



NEWSLETTER



Inside this Issue

Page 1 & 2 - AGS Ski Trip
 Page 3 - Japanese Visit
 Page 4 - German Exchange
 Page 5 - Inter-House Football,
 Geography Trip
 Page 6 & 7 - Communication
 Faculty News
 Page 8 - Renovation Club and
 Navy Visit
 Page 9 - AGS Music News
 Page 10 - AGS Drama News
 Page 11 - School of Rock

Welcome from Mr Kelly

Welcome to the Spring 2023 publication of the AGS newsletter! Inside this edition you will find examples of just some of the opportunities our students have been benefiting from recently. Our commitment towards creating an environment in which all students can develop their talents is central to many of the stories contained within. None of this would be possible without a great group of young people, staff who are willing to help, and a supportive local community. For this, I am very grateful.

Diary Dates

Fri 31st March - Break up for Easter
 Mon 17th April - Whole school return
 Thurs 20th April - Year 7 Parents' Evening (Online)
 Thurs 25th May - Year 10 Parents' Evening (Online)
 Friday 26th May - Break up for May Half Term
 Mon 5th June - Whole school return
 Thurs 8th June - Year 8 Parents' Evening (Online)
 Thurs 15th June - Year 9 Parents' Evening (Online)
 Wed 19th July - Activity Day 1
 Thursday 20th July - Activity Day 2, Break up for
 Summer Holiday

AGS 2023

Ski Trip

As members of the ski trip staff, we had a discussion before leaving this year for Austria as to how many times we have taken the long 26-hour coach journey over to Villach in Austria. We started the trip, as it stands, back in 1996 and here we are 25 successful trips later, with numerous members of staff helping over the years. This year was no different, with an early 5:30am start on the Friday covering a journey of a little over 1000 miles to reach the snow-covered mountains of Austria. Arriving around 10am on Saturday, we saw our first glimpse of our amazing hotel before heading up to have our first look at the mountain, Gerlitzen. Staff and students very quickly got used to the idea of clumping around in large ski or snowboarding boots as well as trying to manoeuvre around on large skis, some for the first time ever!

Everyone got to grips with the equipment very quickly and progress was swift from each of the beginners' groups all the

way through to the 'advanced black' ski group. By the end of the week almost all students were able to ski right from the very top of the mountain down to the nursery slopes, where they had first put on a set of skis at the beginning of that week. What an achievement in 6 days!

As is always tradition, we stopped off at the bottom of one of the runs on the final morning to have a welcomed hot chocolate, before starting our final ascent up the ski lifts in 2023. There was even time for a quick group snap as pictured across.

“ We started the trip, as it stands, back in 1996 and here we are 25 successful trips later ”





The fun continued into every night with a traditional 6th Form quiz, run by our very talented Year 13 students (thanks to Ross, Evelyn and Jacob), a trip to the cinema (for those who didn't fall asleep), a relaxing dip (for some) in some thermal springs, as well as a trip to Italy, some bowling and a final presentation and disco evening.

I think it is safe to say that if you were to speak to anyone who went on the trip, they would say they had a great time, but came back well and truly ready for a well deserved rest. I know this due to just how quiet the coaches were on the way home!



Thank you to each of the students who came on the trip, you were great ambassadors for AGS. Thank you to each of the staff – without whom, the trip wouldn't have been possible.

Watch this space for potential news of our 2024 trip.

Mr Lomax
Trip Lead



Japanese Visit

On 6th February 2023, the Mayor of Toyota City Council visited Derbyshire to discuss the international partnership between Derbyshire and Toyota City in Japan, and celebrate 25 years of twinning. The civic delegation visited two Derbyshire schools as part of their programme of activities, with Anthony Gell being chosen as one of these schools.

AGS has been working with Derbyshire County Council in recently setting up a virtual exchange programme

between Anthony Gell School and Inabu school in Toyota City. In October, students from various Year groups participated in the first of these virtual exchanges, and revelled in the chance to talk to and learn from students in Japan over Microsoft Teams.

The party of Japanese delegates consisted of five members of Toyota City Council: Mayor Toshihiko Ota, Chairman Kiyoshi Itagaki, Kazuo Tsuzuki (Deputy Managing Director of the Toyota City Council Secretariat), Kochiro Kuno (Deputy Director of the Internationalization Promotion Division) and an interpreter. The group were accompanied by Steph Walsh, a fluent speaker of Japanese and DCC representative who has been helping AGS to establish the online links with Toyota. Steph is also an ex-student of AGS.

The delegates were welcomed by students and staff, before Headteacher Malcolm Kelly led them on a tour of the school. The tour allowed the visitors to see various classes learning in different classrooms, students studying in the Sixth Form Centre, a class reading in the school's library and some of the excellent facilities available to students in Wirksworth Leisure Centre.



Once in the Leisure Centre,

the Mayor's party were delighted to meet with some of the students who were participating in the exchange programme

as well as the AGS teachers Mrs Walton and Mrs Walsh who are coordinating this opportunity on behalf of the school. The Languages department at AGS have extended their extra-curricular programme in 2022-23 to include a 'Japanese Culture Club'.

Students who attend this club, and who have forged links with their peers in Japan, enjoyed speaking Japanese to the visiting dignitaries and provided an excellent presentation for all to enjoy. The students then engaged in conversation with the Mayor, keen to know more about Toyota and life in Japan.

The exchange is currently 'virtual' and reliant on the Internet and video calls, however, in future years we are hoping that this international link will mean visits to both schools.



AGS PE News

Jed Brabiner has made it through to the Table Tennis National Finals which is being played in Wolverhampton in late April. Daniel Glithero participated in the County Table Tennis finals.



Y13 students have completed their high ropes course as a part of their Cambridge Technical course.



Our Year 11 boys - Pablo A-L, Henry Kemp, Oscar Hallisey, Daniel Glithero who made it through to the badminton County Championships at John Port Spencer Academy and came 3rd out of 6 schools, narrowly losing out on second place by one game!

Year 7 & 8 Girls:
Football Tournament
Winners.



AGS Basketball



With the basketball season coming to a close, it is good to reflect on the achievements of our teams.

U16 Boys - played in 3 qualifying games and are now in the county final.

U15 Boys - qualified for the county final.

U14 Boys - qualified for the county final, and they have performed extremely well in the national competition and have made it to the last 8 in the country.

Inter-House Football

February saw football fever break out on the astros, with the Inter-House football league drawing to an exciting conclusion. After the Christmas break, five games remained across three year groups, with Fearne the only team who could have caught Arkwright.

The dominance of the Year 10 Arkwright team saw the House across the line, with a resounding 5-0 victory over Wright crowning Ms Flower's House champions.

A special mention has to be made of Arkwright's Owen Young, who bagged a hat trick in Arkwright's last game before taking receipt of the AGS cup during assembly.

Goal of the league season goes to Wright's Jemima Allsop, who won the ball in midfield, advanced 25 yards, drew the keeper before placing the ball into the bottom corner.

Students are already asking about the next phase of Inter-House football and staff are now looking to organise an AGS Cup knock-out tournament in the summer term.

Mr Watts
Deputy Headteacher



**Arkwright win the
AGS league cup!**



Communications Faculty News

A huge well done to our KS4 and KS5 students who took the opportunity to craft a story on the theme of "Transformation".

We had an avalanche of entries showcasing a wide range of interpretations - nature themed, fantasy themed, social realism and gothic styles of writing all featured. How wonderful it was to read the work from our talented young people showing their abilities to craft and shape their writing!

The overall placings were:

1st - Harry Kearns
2nd - Barnaby Sharratt
3rd - Owen Young
4th - Lily McCleod.

Well done to all! We hope you enjoy reading these stories...

Mrs Lovatt
Communications
Faculty

Extract from Barnaby Sharratt's 'An Empresses' Transformation'.

The city of Rantharia glistened in the sunlight, a jewelled ember in the coals of the Burnt lands, former capital of the Empire. The city was aflame. Empress Shana stared at the ashes of her once proud city, burnt by the unbridled fury of open war. There was a sudden percussion, a deep sound as though the entire world was a drum. It was followed by a second percussion, this one knocking the empress to the ground. A third percussion, and a roar of such force that any who heard it would throw down their weapons and flee. The empress held her ground, lifting the Blade of Ancestors high. Then there was a glimmer on the horizon, a shine of gold, one that could be confused with the sun, were it not midday. Then, over the horizon, like the sun, a dragon rose...

Extract from Owen Young's 'Transformation'

The buzzing sound of the doorbell rumbled deep into my eardrums and woke me from my deep slumber. Then came the knock, a knock that demanded my attention. The ominous voice that followed startled me into a shell-shocked state.

"This is the Police," barked the faceless voice below, "Open the door immediately."

I breathed in sharply as my heart jumped into my throat. I lost my surroundings for a second but then everything came back to me as I heard the crash of my door being splintered from its frame and the sound of footsteps as loud as an elephant and as fast as a cheetah ascending the stairs.

I threw myself back in a vain attempt to circumvent the grasp of imprisonment, but there was no escape from the long arm of the law.

"Johnny Tranter, you are under arrest for the crime of handling and dealing illegal drugs."

What happened next remains a bit of a blur to me...

Monochrome - Harry Kearns

It was a cold morning in the city. The sky was overcast, and a thin layer of fog blanketed the streets, creeping through any gaps under doors or through half opened windows. The air was crisp and biting, and the few brave souls out and about in the early morning hurried along, their breath forming white plumes in the frigid air. The silence was deafening. Birds lay quiet, huddled together for warmth in their nests. The storefronts were glazed in coatings of ice, reflecting the dim morning light. The air was filled with the sound of honking horns and the hum of engines as drivers try to navigate through the congested traffic. A man, wrapped in wintery clothing, stepped out from his quiet abode. His coat was thick and padded to protect against the biting wind. He wore a woollen scarf wrapped tightly around his neck; his boots sturdy and well-worn, ready to trudge through the snowy streets. Despite his clothing, he could still feel the winter chill seeping through, making him shiver. He hunched over, pulled the strap of his work bag over his shoulder, and started to walk into the city.

His head was down, focusing on the ground as he stumbled his way forward, each footstep a small victory against the unforgiving elements. As he approached the secluded office building, he let out a sigh of relief. The warmth inside would be a nice welcoming from the cold. He quickened his pace, eager to escape the icy embrace. He was tired, yet another day in his endless loop of miserable life.

It had been twenty years since Peter and James had last seen each other. They had been the best of friends during their teenage years, but life had taken them in different directions soon after. An unresolved misunderstanding meant that had parted bitterly. Peter had ever since felt guilty about not being able to find reconciliation.

He was aware that he had slowly become introverted. It didn't help that he was quick to anger. Finding close friend was difficult for him. A repetitive office job added to this had meant that he had fallen into an uninspiring life. It was days like this that he missed his friend of old.

As he walked out of the building, Peter shielded his eyes from the orange glow of the evening sun. The little warmth in the air was slowly fading with the sun as it set over the horizon. The end of a workday was in complete contrast to the start. The streets were bustling with cars, headlights illuminating the way as they crawled along. The air was filled with the sound of honking horns and the hum of engines as drivers tried to navigate through the congested traffic.

Peter weaved his way in and out of the crowds of people on the pavements, wanting to avoid the hustle. As he reached the outskirts of town, the busyness of city gradually faded behind him. He turned down his street, the trees casting long shadows across the street. Approaching his house, he opened the gate of his front picket fence and walked down the drive. After jumbling around in his bag, he picked out a key and unlocked the door, stepping inside. Placing his bag and coat upon a peg, he sighed. Home.

Kicking off his shoes, Peter headed straight for his gaming console. He picked up a controller and sunk into the sofa. As the screen flickered into life, he was hit with an instant wave of comfort and relief. After scrolling through his game library, he settled on a first-person shooter, his favourite. Looking through his list of friends, he smiled to himself when he saw that one of his friends was online. After sending a message inviting him to join, Peter eagerly awaited the response. A few moments later, a notification took up his screen: 'Invite accepted'. As Peter became immersed in the virtual world, all the stress and fatigue from the day faded away.

Hours passed, light faded, his eyes began to protest. Peter reluctantly knew it was time to take a break and call it a night. As he was signing off, he saw a notification for a new message:

'It's just like old times isn't it, Peter.'

In an instant, he felt transformed. The weight of remorse untethered. Friendship rekindled. Tomorrow, a day to look forward to, a day of possibilities.

Navy Workshop

This term we have been pleased to welcome into school the Royal Navy who have worked with students in Years 7 and 9.

They have delivered assemblies and workshops for all students which have focussed on developing students' teamwork and leadership skills through Technology and Science based activities.

Year 9 built and launched Rockets and Flares while Year 7 worked on a helicopter themed activity.

The students were a credit to themselves and to the school as they worked hard, enjoyed themselves and showed the strong personal skills that we work hard to develop at Anthony Gell.

We will be welcoming the Royal Navy back into school to complete workshops with Years 8 and 10 before the end of the year.

Mrs Lowe
Assistant Headteacher



Restoration Club



The restoration club have been continuing to restore and repurpose a range of items including chairs, bicycles and other items that have either been donated to us or picked up from scrap yards.

Since September we have restored a 1940s Hornby clockwork train, a Victorian chest of draws, a number of chairs and stools and some cast iron hoppers. We will continue to post our projects and items for sale on the Restoration Club Facebook page.

If you would like to donate items for restoration to our club or would like to buy any of our items, please contact me on the following email aweightman@anthongell.co.uk or via the Facebook page: Anthony Gell Restoration Club.

Thank you for all of the support, all of the proceeds go back into the club to fund new projects and purchase tools and equipment.

Mr Weightman
Director of Teaching and Learning Create Faculty & Restoration Club Leader

German Exchange Trip

My time in Germany was a memorable and exciting experience. The town we stayed in was beautiful, and the views were stunning. The people we stayed with were extremely welcoming and friendly. We got the opportunity to see new and exciting places like Marburg Castle and Frankfurt. I also enjoyed being able to go into a German school and see the difference between schools in Germany and England and I found it very interesting. Personally, my favourite trip was being able to go into Frankfurt and the Main Tower. We also got to look around the city and try different foods. We then got to finish our week off by going bowling in Frankenberg and spending time with our host families and our new friends.



It was an all-around amazing trip as we got to see new places and I was very sad to have to leave. I recommend going on exchange trips as they are an eye opening experience and allow you to see what life is like in different countries. I am most grateful for the opportunity to take part in this exchange trip and most thankful for the time and effort it has taken to be set up. The trip has allowed me to see new places, meet new people and make unforgettable memories.

Anselm Canning-Hill
Year 10 Student

Year 11 Geography Trip

We had a very enjoyable experience on the recent trip to Sheffield. The day started with us getting into groups of about four, this was mainly done on the coach and was easily sorted out. Starting off the trip in an incredibly luxurious area, my group stopped at Victor Road to collect our data, it was a very quiet area with not much activity going on in the time we were there. We slowly worked our way down going from high quality of life down to a lower quality of life. Next stop, Sterndale Road. Before we collected data we were allowed the opportunity to spend a bit of money inside a parks cafe (the hot chocolate was incredible, not to mention the tuna sandwich). The park was very open and made a great space for families to visit. Sterndale Road was a nice place, semi-detached housing and a few services accompanied the area. We then took a short drive to Violet Bank Road, not quite the standard we'd seen earlier in the day. Terraced housing with no drives and clearly not a lot of outdoor space, this shows the contrast from just a few miles outside of the CBD (Central Business District).

At the backend of our trip we stopped at a street very close to Bramall Lane. This place was a very different environment compared to that of Victor Road. We were allowed a bit of time after collecting data to walk around and spend some of our money, I did so by buying a milkshake (highly recommended). Overall the trip was very fun and productive. The trip was possible thanks to our great hostesses, Mrs. Harrison and Mrs. Lowe. Thank you very much for an enjoyable trip!

Elliot Bell
Year 11 Student

Spring Concert

For anyone who didn't attend the Spring Concert, organised by the music department on Monday evening, I must tell you.... you missed an absolute treat! The evening was very varied, with wonderful performances by the Orchestra & Urban Choir, individual musicians playing flute, clarinet, piano, electric guitar & violin, a number of small bands/groups and some absolutely stunning vocalists! The production / sound quality was also great!

The talent on display really was fantastic but what made this concert extra special for me was the enthusiasm, supportive atmosphere and warmth, that were palpable.

At the beginning of the event we were told that a grand piano, upright piano and drums used during the performance & rehearsal had all been generously donated to the school (and were subsequently played with aplomb!)

Then, as each of the performers took their place on the stage, it was evident that they all felt encouraged and supported, able to be themselves and enjoy performing without fear of judgement. Some had only had minimal rehearsal time (but were allowed to say so!); a young musician who had only played in public once before, was accompanied by a 6th former for extra support (and performed brilliantly!). Every child or group, no matter who they were or how accomplished they were, received genuine rapturous applause both from the audience and their peers, and it was lovely to see how valued each and every participant was. I was also surprised to learn that there was a staff choir! The wit of their song choice (including "Help" by The Beatles) was not lost on the audience, but how lovely it is, that the staff are happy to get together and rehearse in their free time and commit further time to take part in the concert.

So – a massive "well done & thank you" to everyone who performed, and all those staff associated with the music department.

This was a memorable, emotional and uplifting event and a great reminder of the power & importance of music and the very special qualities of Anthony Gell School!

Kerry Grant
Parent of Year 11 Student



This American piano has been donated to AGS by Molly and David Winder and made at the Steinert Piano workshop in Boston; at that time, a centre for the production of very high quality pianos such as Steinway. These are used in concert halls throughout the USA. This piano's construction and sound is almost identical to the Steinway pianos but few were produced as Steinway stopped the competition from Steinerts in about 1918. So it is fairly rare, especially in Britain. How did it arrive here? Wilfred Bramham, David's grandfather's brother had emigrated from Yorkshire to the U.S. in the early 1900s. He bought this piano for his daughter Mildred when she graduated with honours from the New England Conservatory of Music. During her whole life she was a dedicated piano teacher. When David went to work in New York after 1993, she enjoyed playing duets with him, then on her hundredth birthday, sent the piano to David's house in New York. Subsequently it was moved up to the third floor of their one bedroom flat in Manhattan, where it was not only played but provided a roof over visiting grandchildren who slept on the floor underneath it. David and his wife Molly returned to England in 2014 accompanied by the piano.

They are delighted that teachers and young people at the Anthony Gell School will play and hear the beautiful sound of it.

Mrs Fordham
Music Teacher

AGS Drama News

On Friday 3rd February, two minibuses filled with Year 9 and 11 students went to Derby Theatre to find out more about possible careers within the theatre industry, and our eyes were opened to a whole wealth of possibilities. It turns out that there are a whole range of careers for people both on and off stage and that actually it is one of the fastest growing industries within the UK. Throughout the day we enjoyed workshops on marketing, costume, light, sound and acting but we also found out about stage managers, programming, Front of House and much much more. We dressed up in all sorts of amazing costumes, including Mrs Haversham's wedding dress which we discovered is slightly blue on the bottom because under the stage lights it looks like dirt! We also got to design and make our own mini costumes on a mannequin before judging which was the best.



George Gough, an ex AGS student came into talk to Year 9 and Year 11 students about his experiences in professional theatre. Since leaving school George has worked in professional theatre doing a variety of roles including lighting, stage management, acting and directing. He has worked on a number of shows in London's West End, including the immersive Doctor Who experience and most recently he worked on the Blood Brothers tour and has just finished stage managing this year's panto at the Theatre Royal in Nottingham.



He talked about the wide variety of roles available in both the theatre and the TV/Media sector. He had some fascinating insights, and the students asked some really interesting and thought-provoking questions. Even the drama teacher learnt some new terms such as actors in shows who are called 'swings' who understudy several different roles in order to ensure that 'The Show Will Go On!'

Thank you, George, for giving up your time to talk to some hopeful future theatre industry specialists!

We went on a tour of the theatre including up into the flies where we discovered that head room was a particular issue! You also have to be good with heights and ropes! Then we found out how to create an effective short piece of theatre and how to market to a whole different range of audiences. We had a great day which made us consider not only how a piece of theatre is made, but also the mass of people involved and the possible career paths!

Mrs Hampton
Drama Teacher

Mrs Hampton
Drama Teacher

SCHOOL OF ROCK

School of Rock was a fun, fantastic and fabulous show for cast, crew, and audience. A treat of music, movement, and comedy, the show brought students together from all the arts subjects across all year groups. Auditions for the show were packed – with over 50 people attending. Mrs Fordham and Mrs Hampton had the hard decision of choosing parts for only 20-30 people. Rehearsals started in September 2022 when the cast got a chance to get to know one another and the characters they would be playing. We had lots of extra rehearsals at lunchtime and after school to make sure the show would be as good as it could be. Vocal rehearsals with Mrs Fordham and Mrs Marshall-Simms helped us to learn the songs and harmonies, and in drama rehearsals with Mrs Hampton the cast worked on characterisation, learning lines, and implementing the songs into the scenes. In addition to learning vocal parts for the songs, some of the main cast played live instruments on stage during the performance which added the extra challenge of learning instrumental parts on top of their lines and vocals.

“It was an amazing experience for both the cast and crew”



The Saturday before the live shows, we had a dress rehearsal which went really well! It was amazing to see the hard work from the drama and music rehearsals, along with Mrs Forrester's choreography and Mrs Barnes' costumes, all come together to create an amazing production. We performed for the first time on the 16th of December, then on the 17th for primary school students during the day, and a final performance in the evening. The applause every night was enough to raise the school's roof! Overall, it was an amazing experience for both the cast and crew, but the question on everybody's lips is... what's in store for next year?

Lizzy Stocks
Year 12 Student

