

# NEWSLETTER

**SUMMER 2025**  
ISSUE 69



Some of our Year 13 Leavers at their prom

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## DIARY DATES

Mon 8<sup>th</sup> Sept - Year 7 & Sixth Form students return to school after the Summer break  
Tues 9<sup>th</sup> Sept - All year groups in school  
Weds 1<sup>st</sup> Oct - Year 6 Open Evening  
Thurs 23<sup>rd</sup> Oct - Year 7 Parents' Evening  
Fri 24<sup>th</sup> Oct - Inset Day  
Fri 7<sup>th</sup> Nov - Inset Day  
Thurs 27<sup>th</sup> Nov - Year 11 Parents' Evening  
Thurs 4 Dec - 6<sup>th</sup> Form Open Evening  
Thurs 11<sup>th</sup> Dec - Year 10 Parents' Evening  
Friday 19<sup>th</sup> Dec - Break-up for Christmas 1pm



## Welcome from Mr Kelly

It is my pleasure to invite you to look through this term's newsletter. I hope you enjoy reading the articles and viewing the photographs and images as much as I did.

The summer term of 2025 helped bring another highly successful year at AGS to a close. Our students have learned more, experienced more and understand more, thanks to their approach to learning and the approach taken by the adults who look after them.

Our newsletter is not able to include all of the achievements, or all of the experiences from this term, but we hope that the ones which have been chosen accurately reflect and help to encapsulate a little of what makes AGS such a special place.

It is a pleasure to work with such a talented group of young people and work alongside such a dedicated group of adults. Put the two together, and that's when the magic happens!





# CELEBRATION ASSEMBLY

## A Joyful End to the Year

On Thursday 17th July, the Sports Hall was filled with excitement, energy and school spirit as students from Years 7 to 10 plus some of our Year 12s gathered for our annual end-of-year Celebration Assembly. This event was a chance to recognise the incredible achievements of our students and to celebrate the successes of our school Houses over the past academic year.

From the moment students filed in and took their seats on the floor of the hall, there was a buzz in the air – a sense of community, camaraderie and pride that lasted throughout the entire assembly. With cheers echoing around the room, the event was a true celebration of hard work, teamwork and perseverance.

One of the highlights of the morning was the recognition of our top ten students in each year group with the most positive points. These students were rewarded with vouchers for the cinema, Waffle Waffle and Scarthin Bookshop – a small token of appreciation for the positive attitudes and contributions they've made throughout the year.



Trophies were awarded across a range of categories, including House achievements and inter-house competitions. Gell House had a particularly impressive year, taking home the trophies for both Inter-house Athletics and Inter house Football. Meanwhile, the coveted Best House Attendance and the House with the Most Positive Points awards reflected the continued commitment and enthusiasm of our students across all Houses.

Fearne House had an especially triumphant day, being crowned the Champion House for the 2024–25 academic year, with Arkwright finishing as worthy runners-up. Students from all Houses were quick to show their support, cheering each other on and contributing to the uplifting atmosphere that defined the assembly.

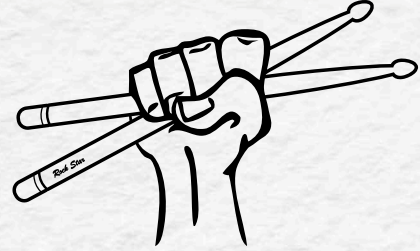
In addition to the House awards, individual students who broke athletic records this year were recognised with certificates – a proud moment for those whose efforts have pushed the boundaries and set new standards for future competitions.

The assembly also included a heartfelt farewell to several members of staff who are either retiring or moving on to new adventures at the end of this academic year. Their dedication and impact on the school community were warmly acknowledged with applause and gratitude. There was a real sense of unity in the room as students celebrated not just their own achievements, but those of their peers. The support, laughter, and collective cheering demonstrated the strong spirit that runs through our school, and it was clear that everyone left the Sports Hall feeling proud of what they and their fellow students had accomplished this year.

What a wonderful way to end the term – full of celebration, school pride and lasting memories.







# BAND NIGHT

## HITS ALL THE RIGHT NOTES

On Wednesday 16th July, the school was alive with the sound of music as students from across the year groups took to the stage for one of our regular Band Nights. Performing to a packed audience of parents, carers, siblings and fellow students, each band showcased their incredible talent, energy, and teamwork.

The evening was a true celebration of musical creativity and collaboration, with a wide range of styles and instruments on show. Whether it was a classic cover or an original piece, every performance was met with enthusiastic applause.

Congratulations to all the students involved – your hard work and passion were clear to see, and you did an amazing job!





~~TOP SECRET~~





# THE GARDEN OF SHADES



A short story by  
William Tebb, Year 8

The winner of the Junior  
Writing Prize at Wirksworth  
Book Festival

"A strong story, well-  
written" - Wirksworth  
Book Festival Judge

Among the cascading bustle of the busy streets, a shadow shone. While normally such a thing as shadow was not capable of shining, it did so anyway, a flare of unnatural radiance in the inescapable colour of the world's deepest darknesses: Black. And in but a moment, it was gone, snuffed away by the fearsome light of day.

Was it beauty or tragedy, then, that its life was such a brief flicker against the vastness of time? And was it beauty or tragedy that only one lonely soul ever took notice of it?

That lonely soul, a girl with knotted brown hair eleven summers old, sat weeping on a distended iron bench. Ash and grime defiled her malnourished, bony features as she sat and thought of where she would be sitting if things had been different— if she wasn't alone in the mud-choked metropolis surrounding her.

It was in the middle of this moment of mournful reflection that the shadow lived out its entire short, shining life, and it caught the girl's eye from within the churning crowd of people on the busy street.

Feeling an unexplained rush of volatile adrenaline, the girl leapt to her feet, dried tears marking her ash-covered face as she pushed her way through the tumbling commerce to where the shadow had been. Once she reached the spot, disappointment swelled in her as she realised that the shadow was gone, before the feeling was shunted away to the back of her bedraggled conscience as another shining shadow appeared in the corner of her vision.

She raced after it, a gnawing suspicion growing in her as it vanished once more and another one appeared elsewhere. She followed them through the spires of the city's highest heights and into the flyblown underbelly of its deepest depths, through archway and alley, over bridge and bypass. She followed the flickering un-lights for what seemed like days and days upon end, out of the city and into the dense, crooked woodland beyond. Here the trees arched over her with growing malevolence like hunchbacked despots, and dreadful howls echoed through the trees like the booming laughter of an uncaring, thirsting god.

The shadows led her ever onwards, and all the while she felt a creeping, inescapable feeling; as if she were being watched by some intangible force. On numerous occasions she felt she saw a pair of bright ivory eyes staring at her, but when she turned to look at them, they were gone— merely shadows in the mist.

Eventually, the forest brightened, a small clearing manifesting before the girl where the crooked trees gave way to dazzling illumination. The shadow flickered, as always, in the centre of the clearing, though this time it did not stutter and stop. As she approached, quaking, the shadow expanded and twisted, warping and contorting its darkly dazzling form over and over, again and again until a shade-child stood before her, its dark, misty face lit up by two pearlescent white eyes. It had no mouth, but the girl knew that if it did have one, it would be smiling a benevolent, warm smile...

"This quietly captivating tale demonstrates a sophisticated story-telling talent. My absolute favourite!" -Wirksworth Book Festival Judge

"...beautifully told, so that the reader becomes absorbed into the joy of reading. The writing is rhythmical and uses extensive vocabulary. The story has intrigue, atmosphere and pathos."  
-Wirksworth Book Festival Judge

To read the whole story visit  
<https://www.anthonygell.co.uk/story/>



# YEAR 13 PROM







WHAT A NIGHT TO REMEMBER! OUR INCREDIBLE YEAR 13 STUDENTS CELEBRATED THE END OF AN ERA IN TRUE STYLE ON MONDAY EVENING. FROM STUNNING OUTFITS TO EMOTIONAL GOODBYES, THE PROM WAS FILLED WITH LAUGHTER, DANCING, AND UNFORGETTABLE MEMORIES. IT WAS WONDERFUL TO CATCH UP WITH STUDENTS AND WISH THEM WELL FOR THEIR FUTURES. MAKENEY HALL, AS ALWAYS, MADE THE EVENT A MEMORABLE EVENING FOR STUDENTS AND STAFF TO ENJOY, AND WITH AN EXCELLENT MIX OF GOOD FOOD AND DANCING. WE ARE SO PROUD OF EVERYTHING YOU'VE ACHIEVED - HERE'S TO YOUR NEXT EXCITING CHAPTER!

MRS BUTT  
SIXTH FORM LEARNING MENTOR





# Year 11 Prom







ON THURSDAY 3RD JULY, OVER 130 YEAR 11 STUDENTS CAME TOGETHER TO CELEBRATE THE END OF THEIR A&S JOURNEY SO FAR WITH A STUNNING EVENING AT SHOTTLE HALL.

ARRIVING IN AN IMPRESSIVE ARRAY OF TRANSPORT AND DRESSED IN THEIR FINEST, STUDENTS MADE A TRULY MEMORABLE ENTRANCE. THEY WERE WARMLY SUPPORTED BY PROUD PARENTS AND CARERS, FAMILY MEMBERS AND LOVED ONES WHO JOINED IN TO MARK THIS SPECIAL OCCASION.

THE WEATHER WAS GLORIOUS—BRIGHT SUNSHINE ALL EVENING—PROVIDING THE PERFECT BACKDROP FOR THE CELEBRATION. GUESTS ENJOYED A DELICIOUS MEAL, CAPTURED MEMORIES WITH A PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHER, AND DANCED INTO THE NIGHT AT THE TRADITIONAL PROM DISCO.

IT WAS A FANTASTIC EVENING FILLED WITH JOY AND CELEBRATION. WE LOOK FORWARD TO WELCOMING YEAR 11 BACK TO SCHOOL ON THURSDAY 22ND AUGUST AS THEY COLLECT THEIR A&S RESULTS.

MRS LOWE  
ASSISTANT HEADTEACHER





# Key Stage 4 & 5 Careers Week



Years 10 and 12 have had a range of fantastic opportunities during our Careers Week 2025, with more than 30 visitors in school delivering careers talks and representing a huge range of jobs and careers.

Staff from the Department of Work and Pensions have visited school to give talks about apprenticeship pathways and deliver CV workshops. The Army came in to discuss career opportunities and deliver a team building workshop on the astro. The Police delivered an employability skills workshop and we conducted a large number of mock interviews. We also welcomed ASK apprenticeships into school, to deliver a parent/carers workshop on Apprenticeships, and Buxton and Leek college who are a local apprenticeship provider.

Year 10 students took part in a 'virtual work experience' during Careers Week, where they were able to explore a huge range of career pathways that are bespoke to their own personal interests. All of Year 10 had the opportunity to visit our 6th form provision, and either a local college or a university, to see what their future may hold in terms of their educational next steps. We thoroughly enjoyed taking students to Derby College, the University of Nottingham and the University of Sheffield. This, alongside a 'me and my degree' workshop from the Higher Education Partnership Pathway, gave students a real flavour of the future opportunities available to them. A great careers week has been had by all and we look forward to continuing to support all of our students as they take these important next steps.

If you feel you would be able to contribute to next year's careers week then please contact me on [jgrindey@anthonygell.co.uk](mailto:jgrindey@anthonygell.co.uk)

Mrs Grindey

Assistant Director of Teaching and Learning - Aspire Faculty



## A Level trip the Lakes

Our Year 12 geographers recently returned from an incredible residential trip to the Lake District, staying in the beautiful village of Grasmere — a perfect base for exploring both the physical and human landscapes of this iconic region.

Students braved the mountain walks in the Easedale Valley, where they mapped glacial features and examined evidence of glacial change in the stunning upland terrain. These real-world investigations brought textbook case studies to life!

In the field, they also conducted a carbon analysis of soils and trees; deepening their understanding of the role vegetation and soil play in carbon storage — a vital topic in climate studies.

On the human geography side, the group visited Maryport to explore urban regeneration schemes and Keswick to investigate rebranding strategies aimed at sustainable tourism and economic revival.

The students were absolutely fantastic throughout — engaged, curious, and full of enthusiasm. They threw themselves into every activity, worked together in the field, made new friendships and supported one another brilliantly. The teachers were thoroughly impressed by their attitude, teamwork, and the thoughtful questions they asked along the way. It was a joy to watch them learn and grow in such a unique and inspiring environment.

The trip offered a brilliant mix of hands-on learning, fresh air, and unforgettable landscapes — an inspiring few days for our future geographers!

Mr Lovatt

Assistant Headteacher, Geography Teacher



# Duke of Edinburgh Award Expedition: Challenge Accepted!

On 14th and 15th July, 27 determined students took on their Duke of Edinburgh expedition – a two-day adventure through the Derbyshire countryside that tested their resilience, teamwork, and navigation skills.

Over the course of the two days, students walked an impressive 30 to 36 kilometres (depending on whether they got a little lost along the way!), carrying full packs with everything they needed to be self-sufficient. They pitched tents, cooked dinner and breakfast, and navigated their route through towns and villages including Cromford, Bonsall, Wensley, Winster and Grangemill.



Day one was hot and sweaty as the students trekked from Wirksworth to Barn Farm campsite, while day two brought the opposite – damp and chilly conditions for the return leg back to Wirksworth via Middleton Top. Despite the challenges, all 27 students completed the expedition with smiles on their faces and plenty of stories to tell. A brilliant achievement – well done to everyone involved!

Mr Lomax  
Outdoor Education Co-ordinator



# Year 7 Students Dive into Maths with Virtual Reality Experience



Eight of our Year 7 students recently took part in a truly immersive maths workshop, that combined cutting-edge technology with real-world problem solving. Using Virtual Reality (VR) headsets, the students were transported to the Philippines, where they worked alongside a local fisherman to help him maximise his daily catch.

Over the course of a 90-minute session, the students used their mathematical skills to solve challenges related to fishing routes, catch predictions, and resource management—all within a realistic virtual environment. It was a unique opportunity to see how maths can be applied in everyday life, even in places and professions far from our own.

The workshop brilliantly blended mathematics and computer technology, showing students how the two disciplines can work hand in hand. Staff were incredibly impressed with the way our Year 7s embraced the experience—showing curiosity, teamwork, and problem-solving flair throughout.

It was a thoroughly enjoyable and educational session that left students inspired and eager for more opportunities to explore learning through technology.

Mr Baddeley  
Director of Teaching and Learning - Compute Faculty



## Year 8 World Foods CAKE Competition

Our talented Year 8 students impressed us with their creativity and baking skills in the World Foods Cake Competition! The challenge was to design and make cakes inspired by food from around the world – and the results were both imaginative and delicious. Well done to everyone who took part – your cakes were truly global masterpieces!





# Sports Day Success!

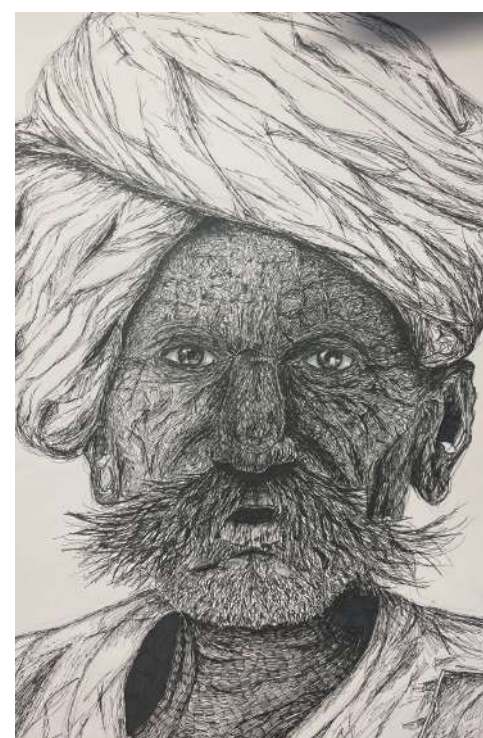
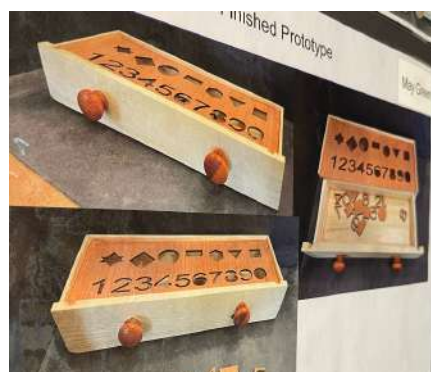
Friday 4th July brought glorious sunshine and an unbeatable sense of team spirit as students and staff came together for our annual Sports Day. The day was packed with energy, determination, and plenty of laughter—especially during the much-anticipated staff race!

A huge congratulations to Gell House, who topped the leaderboard with an impressive 286 points, then came Fearne in second with 281 points, Nightingale in third with 277 points, Arkwright, came in fourth with 265 and Wright was in fifth place with 261.

Thank you to everyone who took part, competed, or supported from the sidelines. It was a brilliant day for our whole school community, and one to remember!









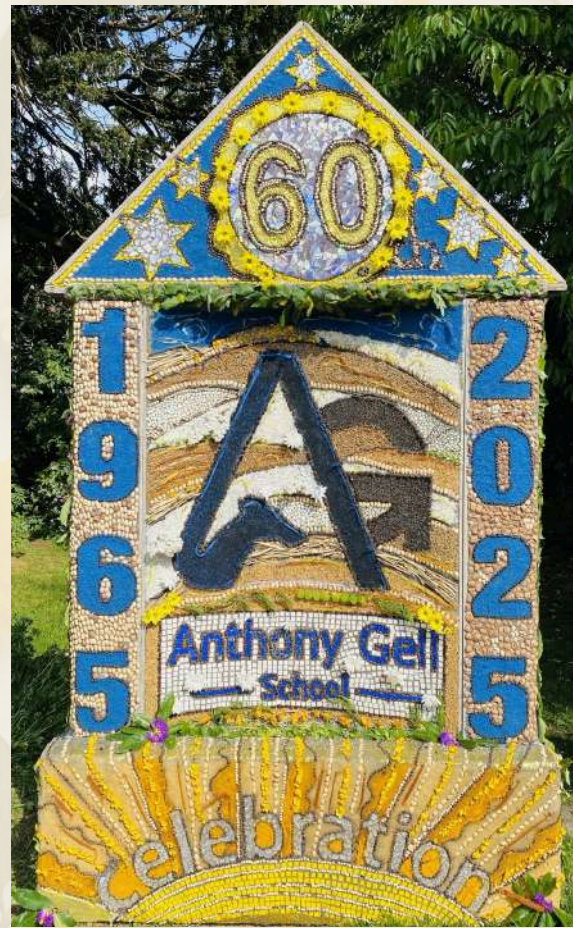
# 2025 Well Dressing

In 1965, Anthony Gell School became a co-educational comprehensive school. Which means we were able to highlight and celebrate the 60th anniversary of this event for this year's theme.

Our Year 7 students designed the well as part of a homework competition. The winning design was by Daisy Worth.

Students, together with staff, collaged the materials onto the well over a period of a week. It was put on display in the Memorial Gardens over the bank holiday weekend.

The money raised went towards our 'Young Futures' programme. The programme implements inspirational workshops and group sessions. The workshops give young people at Anthony Gell School the chance to escape their day-to-day worries and immerse themselves in peaceful activities. They learn techniques to manage their emotions which will better enable them to understand and connect with themselves, each other, and the world around them. All participants build confidence and gain greater self-awareness to help them as they navigate their way through their school years, helping them to make positive life choices as they continue into adulthood. Making them more resilient, influential, and confident to build a brighter future.



Mrs Bailey  
Art Teacher

## 1000 Miles for 1000 Smiles

On Friday 13th of June, a heartfelt journey passed through Anthony Gell School as part of the inspiring "1000 Miles for 1000 Smiles" challenge. The walk is being completed in memory of Eve, one of our students who sadly passed away last year from a brain tumour. Eve's uncle, Richard, is walking 1000 miles to raise vital funds for children with cancer — a mission that holds deep meaning for our school community.

Eve's family began their walk in Ashbourne and made their way to Anthony Gell School, where they were warmly welcomed by staff and joined by seven of Eve's friends. Together, they walked down the school drive and around the top field, pausing at the spot where a memorial bench for Eve will soon be placed — a beautiful tribute to her memory. The walk continued through Wirksworth before heading back to Ashbourne, ending at St Oswald's School, where Eve was a pupil before coming to Anthony Gell.

So far, an incredible £50,779 has been raised towards a target of £75,000. The money is already making a difference — supporting brain tumour research, helping Ward E39 at the Queen's Medical Centre by funding £1,500 worth of fans, and donating £2,000 to The Princess Trust to provide wigs for children who've lost their hair during treatment.

With 389.34 miles completed so far, Richard and the team aim to reach 1000 miles by November 30th, 2025. It's a powerful tribute to Eve and a meaningful way to support others facing similar challenges.

If you would like to contribute please follow this link <https://gofund.me/81f511b6> to their go fund me page.





# Setting Sail for the Ellen MacArthur Trust

Anthony Gell School students will be setting sail for charity after Mr Watts casts off with the Ellen MacArthur Trust. If you talk to any longstanding member of Anthony Gell's learning community, it won't be too long before they say "you know Ellen MacArthur went to this school, don't you?"

Ellen MacArthur (MBE) is a hugely inspirational member of the school's alumni, having become one of the world's most famous and successful professional sailors. Ellen has talked in interviews with fondness of her time at AGS, and of tucking herself away in the library to read *Swallows and Amazons*, Arthur Ransome's tale of a youthful and adventurous summer sailing adventure. Having played an instrumental part in establishing a long tradition of youth sailing at AGS, Ellen's legacy at the school is still going strong, as students have enjoyed the school's sailing programme this summer.

After a brief hiatus during Covid, the school has re-established a strong partnership with Carsington Sailing Club and, moving forward, AGS students are going to develop their sailing skills with some of our keenest adventures building towards the RYA's junior seamanship qualification.

One member of the AGS community who has spent a fair bit of time at sea is Deputy Headteacher Mr Watts. During the Easter holidays, he sailed around the Western Isles of Scotland and in advance of casting off from Largs, Mr Watts visited the Ellen MacArthur Trust, the charity Ellen MacArthur set up to support young people who have been treated for cancer.

Mr Watts met with employees of the charity who talked about the amazing work they do to support young people living with cancer before embarking on an epic adventure circumnavigating several of the Scottish islands.

Mr Watts commented "I'm lucky enough to have very talented sailors as friends who occasionally invite me out to support them as a crew member. Sailing has provided me with some of the most amazing adventures, and I think it's fantastic that we can provide students at Gell with the opportunity to get out on the water". Having been inspired by his time with the Trust and sailing with his friends, Mr Watts's hope is to integrate the school's sailing programme with a campaign to raise money for the Ellen MacArthur Trust and he is currently working with Mr Lomax, the school's Outdoor Education Coordinator, to create a pathway for the coming academic year.



## Founders' Day

Each year, students, staff and friends of AGS come together for a special event, during which we reflect on our school's past and celebrate the present. This year, we were pleased to be joined by AGS governors, AG Foundation Trustees, Gell Friends, ex-students, Freedom Leisure, partner Primary Schools, and local dignitaries.

Our guests were entertained by representatives from the current student body, with various musical renditions alongside student speeches. The focus of this year's event was the momentous change which happened in 1965, when Wirksworth Grammar School became Anthony Gell School and Comprehensive education arrived in this part of the Derbyshire Dales.

