



Spring Term 2014

# Highlights



## Thirty days

Complaining about the length of our terms and how hard we all work is probably a good way to lose sympathy from everyone who has a job away from education, but we are certainly ready for a holiday, and wouldn't have minded if, this year, Easter had been a week earlier. Hopefully, students and staff are looking ahead to a couple of weeks without too much work, and re-charging their batteries rather than scheduling every available minute for revision or study.

Having a school year that is determined by the timing of the full moon, a pagan festival and the harvest gives us half terms that can vary in length from 23 to 37 days, but perhaps it is better than the more regimented six-term year that is proposed from time to time. There is a feeling that children forget too much in the 'long' summer holidays, although there isn't any proper research to back this up and other countries have even longer summer breaks.

Anyway, AHS students and staff have been as productive and successful as ever in the thirty days since half term and have even found time to tell you about some of their Highlights ...

Alan Rosen

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## 2 RECENT SUCCESSES

### UKYP Election Results



The United Kingdom Youth Parliament (UKYP) gives the young people of the UK between the ages of 11 and 18 a voice. Following elections last term, with 14,501 votes being cast across Bucks, Evie Towersey 12O and Charlotte Tosti 12J were elected as two of the three Aylesbury Vale members of the UK Youth Parliament.

Members meet every 4 weeks to work together on campaigns and plan their work. They actively work with their local communities, organisations and schools to promote their campaigns and all students at AHS and beyond are encouraged to contact Evie and Charlotte to suggest policies or raise any issues.

Alan Rosen

### Rock Challenge

On Tuesday 25 February, 67 girls travelled to Stevenage to take part in our first Rock Challenge competition. After a morning spent watching other schools and cheering them on, everyone started getting ready backstage, with the air being practically solid hairspray. At the end of an incredible show, student reps from each school went up on stage to hear the results. After finding out we had won 12 awards including Choreography, Performer's Choice, and Set, achieving excellence in all categories, it was announced that we were also the overall winners, and everyone (including Miss Heninghem) burst into tears. After an 18 hour day we were all exhausted, but definitely excited at the prospect of performing again for the finals in June.



Rebecca Harty, Year 13 student and Rock Challenge Captain

### Badminton Regional Finals Success

Since the Sports Hall was built nine years ago, Mrs Frith has been to many County rounds for badminton; we have always been second, until this year. On Thursday 20 March, the Junior and Senior badminton teams were at school for 6.30 am in order to be on time for the Regionals in Guildford. We were the only school to have brought a Senior and a Junior team so we were in high spirits. First it was the Juniors, Ruchika Madhotra 9S, Sita Morjaria 7C, Gauri Morjaria 7W,



Izzy Marshall 8H and Daisy Williams 9S to play. We got through the pool without losing a single game and won the semi-finals 4 games to 1 to reach the final. It was very tense and when it came to the last match it was 2-2. It was a very close deciding game. When it came to the final point, it was 20-15 to AHS, then we won the final point! This means we are now going to the National Finals at Sherwood Forest, Center Parcs on Saturday 10 May. The Seniors played equally strongly and got all the way through to the finals but unfortunately lost 1-4. Everyone played really well and it was a really exciting day.

Daisy Williams 9S

## RS Trip to Amsterdam

During the February half-term break, just over 60 students went on a Holocaust trip to Amsterdam. During the two days we were in Amsterdam, we went on a guided walking tour, visiting Jewish museums and significant places for Jews during the Holocaust, such as the areas with high Jewish populations and buildings which used to be specifically for Jews.

We also had the opportunity to visit a Holocaust museum outside Amsterdam, situated on an old concentration camp. Finally, we visited the Corrie Ten Boom house, where the Ten Boom family hid a group of Jews from the Nazis in the 1940s, eventually sacrificing their freedom for them. Overall, it was a fascinating and thought-provoking experience.

Lily Pople 10A



## Ski Trip 2014

Snow, skis and sun. Well, sort of. This year's ski trip definitely did not leave in good weather. We left Dover on the last ferry crossing that night due to storms and spent our first day in Passo Tonale surrounded by mist. However, when the mist cleared the following morning, we were able to appreciate the splendour of the resort. It was an amazing week skiing in the beautiful Italian Alps and, despite the fact that many of us couldn't put our skis on at first, we managed blue and red runs, leaving only the hardest black ones. Some of the more experienced skiers even tackled these, enjoying the scenery from the glacier. By the time we boarded the coach for the long journey home, we were an exhausted, but very happy, group.

Katherine Ferris 12M



## Duke of Edinburgh Awards

Lots of girls in Years 10 to 13 have been working very hard towards their Duke of Edinburgh Awards. Nearly 100 girls in Year 10 have completed the Volunteering, Physical and Skill sections of their Bronze Award. Activities range from raising hundreds of pounds for good causes to street dance and playing the harp. These girls will now be taking part in AHS expeditions this summer.

58 girls have just returned from a very successful Silver expedition in the Cotswolds and are now planning to complete their Silver Award with a trip to the Peak District in July, and an intrepid group of Year 12 and 13 girls are off to Mid-Wales to complete their Gold expeditions during the summer.

Richard Torpey





## House Music

I would be lying to you if I said the idea of a leadership role in House Music alongside studying for five AS levels in a new school hadn't initially terrified me. However, as a member of Mr Druker's AS Music class, I hastily found myself fully involved.

Admittedly, the development of our final performance was certainly not without its challenges. I believe my feet must have worn a prominent path from the Study Centre to the pigeon holes, delivering notices to forms regarding the rehearsal schedule each morning. Yet,

soon enough, the strangers I was delivering them to became familiar and the task not so strenuous.

Fast forward to Wednesday 5 March. Was leaving the completion of our programme until two hours before the final performance a bit too risky? You decide. Regardless, after a sprint to Tesco's to buy fuel for the performers in the form of eight sponge cakes, we were (finally) ready. After 15 minutes that I can't remember, our performance was over. Then came the judges' decision - and the rest of the evening was a happy blur. The opportunity to be scrutinised by such accomplished judges had been insightful and interesting, if a little daunting.

Despite the competitive nature of the evening, the most important aspect was not winning or losing. For me, to have been introduced into a team of such supportive and talented individuals at AHS was a success in itself.

Ruth Bretts 12P

## Higher Education Evening

On Wednesday 19 March, Aylesbury High School welcomed over 50 Higher Education Institutions and careers organisations to our annual Higher Education Evening. This is the first year that we have invited boys from Aylesbury Grammar School to the mini-HE Fair part of the evening. Exhibitors ranged from the University of Aberdeen, African and Asian Venture and the British Army to the Universities of Warwick and Westminster. Over 200 students and their parents attended the evening. The whole day had something to interest students - at lunchtime the University of St Andrew's introduced the idea of studying in Scotland and the University of Cambridge was on hand later in the day to answer questions about applying to competitive universities. James Seymour from the Aston University outlined the factors to look for in choosing a university and we highlighted how to make best use of the rest of Year 12 and first part of Year 13 to maximise the students' chances of UCAS success. It was a great day with lots to think about.

Liz Chubb

## Elevate

On 10 March, almost 180 Year 11s piled into the Main Hall for a 3 hour revision seminar (voluntarily, we promise!). The reason? Elevate, a leading company in exam technique, was providing us with helpful hints and top tips in order to 'Ace our Exams' and manage our time effectively. Surprisingly (to the students) it really did help. Charlie, the young presenter, made the workshop fun and engaging while informing us about everything from common distractions - we now realise we can't multitask! - to how to get the most from our revision, using a variety of methods that will suit anyone. Even better, to fully back up the techniques we were provided with, Elevate does extensive research into how the top 1% of the UK's students achieve their impressive grades, so we know the methods really do work. Thank you to Elevate and Charlie for a new approach to revision that, fingers crossed, will stand us in good stead come 12 May when exams begin.

Izzy Phillips 11H on behalf of all the 'Elevated' Year 11 students

## 'Poetry by Heart' County Finals

During the term, Hana Ghani 11M, a posse of dedicated supporters and I attended the County round of 'Poetry by Heart'. Hana had to learn three poems by heart and each of the seven contestants was judged on poem difficulty, understanding, accuracy and performance. Hana presented her poems flawlessly and should be very proud of her achievement.

Matt Elgin



## Meanwhile in Year 7 ... 'Poetry By Heart' Competition

Recently, Year 7 took part in "Poetry by Heart". Each student had to go on to a website, pick their favourite poem and learn it by heart. Then the competition really started. One by one you had to recite to the rest of your group. The best person from every group was chosen to perform in front of the entire class. We voted for our favourite two people to perform in the final, in the Library.

The finalists were: Claire Coates 7A, Charlotte Strong 7A, Eden Horwood 7C, Mahalia McKain 7C, Hannah Ekerold 7H, Sophie Whitehead 7H, Zara Abbasi 7M, Hannah Wright 7M, Emily Critchlow 7S, Lucy Sallows 7S, Sophie Jenkins 7W, and Gabrielle Munien 7W,

The judges said it was a very tough call but awarded 2<sup>nd</sup> place to Eden Horwood and 1<sup>st</sup> place to Emily Critchlow. Each of the winners received a prize and everyone who participated in the final received a certificate. It was an extremely good competition and will hopefully be run again.

Imogen Gibbs 7S

## Creative Writing Club

As well as entering competitions, we took part in National Novel Writing Month, throughout November. We were challenged to write a novel or short story, encouraged by pep talks from young adult fiction writers such as James Patterson and Jeff VanderMeer. Most of us produced a first draft, which we could later joyfully destroy and recreate to our heart's content. However, just completing that first draft in a month was incredibly satisfying after four weeks of hard work.

This doesn't just give us the opportunity to write creatively and potentially be rewarded for the hours of tears and laughter we put into it, but also provides a real learning experience. For the 'A Twist In The Tale' competition - which was to write something with a creative twist of no more than one hundred words - we were forced to be imaginative, but also to show self-restraint and not turn a short story into a rambling essay. These competitions allow us to learn about creative writing in a fun and challenging way.

Lily Pople 10A

This poem is an example of the work that the girls do in the Creative Writing Club.

### Alone - The Story Of A Widow

I am but a lonely widow.  
Days creep by and become weeks, weeks turn into months,  
Months become years and each day I sit in my rocking chair staring into my window.  
I am but a lonely widow.  
Creak, creak, creak, goes my rocking chair.  
Where did the years go,  
The good times?  
The times where you and I would dance around the bedroom to the radio.  
I am but a lonely widow.  
The piercing chirps of the birds outside drown out my mournful thoughts.  
Tap, tap, tap goes the faulty shower – you never really got round to fixing that little problem.  
I am but a lonely widow.  
You may not be with me now but I still have the memories.  
How could I forget bingo Sundays?  
Or  
Hiking Mondays?  
These memories will always be close to my heart.  
I am but a lonely widow,  
With a mind full of cheerful memories and tragedies.  
I am a lonely but happy widow.

Reanna Owusu-Boateng 7A



### Chemistry Olympiad

On Monday 3 February, 18 Year 12s and 13s sat the Royal Society of Chemistry's Chemistry Olympiad, with over 5600 others across the country. This is a challenging two hour exam incorporating fundamental physical and mathematical concepts into the chemical world of molecules. Using the A Level knowledge we have gathered, intuitive guesswork and a periodic table, we worked through intriguing puzzles and problems. Navigating our mind palaces to deduce an answer (or even just to understand the question) always brought that certain sense of elation. Overall, our school did extremely well, achieving 5 Silver and 4 Bronze certificates.

Thanks to the Chemistry Department and well done to all those who participated.

Sony Roy 12I

## AHS Sport Relief 2014 - You've raised the cash, now bask in the glory

The Year 10 PE Change Team and 10G5 Sports Leaders planned, organised and inspired students and staff to get active for Sport Relief. In assemblies, Rosemary Paine 10W, Emily Edwards 10S and Finnley Whitbread 10H inspired AHS to get involved in the Onesie Fun Run, Aerobics, Benchball and Basketball activities held on Friday 21 March. The £580 raised will change lives in the UK and around the world. To absolutely everyone who took part in AHS's Sport Relief, thank you. A massive thank you to 10G5 who all contributed to the organisation of the day, whether taking photos, designing posters, badgering staff to wear their onesies or collecting your cash, be proud - you did a great job!

Ali Arber



## Year 7 Charity Fundraising

On Monday 24 March we held a bake sale for Robin Baker's Orphan Children's Home (RBOCH). In 2000, Robin Baker opened a children's home for orphaned girls in Doma Mandal of Rangareddi District, Andhra Pradesh, India. The orphanage provides girls with a chance to receive an education and reach their full potential. The aim of the orphanage is to educate the girls from the surrounding villages who would otherwise have no opportunity other than to be married off at an early age. RBOCH is the first establishment in the area to educate girls and the first ever to send 6 to 8 girls on to secondary education. Robin's orphanage is entirely supported by her friends and relatives in the UK by sponsorship and fundraising events. This is a small but incredible charity to support; so on Saturday 22 March we spent the day baking. After a hectic sale day, in which we ran out of supplies after about 20 minutes into lunch, we raised a grand total of £65.30. It costs £240 to fully support a girl for a year; we would like to think that this might be an achievable goal with further fundraising. We would like to thank everyone for their support and enthusiasm. To learn more about the girls and their stories or if you are interested in donation/ sponsorship, please visit <http://robinbakorsorphanchildrenshome.org/>



Charlotte Strong, Claire Coates and Anita Binns 7A

## Soroptimists present 'I am Malala' to the Library

Coinciding neatly with World Book Day, Sandy Smith from the Soroptimist Club in Aylesbury came in to present the school with a copy of the book 'I am Malala'.

Malala Yousafzai is the Pakistani pupil who was shot after promoting her views on the importance of girls' education, particularly in the Swat Valley where girls were sometimes banned from going to school.

We were pleased to accept the book as a worthy addition to the Library and would like to thank Sandy and the Soroptimists, whose aim of transforming the lives of women and girls around the world fits in very well with our aspirations.

Alan Rosen



## Level 2 Years 5 and 6 Swimming Festival - February 2014



The Level 2 Years 5 and 6 Swimming Festival, run by AHS Year 12 Sports Leaders at the AGS pool, was a fantastic event. All four of the schools that entered - Cuddington and Dinton, Aston Clinton, Bedgrove and Wendover - really entered into the spirit of the School Games through their enthusiasm and motivation. The atmosphere was brilliant, with the cheers being heard outside of the pool and every swimmer being clapped to the end of every race. Each pupil gave it their all in their individual races. The finale was the relays with each relay team really pulling together. The majority of the swimmers were in the relays and everyone else was cheering. Bedgrove won overall, for the second year running, and again go through to the School Games held at Stoke Mandeville in the summer. The primary schools really appreciated being given an opportunity to swim and compete against other schools in a competitive event. Well done to everyone who took part.

Thank you to the following Year 12 Sports Leaders who made the event possible and were so organised and efficient in running the event: Amy Palmer 12H, Cerys King 12O, Lucy Lowrie 12H, Maddie Rowley 12W and Paige Brook 12J. Thank you also to lifeguards Lydia Dmytrenko 13E and Tilly Bailey 12C for supporting the event.

Kerry Carpenter

## Cricket Squad

The newly-formed U13 cricket team, who only started training in January, competed in their first District indoor cricket competition on 26 February. They performed fantastically, becoming District Champions. At the County Finals, they continued to perform very well, drawing with two other schools. In a tense finish to find a winner, the competition went into knock-out rounds, leading to AHS gaining a very creditable 3<sup>rd</sup> place. Well done to the team: Morgan Davis 8C, Molly Woods 8C, Jasmine Holgate 8C, Izzy Marshall 8H, Kiylo Solagbade 8A, Hattie Moore 7W, Maddy Weir 8H, Mia Gilbert 8H, Sarah Nicholls 7M, Eden Horwood 7C and Chantelle Arulanandam 7A.

Susan Monaghan

## End of the season - Hockey Squads

As the Hockey season comes to an end, I want to say a big 'well done' to all the hockey squads. You have all given your best to matches, even in the very cold weather. There have been a few wins, draws and some losses but you have all impressed me with your spirit, no matter the result. A particular well done to the U14 hockey team on their performance in the end of season District Tournament; achieving a 3<sup>rd</sup> place (with 1 point between them, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup>) is a great end to the season. I hope to see you all trying out for next year's teams.

Susan Monaghan



## Sainsbury's Active Kids Vouchers

We are again collecting Sainsbury's vouchers in order to exchange them for sports equipment. This year we would really like some water polo nets to enhance lessons and House Water Polo. If you have any Sainsbury's vouchers, please send them in with your daughter for her to place in the collection box, which can be found on the top of the filing cabinet outside the staff room.

## National Netball Champions

The U14 Netball Squad travelled to Ellesmere Port, Liverpool on Friday 14 March to compete in the National Schools Netball Finals. We won our first game against Broxbourne School 6-5. By the time it got to our last match in our pool, we had won all our games. Our last pool game was versus Lady Eleanor Holles from Middlesex. Tension was clear throughout, with Mrs Sillence motivating us from the side line. We lost 9-6 but we had qualified for the Semis to play Wellington College. We came 2<sup>nd</sup> to them at Regionals so had a strong desire to beat them. We were 4-1 down at half time but we played well under pressure and won 10-8. Wow, we realised we were through to the Finals.



The starting whistle blew against The Grammar School at Leeds and with shouts and screams from the side line and despite the wind, we were up by 1 goal after the first 7 minutes. Fantastic interceptions and shots in the second half secured an 11-8 win, making us NATIONAL CHAMPIONS!! When the whistle blew, tears were instantly streaming with hugs and smiles all round. We were presented our medals by an England Player!

It was a phenomenal experience and day for everyone on and off court and, on behalf of the team, I would like to thank Mrs Frith and Mrs Sillence, especially for getting us here.

Charlotte Brooker 9M - Vice Captain

## U15 and U13 Basketball - one game away from National Final Fours

AHS's U15, U14 and U13 teams have all reached the regional stages of the competition in fine form. The U13 team are now one game away from reaching the National Finals after beating Cams Hill, Sussex, by a massive 97-13. The AHS team were in fine form and look forward to hosting St John's Marlborough on the last day of term. The U14 team narrowly lost 35-42 to Kings School, Winchester. The U15



team (pictured) hosted Angmeering School and after a determined team performance won 67-38 in a great game of basketball. After Easter they will travel to either Guildford or Uffculme, Devon to challenge for a place at the National Finals in Nottingham in May. Well done to all the squads for their efforts in training and matches.

Ali Arber

## AHS PE Change Team at Wembley Stadium

The Aylesbury PE Change Team (PECT) Year 9s (Charlotte Brooker 9M, Annabelle Denly 9H and Bronwen Reed 9H) were very fortunate to gain places at the second National Young Ambassador Celebration Day. The Youth Sport Trust event brought together the best of the best Young Ambassadors from secondary schools across England. This event is the YST's opportunity to showcase the outstanding Young Ambassadors and the contribution they make to PE and school sport. The day involved three different workshops, where they had the opportunity to utilise some of the skills they have developed, and were fortunate to be working with International, Olympic and Paralympic athletes. Held at the magnificent Wembley Stadium, the event inspired the girls into planning new PECT clubs for the summer or autumn term in aerobics and Smash Up Badminton.



Ali Arber