.

Champagne Supernova, Oasis

Takes me back to my mid-teens, sitting in a field in the Brecon Beacons on CCF Expedition. Happy days!

You Got The Love, originally by the Source, the cover by Florence & the Machine

Also takes me back, to my dancing days at university.

The Lark Ascending, Ralph Vaughan Williams performed by the London Philharmonic Orchestra

A piece of music that helps me to transcend whatever is around me and rise up, like the lark. Very good on snowy mornings or on a desert island when all feels hopeless.

Diamonds on the Soles of Her Shoes, Paul Simon

I could have picked any track off the album Gracelands but have gone for this one because of the jaunty chorus. On repeat (on a cassette!) in the car when I grew up.

Discotheque, U2

One of my favourite bands. Something about the guitar riff gives me chills.

Levels, Avicii

This song was the soundtrack to my five years living in Jerusalem, teaching at the Anglican International School. I saw Avicii in concert in Tel Aviv and it was epic.

Suite Bergamasque no. 3, 'Clair de Lune', Claude Debussy

The perfect piece of classical music?

What book would I take?

Captain Corelli's Mandolin

I could read this time and time again. Beautifully-written, a wonderful story about love and loss and laughter. Magic.

Luxury item:

Memory foam pillow and two pillowcases

No one likes a cricked neck.



Musical Moments

On Tuesday morning students from Upper II treated their year group to our first 'Musical Moments' of the new academic year.

Performances from a singer, violinists and pianists were warmly received and we are looking forward to hearing Lower III play next week.

Mrs Heard



Chessington Trip for Upper IV

We went on a Geography field trip to Chessington World of Adventures as part of our topic on Tourism and Leisure.

As well as enjoying the rides we had a fantastic opportunity to assess how successful the park was as a tourist destination.

We took surveys on the number of people who were in the park, the quality of the environment and we also carried out both a smell and sound scape. We discovered that it is a very successful park for families with young children.

We also noticed that the rides did not go above the tree height because it is in the green belt of London. We will be spending the next few lessons presenting and analysing the data we collected.

Sukhmani, Maria and Layla, Upper IV, (Year 9)

