



The Abbey

Gateway

26 November 2021



French Food Tasting - Ensembles Concert - Stop-Motion Animation

Diving Golds



Last Saturday, Grace (Lower V), Evie, Ella, and Hannah (all Lower IV) competed in the Great British Diving Federation's (GBDF) National Novice, Intermediate, and Advanced diving championships in Cheltenham.

The students competed against very tough competition from all over the country.

All the girls performed brilliantly with Evie winning gold in the Intermediate Girls aged 12 and 13 years old, Hannah winning gold and Ella winning bronze in the Novice Girls aged 12 and 13 years old.

Grace won gold, at what was her first diving competition. She commented, "I was awarded first place at the GBDF National Novice, Intermediate and Advanced competition for my age group - 14-16. I just wanted to say thank you so much to Mrs Burn for encouraging me to start diving"

All four girls dive with Albatross Diving club which trains in The Abbey pool.



Heads: Connected

Why we are here

A lovely experience this week, while on a trip to Manchester for the annual conference of the Girls' Schools Association (GSA).

I was visiting Chetham's School of Music at the kind invitation of Nicola Smith, joint principal of what is the largest specialist music school in the UK.

A small group of us were on a tour of the performance rooms and came across a student playing the piano in an empty studio.

We listened quietly from the balcony. The playing was dazzling, moving, captivating. When he finished we asked if he was practising for a forthcoming performance. No, he said, not really: I was just enjoying the room.

[Read more](#)

Podcast With A Cake

The next episode of 'Podcast with a cake' has been released - on the topic of Black History Month.

This episode 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: [Why we are here](#) by Will le Fleming



Meet the Peris: Saul Picado

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: Saul Picado

What instrument(s) do you teach?
Piano

When did you discover your love of music?

When I was around 5 years old I heard music coming from a classroom, where students were learning how to play some Orff instruments and I immediately asked my parents to enrol me in the same classes. I guess that was when it became clear that I had a strong connection with music. The love for it was gradually being nourished throughout the years.

What advice would you give to young musicians?

The more you practise the more you enjoy doing it. And make sure you are patient.

What is your favourite piece of music and why?

At the moment it is the 3rd piano Sonata by Chopin. Because I am learning it and I am totally immersed in it.

What is your funniest musical moment?

Once, just a few minutes before going on



stage I realised I didn't have two shoes of the same pair. Luckily I had brought one for each foot.

What is your most memorable musical moment?

Watching the performance of La Bohème at the Royal Opera House.

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

If I could meet only one composer I would love to meet Chopin. For the simple reason of being able to thank him for his music.



Bon Appétit, Lower V

At the end of their module on Food, our Lower V French students had the exciting opportunity to practise the language they had learnt by taking part in a tasting of French and Belgian products.

They had compiled a shopping list together with carefully chosen delicacies (croissants, pains au chocolat, baguette and Brie, Speculoos biscuits, profiteroles, etc).

We also had the pleasure of tasting some delicious home made dishes, for example Tarte Tatin, sablés à la noix de coco, muffins à la citrouille. Each product was rated, compared and discussed in groups, enabling students to broaden their range of self expression in French.

C'était une expérience très enrichissante pour tout le monde!

Mrs Berrow



Pistol Talent Pathway

Hannah in Lower VI has been selected by British Shooting onto their Rifle and Pistol Talent Pathways for 2021/22. Hannah will be part of the Pistol Talent Academy.

The purpose of the recruitment process was to understand the current development needs of each athlete and where the British Shooting Academies can best support those aspiring World Class shooting athletes.

Chris Stott, Head of Talent and Coach Pathways at British Shooting, said:

"Building on the success in a very challenging landscape through 2021, we are excited to see so many talented athletes throughout the rifle and pistol pathways this year, supported by high quality coaches throughout the Academies.

"I know the coaches have put in a lot of time and effort building on feedback from athletes and parents to continually evolve the Academy offer for this upcoming year to ensure we do the basics exceptionally well and we can invent the future together,



two of British Shooting's values. We look forward to working together to best support these talented athletes" There are two levels of Academy that this recruitment supported.

The Talent Academies continue to support athlete progression onto the relevant National Academy and World Class Programme, underpinned by the Development Academies alongside their counterparts in Scotland and Wales.

Autumn Serenade Ensembles Concert



The concert began with two amazing, confident performances from the Concert Band. We were treated to an upbeat sound, Santana's Smooth, followed by a calm swing piece, Glenn Miller's Moonlight Serenade, featuring an assured performance on the clarinet from Jennifer (Lower VI).

This switch in tone between the pieces was made effortlessly by the players. Next came the Wind Ensemble with renditions of Rock Around the Clock and Summer Nights. These were both kept in time really nicely with great dynamics showcasing the different instruments in the ensemble.

The Staff Choir was great fun, and it was clear that they were all enjoying themselves - they sang a lovely version of California Dreamin', which was chosen really well for the voices available and sung very charismatically.

The choir was followed by the String Orchestra who played Firework (Katy Perry) which had fantastic bowing from them all, led confidently by Eli (Upper IV) even though it was quite difficult.

The ending was amazing, very coherent and a great note to end the piece on. This pop piece led on nicely to a classic from

Stevie Wonder, Sir Duke, performed by the saxophone ensemble in an amazing performance that really showcased the



diversity of the students involved. This was followed by the inaugural performance of the first, fully student-led ensemble, the Berlioz ensemble.

This quintet was the brain-child of Helena (Lower VI) who chose the music, organised rehearsals and led the performance with charisma and professionalism. Having heard the harp as a member of this ensemble, it was then a real joy to be

treated to the full Harp Ensemble and their piece, Dorian Dreamer. This was performed confidently by all the players, and they were amazing at including all the dynamics to create a wonderful, peaceful escape.

This feeling was carried through by the Senior Choir singing You Raise Me Up, which created an almost tangible atmosphere which was a delight to experience. The high notes were sung expertly and the harmony was maintained throughout.

We then got to hear the Concert Band with two more songs, Skyfall (Adele) and Señorita (Cabello and Mendes). The drums were played marvelously by Mia (Lower VI) as the backing to an exquisite performance

with amazing dynamics that created a fun, upbeat ambience. The Clarinet Ensemble treated us to a magnificent rendition of Bohemian Rhapsody and an astounding solo from Kate (Lower VI). The clarinets were all so in sync it sounded like one player, a feat difficult to achieve by an ensemble of so many.

Last but certainly not least, an astonishing performance from the Symphony Orchestra that stunned the audience by its professionally rich sound. It was led expertly by Tara (Upper V) and conducted beautifully by Ms Bilkey, which all merged to create a wonderful finale to round off a superb night of music-making.

This concert truly encapsulated what it is to be a musician.

Cristina, Lower VI



Speech Day



Last Friday the Senior School was in celebratory mode when hosting the annual Speech Day and Prize Giving ceremonies.

The school welcomed back Alumnae Mrs Lydia Ennis (morning) and Mrs Joanna Jolly (afternoon) who gave an address to prize winners and parents.

It was a day to celebrate the achievements and contributions of so many within The Abbey community, and it was a delight to welcome back so many 2021 Leavers.

Thanks to Kate and Bhaayva, our wonderful Head Girls, for their



involvement across the day. Finally, huge congratulations to all prize winners.

Team Swimming Championships



On Saturday the Inter team of Lower V students - Katherine, Carys, Matilda and Jasmine competed at the ESSA National Schools Team Swimming Championships at the Olympic Pool in London.

They swam superbly. In the Medley they came 9th in their heat and 17th overall, which was a placing higher than they had qualified in.

In the Freestyle they came excellent an 4th in their heat and 7th overall qualifying for the final.

It was a fast race but they held their own and kept consistency in their times and finished in an outstanding 7th place in the whole of England.

This is an amazing achievement in both races so well done to all the students involved.

Stop-Motion Animation

Lower I have been learning all about stop-motion animation as part of their Computing lessons.

We started learning the key techniques by drawing stick men and moving them on our whiteboards and are now beginning to shoot our own projects.

Stories are closely linked with our Ancient Egypt inquiry work and we spent today designing backgrounds.

It's a great way of demonstrating understanding in other subject areas while learning important digital literacy skills.

Hiba: I like animation because I get to use my imagination and it's really fun moving the characters around.

Huihui: I learnt that you have to keep your iPad and background still, but if they move you can use onion-skinning to fix it.

Mr Stevens



Artists in Residence

The Senior School is delighted to welcome two Artists in Residence who will be working with the students during this academic year.

During their residency, they are also offering weekly drop-ins sessions for the wider community to come and view their incredible artwork as well as chatting about their passion for Art.

These open-door sessions happen every Wednesday 12pm-1pm at Turret House.

Below is a brief introduction to both Artists:

Hello! I'm Kristin Rawcliffe and I am a working portrait artist. I create portraits and figure paintings in oils using traditional techniques with the addition of vibrant colour that I use to convey life, expression and emotion.

I am interested in different ways of telling peoples stories through paint and have recently completed an MA in Fine Art at the University of Reading where I experimented with larger, narrative works.

I have exhibited at solo and group shows in London and the South East, including the Society of Women Artists and ING



Discerning Eye. I am looking forward to working with the girls to explore portraiture and finding their artistic voices.

Hello! I'm Emily Kelly and I am a printed textile designer, illustrator and mural painter.

My work is highly decorative and colourful. I am inspired by nature, textures, collected ceramics and Indian textiles.

I work in coloured pencils, acrylics, inks and photoshop. I love to layer my drawings, combine contrasting styles, techniques and scales.



I am looking forward to sharing my work and time with The Abbey School.

Alumna of the Week: Ria Kalsi (2018)

Ria left The Abbey in 2018 to study English at university. During 2019 Ria founded Matriarch (www.mtrrch.com) a positivity platform that strives to create change, empower and build human connection. Ria is hugely proud of her site and the empowerment to be able to publicise her voice.

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

I left the Abbey in 2018 and went on to study English Literature at the University of Exeter. I graduated in 2021 and have gone on to study my MA in English at Kingston University London. I also run Matriarch, as well as consultancy work in Learning and Development and Diversity and Inclusion. I also freelance in marketing and writing.

What do you miss the most about The Abbey?

I miss the environment of being around people and being in places that I was so comfortable and familiar with. I miss

the people the most though and am so lucky to have found some of the most important people in my life at The Abbey.

But also some teachers who were and still are so supporting and nurturing.

What would you say is your biggest achievement?

My biggest achievement is choosing an unorthodox career path which was very different to what my impression of 'success' was at school. Matriarch is the best decision and the biggest achievement I have ever made. Whilst it is really difficult to design your own job, it is the most rewarding and fulfilling thing I could be doing.

What advice would you give to current students?

I loved school, but it took me far too long to realise that it's not your qualifications that give you value and worth as a person, but instead, your experiences and decisions that do. Whether you choose to



go to university or do an apprenticeship or to just have a year out, that decision is valid and your worth is in no way tied to this.

Junior Sports Captains



Gender inequality in Sport is a topic that the Lower III Sports Captains feel passionately about. Ipek, Araliya, Evie & Olanna led their first assemblies across the last two weeks, sharing their views with Lower I-Lower III students.

They included facts, figures, quotes, video clips and even performed a rap they had created. One of Araliya's highlights was indeed 'working together as a team' to plan the assembly.

All four Sports Captains are keen footballers, amongst their other sports and feel that opportunities in competition are fewer for girls. They had selected a strong quote from the International Olympic Committee stating that 'Sport is one of the most powerful ways for promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls', and were glad to hear that by the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris there will be full gender equality achieved in athlete participation.

Araliya's fear had been that the students 'wouldn't all pay attention', but in fact they were enthralled throughout, and although she felt it was nerve racking, Ipek felt more able to 'talk freely to her friends' than to the younger girls.

They all engaged their audiences with questions, listening and responding to their answers and encouraging them to help their cause by 'watching more women's sport at home on the television, and participating in as much or more sport as any boys in their families'.

Reporting back later, Lower I really enjoyed the assembly and were inspired to follow up with the Sports Captains; Lucy & Nainika asking for more sports clubs and challenges, and Isabelle wanting more ideas of ways to 'stand up and let the boys know that they can do everything too'.

Ipek felt pleased that they had 'given a good message to takeaway and that everyone was interested'. Olanna was quick to thank and praise Alma, one of the Lower III digital leaders who had stepped in to run the slideshow and videos very proficiently.

Evie, always full of ideas, is already planning their next venture for a fun staff sports event for students to support and dress up as their sporting heroes, raising money for Sport Relief.

Mrs Orr

Dramatic Drama



Upper V Drama students devised six exam performances of approximately 20 minutes each, in small groups, and performed them to a live audience on Wednesday.

Each group created their own piece from a selection of stimuli, therefore the

performed pieces were the students' own artistic creations. They had to script, direct and perform their pieces, and to some extent design them, with the support and guidance of our Year 13 Lighting Designer, Izzy.

Mrs Perretto

Under 19 County Netball Tournament



Terezka in Upper VI, and who is also Under 18A netball team captain, Sports Captain and Sports Scholar, reviewed the County Netball Tournament on Saturday for Gateway.

"We started off with a loss against Queen Anne's in this round robin but rallied together and pulled it back against other teams.

We were very proud of Shina, one of our shooters, who stood her ground against very physical defence and gained confidence throughout the day. As we

practise more as a team, we will grow to learn how we all play and fix common mistakes such as misplaced ball placement as we aren't as confident as we could be with our teammates' reaches yet.

Our final game was against Wellington, we left everything on the court but unfortunately they pulled away in the last seven minutes.

By the end of the day we had luckily qualified for regionals and are looking forward to it."

Terezka, Upper VI

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 Lovibond - Teacher of Chemistry.

Music:

Requiem Op 9 - Durufle

I sang this in Berlin when I was 14 on the Wellington College Chamber Choir tour of the (still divided) city and it remains an important memory of my earlier years

Symphony No.3 "Organ" - Saint Saens

I was introduced to this by my first "proper" girlfriend and it will always have a place in my heart for so many reasons

Nimrod - Edward Elgar

Sad, solemn, archetypal British ceremonial that moves me to tears every time I hear it

Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves - Verdi

First sang this with the Staff Singers a few years ago and it always pops into my head when I need to express myself vocally - particularly when stuck on the M4 in a traffic jam.

Freebird - Lynyrd Skynyrd

For those who know their 70s rock music,

this song has pretty much everything including the longest guitar solo ever. More importantly, my son loves this too so there must be something OK with my musical choices.

Follow You, Follow Me - Genesis

Genesis have been part of my soundtrack for 4 decades and I could have chosen any number of tracks, but this is the one that moves me in so many different ways

Vienna - Billy Joel

Believe it or not, I was a bit of a wild child when I was in my teens and one day my stepfather sat me down and played this song to me. No lecture was necessary!

Get Busy - Sean Paul

Something more modern but this song just gets my feet tapping and my hips moving

Book:

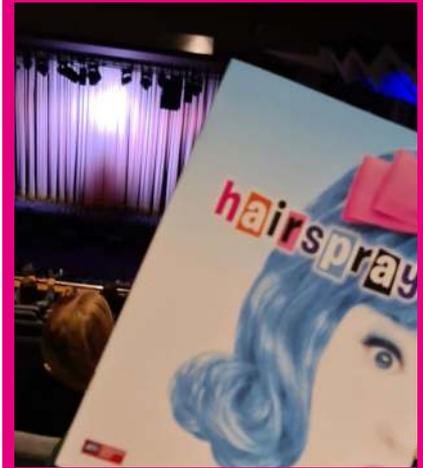
Complete anthology of Jack Reacher books by Lee Child

I admit to being a complete "Reacher Creature" and devour each new book in a matter of days. There's something special about Reacher's attitude to life and the direction of his moral compass which strikes a chord with me and I look forward to October every year when the next book comes out.

Luxury item:

Rugby ball, a set of posts and a kicking tee. Rugby has been my passion for almost all my life - first as a player, then as a coach (proudly including two England Red Roses) and most recently as a father of an extremely talented daughter who is knocking on the door at the highest levels of the game. The ball is obvious but I also need the posts and tee so that I can finally try and master place-kicking.

Hairspray: the Musical



On Thursday 18 November, a group of Senior School students from all year groups travelled to the New Victoria Theatre in Woking to watch Hairspray the musical, UK tour. It was an incredible experience to be back in the theatre after so long and to be there with our friends.

The show was an explosion of bright colours, with the costumes, lights and set giving it a truly joyous atmosphere. Below are comments from sisters Hannah and Louisa:

Hannah: My favourite part of the show was the singing and dancing which was a very different style to anything I have ever seen before. I loved the way the band was part of the show and were onstage behind the actors at specific moments, as I thought it really helped set the scene and add to the loud and fun atmosphere.

Louisa: My favourite song in the show was You can't stop the beat, as this is one of the first songs I ever learnt when I started musical theatre classes and cemented my love of musicals and it was amazing to watch it being brought to life on stage.

As a drama student, I loved the lighting as they used different shapes, colours and movement in order to set the time period and draw the audience into the atmosphere they were creating.

The whole performance shares a current and important message of diversity and inclusion, to all who watch, and shows us there is a lot that we can still change in today's world.

It was such a brilliant opportunity to go on a school trip with my sister and we loved every part of the show. It was a truly fantastic night out!
Louisa (Upper VI) and Hannah (Lower IV)

Studio Sounds

We were delighted to welcome a number of parents into school for the second Studio Sounds of this academic year.

Seventeen students from Lower I to Lower III entertained us with performances for the voice, piano, violin, flute, bassoon, guitar, harp and cello.

With pieces ranging from a movement of a concerto to 'Rudolph's Rag' there was something for everyone to enjoy.

Mrs Heard



Inspiring Visual Arts

Within our Arts Scholarship Tea Party last term we launched an activity called 'Inspiring Visual Arts'.

The purpose of this was to share and discuss influential pieces of work, uncover the breadth of art pieces seen, and think about what has left a lasting impression upon us.

Moving forward we wish to share with you a weekly article that is a culmination of staff and Art Scholar responses. We do hope you enjoy this art journey and help us embrace the importance of the Visual Arts.

This week we begin with Mr le Fleming's influential art piece.

The Weather Project Olafur Eliasson 2003

This installation in Tate Modern's Turbine Hall dominated a huge space and even expanded it by turning the ceiling into a mirror and doubling the height of a huge room.

The vast sun (a semi-circle, made into a circle by its own reflection) was formed from hundreds of mono-frequency lamps that created an unearthly landscape of yellow and black; the air was full of mist; people's voices were hushed.



The exhibition spoke of exploring ideas around experience, meditation and representation. What was most moving was seeing the way people responded: lying down, walking slowly while gazing up at their own distant reflections - the spectators' own figures were central to the artwork itself.

There was a sense of wonder and community, individual insignificance and group participation. Perspectives altered, lost and gained.

Mr le Fleming

Upper V Sports Leaders

Last Wednesday, a third of the Upper V Sports Leaders cohort spent the morning at Addington School.

They were given a mini tour around the school and found out lots of information about how they are able to adapt lessons to meet the varying needs of all of the learners.

They then led two PE lessons alongside the Addington staff to a number of students with varying needs.

It was lovely to see everyone mixing together, forming positive relationships and learning lots from each other. Our students took a lot away from the day and it was a fantastic morning for all. We look forward to visiting again in February.

Miss Venning

Sports Scholar Athlete Visit



We are very excited to launch our first in house Sports Scholar event with the visit of Harry Needs. This will take place next Wednesday, 1 December.

Harry will visit the Junior School first for a live streamed assembly, before swim coaching with Lower III.

The final part of his visit will be a motivational talk to Sport Scholar in the Lecture Theatre at Seniors.

Harry started his swimming career in central London and after a multitude of Junior GB Selections and world travels, Harry left his club in Camden and moved to the British Swimming base in Loughborough in preparation for the London Olympics.

As part of England talent programme and being shortlisted for the 2012 target squad Harry began his journey in professional senior swimming.

One opportunity, in one moment, is the harsh reality of sport and on the back of Olympic selection disappointment, Harry turned his head to a career as a Personal Trainer and Head Strength and Conditioning coach at Stockport Metro.

His passion and resilience is evident in training others towards Olympic selections.

We are very much looking forward to Harry's visit to hear his story and what motivated him to become an elite athlete, the highs and lows of competing and training and the barriers he has had to overcome.

Mrs Penhaligon

Bee Hotel Design Competition

On Monday, a number of Upper II students spent the afternoon in the Art department at the University of Reading.

They were taught by trainee Primary Education students and got involved in a bee hotel design competition run by the University.

The girls were thrilled to be part of the project and created their own bee hotels out of recycled items. Each group's designs were completely unique and one even had a bee disco floor!



They had to pitch their idea to the rest of the group and then create a prototype for a working bee hotel. They were very creative at investigating new ways for bees to inhabit and live on campus in a safe but fun way.

It was a brilliant opportunity to be using the University facilities and experience campus. The rest of the Upper II students look forward to visiting in the Spring and Summer terms.

Miss Mulvenna

