

— A Student Newspaper —

THE HIGH SOCIETY

Friday 3 November 2023



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DRAMA AND MUSIC

OUR HOUSE: 'THE MADNESS MUSICAL'

In the week before half term, after months of hard work and rehearsals from actors, staff, tech team, choreographers and musicians, we were treated to three spectacular nights of AGS' and AHS' joint production, 'Our House: The Madness Musical'.



Revolving around the music of British band Madness, 'Our House' follows the story of London lad Joe Casey. On his sixteenth birthday, the story splits in two as Joe is faced with his first love and a hard decision. In a toss up between a life of illegitimacy and crime versus an honest but certainly humble life, we follow the two possibilities of a "Good Joe" and a "Bad Joe". Joe's two paths are also watched over by his deceased father, who regrets his own criminal choices that saw him neglect his family.

As the parallel worlds of Good and Bad Joe head towards an explosive climax, we find out which decision the 16-year-old Joe made... to turn his back on a life of crime and do the right thing.

Hannah 13C, who plays Joe's mum in the production, told us about the rehearsal process:

“Back in June, about 30 students from both AHS and AGS started learning a line dance for this year's joint school production, and here we are, with a miraculously finished performance of *Our House*. The cast have worked hard to bring this show together with the fantastic band, tech crew and dance captains, taking on not only the roles of actors but also of set artists, conductors, dressers and scriptwriters.”

The full-of-love-and-laughs musical has been a team effort, coordinated under the watchful eye of the director Miss Treherne and producer Mr Warner, and we have created a production which we are proud of, and which we hope our audiences will have as much fun watching as we have performing on our three nights of shows.



Lottie 13C



MATHS

TRIP TO SILVERSTONE



On the 22nd September, some Year 13 students, myself included, had the wonderful opportunity to visit Silverstone, a historical circuit in Northamptonshire. Formula One is a motorsport that originated from the UK, and Silverstone hosted the first ever Grand Prix the world has ever seen. Now with more than 445 million viewers worldwide, F1 is a “fast and furious” sport, and Silverstone is a highly-anticipated circuit to watch every season, seeing around half a million visitors every year, hindered only by the pandemic.



Year 13 students got to see the Silverstone Museum, a visual representation of the history of the track, and we were treated to an insightful talk which gave us an overview of the workings of the circuit, and the different career opportunities that may be available in motorsport.

After being taken around the circuit, we had the opportunity to walk near the Wellington Straight of the circuit, and see some fan plaques and artwork in an unused part of the track. Within the museum itself, there were exhibitions of cars used through the ages, commemorations of celebrated teams including Ferrari and Red Bull, as well as interactive puzzles, games and activities.

As a group, we were able to really get involved and learn about the Engineering processes behind making the cars, and the different parameters considered by designers in order to create such fast cars for driving. One highlight of the day was definitely the opportunity to drive a mini race on a scale model circuit known as the Scalectrix, which enthralled everyone and was fun as a mini competition.



This trip would not be possible without our teachers Miss Wootton and Mr Otoo, who accompanied us on the day. Miss Wootton said:

“My favourite thing about the trip was that you all enjoyed it and found it useful! I thought the workshop was good for anyone that wanted to get into motorsport and the different fields it covers and it was nice that you had some time to look around the museum as well.”

Another student who also went on the trip commented: “I was excited at the prospect of Silverstone because I have enjoyed watching F1 for years! My favourite part of the trip was seeing all the old F1 cars and the track driving experience.”

It was an amazing experience overall, so thank you to Miss Wootton and Mr Otoo for creating this opportunity for us!

Kalpita 13C



MODERN LANGUAGES

SPANISH

PANAMA TRIP



After a year of frantic fundraising, a group of 14 students set off to Panamá on the last day of Year 12 accompanied by Mrs Aston and Mrs Burt for a two week adventure, somewhat into the unknown. Challenges Abroad had only been to Panamá once before - there was lots to be done! The overall aim of the trip was to help a rural community with their environmental facilities and to teach local children English.

Despite Panamá being one of the three carbon negative countries in the world, this is largely due to its rainforest biome, not the nation's lifestyle.

On the trip we taught primary school children about healthy diets along with other realistic methods for them to improve their quality of life and after a brief language masterclass with Mrs Aston, we began to teach at the two local schools, dividing the A-level Spanish students between the teaching groups. Whilst the students were lovely, intelligent and curious, we were swiftly worn out by their flamboyant energy, and it's certainly fair to say that we empathise with our teachers significantly more now!

We spent some afternoons decorating their school playground and bins with eco-friendly designs, with the hope to encourage recycling in the area. Although the hostel provided delicious, vegetarian, local delicacies to reward our hard work, we frequented the local bakery in awe of our discovery of their 25 cent cinnamon rolls!





We stayed in a picturesque youth hostel in 'El Valle', a small town located on the crater of an inactive volcano. We tremendously enjoyed the scenic hike in the sun, up 'La Cara Iguana', seeing Panamanian golden frogs and square trees that are unique to the region. Whilst we loved the rural community, we were only a two hour drive away from Panamá City and spent our weekend exploring the hugely influential capital. The highlights of our visit were the Panamá Canal and seeing a baby sloth in the wild when we went on a guided tour of the jungle.



Whilst the trip's objective was to help other, less privileged, communities, it's fair to say that we learned a lot of Spanish and also lots about each other. We religiously played card games every night and genuinely enjoyed each other's company. Given that we set out on the trip as a group consisting mostly of friendly acquaintances and some of us strangers, we undoubtedly left having cemented friendships and with memories to last a lifetime!

Thank you to Marcella, Eduardo, Mrs Burt and Mrs Aston for a character building, hilarious and truly brilliant trip. It was everything I'd hoped it to be and more!

Hattie 13G



WHOLE SCHOOL

ACS AND BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Michelle Obama once said: “History has shown us that courage can be contagious, and hope can take on a life of its own.”

As the first Black First Lady, she herself has become a powerful and inspirational figure to Black people around the world, a beautiful piece of history in itself. It is important to celebrate Black History Month, and illuminate Black people’s achievements in all areas of life, from all times.



Our African-Caribbean society here at AHS every year celebrates Black History Month in such a proud way, and the leaders strive to create opportunities for the Black community at our school to celebrate their culture. This year, for Black History Month, there was an insightful talk about Black experience during lunchtime, assemblies on Black History Month for the entire school, an Afrobeats dance class, as well as an ACS fair, which both AHS and AGS students attended.

The assemblies highlighted a few key people in Black history, including Claudia Jones, Justin Fashanu, Leomie Anderson, Damson Idris and Malorie Blackman. These people are role models for young people today, and particularly for Black people, a living reminder that they can achieve their ambitions and reach high in life.

The Afrobeats dance class and the talk about Black experience balanced out elements of fun and seriousness integral to approaching such an important time in the calendar, and many enjoyed the opportunity to speak up about their own experiences, as well as have fun with friends and learn new dance moves.



The ACS fair was a wild success, featuring a face-painting booth, dancing, music and sweets stalls for students to indulge in. The ACS fair felt like a party, and an opportunity for students of both schools to mingle, have fun and celebrate as one. At the end of the fair, there was even a flag ceremony, signposting the different societies being represented and commemorating the different people within them, showing that “Black is not one-dimensional”. ACS is a brilliant place to visit for anyone who may want to have that community within school, and it is something that will only progress into the future.

From Ife Akintayo, the Year 13 leader of ACS: “ACS is very important as it creates a safe space for students of African and Caribbean descent. This safe space allows us to open up about the black experience, seek advice from our peers and talk about experiences we may not feel comfortable disclosing anywhere else.”

It is important to thank the people who made this experience possible, and gave us such a beautiful celebration to commemorate Black history. Thank you to Mrs Gaunt, Ife Akintayo and the rest of the members of ACS who made this happen!

Kalpita 13C

HOUSE DANCE

The first big house event this academic year is just around the corner - House Dance is taking place on the 7th, 8th and 9th November!

Many students are participating in this house event and so far have put in a lot of effort in putting their performances together ready for the real thing. The Year 12 House Dance captains were given the stimulus to look at album covers by the artist Storm Thorgerson. Thorgerson made many iconic album covers for bands such as Pink Floyd, Muse and Led Zeppelin and some of his most famous covers included The Dark Side of the Moon, Black Holes and Revelations and lots more.



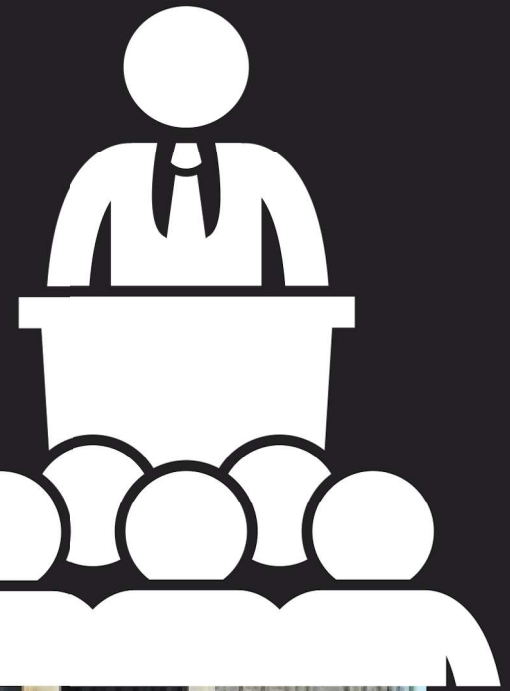
Miss McKendrick has organised almost all of this event, and has kindly shared more information about it:

“From the album cover each house has chosen, they must come up with their own interpretation of meaning creating a clear choreographic intention. The rehearsals have been fantastic with the Year 12 House Dance Captains showing great organisation and leadership in a restricted amount of time. We are all really looking forward to their performances on the 7th, 8th & 9th of November and wish all the houses lots of luck!”
God luck to all houses!

Helena 11C

ROB BUTLER MP SCHOOL VISIT

On Friday 6th October, Years 12 and 13 had an unexpected visitor from the Commons – Aylesbury's Conservative MP Rob Butler – who came to talk about his journey from reporting to political work, as well as providing us with the opportunity to scrutinise him through our own questions.



In his speech, Mr Butler spoke frankly about the drawbacks to his field, emphasised the importance of maintaining one's integrity as a politician, as well as the importance of involving young women in politics, and unsurprisingly, he managed to remain decidedly tight-lipped about party politics. We asked him about disagreeing with party whips (to which he reaffirmed his opposition to HS2), partisan politics, and a few of our more challenging questions were dedicated to dissecting his voting history: all of which he answered at impressive length. Thank you very much to Mr Butler for taking the time to speak with us, and thank you to the members of staff who helped to organise this talk.

Caitlin 13D

THE ARRIVAL OF THE ASIAN HISTORY CLUB

Motivated to enrich the history curriculum and provide students with a more rounded understanding of history, far beyond the feudal system and the well-known Battle of Hastings, Mr Annat initiated a program to introduce Year 9 students to the Partition of 1941.

This gave rise to the Asian History Group, which has since evolved into a platform dedicated to showcasing Asian narratives. From discussions on integrating into British society and navigating the stigmas of arranged marriages to exploring the mouthwatering world of cuisine and the unexpectedly riveting history of cricket (yes, cricket!), This group is a valuable experience for anyone keen on diving headfirst into this remarkable history, whether it is a part of their heritage or not.



Although AHG is relatively new on the scene, it has wasted no time in making its mark. The group has successfully organised events, from thought-provoking discussions led by guest speakers on topics like Asian masculinity and religion to the infamous "Big Asian Geography Quiz," which turned the teams into delightful chaos.

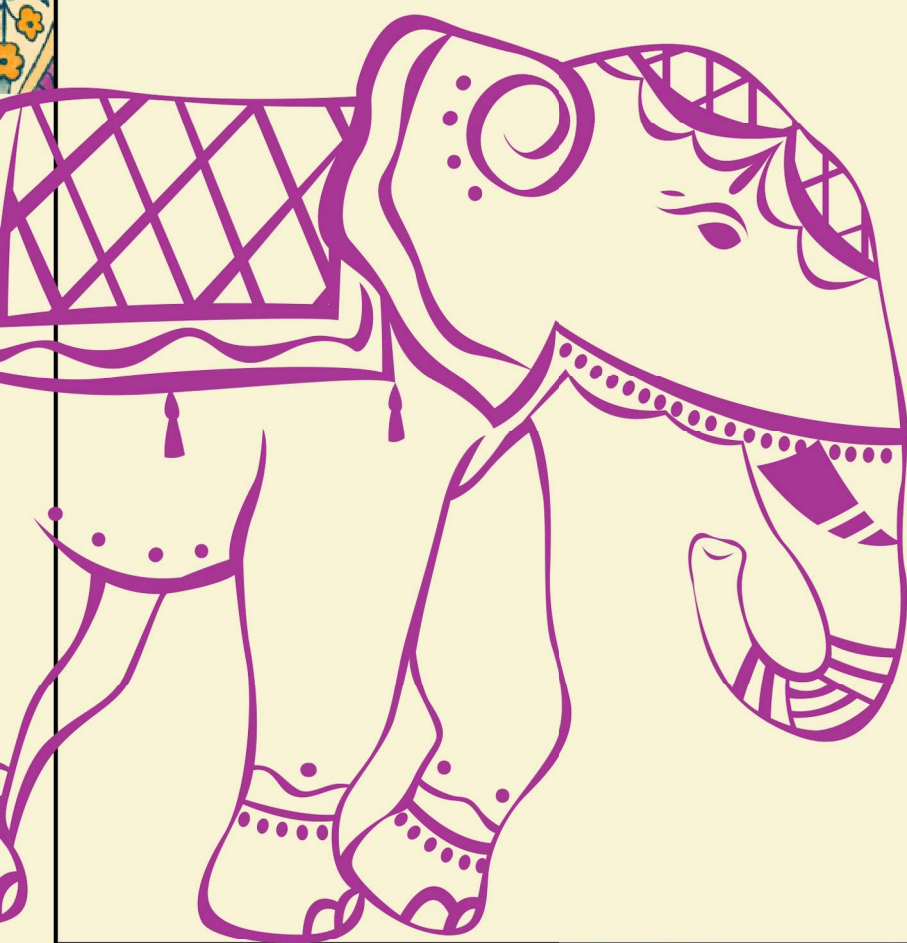
Looking to the future, AHG is set to take on a behind the scene role in planning the sixth-form Diwali disco. So, keep an eye out for updates on this thrilling event, and to all the sixth-formers, be ready to snag your tickets!

Quoting Jamila, the Year 13 Leader of AHG (alongside yours truly):

"AHG plays a pivotal role in establishing a secure space for students of Asian heritage. In this environment, we can openly share our experiences, seek advice from one another, and assess what is happening around us today. Furthermore, it serves as a platform for individuals from diverse backgrounds to actively participate and gain a deeper understanding of Asian narratives, broadening their global perspectives."

This group extends a warm welcome to all and values the active involvement of its members, ensuring that every voice is heard. The door is always open (if you are here Tuesday lunchtime during Week A) so be sure to join us and immerse yourself in a world of lively debate and engaging discussions.

Zainab 13E



CREATIVE ARTS

ART AND DESIGN

A LEVEL VISIT BY ADEBANJI ALADE



In an artist workshop hosted for A level art students on the 3rd October, renowned London-based artist Adebhanji Alade (otherwise known as 'The addictive sketcher'), guided us through his unique approach to producing an oil portrait as, in his encouraging words, "if you can master portraiture, you can paint anything".

From the get-go, Adebhanji proved to be equal parts entertaining and creative, illustrated through his initial exercise to go around the group and ask us of our dream careers to which the only "swear word" in response was "I don't know" (our own responses ranged from designers, creative directors and even astrophysicists), setting the tone for an enthusiastic and engaging day ahead.

**ADEBANJI'S SET UP
FOR THE TUTORIAL!**



Mounting up his canvas, Adabanji began his sketch and the origin of his second name quickly became clear. In fluid motions above his complex grid, he laid down a base sketch in hopes of achieving "a feeling of completion before putting the paint on". Whilst this technique wasn't unfamiliar to us students, it was other-worldly to observe the confidence and familiarity in which he expertly did this and this was truly inspiring to witness.

Despite this, I think the most unique aspect of Adebhanji's process was his paint application. Sectioning his palette up to accommodate light tones, mid tones and dark tones along with his background colour, he began to demonstrate how to use the highlights and shadows on our reference photos to guide our colour palettes through my favourite quote of the day: "It's not a Game of Thrones, it's a Game of Tones!"

Adebanji's finished portrait:



Students' portraits:



During this painting process, Adebanji foregrounded his easy-going nature where he taught the value of “not getting stressed” when painting and emphasised the importance of not overworking oil paint but, instead, “allowing it to flow”. As part of his ‘outside-in’ process, Adebanji left his light tones and highlight application to the end of his painting – along with added details – to not “lose them” or “brush them to death”, a technique that I, amongst others, hugely benefited from employing.

With the portrait rapidly coming to life before our eyes, a stolen glance at the clock filled many of us with disbelief. In just over an hour, Adebanji had effortlessly crafted a stunning stylised portrait – it was an A level artist's dream! So, attempting the same processes ourselves with Adebanji's guidance, we also had a go at becoming ‘addictive sketchers’ and painters, rendering our references into existence upon our canvases with the confidence that, if anything were to go wrong, we could simply “rule over it” as, in the words of Adebanji “that's the beauty of oil paint”.

Needless to say, Adebanji was truly both an artist and a motivator who left a lasting impact on A-level students as, whilst undeniably teaching us game-changing new techniques and processes, he acted to re-ignite an enthusiasm in many of us to find joy in seeking shapes and tones in the people and places surrounding us.

Such perceptions are supposedly explored in his soon-to-be-released book ‘People in their Places’ which can act as a guide to anyone seeking to learn oil paints through to those who want to expand their capabilities by tackling alternative subjects, environments or moods.

