



Anthony Gell
— School —

Autumn 2023 / Issue 64

NEWSLETTER

Welcome from Mr Kelly

It is my pleasure to invite you to read this term's AGS newsletter. Once again, our newsletter is packed full of fabulous memories and wonderful achievements by lots of people who are proud to call AGS their school.

As we approach the Christmas period in 2023, we can reflect with a great deal of pride on what has been achieved in the last 12 months. More success for so many in a wide range of exams and academia, more trips and activities returning after the restrictions of a pandemic, more occasions when young people exemplified all that is good about their generation.

Our students have developed their skills, expanded their experiences, and achieved so much, whilst showing respect and care towards others. They have helped in the local community, contributed to regional events and offered support to international projects. They have much to be proud of and we continue to be very proud of them.



Remembrance Day

On Friday 10th of November, students playing football at break time decided to have a minute's silence before their match kicked off.

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Diary Dates:

Mon 8 Jan - All students back in school after Christmas Break
Thurs 11 Jan - Yr 9 Parents' Evening
Mon 15 Jan - Year 11 and 13 mock exams start
Thurs 18 Jan - Year 9 Options Evening
Thurs 8 Feb - Year 8 Parents' Evening



Tea, Talk and Tech



'Tea, Tech and Talk' is an idea supported by students from the AGS Sixth Form and happens in the cafe of Waltham House. It is open to residents and non-residents alike. The idea is to give older members of our community the chance to have a drink and a chat with someone from a younger generation. They can also bring their phone, tablet etc. with them, and often the younger person is able to help explain things about the device which allows the older person to start using it again or gives them greater clarity and confidence. It has been brilliant to see this support happening. The buzz in the room is superb.

"Tea, Talk and Tech is a rewarding and great experience in which volunteers are able to help improve the lives of people within our local communities, whether that is aiding them with technology or just talking. Tea, Talk and Tech provides a valuable time and space for this to happen." - Lucy Lichters-Swain, Sixth Form Student

Year 7



Football



Full of nervous energy and excitement our first game was not a long awaited friendly but a cup game against Swanwick Hall, which unfortunately was a game too early. Despite several notable performances Swanwick ran out comfortable winners.

Mr John
PE Teacher

Beyond Equality Staff & Student Workshops

We have been incredibly fortunate to be working with a charity called 'Beyond Equality' on exploring the themes of gender identity and stereotyping, including how this manifests itself in relationships inside and outside of school.

Staff have been involved in two training workshops, with a third to follow in the spring term of 2024. Year 9 and Year 10 boys have participated in three two-hour workshops, consisting of small group work with a facilitator from Beyond Equality. Year 9 and Year 10 girls have participated in separate workshops, lead by AGS staff, focusing on gender stereotyping and sexism.

The workshops enhance our PHSCE curriculum and staff training programme and have provoked thoughts and conversation around this very important topic.

Mrs Harrison
DTL - Explore Faculty

Frank Bottomley and John Thompson

Those of you who live close to the school may well have noticed that there have been two new benches added on the footpath behind our school fields. Each of the benches honour a very important person in AGS's proud history.

The first bench has been placed as a mark of respect to AGS's first Headteacher, a man called Frank Bottomley, who was Head when the school changed from being Wirksworth Grammar to Anthony Gell School in 1965. Frank laid down a vision for the new school from the onset, a vision which still forms the foundation of our work today, of a school which is there to serve the community and offer a comprehensive education to all students, regardless of background, goals and talents. Frank paved the way for inclusivity.

The second of the benches commemorates the work of another person who helped shape AGS. John Thompson was a governor and a trustee of our school for many years. He was the driving force behind much of what we see today when we survey the fantastic sport and leisure facilities we have. John typified everything we look for in a leader, a friend and a supporter. He was adamant that the young people of Wirksworth and the surrounding areas should have access to the best sports facilities, and worked hard to get the Leisure Centre and all of the artificial turf pitches in place. In addition to the facilities, John coordinated financial support for many individuals and groups of young people. He helped to ensure that assistance was there, whenever needed, in order to help more people benefit fully from the experience AGS offers.

Both men sadly passed away in 2023. We are incredibly grateful for all that they did for us and very proud of their achievements. Their legacy lives on.

Mr Kelly
Headteacher

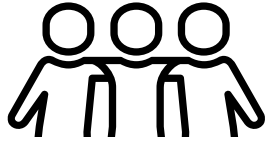


Year 10 trip to see 'Everybody's Talking about Jamie'

One of the most important things we do in GCSE Drama is try to see as many plays as possible. It opens our minds to new techniques, stories and possibilities. In September, students in Year 10 went to Nottingham Theatre Royal and were in for a treat of a play. It struck me, walking through Nottingham at night with the students, just how important it is for the students to see the bright lights, big city effect sometimes and by the looks on their faces, it was a new world for some. In fact, one student told me they'd never been to the theatre before. The show is based on a true story of a boy who wanted to wear drag for his school prom but school said no and this was the story of his coming out and becoming strong. The show was stunning with beautiful choreography, catchy tunes and outstanding acting.

Mrs Hampton
Drama Teacher

German Exchange Visit



After such an enjoyable week in Germany back in February, it was fantastic to be able to welcome our exchange partners here in Wirksworth for the return leg of our German exchange.

After an initial evening settling in with our host families, a busy programme of activities got underway. The first morning for the German students was spent in school, visiting lessons and having a tour of the school with Mr Watts, before an afternoon exploring Wirksworth and Stoney Wood thanks to Phil Richards.

The second day saw an early start as we dropped our German guests at Matlock station to get the train to London. After a full day seeing all the sights in beautiful autumn sunshine they arrived back in Matlock at 10pm – tired but happy!

The weekend was spent with host families, and I was overwhelmed by the number of fantastic places that our families took their guests to: Chatsworth, the Peak District, a walk up Kinder Scout, Sheffield, Derby and even a trip to Manchester City to see the ladies team play – and win!

Monday was the day of our joint visit to Castleton, where the tour of Treak Cliff Cavern proved interesting and informative as always. A lunch stop in Bakewell and a last chance to buy presents for home was a lovely end to the day.

On Tuesday Anthony Gell students left tutor to say farewells to their partners. Firm friendships made and a few tears were shed (!) The partnership between Anthony Gell school and the Wollenbergschule in Wetter is well over 30 years old, and as such one of the longest standing exchange links in the country. I feel privileged to have the support of such amazing students and families to make this year's visit so successful.

Becky Walton,

Assistant Director, Communicate Faculty





A couple of weeks ago, I hosted a German student from Wetter, Germany. It was an amazing week! It was so interesting to see things that I think of as so normal through the eyes of someone who doesn't live here. Like something as simple as Superdrug. Lina, the girl I was hosting, absolutely loves makeup and when I took her to Superdrug, she was so amazed that we had a shop just for makeup, which I would never turn my head at.

Every day was full of different activities, and over the weekend, we went to two different cities, Sheffield and Derby. We met up with other pairs and went shopping. I made sure to take her to the "staple" British shops, and made her try my favourite classic foods, like a pasty and Percy Pigs. It was so much fun, and we had loads of time to get to know each other and learn what we had in common. We managed to use every moment of time we had together.

But we still managed to make a routine amongst all the crazy activities. Every night, we watched a different Disney movie, everyone knows them, and it was a great way to bond over something that we had both grown up with. By the time they all went home, me and Lina had become really close friends. We talk often, and are making plans for me to visit her in the summer.

Greta Buckler
Year 11 Student

QA New Staff



Laura Orton

What is your role at AGS?

I am a science teacher with a specialism in Biology.

What university did you go to?

I studied Zoology at University of Nottingham and did a masters in Wildlife Conservation at University of Bristol.

Why did you want to become a teacher?

I became a teacher to inspire students to study science and take up STEM based careers.

What do you do in your spare time?

I like walking in the peak district and wildlife photography.

If you had to summarise AGS in three words what would they be?

Community, supportive, opportunities.



Richard Holroyd

What is your role at AGS?

I am a science teacher.

What university did you go to?

I went to Nottingham Trent University to do a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry and did a diploma in Industrial Studies. I then did a Master of Science in Information Technology at Teesside University. I went to the University of Reading to do a PhD in Chemistry. Then I went to University of Sussex to do a PGCE in Secondary Teaching.

Why did you want to become a teacher?

I worked in engineering for 5 years following getting my PhD. I decided that I wanted a new and different challenge and enjoyed teaching Chemistry to undergraduates during my PhD studies.

What do you do in your spare time?

I like hiking, gardening and woodworking.

If you had to summarise AGS in three words what would they be?

Supportive, community, approachable.

Photography Workshop

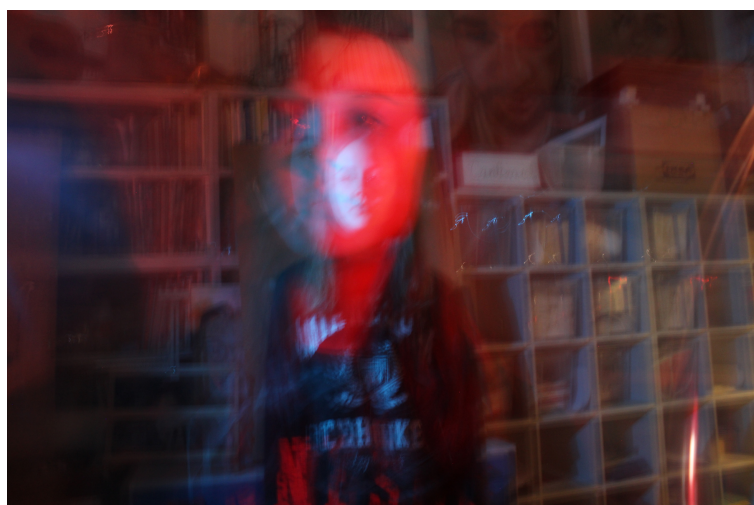
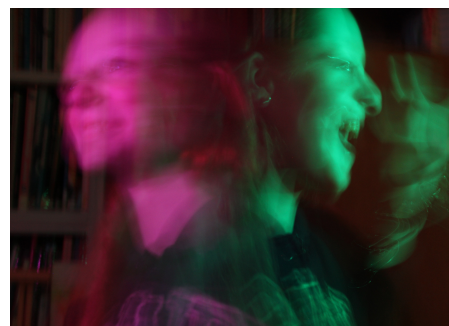
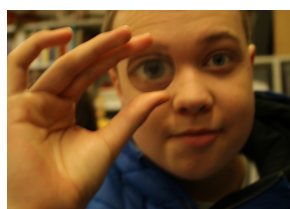
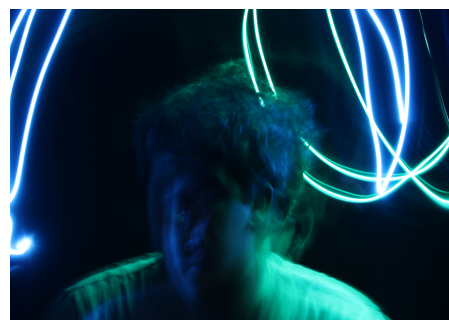


On Monday 4th December, thirty Year 9 students and all the GCSE Photography cohort took part in a photography workshop with Midlands based photographer, Thomas Wynne.

Thomas is a freelance and commissioned photographer who has exhibited work across the UK, Portugal and China, and has produced work for the FORMAT photography festival. Thomas is now a Photography lecturer at Derby University where Thomas and I studied our Masters in Fine Art together.

In the workshop, the Year 9 students were introduced to Photography as a career option and enjoyed using the Canon cameras to take photographs of their friends who also took part in the workshop. Year 10 and Year 11 students were introduced to, and took inspiration from the artists Francis Bacon, Salvador Dali and Philippe Halsman, to create distorted portrait photographs. The students used a slow shutter speed on their cameras, with coloured gels against the torches on their phones to shine different lights onto the face of their selected model. Students experimented with light, facial expressions, movement, and settings on the camera to create beautiful surreal portraits. By taking inspiration from Philippe Halsman's portraits of Salvador Dali, the Year 11 students then went on to use glass lenses next to their eyes, noses, and lips to distort one, or more than one facial feature. This was a very fun workshop for all students to attend and the students enjoyed learning new skills and different creative processes to develop their coursework and creative thinking.

Miss Brookes
Art and Photography teacher



(With special thanks to Grace Smith, Ava-Lily Mountney, Izzi Dutton, Jemima Allsop, Kai Newman, Charlotte Barrow, Evan Rooney, Arlo Galvin and Jacob Higgs for their amazing photographs and modelling skills for this edition of the newsletter).



Under 14 Boys Rugby

On the 16th November, our Under 14 boys rugby team took part in the annual Derbyshire schools rugby tournament. Overall, 10 schools turned up to play in two groups, the winners moving through to the final.

Our first match was against West Park, a school almost twice the size of AGS. The defining moments of the game came when West Park were pushed back into their own try zone by a dominant Gell pack and Teddy Lovatt charged the ball down as West Park kicked from behind their own try line; Lewis Holmes reacted the quickest to the ball on the ground to score the only try of the match. West Park responded well, with a searing individual run down the right hand touch line stopped by a try saving tackle by the swift reactions of Isaac Woolsey.

In the second game we were against Dronfield, another school much larger than Gell. Some ferocious tackling by Leo Forster and Alfie Wheeldon kept us in the match. With only 1 minute left and the team looking to their first defeat, we saw a moment of brilliance from Paddy Oglesby who lifted his head at the back of the scrum, saw the opposition players drift to the right and space appearing out wide to the left, he went for it, scythed through two defenders and scored. With the scores level, Corin Fyffe, stepped up to take the conversion and slotted it through the uprights to scenes of pure joy.

The third match AGS played Ecclesbourne, and looked to build on their successes by finishing the group stage as winners. With confidence high, Rory Young controlled the game wonderfully, with Charlie Willis working well in the second row.

And so to the final. QEGS of Ashbourne had won comprehensively in the other division and this challenge was a bridge too far for our boys. We started well but eventually, the experience of QEGS pushed us back and they scored several tries.

Despite the pressure they were subject to, the team supported each other and never gave up.

The spirit of rugby was the winner, the school shone in this tournament and and we left feeling proud, well done boys! Man of the tournament was an easy choice, scoring 4 out of our 5 tries, well done Paddy!

Mr Lovatt

Assistant Headteacher

Children in Need

For Children in Need this year the AGS Sixth Form organised and ran a game of human battleships. The event was a humanised version of the popular strategy board game using pillows to hit the other team. The whole event was run and organised by the two commentators; Chloe Moseley and Henry Tassell, who kept the game flowing. The crowd were enthusiastic throughout and engaged with the game picking sides to win and cheering for the players, while they donated money to Children in Need. Overall, after two competitive excitement-filled games the score ended as a tie with the students winning round one and the Teachers winning round two.

Chloe Moseley
Year 13 Student



Change, Live, Grow workshop

'Change Live Grow' was an amazing experience and one that students don't often get. It not only addressed the negative side effects of drugs and alcohol but explored safer practice if we do end up in a situation, where we may take drugs. This is so important because most people may find themselves in that situation at some point in their lives and will need that advice. I also enjoyed how it was interactive and fun not just a boring lecture that in the end no one will listen to.

Henry Tassell
Year 13 Student