

— A Student Newspaper —

# THE HIGH SOCIETY

Friday 18 July 2024

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# SKI TRIP

## An Unforgettable Ski Trip Bardonecchia, Italy

Uliana 11A

Imagine the breathtaking beauty of the Italian Alps, the crisp mountain air, and the thrill of gliding down snow-covered slopes. This was just the backdrop to our unforgettable ski trip to Bardonecchia Italy earlier this year and the beginning to lots of new memories. Last term, Year 8s through to the Year 12s set out on a buzzing coach from AHS all the way through the ferry and France to finally arrive at a charming little alpine town on the border of Italy. Upon our arrival, the teachers let us set out on our own with our friends to grab a bite to eat from one of the traditional restaurants around town and explore the souvenir shops, promising us days filled with laughter and excitement.

When we woke up the next morning, we eagerly rushed to the ski rental shop, after having breakfast at the hotel, and picked up our ski gear, and hit the slopes. There were multiple groups across all different levels and slopes, which meant that whether we were beginners or seasonal skiers, there was something for everyone. Everyone had 4 hours of ski lessons per day meaning that we were able to progress through the levels quickly throughout the week and the joy of conquering the challenging slopes and enjoying the winter-wonderland scenery from the top of the mountains was truly special. Apart from the exhilarating feeling of gliding down the powdery snow, the ski cafes and resorts were constantly filled with music and laughter, which made the atmosphere nothing short of magical.

Once we got back from skiing in the afternoon, we would have from 3:00 to 7:30 - until dinner time - to rest and even walk around and explore Bardonecchia for ourselves with our friends! During this time we could indulge ourselves in the famous Italian thick hot chocolates from adorable small cafes, or even go into town and shop around in the different clothing and jewellery boutiques. After dinner, we would take part in amazing Apres-Ski activities organised by our wonderful teachers. This included a quiz night, pizza night, crepe and hot chocolate night, and karaoke night. These activities were the perfect way to unwind and recharge for another day of excitement.



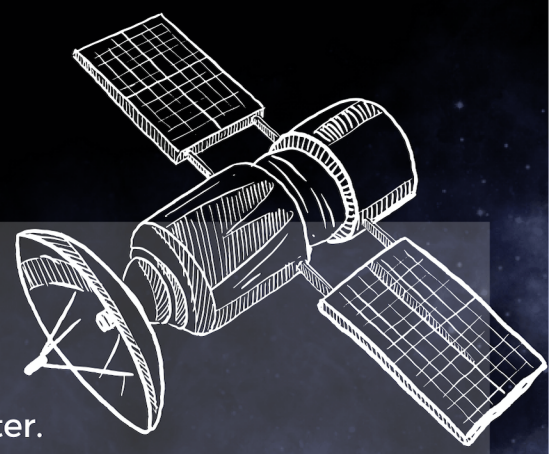
Our school trip to Bardonecchia was truly an experience like no other; from the adrenaline rush of skiing down the slopes to the laughter-filled evenings with friends, every moment was filled with joy and unforgettable experiences. None of this could have been possible without the hard work that the teachers have put in from organising the trip to making this trip run as smoothly and fantastically as it did. A huge thanks to Mr. Stanley, Mrs. Gaunt, Miss. Mabey, Mr. Morris, Mrs. Nicholls, and Mrs. Lu!



# STEM TALK

with Professor Suzie Imber

Earlier this term, we were fortunate to have the opportunity to attend a STEM talk organised by the Mars Society, delivered by Professor Suzie Imber - a professor of planetary science at the University of Leicester.



During this talk she spoke about her research in space physics, focusing on space weather events that occur on both Earth and other planets, with one of these events being the recent aurora that most of the UK would have witnessed on the 10th May. She also discussed a significant part of her research that is centred around the BepiColombo mission, which is a joint mission to Mercury to map the planet and investigate its magnetosphere.

Besides being a Professor of Planetary Science, Imber is also an avid mountaineer and recounted her experiences climbing previously unexplored mountains, in which she wrote a code for a supercomputer that allowed her to automatically identify mountains in the Andes and Himalayas. But what made this particularly interesting for us was the fact that she had linked her own research to these experiences, by identifying the mountains using images from space.

In addition to this, she briefly discussed her participation in the BBC series 'Astronauts: Do You Have What It Takes?', in which she showed us short clips of her experiences and challenges there. One video that stood out to us was the challenge in which the participants were made to escape a capsule that was submerged into a swimming pool.

The talk itself was highly informative and interactive, and it allowed us to gain a deep understanding of the topics she was discussing. It was very enjoyable and we would like to thank Professor Imber and the Mars Society for this wonderful opportunity.

👩🏫 Isabelle 12J  
& Iona 12J 👩🏫





# GEOGRAPHY

## KEW GARDENS TRIP

In June, Y8 had the pleasure of a trip to Kew Gardens in London to explore and learn about the features of this royal botanic site.

We were split into groups for the coach and activities that were set up for us to complete. In one activity we measured the different soil temperatures, soil moistures and humidity as well as other things; we then compared these measurements with what we could see in the biome of the glasshouse rainforest.

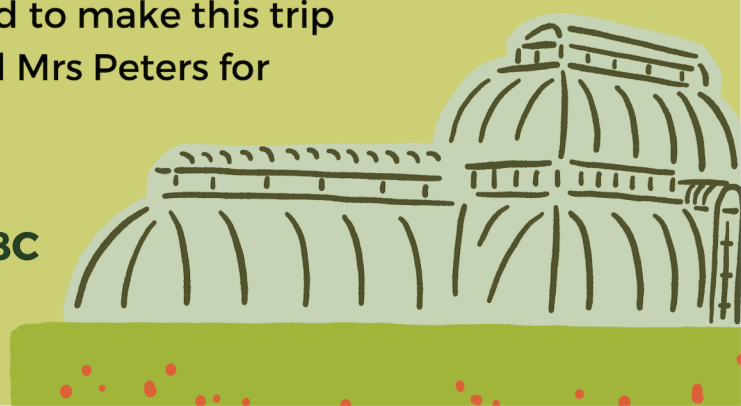
Alongside this we also got the chance to walk around and explore the temperate biome and take part in a scavenger hunt using all the information around us. There were some amazing views when we went up to the balcony in the temperate area and some really interesting plants in the rainforest biome such as a coffee tree, banana tree and a madagascar bush, which although poisonous has the cure to childhood leukaemia! And we learnt that vanilla seeds are helped amazingly by bats.

After our activities, some visited the Princess of Wales conservatory to see the desert cacti species (along with plants like aloe vera) and the very special Titan Arum, which was luckily in bloom for us as it only flowers once every 2 years for 24 hours!! There was a hole cut in the side for us to see the flowers inside. It was meant to smell like a corpse but we couldn't smell it -- probably a good thing!

This was a fascinating trip, linked to what we covered in Geography lessons at start of the year with biomes and what we also learnt about adaptations that plants and some animals have to make to help them survive in their habitat.

Thank you to all of the teachers that helped to make this trip happen and especially to Mrs Kilkeny and Mrs Peters for their organisation for both groups!

**Amy C-B &  
Imogen T 8C**



# ENGLISH

## GCSE Spoken Language Endorsement

"As part of their GCSE English Language, students are required to complete a Spoken Language Endorsement section, where they get a chance to demonstrate their capacity to present a complex topic to an audience. Each year we are blown away by the brilliance of what they produce. Isla's response, kindly reshaped in a written format for you to read below, particularly impressed."

Mr Elgin, Head of English

### Classics: Consigned to the past, or the key to the future?

One of the most common complaints heard in any classroom is, of course, 'but when will this ever actually be useful?'. And though all teachers will try hard to justify the use of the Pythagoras theorem or knowledge of longshore drift, many find it difficult to convey why they believe their subject is truly useful. This same argument is often used against the introduction of new subjects into the curriculum, such as Classics or Philosophy. Any mention of Classics, the study of Ancient Greece and Rome, is often known to be met with sighs and complaints of its dullness, mostly due to its reputation of being a subject 'for the privileged few'. This reputation has led to a large decrease in the popularity of Classics as a subject in schools, despite its immense use both in the field of academia and in the general world. I would argue that access to Classics education is fundamental to understanding our place in the world, and why Western democracy matters, in a world where objective truths are increasingly questioned.

The teaching of Classics introduces children and teenagers to many vital skills that can be used throughout their lives, no matter what path they take - it requires and fosters skills such as comprehension of difficult texts, even in translation, the extrapolation of larger ideas from limited sources, and essay writing, especially when asked to argue a perspective, due to the fact that one must take and defend a stance in a debate in which there is often no one solid answer. Due to the nature of the subject, Classics allows the exploration of a kaleidoscope of elements of ancient culture - from language to politics to history to religion to art - rather than narrowing in on one aspect of the time period. This broad range of focuses means that there is something for everyone in classics, keeping the interest of entire classes rather than just those with a specific interest in a subject.

The Classical period of history indisputably had an immense influence on our own culture and history, being where we can trace the roots of elements of politics, philosophy, ethics, law, architecture, art, and even certain religious and ritual practices back to. This leads to the clear connection that the study of

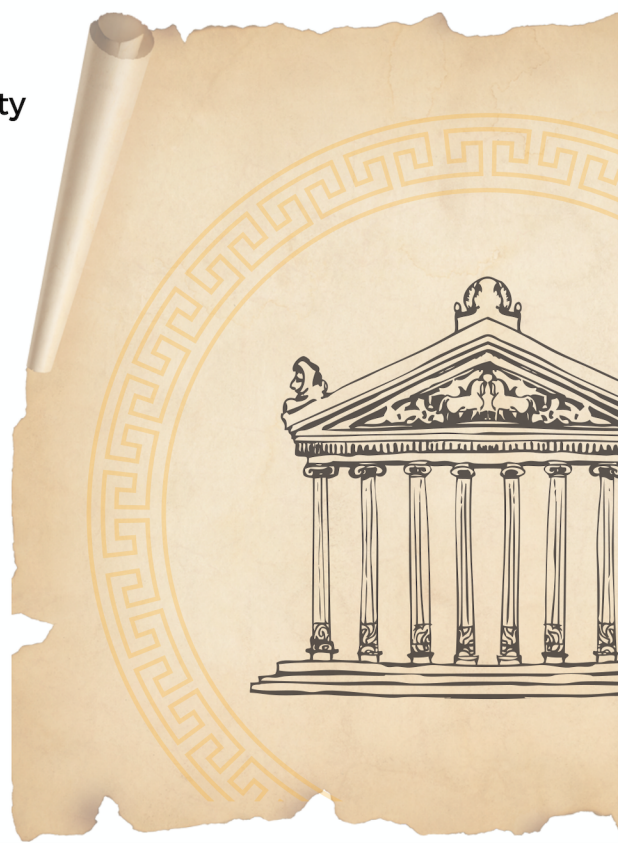


Classics has use not only through the fundamental skills it introduces and reinforces, but also through the content, which often directly relates to other subjects studied in schools.

Now, many of these points will be disputed, for surely other subjects can provide those skills, that form the basis of elements of other subjects, and to that I do not object, but to exclude children from the study of the Classics at all levels of school other than University, or in very few cases at A Level, is also to exclude them from experiencing many elements of our culture, from museums to literature. Most museums and historical exhibitions will assume a basic level of classical literacy when creating their exhibits, and so to go through them without that understanding is to have a reduced experience in comparison to those lucky enough to have an education in Classics. This is true, however, not only of museums and places dedicated to history, but also of other things such as literature and film. How many of the fantasy creatures described in your favourite books take their origin from the Greek myths? How many of your favourite narratives take their story from playwrights and storytellers such as Euripides or Homer? Indeed, how many of your favourite characters can escape the character archetypes established in Ancient Greek theatre? Without the understanding of this Greek and Roman culture, all of these references will fly straight over your head, diminishing the authors intended experience of their work.

With the increased focus on STEM throughout the school system, the humanities are falling behind, being given less focus and less funding. In turn, this means that Classics and the push for it to be included in curriculums is also suffering. Currently, Classics is massively underrepresented throughout the country, with only 1.3% of state schools entering candidates for A Level Ancient History, and 2% of them offering A Level Latin, according to the Advocating Classics Education project. Classics had been found to mostly be offered in boys single sex schools, with Aylesbury Grammar School being the only state secondary school in Buckinghamshire to offer GCSE or A Level facilities for Ancient History and Latin. These unequal opportunities are harmfully contributing to the widespread notion that Classics is elitist, only available to boys in private schools, as seen in the statistic that 49% of independent schools offer Latin at KS3, in comparison to only 2.7% of state schools.

In conclusion, I believe that it is vital that the accessibility of Classics should be increased for students of all ages, not only for the skills it teaches but also for the enhanced experience of our world that it offers, and the disadvantage that comes with not having access to that education. There are more than enough students who have the enthusiasm and the will to do well in this subject, but who are held back by their lack of access to the resources and the support that they require.



# DIVERSITY WEEK 2024!

This year's Diversity Week took place from Monday 24th to Friday 28th June and was a packed week with lots to celebrate and participate in.

## Inclusion and Diversity at AHS

First of all, our ID Ambassadors assembly laid out the goals and scope of ID at AHS. We want the whole AHS community to make sure that everyone feels like they belong here. This could be spreading awareness about certain demographics or bringing everyone together. The ID reps wanted to assure that they are here for every pupil. They encouraged students to ask questions and welcomed comments, feedback on ideas, events, practically anything related to ID. They encouraged everyone to join their wider ID meetings or speak to the ID rep in your form.



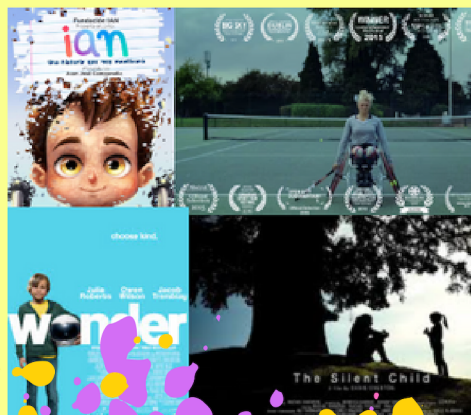
## Charity

All donations funds were being raised for the British Red Cross.



## Monday 24th June

On Monday, mural making took place where pupils could design a mural in the style of an AHS mosaic. Everyone was welcomed to make their own AHS tile and then bring it at lunch to add to the boards. The tile could be anything like things that represent their identity, beliefs, traditions and culture. There were some interesting and nicely decorated tiles. Some included Tamil Eelam, India and many more.



## Tuesday 25th June

On Tuesday, there were a number of films being screened that the ID believes will promote and highlight important messages about inclusion, diversity and belonging. These included short films about overcoming adversity, 'Wonder' and 'Turning Red'. I went to see Turning Red and to be honest it was fantastic with some moments of laughter and some were about understanding issues and key messages.

## Wednesday 26th June

On Wednesday, our very much postponed Holi run (due to bad weather earlier in the year), became part of the Diversity Week celebrations with a colour run on the field. White t-shirts became beautiful rainbows with harmless coloured powder being thrown at pupils dancing and sprinting around the track. It was a pleasurable day. Everyone had a big smile on their faces.





# DIVERSITY WEEK CONT.

## Thursday 27th June - Culture Day!

On Thursday, our non-uniform day raised funds for the British Red Cross and everyone had the chance to wear their favourite culture dress. At lunchtime we had an incredible celebration planned in the hall with students from AGS joining us. There was an awesome Pride Parade, Catwalk and Performances. The catwalk had many cultures participating including India, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, Zimbabwe, Pakistan, Morocco, Ghana, Malaysia, Slovakia and, of course, the UK. Outside there were many stalls taking place where people did raffles, quizzes, making bracelets, selling food and much more. Performances took place in the main hall where dances and dramas commenced.

## Friday 28th June

On Friday, there was an extra opportunity to see cultural performances and finish with a jam-packed disco in the Harding Hall.

It was lively and fun week with so many students embracing the opportunity to celebrate a whole range of different aspects of our identities. It's been a joy to see everyone coming together to recognise and promote the welcoming environment we are so proud of at AHS - a place where everyone feels that they belong.

Aishaani U 7S



# CHEMISTRY NEWS

## Royal Society Top Bench Regional Heats

AHS was proud to enter the Royal Society's Top of the Bench regional heats this year. Run from October to January, this competition in the past has involved practical tasks, written theory tests, and team missions to prove safety, problem solving and general chemistry knowledge. This year's competition was to design a poster on a transition metal, entering a team of 4 (one Yr11, one Yr10, two Yr9s).

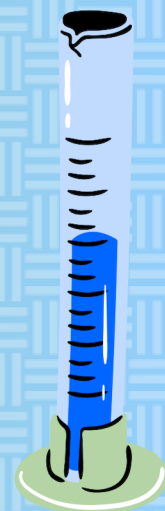
Two entries were credited by the judges:

Presenting yttrium, was Thannista S, Emily D, Hirah K, Nandu T.

For nickel and nitinol, Natasha A, Alex K, Anushri B.

Judges said: "All teams did phenomenally well, and it was very difficult to pick the winners.

Nickel poster is great - love the live experiment link! Yttrium poster also contains lots of useful info."



# Duke of Edinburgh

## Bronze D of E

After six months of recording their volunteering, sports and skills for an hour each week, over one hundred year 10s were finally on the home stretch to finishing their bronze DofE - the expedition. The training weekends on 19th-21st April and 10th-12th May had us fully prepared; knowing how to cook meals and set up a tent and planning our route. Although the first weekend was pretty chilly, the second was balmy and some were even able to see the northern lights! The early evening football game at the centre of all of the pitched tents that scattered the school field, plus Mr G's campfire stories (minus the campfire as sadly safety regulations could never allow it) are definitely our most memorable takeaways of the training weekend. The actual expedition, however, was no mean feat, with over 6 hours of walking each day and around 24 km in total.



Each group started at a checkpoint given to us, and made our way to the Coombe Hill campsite on the first day and the final checkpoint on the second via a route we planned in the previous training session. The first weekend (8th-9th June) greeted us backpackers with a friendly, just short of twenty degrees climate, which kept our spirits high as we set off, singing songs through the town we were dropped off at, and adjusting each other's backpacks to help distribute weight away from their shoulders. We made it to the first checkpoint with smiley faces and already plenty of empty snack packets shoved into pockets, and we were ecstatic to see that we had caught up with the group who set off half an hour prior!



Continuing our adventure, we followed the map, with myself as the self-appointed geographer, through yet another picturesque woodland trail, awaiting a clearing visible on the map that would indicate that we were still on the route, but the clearing never came. The woods seemed to gobble us up and our hope regressed as its trees stretched on and on, an unrecognisable path meeting us again and again. However, after a much needed snack, a 'nature toilet' break, and hours behind our pre-set schedule, we finally located ourselves at a point two kilometres away from where we should have been and I, mortified, mumbled my apologies for the map-reading error. The remainder of the first day hike passed by with higher spirits, accompanied by comedic meetings with the other groups doing our route, who had equally embarrassing stories of being lost, and it was relatively uneventful- except from a missed no entry sign into a private sheep field (but handled efficiently and safely of course)! Our dinner of stir fry, once we'd reached camp, was a delight against the cooling evening air, followed by a pan-full of hot chocolate to attempt to warm us up.

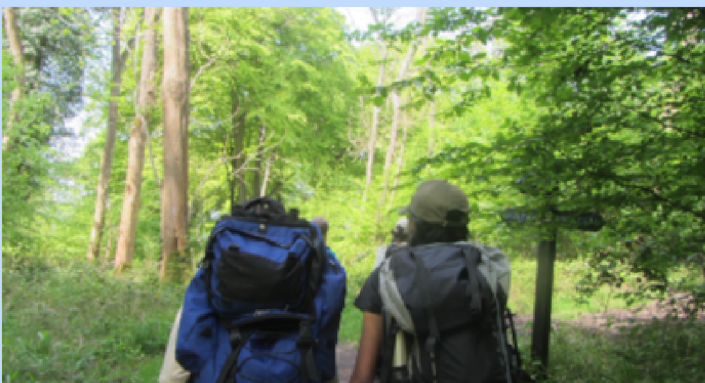


## D of E cont.

The night was much colder than I'd packed for; my measly two season sleeping bag struggling immensely to keep me warm. After a restless and extremely chilly sleep, we poured milk into cereal and brewed a fresh batch of hot chocolate- highly, highly recommended for anyone doing bronze DofE. Before we knew it, we had parted from the comfort of the campsite and found ourselves struggling up Combe Hill- a tiresome endeavour at eight in the morning, but once conquered, it set us up for a new, resilient outlook. We flew by checkpoints, the weights of our backpacks forgotten with conversation and generous helpings of our snacks and lunch of hot tomato soup and bread. With a lesson learnt to always double check the signposts enroute, my map skills reached new heights, parallel to the expanse of our pride in our achievements. As a close group, it felt incredibly refreshing to spend so long without phones or distractions- to just have us, the outdoors, massive 65L backpacks, and a game of 'dobble' every now and then. With school the next day, the promise of sleep was a heavenly thing as we waited for our parents to collect us- and my fatigue hit the second I strapped into the car. Certainly, both the training weekend and expedition will be something to remember!

Unfortunately, people on the second weekend (15th-16th June) were not so lucky weather-wise and were hit with rain on the first day. My shoes didn't dry out the whole expedition! Despite this, our morale was kept high through some singing and some snacks, and before we knew it we had reached our goal for the first night and were setting up our tents and cooking ramen on the stoves for dinner. On the Sunday morning, we arose sleepily and began folding up our tents and sleeping bags and making breakfast. Another long day was ahead of us, but motivated by the promise of home (and a shower) at the end of the road, we once again packed our bags and set off into the countryside. The views from the top of the hills were beautiful, and luckily the weather was much better with only a small bit of drizzle every now and then. Even though my group got lost, we soon found our way back on track and were making good time, stopping for a quick lunch break before finally reaching our destination. After a quick sign-off with our assessor, we popped into Tesco and grabbed some celebratory ice cream before being picked up by our parents and going home for a shower and a long nap!

Altogether, many year 10s can agree that bronze DofE was an amazing experience, and we have learnt so many key skills such as first aid, setting up a tent and - most importantly - keeping positive. Although certainly no experts, we hope that our stories provide some guidance or inspiration on how to most enjoy bronze DofE if you are planning to do it. Just remember the importance of clothing, food, warmth and, most importantly, the ability to laugh through several misadventures, and to enjoy the beautiful, but sadly un-instagramable (unless a digital camera is involved) landscapes of the English countryside! The one thing I would recommend the most is to take some spare shoes for the campsite - you'll need it for any wet weather! Some of us are planning to go on to do silver next year, so let's hope it ends up as much of a success as this one!



**Katie K and  
Rose P 10C**



# ICELAND TRIP

## Noor H 10W



In May, a group of Geography students from year 10 enjoyed a 4-day trip to Iceland. After a long day of travelling, the group was quickly flung into a jam packed itinerary.

The first place that we visited was the Sky Lagoon, which to many was the highlight of the trip. The next day started with a quick visit to a nearby power station, where we had fun learning about geothermal energy. After that we took a scenic drive to the tectonic plate border of the Eurasian plate and the North American plate. We spent some time walking around there and learning a lot from our lovely tour guide! Our next stop was the Gullfoss waterfall which was huge and we had a great time looking around.

We started the morning of the 26th May by driving to Skogafoss waterfall. We could walk up close to this waterfall and a lot of us got drenched because of this. After that quick stop we headed to the glacier; this was highly anticipated from the whole class and it definitely met expectations. We donned on our gear and began walking up the glacier, the best part to many was getting to drink glacier water! After the glacier we were all exhausted, but the day's activities didn't stop then. We went to a beautiful black stone beach and shortly after that we drove to another waterfall.

This waterfall was called Seljalandsfoss and we were able to walk behind it. There was also another waterfall really close, so we were able to walk towards it. The other waterfall was called Gljufrabui, and it was in a cave! The last event of the day was getting to go to a lava show in Reykjavik, the lava show was another one of the most talked about moments of the trip.



The following morning began with a long drive to a volcano crater which we could walk up! After that we went to see another waterfall and we also had a quick visit to a hot spring. The next stop was an area of quite a few waterfalls which the whole group had a great time exploring. We finished the day with a relaxing drive back to Reykjavik. When we returned we had dinner at the Hard Rock Cafe which was pretty cool. The morning of the last day we visited a museum, which was really informative and we read a lot about the geography of Iceland. We also enjoyed an interactive ice cave exhibit, which was my personal favourite part of the museum. After that we went to the airport which concluded our trip!

Thank you to all the teachers involved in this trip for making it such a pleasant experience! And hopefully future year groups will enjoy this trip as much as we did.

