



The Abbey

Gateway

3 December 2021



Young Enterprise - Chess Champion Returns - Sailing Stars

Hansel and Gretel



Last week Upper I put on their production of Hansel and Gretel.

They were very excited to welcome their parents in the audience and share what they had been working on. From the wicked stepmother to the bungling robbers, the whole year group took to the stage; singing, dancing and delivering their lines with enthusiasm and joy. The whole production was fantastic.

'I enjoyed learning the songs, acting my lines and making people laugh' - Jasmine, Stepmother

'I really enjoyed the whole experience of being a wicked woman; wearing the costumes and moving around the stage in character were all great fun. I wish we could do a production every term!' - Beatrice, Wicked Woman

'My favourite song was, 'This Bad Bad Place. I felt really confident about saying

my lines and acting on stage' - Aleeza, Robber

'I liked all of the songs, but my favourite was 'Dinner at the Double'. I loved singing and dancing along' - Thimuthu, Narrator



Heads: Connected

Under our skin

I have spent a lot of my teaching life thinking about how a girl might feel comfortable in her own skin: how she may grow to be a woman who likes herself without the security blanket of others' approval. Through morning assemblies, PSHE lessons, Listening Ear sessions and Form Teacher discussions, our aim is to make a difference to the girls in our care, and we work hard to do just that.

When I was at school, I had an unforgiving sense of self. I'm not sure of its source, but it was not quiet, and I suspect there were times it made me hard to like. Always my hand up in the classroom, achieving the highest grades from the notoriously hard-to-please teachers. Roles in concerts, my name on prizes: I can remember the eye-rolls from classmates. But, in the main, I was approved of, and that was what mattered. It made me feel safe.

[Read more](#)

Podcast With A Cake

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

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: [Under our skin](#) by Nisha Kaura



Meet the Peris: Martyn Jones

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: Martyn Jones

What instrument(s) do you teach?
Piano

When did you discover your love of music?

My parents were both music teachers and so I was surrounded by music at home.

What advice would you give to young musicians?

The more you practise the more you will enjoy yourself. It's not a competition to see who gets to Grade 8 first!

What is your favourite piece of music and why?

There are so many gems! Probably either Mahler's Sixth Symphony or Prokofiev Piano Concerto No 3.

What is your funniest musical moment?

Taking my piano diploma exam: my third piece contained a top A sharp, the piano, however, only went up to an A natural. I literally ran out of notes! The examiner then proceeded to get the giggles.



What is your most memorable musical moment?

Performing in Sydney Opera House, though as a singer, not a pianist.

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

Dmitri Shostakovich. A great Russian composer who was also a qualified football referee. He got into trouble with the USSR authorities for writing the wrong sort of music.



Harry Needs Visit

The Abbey welcomed GB swimmer Harry Needs into our assembly and lessons on Wednesday.

This exciting opportunity presented Lower III students with the experience of being taught by the elite athlete in their swimming lessons. With his instruction and demonstrations, students developed their front crawl and breaststroke technique.

Harry also gave a motivational speech to both Junior and Senior School students about high level performance that inspired them to reach their goals.

We look forward to welcoming England and London pulse netballer Jasmin Odeogberin in the New Year.

Miss Steele



Christmas Decorations

On Monday The Abbey Nursery class returned to the Senior Art Department to complete working on their Christmas decorations.

Students and staff felt very at home within the department and we enjoyed Christmas music as well as experimenting with various techniques in applying paint to our fired clay ornaments.

Toothbrushes, sponges and fingers were used to blend pearlescent colours together. Sixth Form students led the way in helping with the activity and were an asset to the workshop activity. We then used Christmas stamps to make gift bags and tags for the decorations.

Thank you to our Nursery and Senior Art teams as well as our Sixth Form students for a wonderful couple of sessions. We sincerely hope all the Nursery families enjoy their Christmas gift. See you again next year! Merry Christmas!

Mrs J Barrett & Mrs S Kellow





Alumnae Louise Head (2016) popped in to The Abbey School last Wednesday where she joined in with Chess club and offered great advice to budding Chess enthusiasts, spoke to some of her past teachers and managed to answer a few questions for us as well.

Louise is currently a PhD student at the University of Edinburgh, working at the Institute for Condensed Matter and Complex Systems. She is studying soft matter Physics and developing algorithms for simulating complex fluids.

Louise is also a highly skilled Chess player and has been very successful in her achievements.

What is your fondest memory of The Abbey?

I was at The Abbey since I was 10 and enjoyed my time through all the year groups. I particularly enjoyed Sixth Form, being able to specialise in my favourite subjects. I was also proud to be a member of the Paget house, and supporting my house in chess and HMAD!

What do you like most about Chess and when did you start playing?

I started playing at 6, at my junior school chess club. At first, I attended the weekly club meetings, but started competing in tournaments aged 8.

There are many aspects to chess that I am passionate about, I've always liked the strategy behind the game, coming up with plans and predicting what your opponent is thinking. While chess games often can start by the same sequence of

moves, amazingly there are more possible variations of chess games than there are atoms in the observable universe - so there are always new and exciting games that can be played at all levels.

I also love the competitive nature of chess, whether you play online or in a tournament game it is always rewarding to win chess games - particularly if the wins contribute to your individual performance in a competition, or towards a team result.

These days I greatly enjoy travelling to competitions in new places, and meeting chess players from around the world!

What are your achievements in Chess?

- English Women's Chess Champion (2017 & 2019)
- Represented the England Women's team at the World Chess Olympiad 2018 and European Team Championships 2021
- Became a Woman FIDE Master (WFM) in 2017
- Being on the BBC One Show and playing chess against Sir Tim Rice (2018)
- Commentator for the English Chess Federation 'Checkmate Covid' 24 hour charity event (2021)
- First female president of the University of Warwick Chess Society, and won the English Chess Federation 'Club of the Year' Award (2019)

Any advice for chess players?

To improve at chess it's hugely important to always enjoy what you're doing. Sources of inspiration could come from playing over-the-board or online chess games, solving chess puzzles, learning chess openings, or watching commentary on big

events (such as the world championship match going on currently).

How will you continue in Chess?

I would like to continue to represent the England national team and achieve the Woman International Master (WIM) title.

Did you watch the Queen's Gambit? If so, what do you think about it?

I loved the Queen's Gambit series. In the UK, chess is widely played by more than 10% of the population, but yet it still doesn't have the same attitude and popularity that it does in a number of other countries around the world. Chess is even part of the national curriculum in some countries such as Hungary and Armenia!

The Queen's Gambit was a very special series to the chess community because it gave non-chess players an idea into the chess playing world. Even though the series is fictional, it showed everyone the competitive nature of chess tournaments, being a successful female (girl power) in a male dominated sport, the support teams that are behind the journey of many chess players, and even the glamorous scenes of playing chess around the world at high profile events. The chess games themselves were based on real games, and were selected by a former world champion, Garry Kasparov, so the series appealed to chess and non-chess players alike.

The popularity of the series, combined with lockdown, meant that there's been a huge and very exciting rise in new players taking up the game. For example, chess.com has had more than 20 million new accounts since last March, and university chess clubs have had a huge spike in members this year! Shortly after lockdown ended this July, there was even the UK's first chess festival in London's Trafalgar Square called 'Chess-Fest' with an amazing 6000 people attending. The UK chess scene is certainly thriving from the surge in popularity following the series.

What would you say is your biggest achievement?

I'm proud of all of the chess achievements, and also achieving a first class Masters degree in physics from the University of Warwick.

What advice would you give to current Abbey Students?

I would say that it is very valuable to be confident in your own abilities. In any path that lies ahead, whether it's your studies, exams, a job or your hobbies, there will be successful moments and failures. The important thing is to always keep your successes in mind, even if you hit a difficult patch. Approaching each task with a positive mindset, and to believe in yourself will give a boost to any performance.

Photo credit to chess.com - taken at the recent European Championships

Carol Service



The festive season kicked off in style last night at the Senior School with the annual Carol Concert. A late venue change meant Richards Hall hosted the event - that was enjoyed by parents, staff and students.

Alongside the traditional congregational carols, the evening included exquisite performances from the Harp Ensemble, the school choirs, staff singers and the Symphony Orchestra.

Warm thanks to all the musicians who participated in this wonderful occasion.



Chemistry In Action



The Chemistry lecture day introduced us to many novel fields of research which make themselves relevant in today's society.

An informative lecture given to us by Dr Asel Sartbaeva, a Royal Society University Research Fellow in Chemistry at the University of Bath, introduced the most vital of topics of how vaccines are stored, transported, and administered to all.

Learning about the use of silica to prevent proteins denaturing illustrates how vaccines can be delivered to hot countries without spoiling, reducing healthcare inequality.

We thoroughly enjoyed the interactive aspect which stretched our A Level knowledge and left us with a very positive experience.

Liah, Upper VI

House Netball and Football

Last week, all students in Upper III - Upper V participated in the annual Senior House Netball and Football competitions.

In House Netball and Football, everyone represents their house, either in the A or B team, for some friendly and competitive fun. At the end of each competition, we get an A and B team winner and then we combined the scores to get an overall winner for that year group.

There were some fantastic performances individually and as teams and it was lovely to witness the excitement and support students have given each other, both from their own house and others. The results this year are as follows:

Netball:

Upper III - Paget

Lower IV - Carrington

Upper IV - Carrington

Lower V - Kensington

Upper V - Result available next week

Football

Upper III - Carrington

Lower IV - Kensington

Upper IV - Kensington

Lower V - Paget

Upper V - Kensington

Miss Venning



Multi-Talented Sporting Student

Cara's (Upper IV) extra-curricular activities outside of school continue to keep her busy.

In tennis, she regularly trains with Maidenhead Lawn Tennis Club (MLTC) squads and Berkshire County squads. This helped her to win the 14U girls doubles Berkshire County Cup this year.

Cara had her first paid job helping out with tennis camp at MLTC which inspired her to complete the LTA tennis leaders course during October half term.

She is also involved with karate, and Cara regularly trains with the Traditional International Shotokan Karate Association (TISKA) in Maidenhead.

She achieved her black belt and is working towards her second Dan. She helps out with the club when possible. Recently Cara has become a member of David Lloyd and trains at the gym whenever she has a spare moment. She also has taken an interest in learning a new sport, Golf.

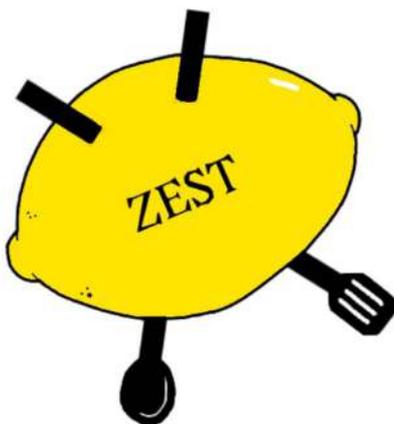


Young Enterprise - Team Zest

We are a Young Enterprise group called Zest and have created a story/cook book with beautiful illustrations and a moralistic storyline.

We want our young readers, aged 3-8 to have an adventure with Kai whilst learning a beneficial moral: 'You never know until you try,' encouraging them to be more open minded and try new things.

It improves their confidence both in the kitchen and in the outside world.



Check out our social media (Instagram - [ye.zest](#) and Facebook - YE ZEST) for more information and if you are interested to buy a copy please contact: ye.zest21@gmail.com

Swimming Captain

Earlier this year I was appointed as Club Captain at Maidenhead Marlins Swimming Club, where I have swam for the last 8 years.

Within this role I motivate the other swimmers, attend club events and discuss the clubs direction with the Head Coach, Paul Lloyd.

Recently I was asked to make a video to promote the club where I highlighted how as a club we work together as a team and encourage each other to improve our performance.

I also spoke about how supportive and approachable the coaches are, which is important to motivate an athlete through the peaks and troughs of their sporting career. I believe these aspects are fundamental in getting the most out of any competitive sport.
Annabelle, Upper VI



DofE

Lower V students now have the opportunity to enrol on the Silver Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

Please make sure enrolment forms are returned by the end of term.

Any questions about the DofE Award - please contact Mr Godfrey on godfreyri@theabbey.co.uk

Musical Talent



Emma in Upper I has been offered a place on violin for the National Children Orchestra project programme 2022 (age 8-12 group).

For piano, she has also been successful and is through to the semi-finals of the Berkshire Young Musician 2022 Piano competition. The semi-finals will take place in January. Good luck Emma!

Inspiring Visual Arts



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

This week we look at Hana's (Lower V) influential art piece.

What Matters (the scattering)
Shuster and Moseley 2017

As part of the Lumiere festival in 2017 inside St Oswald's church, 2300 hand blown glass bubble fragments were suspended from specific locations, which represent the distribution of matter in the early universe, just after the Big Bang.

The glass colours and locations were coordinated according to a spectrum of spherical sections derived from the Cosmic Microwave Background Radiation image which earned its discoverers a Nobel Prize in Physics in 1978.

As more visitors filled the church, the art installation became more alive with glass pieces and light reflection movement caused by the motion of the air.

I was inspired by this piece because I found it amazing how something as complex as the universe can be represented through a simple combination of glass pieces and light.
<https://vimeo.com/264208861>
Hana LV

TAPS Committee



We are delighted to introduce the members of our inaugural TAPS committee! They are:

Parent connections and mentoring:

Jonathan Bill

Secretary: Ellen Richardson

Treasurer: Sarah Marnu

Welcome and inclusion: Charlotte Briscall

Parent link co-ordinator: Helen Wallace

Committee meetings will get underway from January and address some of the fundamentals, for example how to gather and share parent contacts, as well as starting work on events and activities. In the meantime we look forward to welcoming all those who are able to come on Monday for our Candlelit Procession to celebrate the re-launch of our Parents' Society. And we look forward to many such events ahead!

Tennis Achievements



Gabriella in Upper IV loves playing tennis. She is a member of Caversham Lawn Tennis Club and plays on average 4-5 times a week. She enjoys developing her game and is improving all the time.

This summer she won the club's under 16 girls championship. She was also selected to attend Berkshire County training, and attends regular monthly squad sessions with girls from all over the county.

Gabriella enters tournaments most weekends and recently has competed in events in Oxford, Winchester, London,

Guildford, Abingdon and Windsor. She has had a number of successes. Particular recent highlights were winning an under 14 event in Oxford and reaching the final of an under 18 event, again in Oxford.



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 Adams - Director of Music, Junior School.

Music:

Sarabande - Handel

I like any music from the Baroque period but this one is my favourite. It made my day when my son was starting out learning the cello when he learned to play this.

Knight Templar - George Allan

As a cornet player having grown up playing in a brass band - my favourite brass band is Black Dyke Band. I was lucky enough to have the chance to play in a massed band with them after attending a course run by the conductor. Knight Templar was one of the pieces we played. I was really lucky to be able to do this as at the time the band only had one female player as most top bands were male only. There were over 75 players in the concert and only 10 were female.

Gabriel's Oboe - Ennio Morricone

A beautiful piece of music - I love the tone of the oboe.

Theme from ET - John Williams

Any film music by John Williams would be on my list. I chose ET as it has happy memories of seeing the film with my grandparents

Take on Me - A-ha

When I was in Year 9 at school the choir went on a tour to France/Germany/Belgium and this was the song that was played frequently on our coach journeys

Yesterday - The Beatles

I have always like the music of the Beatles and this song was played dedicated to me on a German radio station for my 17th birthday. Paul McCartney was also the first live concert of pop music that I went to

One Day More - Bouil and Shoenberg (Les Miserables)

I love Musicals and listen to them frequently at home. I particularly like this song as there are lots of different parts weaving together

Notes/Prima Donna from Phantom of the Opera - Andrew Lloyd Webber

Phantom of the Opera is my favourite musical of all time. I have seen it in the theatre many times and if I could only see one more show this would be the one I would go to. As with the song from Les Miserables I like this one due to all the different melodies weaving together

Book:

I don't have a favourite book as such but I really enjoy reading about those who were in the resistance in World War II so would probably find a book I hadn't read based on this

Luxury item:

As I would be on my own it would have to be a photo of my family

Wellbeing Corner - Sleep Tips

Try writing down any worries or thoughts that are playing on your mind before bedtime, there is plenty of therapeutic evidence to suggest that the simple act of journaling can help to release troubling thoughts and to free your mind from them.

Set boundaries for what you expose yourself to, limit screen time on social media, the Freedom App is helpful to control hours wasted scrolling.

Have a regular bedtime routine that avoids late afternoon napping and ensure that you have some downtime to act as your bridge to sleep after the busyness of your day.

Avoid caffeine and too much sugar, Chamomile tea may aid sleep naturally with its sedative effects.

If you are unable to sleep after 30 minutes or so, put on a low-level light and whilst avoiding technology, do an absorbing and relaxing activity that will keep you in the present moment such as folding clothes, organising your books, then return to bed and give yourself renewed permission to sleep.

Deep diaphragmatic breathing to help lower your heart rate combined with a body scan exercise (squeezing your muscles from your toes all the way up to your head on an inbreath and exhaling and letting go on the outbreath) can be calming too.

Above all, be compassionate and kind to yourself.

These words by Shane Koyczan may help you too:

"Know that now is only a moment, and that if today is as bad as it gets, understand that tomorrow, today will have ended."
Mrs Staines

Quantum Theatre

Last week, Lower IV students enjoyed a dramatisation of Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol.



They have been studying Dickens' classic tale of poverty and redemption in Victorian London this half term, and greatly enjoyed Quantum Theatre's fast-paced and funny adaptation.

Three actors only presented all three of the Christmas spirits, Bob Cratchit and his extensive family, the Fezziwigs and other minor characters, and of course Scrooge himself, with great energy.

At the end of the play, there was an opportunity for the students to ask the performers about their lives as actors, and how they managed all those changes of voice and costume.

Mrs Button

Sailing Stars



There are a number of sailors in school, some of whom have excitedly been reporting back about how they started out in the sport and are now loving the challenge and the fun of being out on the water.

We have nominated two students in particular for a national competition run by the Mintridge Foundation, aiming to find a young sailor who demonstrates the spirit and ethos of World Sailing.

Jo (Lower IV) & Pippa (Lower III) both spend all their weekends travelling around the country racing on the sea and lakes in their boats, which for Jo is a Feva named No-Mad, sailing with Mhairi, her teammate who goes to school in East London. They have been selected for the RYA Southern Training Group which is the first step on the RYA junior pathway that develops high performing sailors, and they are setting their sights high for summer 2022.

Pippa sails an Optimist, which is a single-handed dinghy and she too is a member of the Regional Training Group.

Both Abbey students are aware they have lots to learn and are keen that an opportunity to win six months remote mentoring with professional sailor, Hannah Diamond who is part of the Women's Pathway Programme, would send them in the right direction.

The values that they had to demonstrate are similar to those of our school, along with traits from our Abbey Learner Profile.

Pippa particularly demonstrated her integrity, and fairness in racing, winning



the Sportsmanship trophy at the Early Summer Championships.

Jo has real ambition, building up her skills on the water, alongside remote learning for technical or core training; being excited about discovering ways to progress and go faster.

We look forward to trying to link all our sailors up with each other sometime and maybe these more experienced nominees can inspire our younger budding sailors.

Mrs Orr

Nursery and Reception Nativity

This week Nursery and Reception sparkled and shone in their annual Nativity.

'The Big Little Nativity' was a wonderful way to share the retelling of the first Christmas. It was lovely to enjoy this moment with families, creating precious memories to look back on in years to come.

From our tired camels to the chanting carol singers, each and every child gave their all. Well done and huge thanks to all involved.

Mrs Archer

