



The Abbey

Gateway

10 December 2021



Public Speaking - Upper III Latin - Sporting Stars

Candlelit Procession



On Monday evening, the school community enjoyed an evening of festive fun as part of a Candlelit Procession between the Junior and Senior School sites.

Starting at the Junior School, and with temperatures falling sharply, things soon warmed up with four carols and some delicious hot chocolate. Well done to the Junior School students and staff singers for their wonderful contributions.

It was then down the hill, safely marshalled by our new TAPS committee members, to the Senior School, where mulled wine and mince pies were on offer before two further carols were enjoyed.

Enormous thanks go to The Abbey musicians for their amazing accompaniment throughout the evening.

The evening ended with Mr le Fleming introducing the TAPS committee members, before wishing everyone a very happy



Christmas. It was a truly beautiful evening...hopefully the first of many community events.



Heads: Connected

Light shining in darkness

Is the darkness alive? And how angry is it?

Let me backtrack a little. At this time of year an ancient rite of passage for head teachers, almost as old as Christmas itself, is to read the Ninth Lesson in carol services: where St John unfolds the mystery of the incarnation.

One of the lines carries particular beauty and this year I heard it in two different translations. The King James Version of the Bible puts it this way: and the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

However, the English Standard Version feels very different: the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

[Read more](#)

Podcast With A Cake

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

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: [Light shining in darkness](#) by Will le Fleming



Fellow and Staff Leavers Concert

Wednesday saw the return of some much-loved members of The Abbey family, when we welcomed Fellows and long-serving members of staff who left last year.

The event began with a Fellows' Afternoon Tea; they were then joined by last year's staff leavers who together were treated to a spectacular concert given by some of our outstanding senior musicians.

The programme included dazzling solo performances on violin, clarinet, harp, flute and recorder, as well as uplifting music from the clarinet, saxophone and Berlioz ensembles, and the Fourth Form Choir.

Music alumna Francesca (Frankie) Richards (2019) made a return visit to give a moving rendition of Pie Jesu from Rutter's Requiem, the performance of which secured her a choral scholarship at Homerton College, Cambridge, where she is currently in her third year.

The concert concluded with a surprise item dedicated to Mr Stephen Willis, former Director of Music. O Mio Babbino Caro was always a firm favourite of his with the Senior Choir and he was delighted to be invited by Ms Helen Bilkey, Director of Music, to take a trip down memory lane and conduct our flash-mob choir, specially created for the evening!



Careers and Higher Education Fair

Please save the date for our bi-ennial Careers and Higher Education Fair which will be taking place on Thursday 10 February 2022.

If you or anyone you know would like to take part in this fantastic

event to represent your company and give invaluable guidance, help and information to our students then please contact Julie Bushrod at externalrelations@theabbey.co.uk - we would warmly welcome your participation.

Rowing medal

Ione in Upper IV is a keen competitor out of school and enjoys both riding and rowing. Currently riding has been reduced to once a week, as rowing intensity has increased.

She is a member of the J15 team at Marlow Rowing Club, and trains for 1½ hours after school on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays (Abbey netball matches excepted), and 4 hours each Saturday and Sunday. She has represented the club in the 'A' crew several times in the past year.

She recently won her first event: Womens' Junior Under 15 Coxed Quad Sculls at Upper Thames Small Boats Head of River Race - a 3km race at Henley, featuring all of the local clubs and several from further



afield. Pictured is Ione (far right), with her crew. Keep up the good work Ione.

Photography Competition

We are very excited to launch the Junior School Christmas photo competition!

Over the holidays, all students from Nursery to Lower III are invited to explore their creativity and capture inspiration through photography. After much discussion in Computing lessons with students, each year group has a theme based on their learning from the Autumn term.

Nursery: The Beauty of Nature

You can use objects in nature, create art or observe an aspect of nature (eg. weather, sky, woodland, insects, hills)

Reception: How we express ourselves

How you express yourself, your beliefs, traditions, celebrate and understand more about other people

Lower Prep: Where I belong

Capture a place that is special to you. It may be local or further away

Upper Prep: Earth's finite resources

Energy resources, seasonal differences, wood, water, crops, minerals, rocks, soil.

Lower I: Connections

Making connections with people all around the world and making a link. Be creative!

Upper I: Who we are

Symbols are used to express and communicate beliefs and values. Purpose of symbols.

Upper II: Rules in everyday life

Capture an image that shows a 'change in form' or a 'change over time' - eg: life cycle, change that takes place as people develop and grow

Lower III: Keeping my culture alive wherever I am

How could you capture an image to show culture that is special to you, or special to somebody else?

The entries will be placed in a special gallery later in January and we would love parents to come and join us in celebrating the exhibition. We will also choose one lucky winner from each year group who will receive a special prize!

How students can enter:

- Ensure you have taken the photograph yourself
- Include a little description about your photo including a title. Why did you take this photo? Where did you take it? A little story about the photo (max. 3 sentences)
- Name your photo:
Class_FirstNameSurname
(Example: LIIIB_SallyJones.jpeg)
- Emailed to JSComputingEvents@theabbey.co.uk, ideally as a jpeg and an attachment by midday 05.01.22
- Exhibition date: Wed 26 Jan 2022
- Prizes: 1 per year group
- Deadline for submissions: Midday 05.01.22

Looking forward to seeing your entries!
Mrs Walton & Mr Stevens (Junior Computing Team)

Swimming Progress



Anaya in Upper III has been making waves in the pool with incredible progress made with her swimming. She trains with the Reading Swimming club as part of their Junior Performance Squad. Some of her recent achievements are as below:

- Interclub meet attended by 12 Swim clubs from across England. held at Hart Swimming Club, with 95 swimmers participating. Anaya won 2 silvers & 2 Bronze Medals (silver for 200 IM & 50 Fly, bronze for 200 Freestyle, 50 Freestyle).

Her rankings are as follows for the South East Region

400m IM - ranks 14th
200m IM - ranks 20th
100m fly- ranks 14th
50m fly- ranks 27th
800m freestyle - ranks 24th
200m freestyle - ranks 12 th
100m freestyle- ranks 25th

Based on her recent performances, she has also qualified for the County Meet to be held in January 2022.

DofE Award Achievements

Over the past half term the following DofE Awards have been achieved.

Very well done to everyone:

Bronze:
Megan

Silver:
Megan
Helena
Frances
Jia
Chaarvi
Maryam
Dilaanshi

Gold:
Lara

Junior School Reindeer Visit

On Tuesday, The Junior School had two very special guests to help them all get into the festive spirit - reindeers!

Jet and Hail met students and staff, and thoroughly enjoyed being centre of attention. Jet (eight years old) was born in Norway, but Hail (four years old) is one of only a handful of reindeer who was born in the UK.

A rumour that Rudolph was spotted eating grass on the conversation garden has not been confirmed.



Save Reading Gaol 'Freedom' Competition



We wish to extend our sincere congratulations to Esme in Upper III for entering and winning the Save Reading Gaol 'Freedom' Competition.



Her small canvas painting of a freed bird gained lots of attention and won two awards - the Art Critic Prize (given by Waldemar Januszczak), and the Gold Award in the Hobbycraft public vote.

Well done and keep up the great work!

Upper Prep Performance



This week, Upper Prep were thrilled to welcome their parents to their wonderfully vibrant performance of 'A Happy-Clappy Nativity'.

The Happy-Clappy Nativity was about Mary trying to find an inn with Joseph. One night, an innkeeper offers them a place that has no chairs and no beds - it's really rather small. Well, it was a stable after all!

"They were delighted and baby Jesus arrived that night surrounded by many noisy animals." - Esha

"I like telling the audience 'wakey, wakey!" - Camilla

"My favourite part is when all the animals are arguing because it's very funny." Ahana

"My favourite song is 'Led by a Star' because it is so exciting when the three wise men bring Jesus the gifts." Saanvi

Going For Gold



Last weekend, Ella (LIV) competed against rowers from across Great Britain in the 2021 Mizuno British Indoor Rowing Championships.

It was her first competition, having only started rowing in September this year and she represented Reading Rowing Club in the Year 8 Girls 3 minute race.

Junior Library

Lower III students spent their Wednesday lunchtime enjoying some peaceful reading and creating Christmas Trees out of 'well loved' books.

It was lovely to be able to reinstate this favoured activity in the library again this year.
Mrs Botterill



Public Speaking



Last Thursday the Upper V Public Speaking Team - Harriet, Jigya and Alia - won the local heat of the ESU Public Speaking Competition.

Harriet (chair) and Alia (questioner), hosted the speaker from Bloxham School; Jigya (speaker) spoke passionately to support the argument that education should be a priority in developing countries.

Congratulations to the team and good luck in the branch final to be held in Oxford at the end of January.

Raising the profile of oracy in schools was a key finding of the most recent Oracy All-Party Parliamentary Group report, Speak for Change, and as a result The Abbey is now an ESU Affiliate School

Ms Quant

Music Exams

Congratulations to all musicians who recently passed their music grade exams!

Special mentions to Amelia (flute), Linda (violin) and Lily (recorder) who got distinctions at grade 8.

Good luck to Katherine who has got through to the semi finals in the piano category of the Berkshire Young Musician of the Year, which is held in January.

Dancing Accolade



Hope (Lower V) has recently been awarded honours in Tap and Character Dance at the JG Dance Competition. She now moves to the second level of British Arts enabling her to compete with the best dancers in the UK. If successful at this level, the national finals await at The Polish Theatre in London - a competition where she is a previous winner.

Hope loves dancing...and started at the tender age of four! Good luck in the forthcoming competitions.

Swim England Championships



On 5 December, Libby participated in the 200m, 400m and 800m freestyle events at the Swim England Winter National Championships.

Libby achieved a new personal best in the 800m and was just off her PB in the 400m and 200m.

This is an open age group event and Libby achieved 33rd place in the 800m and was 7th in her age group, she was 88th in the 400m and 200m in the open category and 20th and 19th respectively in her age group.

Cross Country

On Friday the Inter Girls team travelled down to Newquay, Cornwall to compete at the weekend's ESAA National Schools Cup Cross Country Championships.

The course was brutal with ups and downs, slippery mud and ever changing weather conditions including gale force winds, sleet, hail and rain! The students ran superbly especially in these tough conditions and worked together to achieve the highest positions they could against the top schools and runners in the country.

Carys had a phenomenal run and was in the top 3 for most of the race just being pushed into 4th in the dying stages. There was only five seconds separating 2nd and 4th positions; a superb achievement.

Behind her Maya and Lily worked hard to stay together and were rewarded with an excellent 53rd and 57th. Lily came in 108th and Gabby had an excellent second half of the race to chase her down, coming 110th.



Amelia stayed strong throughout the run and finished a fabulous 136th. The top 4 scores totalled together gave them a team score of 222 and they finished an outstanding 12th out of 27 schools competing,

They were the only Berkshire school to qualify in this age group and also out of the three South West regional schools to

qualify they came out top beating the other schools by at least five positions.

This is a fantastic achievement to be 12th in the country and one of the schools highest positions achieved in this competition as well as Carys being the highest placed individual we have ever had. Well done, girls.

Mrs Kirby

Fourth Plinth Competition

To celebrate Black History Month, the History and Art Department ran the Fourth Plinth project.

Open to all students, the challenge was to design or make a statue that would be appropriate to be placed atop the fourth plinth in Trafalgar Square.

The design had to focus on Black achievement but could take any form.



There were several excellent submissions but the judges determined that the winning entries were as follows:

Lower School	Anaya &
Upper School	Suhana Lily

Many congratulations to all three winners!
Mr Hawkins

2021 Ritangle Competition

At the start of October, I formed a team with my peers to compete in the 2021 Ritangle Maths Competition.

The competition spans over 9 weeks, where teams across the UK must answer 32 questions. Each correct answer reveals a piece of information that helps solve the final task.

We were tested on our problem-solving skills and often had to think outside the box.

The competition also encourages the use of technology to assist us in solving the questions. This could include anything from graphing software to programming in Python.

This freedom to explore different ways to solve complex problems along with learning new parts of the A Level Mathematics syllabus, which we are yet to cover in class, is what kept the competition engaging.

All in all, it has been an exciting experience so far and we look forward to completing the final task as we now enter the last stage of the competition.
Sarah Lower VI

Chess Update

Once again, The Abbey Chess team played well at their most recent event.

At Wednesday's 'She Plays to Win' online chess tournament, the school finished 3rd

out of 38 teams. Huge congratulations to all those who participated.

The next event is the National Girls Schools Chess Championships, to be played 'live'

at St.Catherine's school, Bramley, and two teams from The Abbey will compete. Good luck!

Mr Hills

Inspiring Visual Arts



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

This week it's our very own Director of Art, Mrs Barrett's selection:

El Seed - 'Perception' 2016

"Anyone who wants to see the sunlight clearly, needs to wipe his eyes first."
Saint Athanasius/ El Seed

A profoundly moving art project about misconception, community and peace.

This is an anamorphic piece, spanning across 50 buildings in the Manshiyat Nasr district of Cairo, Egypt. It is painted across the buildings and homes of the coptic community of Zaheeb.



Only visible from a certain point of the Moquattam Mountain, the arabic calligraphy morphs words of Saint Athanasius of Alexandria (Bishop from the 3rd Century) to emphasis the importance of us not being so quick to cast judgement.

https://www.ted.com/talks/el_seed_a_project_of_peace_painted_across_50_buildings?language=en



Swimming Trainer

Elizabeth (Upper V) speaks below about her swim teaching and passing on the skills she learnt from her own swimming training.

She still swims regularly and teaches young swimmers for the swimming club at St. Andrew's on Wednesday evenings. Elizabeth started doing this for the DoE silver, but plans to continue as a paid instructor from Jan 2022.

"I really enjoy helping teach the kids. It's always a bit of a challenge when one of the children is unsure of themselves or scared on their first try at something new, but eventually they become more confident in the water.

My favourite part of the job by far is watching them improve, especially once



they start to swim more independently. They are always so proud of themselves the first time they swim without any help, and knowing I've helped them achieve that is really rewarding."

Gym Championships



Christmas Card Designs



The winners of the Christmas Card Design Competition can be revealed.



school's card design, and Reeti as the winner of the charity card design.

Congratulations go to Christine Painter (support staff) as the winner of the

Well done to all who submitted entries.

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 Mrs Botterill - Librarian, Junior School.

Music:

Hallelujah - Leonard Cohen

This song is timeless, it hits my heart every time I listen to it. Of the many covers that have been made K.D. Lang is second after Leonard

Gabriel's Oboe - Ennio Morricone

This was my dear Dad's favourite piece of music

If I Were a Carpenter - Bobby Darin

Beautiful words

Shape of You - Ed Sheeran

I like the clever 'Sheeran' lyrics and rhythm of this song

May You Never - John Martyn

That voice!

Bridge Over Troubled Water - Simon & Garfunkel

Another timeless and almost biblical classic, it is so very moving as the song builds up to the ending

In the Air Tonight - Phil Collins

It brings back fabulous memories of seeing Phil Collins playing drums at the Dome in Brighton, just a few years ago...

Let's Dance - David Bowie

Incredible Bowie, always makes me want to dance

Book:

Where the Crawdad's Sing by Delia Owens

If I could be like Kya, the main character, I would have the courage to survive on a desert island and might collect some shells and feathers along the way!

Luxury item:

An infinite amount of paper and an 'infinity ink' pen to write stories with.

Upper III Latin

Upper III Latin students have started to look at heroes in the Ancient World from Romulus to Horatius.

They started by choosing heroes from the modern day and writing about what made them a hero on a 'Padlet'. In class they discussed their shared qualities and then investigated some Ancient heroes to see how the concept of 'hero' has changed over time. Amelia reflected on what it is to be a hero.

What is it like to be a hero?

It really does depend on what era you're talking about. The expectations of modern-day heroes and ancient, legendary heroes are different, almost polar opposites.

Modern-day heroes normally use their fame for good. Let's take Ms Rosa Parks for example.

She became famous after refusing to give up her seat on a segregated bus for a white person.

A hard start to life, while in Ancient eras, life would have always been a struggle or a walk in the park for heroes. Rosa dedicated herself to oppose racism, becoming a world-famous activist. A perfect role model. Many Ancient heroes... eh... not so much.

Romulus murdered his brother Remus, and then became a hero by building Rome. I would've assumed that he left the family murder part out of his biography.

Theseus murdered a kind and generous man that gave him hospitality in his kingdom.

Some Ancient heroes were quite selfish, like Odysseus. Odysseus and his men, after winning the battle of Troy, sailed across the sea, angered Poseidon/Neptune and everyone drowned or died in the following events except Odysseus.

People heard his story and felt remorse and sympathy for Odysseus, while also respecting his 'strength' and 'courage'.

Modern-day heroes are more 'believable', they have stories that people can relate to and even though there is lots of pressure on modern-day heroes, we have so many good role models that people can look back on for generations and can inspire them.

Being an Ancient era hero was slightly less achievable to say the least.

Miss McDonald

Make and Bake Workshop



14 Senior School students took part in the Christmas Make & Bake Workshop on 27 November. It was a really busy day with lots of baking and creating edible sweet dishes.

Everybody made and iced a fruit Christmas cake, and these have been admired by many students looking at the display in the Hardcastle Hall.

There was also time to make Christmas lights bark, chocolate truffles, piped mince pies and a gingerbread wreath, which were gift wrapped and boxed for the girls to take home at the end of the day.

Grace and Maya in Lower IV said, "We had a lot of fun and now have learnt a few recipes that we can impress our parents with."

Mrs Wooldridge