



The Abbey

Gateway

21 October 2021



Roman Day - HMAD - Artificial Intelligence

Modern Biathlon Championships



Under 14 winner Carys with British Modern Pentathletes Jo Muir and Jamie Cook

The Abbey was well represented across both Junior and Senior schools at the British Schools Modern Biathlon Championships at the weekend - and we are proud to announce we have a British Champion.

Carys, having placed 4th in previous years was obviously fired up this time to get on the podium. Despite being quite nervous beforehand, she channelled her energy effectively, gaining 2nd place in the run and 4th in the swim. Her combined points for this ensured 1st place overall - making Carys the Under 14 British Schools Modern Biathlon Champion 2021. Many congratulations.

The event was held at the prestigious sports village at Bath University, which is also the training home to the modern pentathletes who were so successful at Tokyo 2020 - some of whom were there and chatting to the next generation.



Junior School students, who earlier in the week had been successful in a cross-country event in Oxfordshire against eight other schools, were ready for the challenge of the biathlon. Araliya and Emily in particular built on that performance, both gaining a new personal best in both disciplines. Along with Pippa and Evie they came away as a 7th strongest team in Under10s - a very impressive display in a national event. Araliya finished 12th overall and Emily was 23rd.

Other students also ran or swam faster than previously, despite a lack of competition, including Alice in the Under 9s, placing 23rd. Her sister Grace placed 17th individually, and was part of the Under 13s team who finished 9th overall along with Lauren and Ella.

There was a good Abbey team spirit across all age groups. Isabella and Didi competed in the Under11s, and Riya in the U12s - we were very proud of all our qualifiers, but everyone would agree that the highlight of the day was in the Under 14s competition.



Heads: Connected

In celebration of making

Today's theme is a single word, but a powerful one. It is a word that carries so many meanings that its entry in the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary takes more than a page, spread across ten separate primary meanings, and 56 secondary meanings. Here's the primary top ten:

- To produce by combination of parts
- To cause to exist
- To entertain in the mind
- To amount to
- To gain, acquire or earn
- To bring to a specified condition
- To cause to be
- To cause to happen
- To work a miracle
- To behave as if

The word at the heart of all this, and, it could be argued, at the heart of the human experience, is: to make. And it is the theme of the day because today, in the Senior School, for the first time in two years, we saw the extravaganza that was House Music and Drama and the incredible work made by students across the school.

[Read more](#)

Podcast With A Cake

The third episode of 'Podcast with a cake' has been released - on the topic of Celebrities and Influencers.

Episode two is available on [Spotify](#), [Apple Podcast](#), [Castbox](#), and [Amazon Music](#). New episodes will be uploaded each Wednesday.

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

This week's Heads Connected: [In celebration of making](#) by Will le Fleming



Meet the Peri's: Christopher Frost

The Abbey Music department is very fortunate to be supported by a vastly experienced team of peripatetic teachers.

In this feature, we get to know one of them a little better:

Name: Christopher Frost

What instrument(s) do you teach?
Saxophone and Piano

When did you discover your love of music?

My grandfather and great grandfather were musicians. In fact, I have an old photograph of my great grandfather in the army band taken at the Somme in 1917.

My mum always liked the violin as he played that (amongst other instruments) and so I started violin lessons from the age of 6. At 8, I started to learn the piano which is where my love for playing music really took off. I really loved the sound of the saxophone and started lessons at 13 and immediately joined the school jazz band and it became my favourite instrument.

My parents always played records over Sunday dinner and I loved listening to these. I often asked them to put on Paul Simon's Graceland because of the many wonderful voices, instruments and harmony he used.

What advice would you give to young musicians?

Listen to as much diverse music as possible and sing. This will broaden your horizons and develop aural skills. Play with other people as this is the most joyful aspect of music and will greatly enhance your musicianship. Understanding rhythm and having a strong sense of pulse far outweigh the importance of note reading.

However, commit note mnemonics to memory at the earliest opportunity. Once they are internalised, note reading is just like riding a bike as you will never forget them. If you can read well and are strong rhythmically you can cross over easily between different styles of music and will be in demand. Also, you may not realise it now, but scales and arpeggios are a huge help later in your musical journey. Don't be afraid to make mistakes and experiment as these will lead to many light-bulb discoveries.

What is your favourite piece of music and why?

An incredibly difficult question to answer but pieces that spring to mind are An American In Paris, West Side Story Overture and the Theme from ET. I have



a large film music collection with John Williams, Hans Zimmer, Michael Giacchino and Alexandre Desplat comprising my favourite film music composers although The Nightmare Before Christmas is my favourite soundtrack album.

What is your funniest musical moment?

Rehearsals and shows usually provide plenty of funny moments; it's the interactions with your fellow musicians, singers and actors often during "you had to be there" moments.

Once I played Hawaii 5-0 while the Bishop of Reading was processing up the aisle for a service to consecrate a garden and another time I was accompanying a singer whose front tooth fell out mid-song.

What is your most memorable musical moment?

At school I sang in the choir in front of the Queen and led the school marching band through the streets of Henley in an open top bus parade for the triumphant GB rowers from the 2000 Olympics.

I have performed alongside Erasure's Andy Bell on live radio on BBC Radio 2's Madeley on Sunday and on BBC Radio Scotland during the Edinburgh Fringe. Both of these were more terrifying than singing in front of the Queen.

In 2019, I realised a personal goal becoming composer and musical director of a London show that ran for 18 performances.

If you could meet any composer from any point in time, who would it be and why?

I would meet George Gershwin as he was the catalyst for my favourite art forms and had the confidence in his ability to compose music like no-one else had before. I would love to talk to him about his approach to harmony.

Knitting and Stitching Show

GCSE Textiles Design students recently enjoyed the delights of The Knitting and Stitching Show at Alexandra Palace where they were able to immerse themselves in a wealth of creativity.



One of the highlights was Suzy Wright's Birds of Paradise exhibition, so called because of the extravagance with which the subjects in her 'pieces' dress. Some of the Lower V's talked to the artist herself and learned more about her approach. Her work involves a study of colour and how she views it. The amount of detail in her embroidery was fantastic and the students were amazed to find one of her larger pieces of work for sale for over £5000.

Mrs Lesbirel



Harvest Celebrations



This week we have celebrated Harvest throughout the Junior School with assemblies led by our Charity Captains and a traditional Harvest Festival at Christ Church with our Lower I and Upper I students.

All food items so kindly donated by our families have been delivered to The Salvation Army to help families in need within our local community. Thank you all for your generosity.

Mrs Hammond

Roman Day

Upper I (Year 4) enjoyed a fun-filled Roman day on Tuesday with a range of activities planned to enhance their Unit of Inquiry this half term.

These included a workshop led by 'Boudicca', Roman food tasting, designing and creating a mosaic and a Roman themed PE session. It was wonderful to see the efforts that everyone made to look the part.

I loved Roman day because we got to dress up and playing with my sword was fun. I learnt that Romans ate lots of fruit including grapes. I also liked eating the dates as they were sweet! Playing with Boudicca was also fun (but she was a bit too loud for my liking). I was glad that I got a picture with my shield. Overall the day was very enjoyable.

Amy Upper I

It was fun when we worked with Boudicca and played a Roman game called 'guess the god'. In PE, we marched like the Roman Army.

Meiyu Upper I

Roman day was brilliant. Absolutely unforgettable. I have two favourite bits. The first one was the food tasting. I was brave and tried a huge raisin (dates) and some chickpeas (that make hummus) Olives too (my favourite). Then there was



the workshop which I loved. A woman came screaming into the Space, and claimed that she was Boudicca, queen of the Iceni tribe.

Nona Upper I

My favourite bit was the Roman Workshop because I liked learning about the founding of Rome.

Emma Upper I

Mrs Hammond

Abbey Interludes



This week saw our fourth Abbey Interludes Recital in the music department.

We received an overwhelming number of applications from performers and we were treated to some phenomenal performances given by Emma (violin), Shree (piano), Maisie (singing), Suhana (recorder), Jodie (flute), Natasha (guitar) and Linda (violin).

This event is open to all students at the Senior School, regardless of whether they receive instrumental lessons in school or not, and is organised with the sole aim of encouraging and supporting our musicians to become more confident performers. Application forms can be collected from the music department.

Cross Country



The Manor Prep School in Abingdon hosted the first 'live' cross country running event at the end of last week and teams from Lower I to Lower III were excited, yet nervous to be competing alongside girls and boys from eight other schools across Oxfordshire.

The course was flat and therefore fast, with a short climb and a quick decline at one end and a narrow, winding, wooded section at the other.

Each race went off at a scarily fast pace before settling down for most runners. In every age group race we had at least one student in the front pack, with one Abbey runner finishing in the top 6. A special well done to Under 8- Ria 6th, Under 9 -

Mayowa 4th, Under 10 - Jinxin 5th, Under 11 - Araliya 6th.

Other runners were spread out throughout the field but wherever they finished everyone was rightly pleased with their effort and achievement in a tough and competitive event. We are looking forward to having parents back as spectators to encourage the runners, and in having running club back fully across all age groups during lunchtimes to gain some additional training.

In the meantime, why not all get out for a run over half term or start with power-walking and build it up? Embrace exercising and the outdoors.

Mrs Orr



House Music and Drama (HMAD) - And The Winner Is...



Ducat live performance

During the past few weeks, students have been busy rehearsing for the annual House Music and Drama (HMAD) competition, and today was showtime.

This year's theme was shapes - so House Captains got creative about how to incorporate this thread throughout their performances.

Paget House Captains Grace and Lally went on an adventure around a magical Monopoly board visiting famous squares; enjoying street theatre in ancient Greece, dancing and a flash mob in Time Square and some spectacular choreographed fighting in Madison Square Gardens. With an amazing cast they had quite the adventure and produced an excellent performance.



Carrington live performance

Kensington's production was centred around a school day with lessons in various subjects which can include something about triangles, e.g. Physics has a prism, History has the pyramids, and Maths has different types of triangles.

Within this structure they included the usual HMAD requirements of at least one of each of the following:

- choral item
- orchestral item
- devised piece
- scripted piece, from a full length published play
- poem
- dance piece
- Sixth Form comedy sketch.

For Ducat, Anika and Tara were on the hunt for the Abba Red Vinyl that has been stolen from the Very British Museum in London.



Paget live performance

House Music and Drama (HMAD) - And The Winner Is...



Kensington live performance

They began their journey by meeting Sherlock Holmes who provided them with a map of the London Underground, offering them advice and outfits to become detectives themselves.

Holmes, The Globe Theatre to watch 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', Oxford Circus to watch a Gym and Dance circus performance, an Olympic training session, a visit to the Royal Observatory

were snapped up by MI6 for another investigation.

Carrington took a journey around the world collecting different coloured diamonds - each diamond represented a quality such as those on The Abbey Learner Profile. Along the way Tiffany and Cosmo learn to be better people and shine like a diamond.



Carrington live performance

All the performances were outstanding, and HMAD showcased the rich depth of creative talent within our student body. Many congratulations to all who performed - particularly those in Upper VI (Year 13) for whom it was their last HMAD.

And the winner? After much deliberation, the closely fought contest went to Paget. Congratulations to everyone involved.



Ducat live performance

Anika and Tara travelled all around London on the Underground, meeting many interesting and diverse people; watching plays and performances; and gaining clues on the way. Some of the areas they stopped and the people they met included: Baker Street where they met Sherlock

Covent Garden, and the West End to see a number of shows, a Bollywood performance and explore the diversity of London.

Anika and Tara ended up at Waterloo where they retrieved the vinyl and



Kensington live performance

STOP PRESS

At the end of HMAD, Ms Bilkey also revealed the 2022 Senior School Production will be 'Hairspray'. The news was met with utter delight, and excitement, from the students across the School.



Paget live performance

Getting To Know You: Desert Island Discs



This weekly feature gives us all a little insight into The Abbey staff, and our next Desert Island Disc 'castaway' is Miss Butler - Head of English.

Top eight pieces of music:

Turkish Rondo - Mozart: my favourite piece of classical music.

Your Song - The version from Moulin Rouge sung by Ewan McGregor

Cool - Gwen Stefani

To the End - Blur: The first band I ever saw live. There is a beautiful version of this song featuring Françoise Hardie

Into the Groove - Madonna: one of my favourite songs as a girl. Loved dancing to this as a young 10 year old

Don't Stop Me Now - Queen

Dignity - Deacon Blue: Great anthem by Scottish legends

Head over Feet - Alanis Morissette

Book:

Cloud Atlas - David Mitchell

It is like 6 books in one. Beautifully written with clever plots spread through time with little interlinking motifs.

Luxury item:

My pillow. Sleep is everything.

Berkshire School Football Trials

We would like to congratulate Izzie, Myleene and Emily on attending the Berkshire Schools Football trials. Students were able to be nominated for these trials and then had to compete in two rounds to become selected for the Berkshire squad.



Emily and Myleene both attended the first round of the Under 14 Berkshire Schools Football trials, with Emily making it through to the final round and subsequently into the squad. Well done Emily.

Izzie attended the first and final round of the Under 16 Berkshire School Football trials and has been successful in obtaining a place in the squad. Izzie has been a committed member of the School football team throughout her time at The Abbey and we are delighted with her fantastic achievement of making the squad.

[Miss Venning](#)

Golfing Star

Myka in Upper I is a golfing superstar in the making. Benefitting from regular sessions with her coach, Myka has achieved a number of outstanding performances recently:

- US kids British Championship - 3rd place
- US kids South Wales Tour - 1st twice and came overall 2nd despite participating in only 2 out of the 7 tournaments.
- Berkshire Golf Girls - participated in 3 fun competitions and 1st in all 3.
- British Junior Golf Tour - one victory

Netball Success

Congratulations to the Under 16 A and B Netball teams who participated in the South East Berks Netball Tournament last week at St. George's School Ascot.

Both teams played fantastically in their group stages, qualifying for the finals in the respective pools.

The A team narrowly lost in the finals to Wellington College finishing 2nd in the A Team League. Whilst the B team took part in an exciting final against St. Mary's Ascot managing to secure a win, and finish top in the B Team League.

Artificial Intelligence

Last week, our Lower V students had a great opportunity to spend a day at UTC Reading learning about what AI is and discussing the different technologies that are currently used in our everyday life.

They played with Amazon's translation and recognition software and discussed some of the errors that users can encounter while using AI.

Students were asked to solve one of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals using AI and create a presentation to win an AI competition.

Their presentations included fantastic solutions such as:

"Voice me" App which helps autistic people to understand their tone of voice and interpret their mood by connecting the App to a smartwatch and asking questions to the user about their mood.

Maro bot, a sustainable designed solution that uses photo recognition software to clear the oceans of oil and plastics left by previous generations, based around a company which championed gender and ethnicity equality as part of its core values.



Matrix App, a petition app for peace and justice institutions that is accessible through its use of both physical magazines alongside the app, that uses AI to challenge the usual social media bubble by actively showing oppositional views too.

And finally, a TeacherBot, which provides education to home schooled children, or those in areas where quality teachers are not available, using AI to gauge students' progress, log what students know and creating new topics on what needs to be taught.

[Miss Mogio](#)

