

— A Student Newspaper —

THE HIGH SOCIETY

Friday 03 March



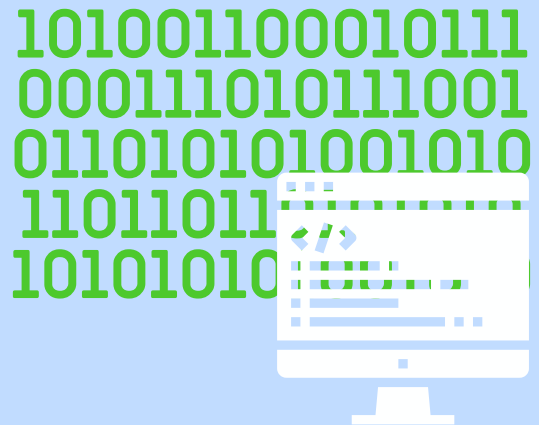
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CYBERFIRST - AYLESBURY HIGH'S SPIES

Each year GCHQ, the UK's 'intelligence, security and cyber agency', run the CyberFirst girl's competition. In teams of four, female students from across the UK compete in a week-long online qualifying round and - if they complete 250 computer science based challenges - in an in person finals. For the past three years AHS has made it to the finals and this year team Mystic Turtles upheld this impressive streak. We spoke with them ahead of the event on February 4th.



Nikitha (8H) decided to sign up for CyberFirst as she enjoyed her computing lessons, but quickly discovered more skills were needed than the ones you might expect from a Computer Science competition. Her form mate Ire remembers loving the Maths questions that popped up, while Amber and Clara (8S) would recommend entering to anyone who enjoys riddles or logic puzzles.

Delegating challenges reflecting their respective strengths is something they all recognise as having improved their communication skills, and how well they've done is a testament to how effectively they work together. Though the effort they've put in to become finalists from the thousands of teams that entered the competition is clear, their CyberFirst experience was much more than just hard work. They've come away with new friendships, transferable skills, and unanimously agree that they'll remember it for years to come.

You can attempt some of the challenges the girls had to complete here, or reach out to Mrs Jaggs for more information about CyberFirst courses for older students.

● ● ● CREATIVE ARTS ● ● ●

GOLDS ARTS AWARDS

It is widely acknowledged that the dance world has a reputation for toxicity in the area of body image perception. In fact, several studies carried out from 1966 to 2013 revealed that around 12% of professional dancers had an eating disorder (for ballet dancers specifically it was 16.4%). This stems from the unrealistic expectations of an “ideal dance body” - it is completely out of the question to expect that only a certain body type should be able to make a living doing a thing that they love - an art form that should be accessible to everybody. To explore this issue, I interviewed several people, male and female, at different levels of their dancing career. From this, I managed to gather not only the different experiences of men and women in the dance world, but also to try and discover at what point attitudes towards body image start to become negative and detrimental to a dancer.

One might think that the real damage is done in the professional industry, when you are effectively being paid for how you dance and how you look. However, some responses that I received subverted these expectations by stating that actually the real damage is done in preparation for a professional career. Alex (undergrad student at the London School of Contemporary Dance) said that currently he feels very little pressure from his current dance environment to look a certain way. However, he said that at his recreational ballet school at home, when growing up, he did. These feelings were somewhat echoed by Miss Mckendrick (dance teacher at Aylesbury High School) who said “when I was training at my dance school, university and working professionally, I felt a sense of pressure to look a certain way physically but also achieve certain aesthetic goals when it came to physical skills such as strength or flexibility”. This is a clear indication that dance training takes a rather backward view of the modern dance industry and is preparing dancers for an industry that will judge them based on appearance

Alternatively, the two youngest dancers I interviewed, Stanley (secondary school student), and Sophie (student at the Performing Arts Depot college), said neither of them felt significant pressure from their current dance environments to look a certain way. Stanley said he felt only a pressure from himself to look the way that others do, while Sophie said “I know certain looks are often more likely to get certain opportunities”. So even in instances where there isn’t specific pressure coming from teachers, directors, choreographers etc. the stigma around body image is still a looming presence in dancers’ lives..

The real question is, if the dance world can be such a toxic environment, why do people still do it?

From the answers that I gathered within case studies, there were a multitude of reasons, centering around the feelings of freedom, happiness, positivity, and creativity that it evokes within them. But also a desire to perfect a skill, to collaborate with others, to escape from the everyday and to express themselves without speech. Perhaps the most interesting reason, and arguably an inverse to the argument overall, is the desire to push their own limits of athleticism. It is undeniable that dance is or rather can be an extremely physically demanding activity. There are styles in which dancers perform moves that look impossible and require extreme levels of strength, technique and agility. This is a feature of the art that many people love and desire, having a goal that is difficult to achieve gives one a purpose and means to continue. So, given that many dancers find the aspect of athleticism and physical activity an attractive part of dance - do they think there are any physical qualities that are essential to achieve success in this industry?

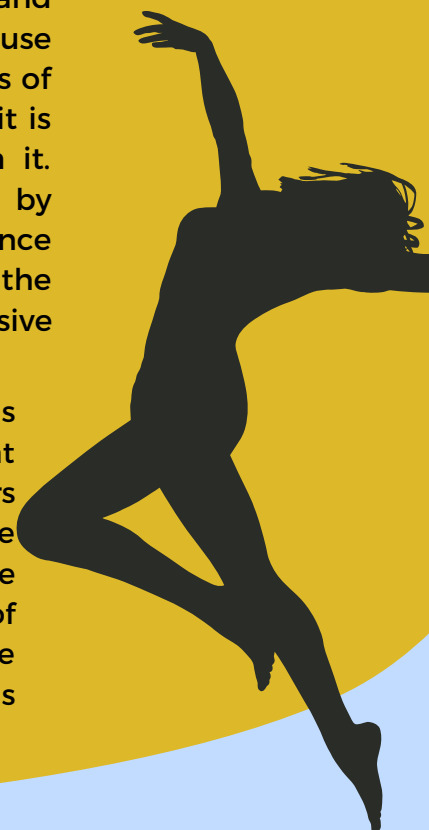
In short, not really. There were two most commonly expressed opinions. The first was that there are no god given physical features that will get you further than anyone else - there are, however, physical attributes that can be attained through training like strength and flexibility that will undoubtedly get you nearer to success. The second was that the only real physical feature that stands one dancer above another is their expression - the use of face and specifically eyes is said to be the most important part of dancing, because from the audience's perspective, they want to be told a story before they stop appreciating the dance quality.

On the other hand, one case argued, "it would be remiss to disregard the overarching archetypes of physiology. In these codified techniques and more traditional methods, there is in my view unfortunately still an essential body type."

Negative attitudes toward body image, be it aesthetic or ability based, is an issue being faced courageously by many in the professional dance world. There are becoming more and more examples of inclusive dance companies making appearances all around the world now, for example StopGap Dance Company in Farnham, England. This is a company that celebrates and provides an outlet for dancers of all body types, including those who use wheelchairs or other movement aids. Not only is it fantastic that dancers of all shapes are becoming more widely accepted, but more importantly, it is fantastic that people of younger generations are being educated on it. Artificial things, a piece by StopGap Dance Company, choreographed by Lucy Bennet, is now featured in the theory segment of the AQA GCSE dance curriculum. It is steps like this which are important to ensure that the industry is progressing, and we are endorsing a new generation of inclusive dancers.

So, in conclusion, while it appears that the professional dance industry is slowly but surely taking steps to become a more inclusive environment that is ultimately less "toxic" and detrimental to the mental health of its dancers due to negative attitudes towards body image. However, it is undeniable that in both recreational and vocational training schools, funnelling into the dance world, they are "preparing" young people for an outdated image of the industry by beating them down for the way that they look. Steps are being taken in the professional world, it's time that training institutions caught up.

By Lottie, 12M



● ● ● CREATIVE ARTS ● ● ●

PE NEWS

This term, the Invitational Gala took place at Wycombe Abbey, with 18 schools taking part. Our school came in 2nd place overall (we came in second place for both the junior and senior category.) We have also participated in a number of B team swimming competitions. There was involvement from a lot of new AHS swimmers, who all performed brilliantly, as did the rest of the swimmers, many of which got PBs this term. There is hope to get into final competitions with all the schools in the league - more information on this will be announced in March.

In addition to all this news, Mrs Carey has asked me to bring some attention to the Year 7 Aqua Club, as there will be places available in the summer term for new members. We have had lots of students join recently, and they have all been enjoying the activities, which include things like water volleyball, water polo, races, and aqua challenges. She would also like to thank the Year 10 aquatic leaders this year who have made this club possible by planning and assisting with sessions throughout the year, as well as developing their own leadership skills.

Finally, a group of Sixth Form students have been visiting KS3 swimmers on their weekly lessons over in AGS, who Mrs Carey also wanted to give a massive thank you to for their contributions.

By Alex, 10C



" & JULIET "

It was a genuine pleasure to take 75 Year 8 students to see the jukebox musical ' & Juliet ' in London's West End on 01 February. The plot centres on Anne Hathaway, Shakespeare's long-suffering wife, and her insistence that Shakespeare change the ending of 'Romeo and Juliet' to enable Juliet to have a future and a second chance at love following Romeo's demise.



Full of great pop songs from The Backstreet Boys, Britney Spears and Katy Perry whose lyrics were cleverly employed to create dialogue for the characters and move the plot along. The stage design, costume and lighting were bright and engaging and coupled with smoke and confetti, at times the show resembled more of a pop concert than a musical!

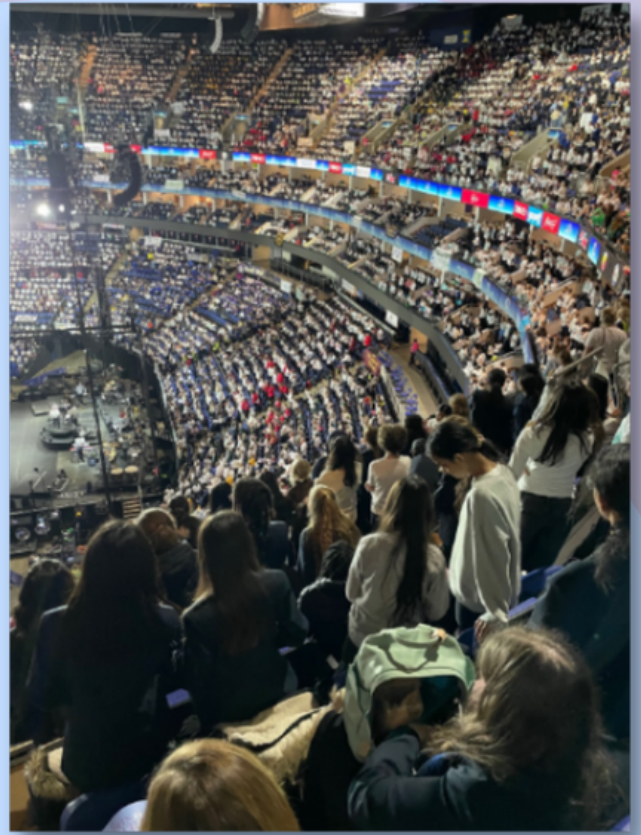
Year 8 thoroughly enjoyed the trip and serenaded the coach with numbers from production all the way home!

By Mrs Hughes



YOUNG VOICES

On the 24th of January 129 Year 7 students went to the O2 arena in London to perform in a choir amongst 9000 other students from around the country. In what was described by Mr Warner as “An extremely well-produced concert” students had the opportunity to perform in a large context with professional musicians, singing a range of different pieces from a Trolls pop medley to a medley of folk songs from around the nation - they even sang a song in Welsh!



All of Year 7 spent a half-term unit on singing within their curriculum music lessons, where they worked hard learning all of these songs. Mr Warner commented on how proud he was that “all the students engaged and performed enthusiastically” on the day. They had the opportunity to sing alongside a whole host of world-class performers including Heather Small, street dance crew Urban Strides (including an ex AHS student), Beatbox Collective and Anna Phoebe (rock violinist).

Nitya 7W said "I really enjoyed it, it was amazing to sing with so many other schools and children" while Elena 7W said “I would definitely recommend it to other students because it was amazing”

By Lottie, 12M

MODERN LANGUAGES

YEAR 12 LANGUAGES WORKSHOP

On the 13th of January, a small group of Year 12 French and Spanish A-level students, including myself, spent the day at Oxford Brookes University for a travel workshop. McDonald's breakfasts in hand, we met in Aylesbury bus station, accompanied by our Señor Martinez and language assistant, Rosa.

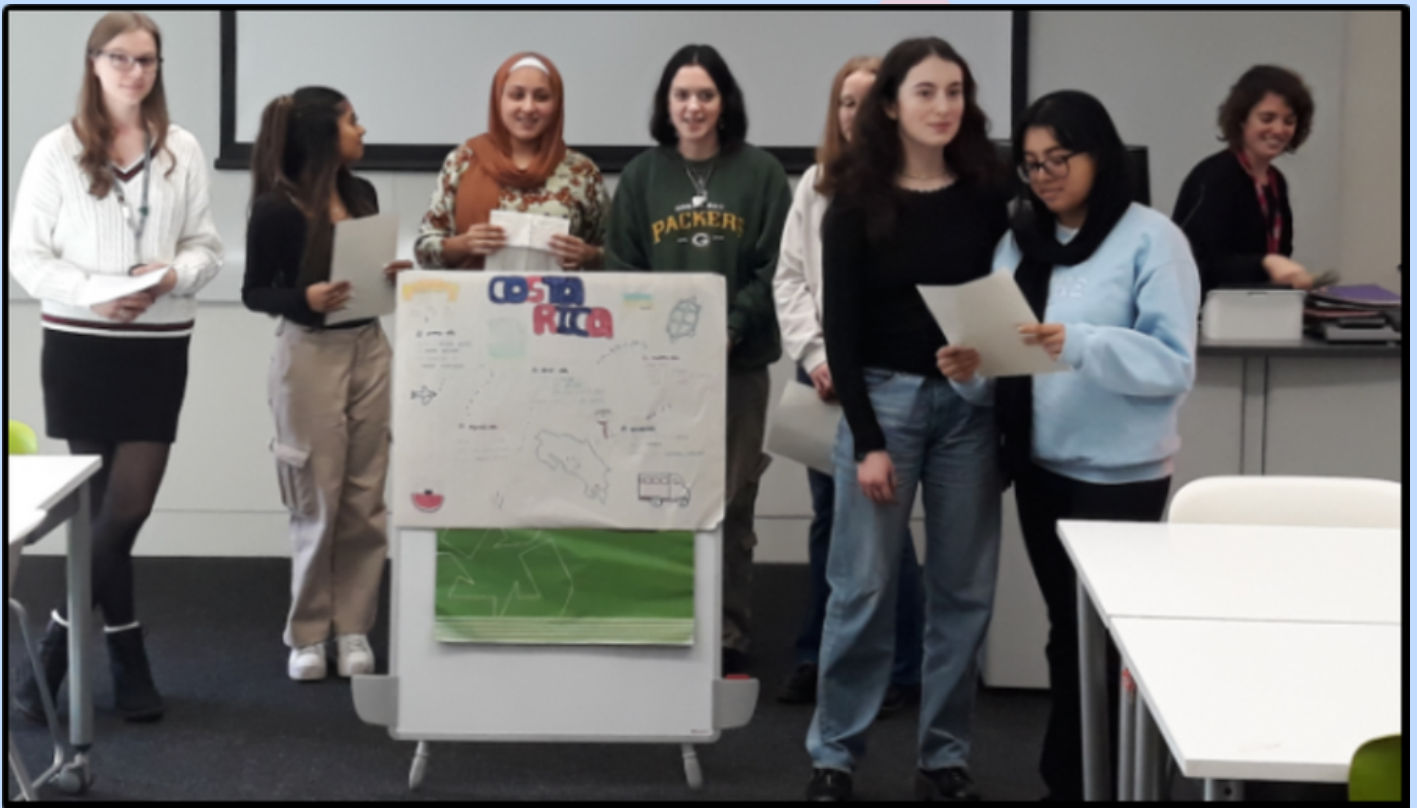
Originally sitting in our separate schools, two lecturers from the university quizzed us on European cultures to ease us into the day - AHS taking the win, of course. Then, the French and Spanish students were split up and groups were combined with students from Headington and Matthew Arnold School.



We had a few hours to get to know our teams, decide on a location and itinerary for a five-day trip, draft a script, design a poster and finally present our package holiday - in our studied languages - to a panel. 'What was a flaw in this project?' Well, without a set budget, we were inclined to take extortionate modes of transport featuring both helicopters and private jets with an infinite disposable income. Alas, we were conscious of the global climate crisis and thought it is an ultimately better idea to use other more eco-friendly methods of experiencing the Central American rainforests!



With teams choosing exotic locations in Spain, France, Puerto Rico, Costa Rica and Morocco, there were a vast array of excursions planned. Groups consisting of AHS students were awarded with the best oral and best overall presentation, highly commended by native speakers. After a full-on day, the worn-out, nonetheless buzzing, group of students took the bus home.



We had a lot of fun and, with many of us signing up to Brooke's business workshop in Summer, we're keen for more!

By Hattie, 12G

CHEMISTRY SPOTLIGHT

KS3:

Lydia in Year 7 entered the STFC RAL National Essay Competition, was invited to an event for the 15 finalists:

"It went really well, I had to wear PPE to go see a laser that most of the staff hosting the evening hadn't seen before! There was a table with a four and a half billion years old meteorite, part of the moon and part of Mars! Some of the videos were superb, so I didn't win, but it was a really good experience."

Congratulations Lydia

The reason I love science is because it is used all around the world for everything. Whether it is why we eat food or why and how we are able to go to space and do scientific research. Science is all around us and even just scooting down a ramp is all about why the wheels need to be round and making sure that there isn't too much friction so you fall off.

I started really liking science in year four near the start of homeschooling and lockdown because I found out about Operation Ouch and loved watching it. Ever since then I have wanted to be an Orthopedic Surgeon or radiographer because I do not freak out because of all the gross things like blood and bones. I am fascinated by everything else in science because most of it connects to medical research and the human body.

Another reason why I love science is because I love doing experiments and boiling chemicals on the bunsen burner.

At my primary school we watched the older years put bubbles of soap on their hands and lit the soap on fire but we never got to do it because of covid. We also did loads of cool experiments and even dissected a flower. My favourite things I learnt at my Primary school was probably learning about the Digestive system in year three and the ear and sound in year four.

When I fell off my bunk beds and caught my wrist on the rung of the ladder I ended up in Accident and Emergency and the doctor could tell from the X-ray that I hadn't broken it but I still had a lot of growing left. Because of science an X-ray, that took less than ten seconds, can show someone whether they need surgery and how much growing they have got left.

Another reason why I like science is because you need it in all sorts of different day to day activities. As an example I am too scared to go on a halfpipe with a rail at any skatepark because my nervous system is telling me I can't do it so that would make me think I'm going to injure myself and then I would actually injure myself. Another example is in lessons that involve a pen. The gravity that is pulling towards the centre of the earth is letting the ink get out of the pen because you can't write while lying down and the paper is on top of you.

Another reason why I love science is because there is a part for everyone. If someone gets grossed out really easily then they could do atoms but if someone likes dissecting things then they could do dissection.

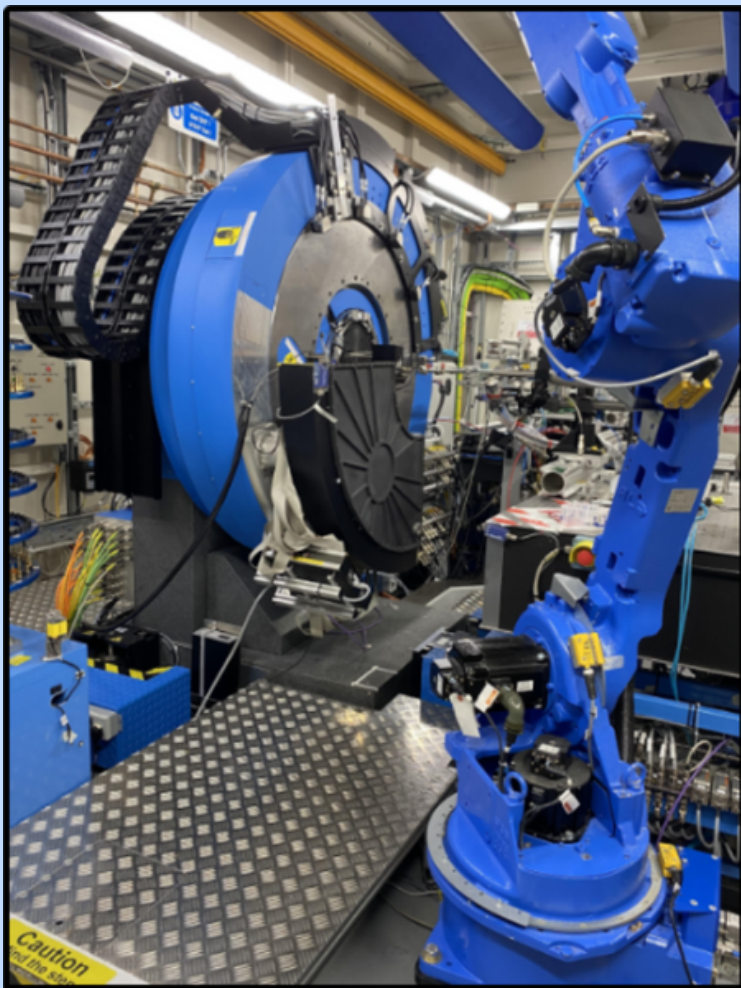
My last reason why I love science is because before covid and lockdown my favourite subject was computing. Sometimes when I feel like doing something to do with science but want to go on electronics then I can always study computer science.

Two other year 7 students got the chance to speak to some working scientists in the field of forensics via an online panel discussion, set up by "I'm a scientist". Ophelia and Francesca joined during lunchtime and used the text chat to ask questions. They appreciated this experience and had this to say: "it is really cool being able to find out about the variety of scientists' jobs. Their point of view is fascinating." and "I liked finding out how the process of forensic cases worked." These chats are open online now and include other topics such as CERN, as featured in the last edition. This is a great opportunity to get to learn more about STEM subjects outside of lessons - please let your teacher know if you are interested!

KS4 & 5:

Bella in year 10 completed a week of work experience in Science Oxford Centre - here's what she had to say about her experience:

“During my week at the Science Oxford Centre, I learned about what being a scientist or working in a STEM-related field is like. I got to meet scientists; ask them what their day is like and discuss their research with them. I was lucky enough to learn technical skills and have hands-on experiences with equipment I would usually not have access to, like micropipettes and university-grade microscopes. My favourite part of the week is when I got to spend a day at the Oxford University Museum of Natural History to manipulate DNA and use gel electrophoresis to present my findings. Not only did I learn a lot of skills from this experience, but could apply it to what I was learning at school. This opportunity is great for those interested in pursuing a science-based career or those interested in science generally.” (Bella Yr10)



In November, six teams of four Year 10 students participated in the RSC (Royal Society of Chemistry) regional quiz. Teams led by Aara, Nidhi, Tyra, Thannista, Scarlett and Chloe completed several rounds of questions. With Nidhi, Orezi, Pransha and Libby being the highest scoring team. Well done to all involved!

Zoey, Ayesha, Teena, Mahira, Anne and Kalpita in Year 12 attended the University of Oxford Materials & Physics Day.

Kalpita and Zoey kindly gave me a summary of their day. They had three workshops: The first one was about how superconductors worked; where students got to see a levitating cube after liquid nitrogen was poured on the superconductor. The second one was about materials and looking at stress and strain. The third one was about the Hubble Constant, and they attempted to find the age of the Universe.



Kalpita - "My favourite personally was the superconductivity session because it was incredibly cool, we got to conduct an experiment where a superconductor was chilled to a critical temperature, which is quite low, by using liquid nitrogen, and when you try to balance a magnet on top, the two magnetic fields clash and repel from each other, causing the magnet to 'float'."

They also had a tour of Mansfield college, and got to hear about student life, getting the chance to meet students, and learn about the rigorous academics as well as what to do if we ever wanted to apply to Oxford.

"All in all, it was a great day!"



By Beth , 13H



STEM TALK



On the 11th of January, AHS enthusiastically welcomed Sigourney Bonner, A Forbes 30-under-30 cancer researcher, and Laura, a Spanish aerospace engineer. They were invited as part of the MARS society club, which occasionally hosts talks from STEM career professionals after-school. January's talk was an extremely special one as many interesting topics were discussed.

The society members listened to Laura talk about 3D printing in space to make replacement parts for rockets and the use of 3D printers on the ISS! It was also inspiring to hear from Sigourney Bonner who talked about her career and the work she has done so far, such as being a co-founder of Black in Cancer, which has been heralded as an award-winning initiative. It works to increase ethnic minority engagement in cancer research, whilst simultaneously challenging stereotypes about cancer in black communities. The talk was a huge success, attracting a vast audience from many of the neighbouring schools.



To anyone who has any interest in the sciences, engineering, or even computing, Mrs. Brittain encourages you to "come along, as it is worth seeing what people have to say because there are opportunities out there that many are not aware of". In the future, Mrs. Brittain also hints at the prospect of inviting more chemistry-related guest speakers. All the talks start at 4 pm and finish at around 6 pm. You don't want to miss out! Click [here](#) for the MARS society google site to find out more!

By Maryam, 12K

ID GROUP: ID UPDATE JAN 2023

We are continuing to work hard on equality, diversity and inclusion at AHS. September brought the exciting introduction of our new Afro-Caribbean Society, who meet weekly on a Monday and led on Black History month. Another highlight of last term was our vibrant Diwali celebration in October, which included a very well-attended lunchtime disco, colourful chalk rangoli drawings and a fantastic non-uniform day. In November, we organised an inspirational event with performance poet Sophia Thakur who talked about her experiences growing up and her mixed Gambian, Indian and Sri Lankan heritage.

In December, we had a very useful meeting with teachers to learn about all the work they are doing to diversify the curriculum. It was very interesting to hear how KS3 History explores areas as diverse as the Silk Road, the Black Tudors, the partition of India, votes for women and LGBT communities. And about texts which have been introduced in English lessons such as *Purple Hibiscus* by the Nigerian author, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, and *The Empress* by Tanika Gupta which follows the true story of Queen Victoria's relationship with her servant Abdul Karim, and the experiences of Indian ayahs who came to Britain during the 19th century.

Our BSL group worked hard on their sign language throughout the autumn term and entertained the whole school with their signed version of *You Will Be Found* at our A Factor performance. We are just starting to look at how we'll celebrate Eid at AHS in April. We are currently working with the ID group at AGS to plan an exciting event to celebrate Holi in March and to see how we can work together on some ideas for Culture Week in June, including our third Pride Parade.

By Mrs Queralt



ABERDYFI

It was that time of year again! Last January, the Year 8s got the opportunity to go on AHS's timeless Aberdyfi trip. After a smooth journey down for both groups and plenty of preparatory L4L lessons, they did activities such as canoeing, rock climbing and even scrambling, a fan favourite among the Year 8s. And of course, the groups embarked on the infamous hike, described as "tiring but fun" and the view was reported to be magnificent. They didn't just have fun, though, many Year 8s found the trip incredibly improving their confidence and building their teamwork skills.

Sharing accommodation with new people and old friends allowed new friendships to blossom and old ones to grow. The week concluded with some hilarious presentations and off home, they went, hopefully with some memories that will last a lifetime.

By Scarlett 10A

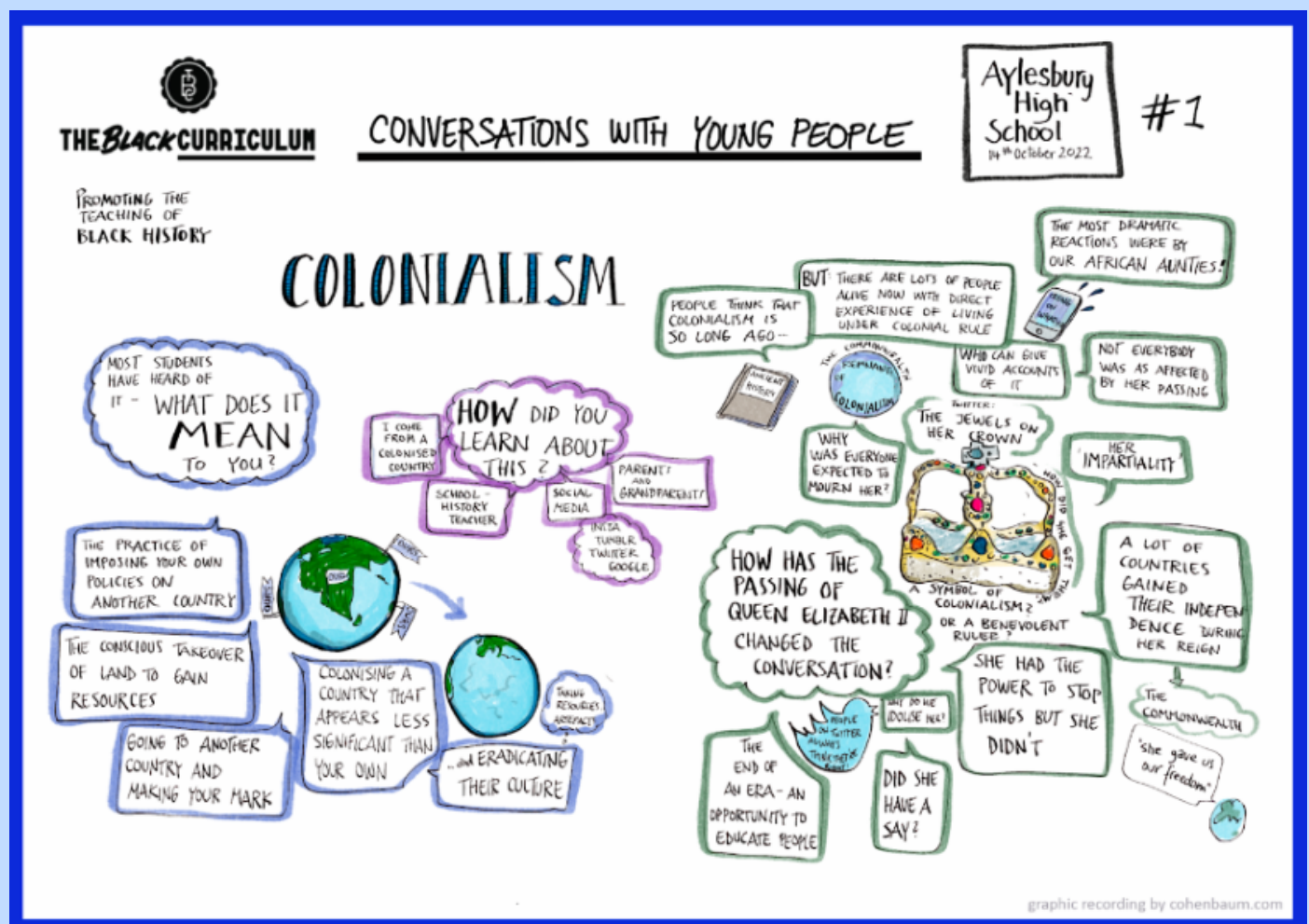


ACS

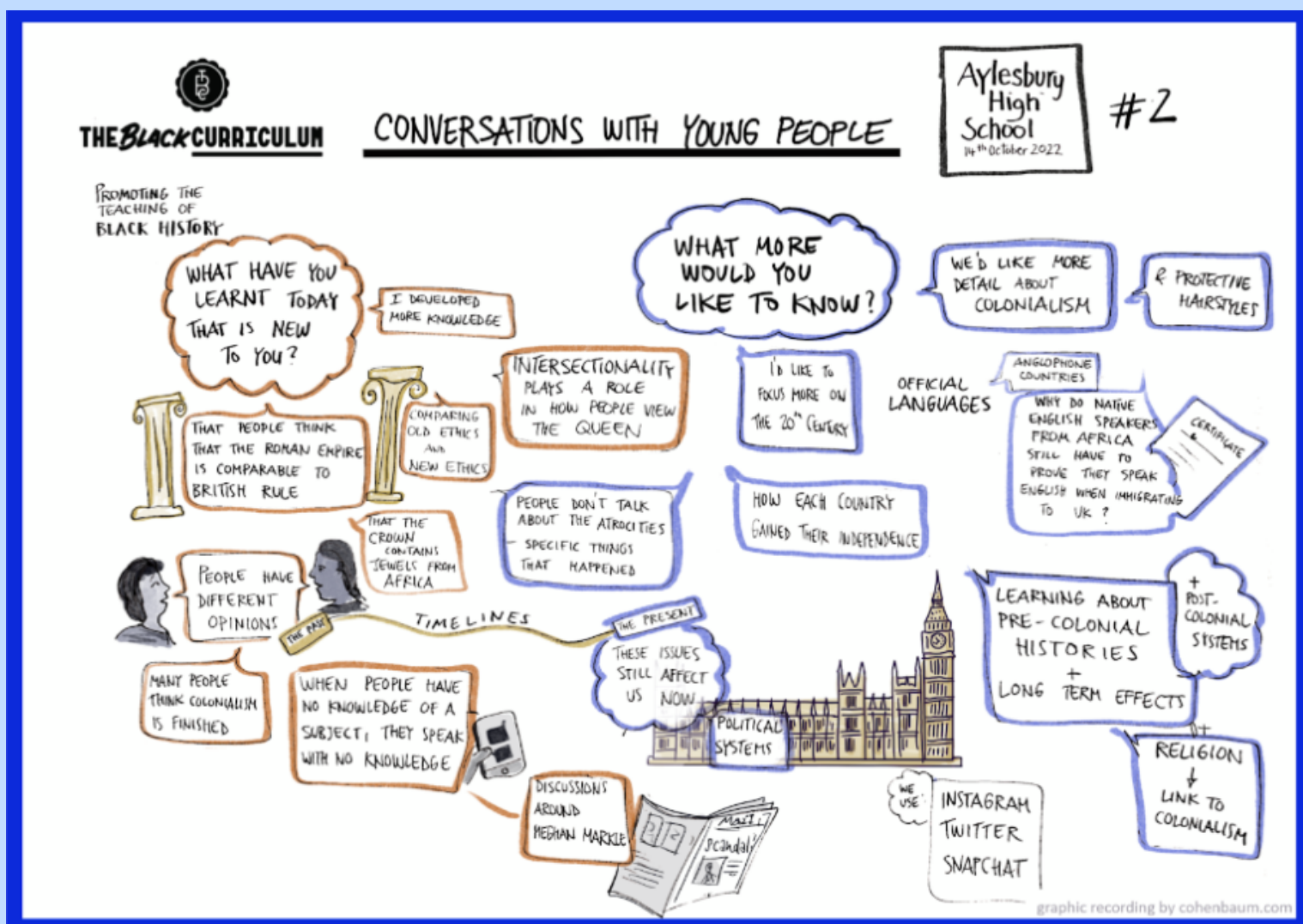


The Afro-Caribbean society at AHS is a special place, run on Monday lunches in by Ana in Year 13 and Mrs Gaunt. At its core, ACS is described by its members as a place of safety, honesty, a place of welcoming, a place of expression, and culture. ACS is a place where people can feel comfortable and free to discuss important issues and things that may affect people of African or Caribbean descent in the British media as well as international media, such as the Tyre Nichols case in the US.

ACS is an opportunity to network with students in a way that perhaps we do not get to do normally, with students from different year groups being able to relate their cultures and personal experiences.



Despite being a fledgling society, ACS has already successfully delivered informative assemblies during Black History month in October, as well as hosted Elizabeth Kwaw in a discussion about colonialism. This society prides itself on working closely with the students, and so attempts to cover topics that the students contribute and would be interested in, from the representation of Black hair in the media, to watching films and having a table discussion about the art in African and Caribbean culture.



All the people in ACS are happy to support their fellow students, and although understanding that some topics may be harder to talk about than others, they will always attempt to leave on a positive note. In the future, ACS are excited to be holding more events, so please keep a look out for those! All are welcome, so come along to learn more about the African-Caribbean diaspora!

By Kalpita, 12C



YOUTH VOICE BUCKS

On Thursday, 23rd February, a group of students attended the first ever Bucks Youth Summit. It was organised by a group I've had the privilege of being part of - Youth Voice Bucks. Youth Voice Bucks is a youth forum that is all about listening to young people's voices and acting on them to make things better. In January, we decided to start planning an event that was meant to bring young people from all over Buckinghamshire together to discuss the biggest issues and areas of interest.

When planning the Summit, we made it a major priority to not make it a long boring talk - where young people felt as though they were being talked and lectured to, instead, we wanted it to be more conversational and informal - a place where young people wouldn't feel judged or limited in what they could share. So, this is where the idea of having conversation spaces for the different topics sprung. There were eight different conversation spaces available on the day: Mental Health, The SEND Space, The Queer Space, A Youth-led conversation on sexual violence, feeling safe and protected, Access in rural communities, The Space for Creative Thinking and lastly, Spaces and Places for young people.

Although it wasn't possible to attend all the conversation spaces that were held on the day, I will share my experience of the three conversation spaces I participated in: Feeling safe and protected, The Space for Creative Thinking and Mental Health. The first one I attended was feeling safe and protected, which was led by Thames Valley Police. We discussed crime and safety issues that mattered most to us, the causes of crime and violence, particularly knife crime within Buckinghamshire and our ideas to prevent crime and help keep people safe. It was eye-opening and intriguing to hear different people's views on crime and how it could be improved.

The second conversation space was The Space for Creative Thinking. This space explored how young people experience creativity, what creative activities are missing in the county, and where we would like to experience them. We also discussed what we would like to see at a youth arts festival. Then, to end the afternoon, I visited the Mental Health conversation space. This was definitely my favourite space of the day, and it was also the most fun; there was a silent debate board where we could answer a series of questions relating to climate change - how it affects our mental health and nature. We talked about the impact nature can have on our mental health. In the end, we got the opportunity to go home with a vegetable or flower to grow! At Youth Voice Bucks, we are planning for this to become an annual event that is able to monitor the issues discussed each year and see an improvement after each one. The Summit was a very engaging and mind opening experience. Hopefully, next year is even better!

By Chidum, 9M