



The Abbey

Gateway

8 October 2021



Hockey - National Poetry Day - Heatree Residential

Calling All Skiers – Join The Abbey Ski Race Team



The ski racing scene is now back up and running, and we are looking to build upon the pre-pandemic success of The Abbey's ski racing team.

School events are typically for teams rather than individuals, and prior to the lockdowns The Abbey team won the National Schools Outdoor Championships in 2019.

Since the lockdown restrictions have been lifted there has been a small number of school races, with more scheduled for the autumn term onwards.

Lauren, Lower VI (Year 12) has represented The Abbey as an individual and had some great successes: in the five races entered she has recorded three first and two second places, including this week when Lauren won gold at the National Schools

Indoor Open Championships (South) at Hemel.

Racing is on slalom courses, on both outdoor dry slopes and indoor snow domes in the UK (and there's even the possibility of racing in the Alps). The courses give an exciting but achievable challenge for any competent skier.

We are now looking for any budding ski racers that might like to join the team. Previous race experience is not necessary and any Senior School student able to ski confidently using parallel turns is welcome.

It is also not necessary to have your own ski equipment as this can be hired if needed. We intend to arrange slalom training sessions before the next round of races, so please contact Mrs Penhaligon to register your interest.

Heads: Connected

Fundamental values

What are British values? What are the qualities fundamental to the British way of life?

This is a topic that can inspire debate, dissent, satire and cynicism - all of which might be seen by some as not atypical British characteristics. One broad area of discussion is the role of the word British. Asking people to define what is quintessentially British will yield a range of answers, but most lists end up including queuing, rain and tea. More in-depth discussion may wander into history, identity, empire and all the complexities that debate entails.

[Read more](#)

Podcast With A Cake



'Podcast with a cake' is an online series with five Sixth Form students, who discuss a host of topics close to their heart.

Ranging from veganism to the impact of social media, each episode also includes sampling and scoring the cake of the week.

Episode one is now 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: [Fundamental values](#) by Will le Fleming



Meet the Peri's: Karen Ayton

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: Karen Ayton

What instrument(s) do you teach?

Clarinet, Saxophone (Junior School) and Piano (Senior School)

What advice would you give to young musicians?

Try to practise little and often at first. Don't get caught up going immediately from one exam to the next. Find some pieces that you really enjoy playing, and join some groups.

What is your favourite piece of music and why?

The conductor of Reading Symphony Orchestra conducted in full pirate costume for a performance of Pirates of the Caribbean. We had a parrot on the stand in the wind section. It was difficult to play, because we were laughing so much.



What is your most memorable musical moment?

I've been lucky enough to play Rachmaninov's Second Symphony twice. It contains a wonderful clarinet solo at the beginning of the slow movement. I was particularly proud of how I played it the second time.

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

Eric Satie. He was completely eccentric, and it would be really interesting to find out what made him tick. If I could have two, the second would be Elton John.

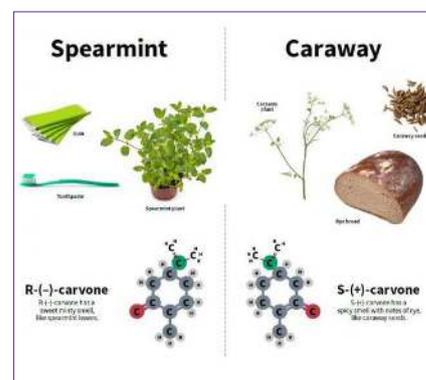
Chemistry at Home

You may have read in the press that the Nobel Prize for Chemistry has been awarded to two Scientists for their work on molecules that are mirror images of one another.

Using their knowledge, they have built a chemical toolkit which has been used for, amongst other things, discovering new drugs.

Many molecules are asymmetric and thus able to exist in two versions where one is the mirror image of the other. The molecules behave in different ways. One example of such a molecule is limonene. One version has a lemon scent; its mirror image smells like orange. This shows that our bodies can differentiate between the two mirror images. The same is true for drugs that are prescribed for diseases.

Many beneficial medicines have mirror images which have little if any pharmacological effect. In the case of thalidomide, the apparently non-active mirror image was found to damage unborn children. Since then, medicines have been more thoroughly tested in an effort to avoid this but it is often expensive to separate the mirror images from each other. If no dangers are found, the medicines are marketed as a mixture of the two versions.



So why not try this at home?

Spearmint and caraway both contain a chemical called carvone. One mirror image smells very different to the other.

You could verify this for yourself by conducting a blind test. It is thought that one in eight people cannot tell the difference.

This is an experiment which we carry out with our Upper VI (Year 13) Chemists. We often find that someone in the group cannot distinguish between them.

Mrs Harrison

My Favourite Poem
chosen by Dr Robinson

The Sea
Shirley Fudge

Gentle lulling of the sea,
Once again you beckon me.
Caressing waves upon the shore
Transporting me to years of yore.
As a child, your charm I sought,
Protecting me from battles fought.
Upon your craggy cliff I sat
To gaze in awe and wonder at
The magic of your shimmering tide
That restored ease and peace inside.

Interludes Lunchtime Recital

We were exceptionally fortunate to have a wonderful group of musicians performing in this week's recital.

We listened to performances from Suhana (recorder), Harshini (oboe), Helen (cello) and Jess (flute).

These recitals really are a fantastic opportunity for students of any age or standard to develop confidence in learning how to 'perform', and this week's musicians should be very proud of their achievements. Well done everybody.

Ms Bilkey

Gymnastics Update



We recently reported Zoe in Upper V (Year 11), was picked to compete for Team GB in the European Gym Championships.

Zoe and her team mates finished 14th overall which is an outstanding achievement given it was their first major international competition. What an exciting future Zoe has ahead of her.

Alumna of the Week: Caroline England (1986)

Caroline has always worked within Marketing and Business Development; however, she always had a passion for writing. In 2018 Caroline embarked on a new challenge and created Featherbed Tales - recordable digital picture books for children.

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

I left The Abbey in 1986. I currently run Featherbed Tales - a tech business which enables families to share beautifully illustrated digital picture books narrated by their loved ones. Families can create their own audio recordings through our platform so that as a reader turns the digital pages they can read along, look at the pictures and hear a personally created audio narration when they can't be together. Loved voices are known to reduce stress and provide comfort and reassurance to the listener. Originally conceived to connect families who can't be together through magical storytimes, our books are enjoyed by families separated through hospitalisation, parents working away on military deployment and geographically dispersed families - especially grandparents. Children love creating their own recordings too which bring joy to isolated older family members and help them to feel involved in their grandchildren's development and progress learning to read and talk.

We work primarily with city and county library services who offer our books to their library members free of charge. Easy to record and share, once created, the recorded books capture a moment in time - a lasting memory of a child's unique and charming little voice or memorable story readings by the older members of our families. Shared with permission by Little Emily is this wonderful story recording Jump Jerboa Jump - which Emily created especially for her grandparents. This encapsulates for us the power of stories and our voices to connect and

enhance bonds within families. For more information, [click here](#)

We are now developing a range of other applications for our tech, including working with schools developing products to address the growing inequality gap in reading, particularly for children whose parents do not read with them or those who don't readily engage with books. Further applications around dementia, recording family histories and a wider range of content to support speech and language development are also in process. As a new, creative and agile start-up we are always interested in exploring new partnerships and opportunities, so welcome connections with other individuals and organisations.

What do you miss the most about The Abbey?

There are several things I miss about The Abbey - being in an environment where a love of learning for its own sake prevails, something which perhaps many of us only recognise as consequential as we get older. I too valued the passion of the teachers, creating a nurturing bubble for students to flourish with unlimited time to explore concepts and meaning, especially in literature. I miss the warmth and honesty of friendships before we create walls to hide behind as adults. Friendships I made at The Abbey remain as important to me today and retain the lack of pretension we had as teenagers.

What would you say is your biggest achievement?

I think my biggest achievement is being prepared to fail and potentially to do so in public view. Inspired by others to follow a dream, I love having created something different which brings social value. I have always believed that regret is a pointless emotion, and so, having always wanted to do something with my writing, I know I will never find myself in a position looking back and wondering "what if?" The road my journey will take remains shrouded



in mist, but I am certainly going to relish finding where it takes me.

What advice would you give to current students?

There are several lessons I have learnt along the way, some early and some late which I see as particularly important:

- Seize every opportunity - you never know where it might lead you.
- Believe in yourself, but always be prepared to listen and re-assess
- The things you find most painful are likely to be your greatest chance to learn and grow.
- You can learn something from everyone sometimes in the most surprising places.
- Never write someone off, some peoples' talents and abilities are better hidden than others. Sometimes we just need the right environment to flourish.
- Don't take yourself too seriously - being able to laugh at yourself really makes everything much much easier.

Cybersecurity Awareness Month

Did you know... October is Cybersecurity Awareness Month?

In an era of constant change and technological evolution, cybersecurity has become a crucial topic for computer scientists across the world. According to Cyber Crime Magazine, there is a "350 percent growth in open cybersecurity positions from 2013 to 2021", which

means that there will be 3.5 million unfilled cybersecurity jobs globally by the end of this year.

To empower our younger generations and provide them with the necessary tools to succeed in the future, we are celebrating Cybersecurity Awareness Month at The Abbey School in October.

For this reason, we are sharing three main tips to keep your computer systems secure:

- Keep Your Software Up to Date.
- Use Anti-Virus Protection & Firewalls.
- Use Strong Passwords & Use a Password Management Tool.

Our students will be learning more about Cybersecurity this month, so if you would be interested in sharing any cyber stories with us then please email them to Miss Mogio.

Under 9's Hockey



Under 9 hockey players have been practising during lunchtime club and this week enjoyed their first ever fixture - away to Cranford House School.

Four teams travelled to Wallingford by coach, which is often the highlight of the event and the cause of most of the excitement, but these students were focused on the actual hockey matches and having all remembered their shinpads and mouthguards, they were primed for some action on the pitch.

There was a definite thirst for competition as play began. Kara had multiple shots at goal and by the full-time whistle had scored three times. Nawal, supported by Zoey, scored her first Abbey goal, being new to school, and was excited to be going on and scoring more.

The boys on the opposing teams were Cranford's main goalscorers, but with a

friendly, festival atmosphere, the focus was on the fun and the gameplay.

With time, our next steps we'll be working on translating our keenness to compete into greater goal scoring opportunities.

Mia, Thimuthu and Sarayu demonstrated some strong and instinctive defensive skills, not wanting the matches to be over despite playing four quarters, and immediately asking when their next fixture would be.

What a positive start to their matchplay experience, from which Sophie was still buzzing at school the next morning. It was great to see so many students involved; let's all aim to play more, in & out of school, and keep building on this great start.

Mrs Orr

Upper Prep Visit to Waltham Place



This week Upper Prep visited Waltham Place Biodynamic Farm as part of this half term's inquiry into seasonal changes.

We found out about the fruit and vegetables that can be grown throughout the year, what is currently being planted in the kitchen garden and which plants are ready to be harvested.

We then went on an autumn walk to observe the trees and find out about their seeds and seed dispersal - we even had the opportunity to create some natural autumn mandalas and collect some freshly laid eggs along the way

Mrs Yendley-Johnson

Sixth Form Taster Days

On Thursday 23 September, Lower VI (Year 12) headed off to Surrey University for the day to get a feel for Uni life.

On arrival, we headed to the lecture theatres, where we were given an introductory talk by the Head of Admissions outlining how to choose the right university for us.

The information she gave us was invaluable, and she introduced some factors none of us had even considered, such as the differences between a campus or city university. We were then taken on a tour of the grounds by a team of student ambassadors.

We visited the expansive library, the brand-new computer science and engineering studio, and the Student Union. Luckily it was a beautiful day, which gave us the opportunity to take in the views in some of the University's magnificent green spaces, full of sculpture and wildlife. We then took lunch in the canteen, sampling the myriad of options available or had a picnic by the lake.

After lunch we attended lectures on Personal Statements, Choosing the Right Course and Student Finance. They gave us a clear idea of the different pathways that are opened to us thanks to a degree. After this, we passed the sports centre, containing a rock - climbing wall, two swimming pools, squash courts, and a giant state of the art gym - and that just that was what we could see from the foyer.

Overall, our visit to Surrey University was hugely beneficial in giving us a look into Uni life, and now we can't wait for the real thing.

At the same time Upper V (Year 11) students were being entertained by our Upper VI (Year 13) students who gave them a brief introduction to life in The Abbey Sixth Form.

They had several taster lessons of their choice along with lunch and some relaxation in the Sixth Form Centre. A good time was had by all and Upper V (Year 11) were buzzing with enthusiasm for the real thing.

Choose a Poem

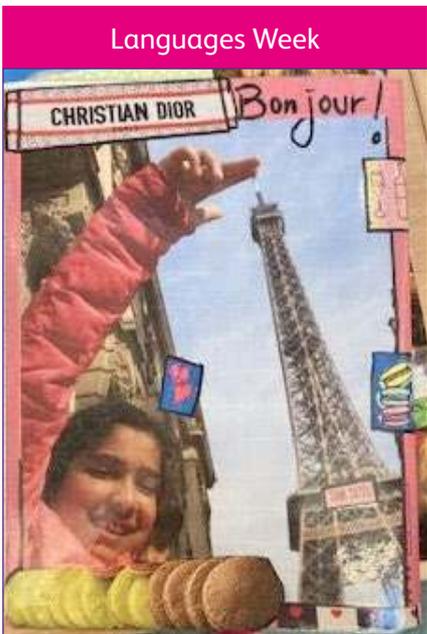
National POETRY Day 7 October 2021

#NationalPoetryDay
www.nationalpoetryday.co.uk

My Favourite Poem
chosen by Mrs Staines

Life is Amazing
L. R. Knost

Life is amazing and then it's awful and then it's amazing again and in between the amazing and the awful it's ordinary and mundane and routine. Breathe in the amazing, hold on through the awful, and relax and exhale during the ordinary. That's just living heartbreaking, soul-healing, amazing, awful, ordinary life and it's breathtakingly beautiful.



Last week, we celebrated the European Day of Languages and The Abbey's Modern Languages Department decided to extend the celebrations to a whole week.

A variety of events took place ranging from quizzes, Kahoots, dances, cooking challenges and tongue twisters, which took part in lessons and at lunch times. The week was launched in a special assembly. Our guest speakers were Riya Jamthe (2020) and Annie and Imogen in Upper VI (Year 13), who talked about their experiences of learning languages at The Abbey and at university.

We also asked the teachers to conduct some of their lessons in a foreign language and the students were asked to vote for the teacher who used their language the most.

The winners are: Mrs Jest, Mrs Mallet and Mr Patterson. Mr Dennedy, Mrs Davey, Dr Long and Dr Beaver also received lots of votes.

The overall winners of the German Quiz were Amelia and Rebecca in Upper IV (Year 9) who scored an amazing 21/23.

The winners of the Upper III (Year 7) and Lower IV (Year 8) book competitions were Riya, Olivia, Grace, Rosa and Aurelia.

Thank you very much to everyone who took part and the language teachers in particular.

Frau Byrne



Upper II go to Heatree



Upper II (Year 5) have had an amazing time at Heatree this week.

Walks across Dartmoor, raft building, camp fires and mud are just some of the things they got up to and covered in.

Residential trips are all about getting used to doing things differently and sometimes this can be tricky (although birthday cake for breakfast was the kind of different nobody seemed to have a problem with).

Mrs Clark



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 Mr Dennedy - Teacher of English.

Top eight pieces of music:

Send Me On My Way - Rusted Root: The most feel good song ever made and it features in the film adaptation of Matilda.

Final Song - MØ: One of my go to karaoke favourites from my favourite Danish pop star. It also has a great video that includes snakes and floating in a desert with dust clouds and dancing. MØ is just sometimes that little bit extra.

Running Up That Hill - Kate Bush: In my opinion the video to this song is the definition of interpretive dance. I love it so much and can perform it on the spot as proven by my win in the University of Reading Pairs Dance competition of 2012.

I'm Goin' Down - Bruce Springsteen: The hidden gem on a brilliant album that doesn't get as much love as it deserves. While the famous singles like Dancing in the Dark and Born in the USA are the most well-known songs, when Springsteen sings this one live it is always the highlight of my night.

Clearest Blue - CHVRCHES: What more could you need than an electro/indie/pop song by a controversial Glaswegian trio that samples Just Can't Get Enough? Pop bliss and edgy synths team up for a relentlessly catchy and loud 4 minutes of dancing and screaming out the lyrics at the top of your lungs.

The Louvre - Lorde: It's like a film in lyric form and much more muted than my usual go to songs. One of the highlights of Lorde's brilliant sophomore album Melodrama that deals with far more than is expected of most pop stars but it fits perfectly into the New Zealander's repertoire of reflective and alternately happy or sad songs.

Seven Wonders - Fleetwood Mac: One of my favourite opening sounds to a song ever! Instantly recognisable and iconic before being further immortalised in Series 3 of American Horror Story.

Radioactive - Marina: The first song that came on the radio after passing my driving test and one of the best songs on an album full of standouts.

Book:

His Dark Materials by Philip Pullman: I wrote my undergraduate dissertation on this series as I can name every chapter of Northern Lights in order as I've read it so many times. I also collect the series and have over 5 different editions of the full collection.

Luxury item:

An unlimited supply of hair conditioner because my hair is like a Brillo pad!

Netball



The Abbey Wycombe Invitational was a fun and successful tournament.

The team consisted of a mixture of students from both Upper V (Year 11) and Lower V (Year 10), who have not played with each other before.

It was a great opportunity to try lots of new combinations of players and for the students to get to know one another in preparation for the Berkshire Schools Tournament coming up next month.

The team played six matches, of which they won 5 and drew 1. There was a tie for first place, so the final placings were decided by goal average.

After a tense and exciting wait, The Abbey were announced the winners!
Mrs Sikorski

Reading Youth Orchestra

After 18 months of being online, it has been amazing to return to regular in-person orchestra rehearsals with Reading Youth Orchestra (RYO).

Over the summer, I had the opportunity to arrange a piece for them, on the theme of 'World Music', as a change from our usual genre. As I had been given free rein within the theme, I chose to arrange a medley of three pieces from the African - American railroad; Go Down Moses, Now Let Me Fly and Yankee Doodle.

I enjoyed the many challenges this presented, including the varied number of instruments and making sure the tune was shared across the whole orchestra, so it could be heard. After spending hours

working on my arrangement, it was very emotional to hear real instruments playing it rather than the synthesized sounds from the software I was using.

Reading Youth Orchestra meets every Friday night and, as well as playing amazing pieces, we are all great friends. We always welcome new members and for more information please visit the website: <https://www.readingyouthorchestra.co.uk>.
Jennifer, Lower VI (Year 12)

