

— A Student Newspaper —

THE HIGH SOCIETY

December 2024



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Get to know your teacher!

An interview with Miss Hussey

This issue we are focusing on Miss Hussey, a teacher of English and French as well as a Year 8 form tutor.

What are some of your favourite parts of teaching English?

I love introducing students to texts they may not have otherwise read and then seeing some get really into them and enjoy them. Some of my favourite things to hear are "Lord of the Flies was actually really fun!" or "I miss when we read 'The Empress'!" Allowing students the opportunity to discuss their ideas and develop their viewpoints on important real-life issues which are reflected in the texts that we read is also very enjoyable.

What are your other responsibilities at AHS beyond teaching your subjects, and what are your opinions on them?

I am a form tutor, which I think is fun because seeing your form every morning means you get to know them very well and see them grow through all sorts of experiences. I have a Year 8 form currently, which means I'm going on the Aberdyfi trip for the first time this year - wish me luck! I am also Key Stage 4 coordinator for English, which means I oversee the GCSE English curriculum and make sure it runs smoothly. It's so fulfilling getting to see the Year 11s get the grades they worked so hard for at the end of their GCSEs.

I am also a trip leader for the school's Swedish Exchange, which I really enjoy as it allows me to see the participants in a whole new context outside of the classroom. It's impressive how they build their character and resilience as they develop their independence and overcome cultural differences. Plus, I get to visit the ABBA Museum every year, so what's not to like about that?

Why did you decide to get into teaching?

I was inspired by one of my high school English teachers, Miss Morrison, who always made lessons super fun and interesting. I wanted to do the same!

What is your favourite thing about AHS as a community?

I really love how welcoming everyone is - students and staff. When I first joined AHS in 2019, I came in as a supply teacher. I immediately felt like a part of the school because the whole community was so warm and helpful and lovely that I never wanted to leave! I still think that's true of the AHS community.

What is your favourite part of the KS3/GCSE/A-Level curriculums to teach?

KS3 - Politics, the Media and Language as Power in Year 9

GCSE - Lord of the Flies

A-Level - Individual Variation in English Language



Get to know your teacher!

An interview with Miss Hussey

This issue we are focusing on Miss. Hussey, a teacher of English and French as well as a Year 8 form tutor.

How does English tie into other subjects in your opinion?

English ties into so many other subjects, as at its core English is reading, writing, speaking and critical thinking - all of which are key skills not just in academics but in life! In order to understand a Science or Geography question, for example, you need to be able to read it accurately to be able to work out what it's asking you in order to properly explore it. Then, you need to be able to express yourself clearly in your answer, and English helps with that too.

What's a fun fact about English you would like to share?

Language is constantly changing and the meaning of words shift over time. Some of my favourite examples of this are:

- The word 'check' in the 12th-15th century only referred to the move in chess ('an attack on the king') but eventually evolved to its modern day meaning 'to stop and examine something'.
- 'Terrific' originally meant 'terror-inducing' but now connotes something extremely good.



- 'Girl' in Old English was a gender-neutral term for any child.
- 'Hello' wasn't widely used until the mid-19th century in America when the word was coined as an adaptation from 'hollo' and 'holla' (sounds used to signal to farmers that someone was approaching). 'Hello' was then chosen as the standard greeting on the telephone which was invented at the same time, which led to it becoming a standard English greeting.

These sorts of changes are still happening! Voting for the 2024 Oxford English Dictionary Word of the Year is currently open and you can see how the meanings and usages of certain words such as 'demure' and 'lore' are changing as we speak!



Year 12 Artist Workshop

On Wednesday 16 October, Jane Charles, a textiles artist who is working with the Waddesdon Manor learning department to put together an exhibition, ran a creative workshop with the Art Department and Art students from Year 12. Each of us had the opportunity to create a panel based on our interpretation of either a fairytale or a nursery rhyme, which would then go together to create a stained glass window.

The exhibition is called Happily Ever After and the theme for the house is Sleeping Beauty. One of the towers in Waddesdon Manor contains a room with seven panels painted by the Russian painter Léon Baskt, and the panels combine to tell the story of Sleeping Beauty, which is why this theme was chosen. The community and schools element is located in the coach house, and the theme for this area of the exhibition is fairy tales and nursery rhymes.

AHS has created one of the three large stained glass windows - they are faux stained glass with acetate and design lines to represent historical fairy tales and nursery rhymes.

The exhibition was put up in the October half term, and the opening day is the 15th of November and it will run until the 2nd of January. To visit, tickets have to be booked in advance.

Jane is a local textiles artist, regularly completing projects with various schools and groups, and I had the opportunity to interview her about the exhibition at Waddesdon Manor, and on her work as an artist. Here is what she has to say on the project...

"This is the biggest and most challenging project I've done, since each day is with a different school using a different technique. Yesterday with Year 7 at AHS, I made trees using the Batik technique, which is a larger version of the cotton reel trees I make as part of my personal work. I enjoy working with communities in general, as it is an opportunity to create my work on a bigger scale.

I like telling a story with each of my pieces, for example with eco printing. Eco printing is a natural printing technique, using leaves, rusty water, and steam, which leads the tannins in the leaves to create an impression on the fabric, expressing beautiful and intricate details. This is then worked into my embroidery. I like to tell the story of the area I've gathered the leaves from, so I'll go to a particular place, gather the leaves from that area, and depict the story of that area through eco printing.



Diya B, 12 D



What I talk about when I talk about running

Noor Q, 13B,

My running experience has taught me the importance of exercise for physical and mental health and made me eager to encourage others to experience these positive effects too. Running was once something I dreaded but when I gave it another chance, it quickly became something I looked forward to and I am now training for my first half marathon! Training for this has been challenging, but it has also motivated me to run distances I never expected. I hope this article showcases how positive running can be and encourages you to go for a run or try something new!

When I first started running, it was difficult not to set high expectations and challenge myself each time; however, there were a few things that helped me track my running and motivate me.

Some tips that helped me are:

- **Using running apps to track achievements - (For example: Strava, Couch to 5k, Runna)**
- **Trying different types of runs (tempo, interval, easy, long)**
- **Strength training (this can be through bodyweight guided exercises at home on youtube or by using weights at home or in the gym)**
- **Trusting the process! - remember it will take time to increase distance or pace.**

Recognising the benefits running can have has also been beneficial. I have found that running provides numerous benefits for overall health, these include: positively influencing blood pressure/ circulation, reducing risk of cardiovascular disease, improving sleep and mood. Running can also help with your mental health by helping fight anxiety as it releases endorphins and increases concentrations of norepinephrine, which helps moderate the brain's response to stress.

Sports Psychology also provides an insight into the impact of running and highlights the different strategies used in sport to achieve successful outcomes. It emphasises that focusing too much on results can be counterproductive and suggests that instead of letting successes or failures define us, it can be more beneficial to focus on our response.

It is also important to recognise that different strategies work for different people. For instance, Michael Phelps uses music to prepare, while Usain Bolt has a more humorous approach and both are successful athletes. This reaffirms the idea that individual approaches are key to enhancing personal performance, rather than making comparisons with others.

'I trained 4 years to run 9 seconds and people give up when they don't see results in 2 months'
- Usain Bolt.



Remember: anyone can run! Wear whatever makes you feel comfortable and run somewhere you feel safe. You don't have to look a certain way to enjoy running, you just have to find what works for you, and there are many people out there like you who do it too!

Run for Fun Club runs after school on a Tuesday as well as Friday Lunchtime, if you would like to run with like-minded people.

And remember - your journey may feel more like a marathon than a sprint!

STEM Anatomy Talk – Dr Cecilia Brassett

The first STEM talk this year was held by Professor Cecilia Brassett on Anatomy.

She shared her experience and journey from being a general surgeon to a professor at Cambridge, while giving insightful reflections on her work as a teacher. It was most interesting to see how the teaching of anatomy is heavily intertwined with appreciation of being able to practise and learn.

For myself as an A Level Biology student, it was inspiring to see how one can take an interest in anatomy and the human body and apply it to real world scenarios.

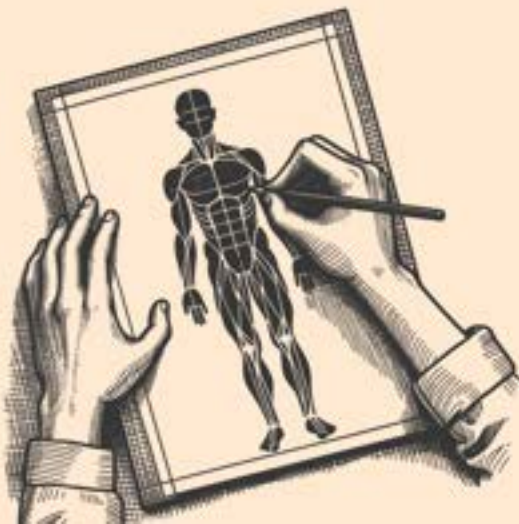
For example when she discussed and showed Geriant Thomas's shoulder dislocation and how important it was to apply knowledge of anatomy in this case - where the doctor had to recognise the dislocation on site and position him to reduce further risk of damage.

I really appreciated the opportunity to hear Dr Brassett's experiences and reflections.

When asked what her most memorable moment as a surgeon was, her answer demonstrated both the complexities of anatomy and the importance of trusting your gut in science! Dr Brassett described following up on a surgical patient who was presenting with pain post surgery. She rushed the patient off to surgery only to find a severe case of Gangrene. Gangrene is the loss of blood supply to the organs, causing them to turn black. This was the result of a genetic condition in the patient. Her supervisor had told her to "close" and essentially accept that the damage was far too great, however Dr Brassett used her knowledge of anatomy and skill to save as much as she could, ultimately saving the patient!

It was an absolute pleasure to hear her experiences and she was definitely an inspiration for all - clearly demonstrating you can follow your passion regardless of setbacks and unfortunate circumstances.

Inaya Ahmed 13K



The English Literary Canon: Why is it still valuable?

An increasingly discussed topic has been questioning the value of English Literature in school curriculums. Why do we have to study Shakespeare, Frankenstein, An Inspector Calls or even Lord of the Flies? This then branches out into how these texts are even chosen: What influences the collective opinion of society to determine certain texts as the literary heritage of our history? What determines a literary giant and deems them the privilege of being resonant still in today's society, enough that we still read and analyse their depth in classrooms to this day? I will be discussing the importance and value that literature has in our curriculum as well as, alternatively, the drawbacks of the limited representation.

Firstly, English specialists I have consulted have said that it is important to be comfortable in talking about these big literary names, be engaged and a part of that literary tradition, as well as the complex discussion of defining which texts deserve to make up our literary canon. These texts have a way of making human emotion and the human experience tangible, of relaying wider moral messages that are timeless and universally resonant. Thus, these literature texts ultimately spark the underlying question of what it is to be human.

This is a discussion we are all essentially a part of and need to explore. It is through literature that we can start to understand the genres and forms we read in contemporary literature but more importantly: the complexities of modern society and culture.

Literature gives us a unique insight into how we have become the society we are today, one with increasing compassion as well as division.

“Classic literature allows us an insight into history and viewpoints of time periods that we haven't lived through, and whilst modern literature is also important as it shapes our perceptions, many works of today have been sculpted in the aftermath of old texts.”

-Nathalie Y

However, these texts are also known for being prime embodiments and evidence of underlying issues of race and gender representations, which highlights the resonance of these issues in today's culture. As we learn to evaluate if and how society has changed since these texts, the fact remains that these issues are still pressing in today's day and age. Which is why older texts are essential, so that we may critique the harmful power structures rooted in a traditionalist, prejudice ridden past so that we can move forward as a progressive, modern community. These texts represent history, the opinion of society at the time, and if we do not learn the mistakes of the past, we will be doomed to repeat it.

Therefore, literature is a timeless vehicle for delivering moral messages so that we can affirm and critique our culture. Thus it is essential that we modernise, discuss and dispute these ideas and issues to move forward as a society and learn from past mistakes to make a more equal world where people are accurately and equally represented. We can then use these literary tools to see how far we have come as a society and to see how much farther we must go.

Arguably, a more effective way to show equal representation is through shining the spotlight on literary works of writers that represent these minorities, those overshadowed and placed onto the inferior position on social ladders. This would allow minorities to enter the conversation that they have been barred and excluded from throughout history, allowing them to reclaim the narrative, their narrative, to portray their experience of the human condition through their own lens, with their own voice, through their own experiences. English curriculums are currently working hard towards this goal. This is how we can fulfill the ultimate mission of spreading literature to allow everyone, especially those silenced in the past, to be allowed and comfortable to express their opinions through the encouragement of literature texts that prompt them.

When I start complaining about the readings I have to do, or even going to school, I remember how privileged I am that generations of women before me gave me this opportunity to have an education. How privileged I am that I can complain. English allows me to enter conversations branching from politics, ethics, morals, philosophy to express my values and ideas. To have a voice where so many before me were silenced and rebuked for having ambition. Therefore, these texts are so relevant as symbols of progression, so that we can make the world a better place, one that represents and allows everyone from all backgrounds to speak out and share their thoughts and opinions.

Mary Z 12F



Biology workshop at Oxford National History Museum



The Molecular Biology Workshop provided an excellent opportunity to enhance existing knowledge and acquire new practical skills, whilst also offering insight into the cutting-edge genetic and broader research conducted at Oxford University.

The workshop focused on key techniques such as polymerase chain reaction (PCR) and gel electrophoresis, to investigate the relationship between genotype and phenotype. We collected taste receptor cells, processed them through centrifugation to create a cell suspension, and extracted DNA. Using this DNA, we specifically explored the TAS2R38 gene and employed gel electrophoresis to analyse and compare our results. Furthermore, the practical application of gel electrophoresis in anthropology and evolutionary biology was highlighted, demonstrating its role in studying genetic similarities across populations and species.

We were also shown how the fossil records alongside computational modelling are employed to produce evolutionary models by comparing various reconstructions of skulls of an early Homosapien species from the Oxford Natural History museum. Allowing for a deeper understanding of evolutionary biology, and adaptation of Homosapiens overtime. This workshop developed our interest and knowledge of both human history and evolutionary processes, alongside the ways groundbreaking genetic research will help shape the future.

Amber O, 13C



AI - Is it more than just a tool to complete last minute assignments?

The fervour around AI has been building in our collective imaginations for the past few years; despite this, misinformation is still present about what it really is. 'Artificial intelligence' as a term is vague and serves more as a marketing ploy rather than an accurate descriptor. Defining intelligence is a challenge, because the definition of intelligence has changed over time to reflect the norms of societies and has never had a concrete meaning. For this reason, I will refer to 'AI' in this article as 'LLMs' (Large Language Models) and 'machine learning'.

LLMs such as ChatGPT, in a simple sense, work by organising data into categories based on how it is labelled, finding patterns in how data is organised, and outputting an average of what it has found. Other machine learning programmes are more rudimentary and can only process highly specialised data sets, but with higher accuracy. For example, if I wanted an algorithm to detect the absence of the colour red in a photo, I could design this algorithm to operate with almost 100 percent accuracy without having to waste time sorting through all the photos individually. However, LLMs like ChatGPT are more general, with a much larger data set, and are much less accurate.



The problem is that LLMs are 'black box programmes'- the way they specifically determine an output is unknown. As well as resulting in errors, this also highlights the ethical problem that these programmes can not be held accountable for what they produce. Even in specialised machine learning these problems occur, such as discriminatory recruitment algorithms and racist predictive policing algorithms. The issue of blame means that humans are still very much necessary to ensure nuance has been taken into account, so many of these programmes are effectively redundant.

For students, while using a tool like ChatGPT might be enticing, it could hinder their development to learn critical thinking. Especially in an age of rapid disinformation, it is important that students learn to understand and comprehend what they are seeing rather than have a robot do the thinking for them.

AI - Is it more than just a tool to complete last minute assignments?

Notably, these LLMs can be used to produce misinformation themselves, including the hilarious example of claiming that snake fights are a routine part of thesis defense presentations. However, the area of education that will be most impacted is higher education where controlled assessments are not as common. The prevalence of LLM tools may mean that degrees become less valuable and that professionals entering the workforce may not have the necessary skills they should. Further, richer students have the ability to access the full scope of these generative tools, creating a potential accessibility barrier.

Another less acknowledged, but equally important, aspect is that data shows that LLMs are detrimental to the environment. On average, each search into ChatGPT consumes 30 times more water than a conventional google search. LLMs depend on the physical existence of enormous servers. Each wire, IC and nanotransistor is built with precious metals that are mined, sometimes illegally, from mines that pollute massive stretches of land. Also, LLMs depend heavily on human labour, with each piece of data, among billions, having to be individually sorted by workers paid as low as a dollar an hour. Like all technology, LLMs are not neutral and have physical effects on the world.

The tremendous human and environmental cost also highlight that LLMs are expensive technologies that depend on optimistic funds from investors, and if companies like OpenAI can't provide the return they promised they would, the world of LLMs may face a dramatic crash. This could be potentially disastrous, especially if we rely too heavily on AI for the foundations of our social systems.

There is no clear answer on what position to take on LLMs and machine learning. There are many positive uses of these tools, such as machine learning algorithms being used to treat cancer and reach breakthrough results in researching the universe. But it would be reckless to ignore the real costs of developing 'AI'. Either way, it is important to view the issue not as existing in its own bubble, but as a reflection of current social issues.

Hanna S 12D

For more information, guidance and support, please see the **AHS Student Guide for Artificial Intelligence** available on the Student Homepage.





House Dance 2024



On the week commencing Monday 21 October, House dance 2024 kicked off to a great start. Despite having a reduced time period of 5 weeks, the House Dance captains choreographed, taught and organised a ten minute routine each. The performances were a brilliant testament to their hard work and dedication.

The stimulus that inspired our House Dance captains for this year was books by British authors. The inspired themes were as follows:

Ascott created a piece based on the story of Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare.
Claydon were inspired to explore the story of the Bronte sisters.
Hughenden chose to portray the story of Peter Pan by J.M. Barrie.
Missenden was interested in the story of Alice in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll.
Stowe delved into the story of James Bond, Casino Royale by Ian Fleming
Lastly, Waddesdon chose to present the story of Rebecca by Daphne de Maurier.

The dances were performed three times on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday evenings. The first and second night were judged with results on the final night. Everybody in the audience enjoyed it immensely, with one audience member saying, "The pieces were incredible. You could really tell that the house captains had worked really hard on them, and there were some really striking moments in all the dances."

House Dance Results:

Third place: Ascott
Second place: Stowe
First place: Missenden

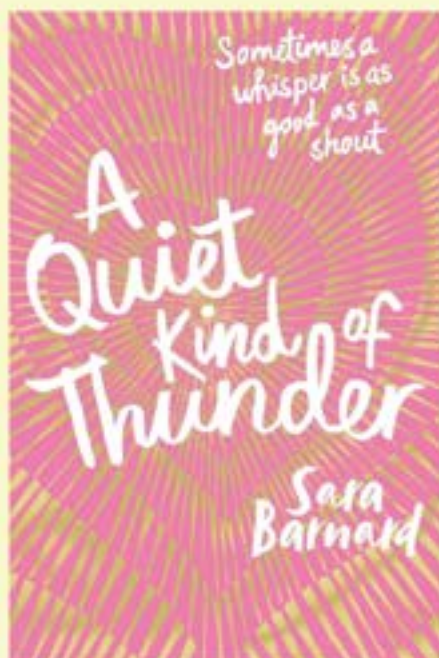
Well done everyone! Great job to all of the performers and house captains especially in this year's House dance winners: Missenden!

We especially want to thank Mrs Pennington and Miss Schembri who worked so hard to put this event all together. And to all the other teachers, students and parents who put time and effort into making this event happen.

Lucy M, 12D



SEND Representation in Reading



This book follows the story of a girl with situational mutism (a condition where someone struggles to speak in certain situations usually as a result of high anxiety) and a deaf boy, it explores their journey as they both use sign language to support and accommodate each other's needs.

Through this novel, Sara Barnard emphasises the importance of sign language and how it can be beneficial to a range of people from those in the Deaf community to people who struggle with speech. The story of Steffi and Rhys highlights that sometimes the quietest voices can be the most powerful. 'A Quiet Kind of Thunder' shows how accommodations can make a huge difference to confidence, independence and determination in a wonderful way as the characters support each other to overcome fears.

I would highly recommend this book to anyone who wants an insight into life as part of the Deaf community or the reality of situational mutism!

Zahra Q 13E

Top of the Bench Competition in Chemistry

AHS students and The Chemistry Department participated in the 'Top of the Bench' Competition: A team of four, comprising two Year 9, one Year 10 and one Year 11 student, competed online against other schools in the area to answer questions on their Chemistry syllabus and general knowledge.

Says Clara, in Year 10: "I really enjoyed participating in the Top of the Bench competition this year. It was exciting to go up against other schools and see how well we could do as a team, and I think it was a great opportunity to push myself and try something new. I am proud of our results. I am grateful for the chances offered to students at this school to take part in co-curricular activities related to our interests such as this."



HOUSE SPORT

This half term we had our termly House Sports event, a House event where students have the opportunity to compete against the other Houses in their year group in various different team sports. The results across all year groups are added up to get overall results for each House.

In sports there are three different types of sports; this term was Football, Dodgeball and Kinball. Students choose one of the three choices and compete to win and earn points for their House

It gives the whole school and year group an opportunity to take part in a competitive activity, to be physically active and have fun with their peers. This event has an effect on pupils' wellbeing and develops other skills as well, such as working as a team, their ability to compete as a form, increasing self confidence and building on the school values.

Most students say that House Sports is an absolute pleasure. It was fun to have a competitive event where teamwork was one of the major skills that could be used, alongside encouraging physical activity for everyone and a decent selection of popular sports designed to make you think. Overall, it was nice to see people helping each other, giving advice and having all-round good sportsmanship throughout the games. For dodgeball, it was a good way to learn how to accept when you make a mistake or get out of the game (being honest with not only yourself but others too!) and have a healthy relationship with your team and opposing team.

Here are the results for House Sports:

Stowe - 1st
Ascott - 2nd
Waddesdon - 3rd
Hughenden and Claydon - 4th
Missenden - 5th



Aishaani 8S



Year 7 STEAM Fest

On 19 November, we were thrilled to have been invited to the STEAM Fest at Wycombe High School, organised by the school and AtkinsRéalis. AtkinsRéalis is a world-leading engineering service and project management company. They connect people, data and technology to transform the world's infrastructure and energy systems.

There were around 100 students at this festival. Other schools taking part included Great Marlow School and Sir William Borlase's Grammar School. We were put into 20 groups of 5 which allowed us to interact with pupils from different schools and work collaboratively to create a product. Our task was to design and build a full size prototype of an ejector seat using cardboard and other recyclable materials. It challenged us to think about the best structure for a sturdy chair using shapes such as triangles or criss cross patterns. We came up with lots of ideas on designing the seat, modelling its structure and testing its stability. Finally, we did a presentation to explain our final product. At the end of the event, two people from AtkinsRéalis company shared their experience and inspired us to take part in STEAM programmes and careers.

It was a wonderful festival to showcase our creativity, enthusiasm and teamwork throughout the day. It contributed to developing our interest and knowledge about engineering and design concepts, alongside inspirational STEAM projects to participate in. Thank you to Mr Potkin and Mr Stevens for taking us on this rewarding trip.

Kiera L 7A



THE HIGH SOCIETY TEAM

Editors-in-chief

Nathalie Y 12K

Mary Z 12F

Designers

Senaya G 7A

Sahasra G 7A

Yaashi S 10C

Writers

Nathalie Y 12K

Mary Z 12F

Amber O 13C

Hanna S 12D

Zahra Q 13E

Diya B 12D

Noor Q 13B

Keira L 7A

Lucy M 12D

Inaya A 13K

Aishaani U 8S

Student Publications Lead

Miss Nash