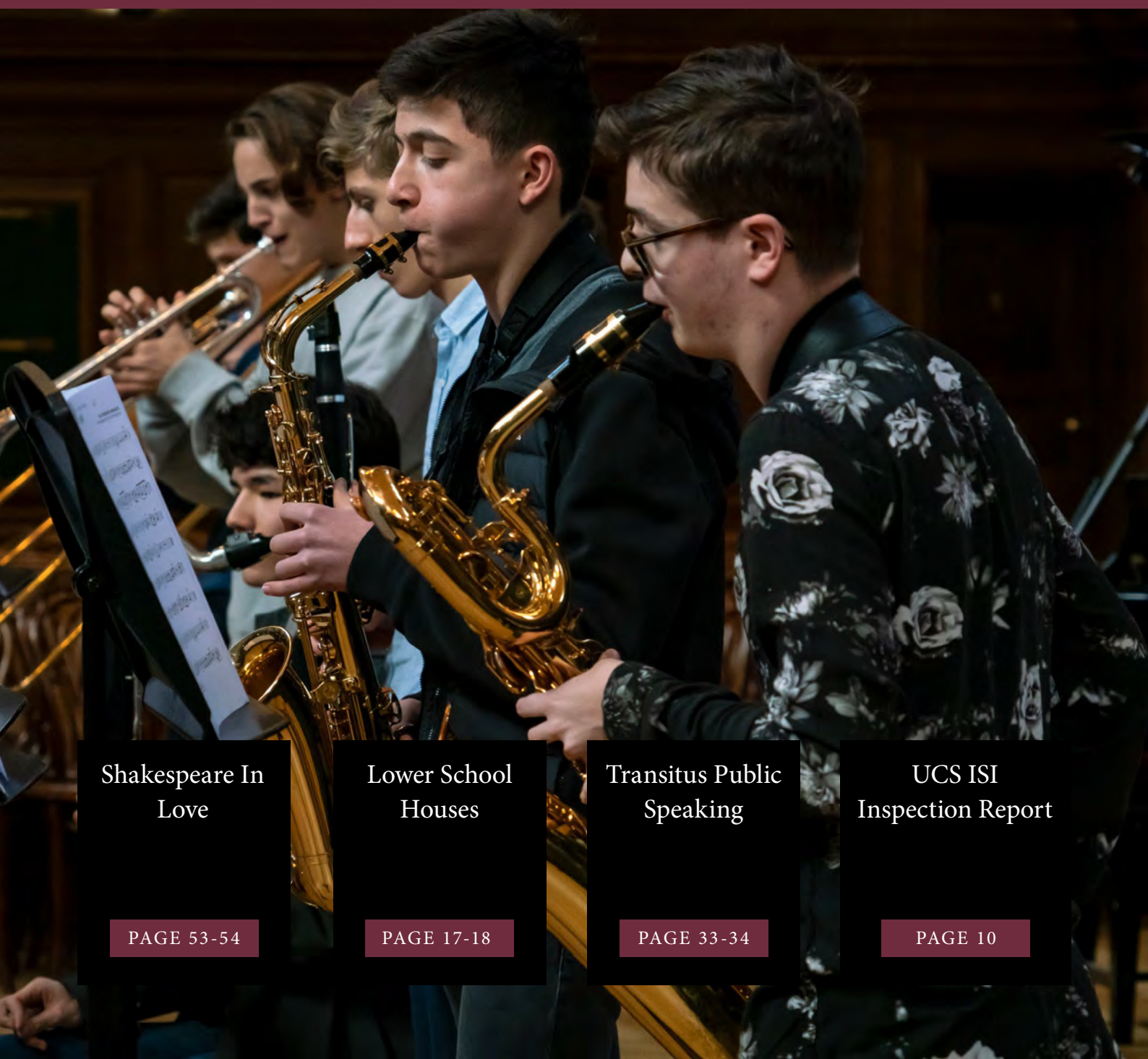


THE FROGNAL

UCS NEWSLETTER — ISSUE MARCH 2022

Celebrating the events and achievements of the Spring Term at UCS Senior School.



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Love

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Welcome To The Spring Term Edition Of The Frogнал



This could have been a term when our school community looked inwards, not outwards:

- *We began 2022 with news from the Independent Schools Inspectorate that we had scored the highest grades possible in last November's inspection;*
- *We then rose to the challenge of Transitus Progress Tests and GCSE and A Level Mock Exams;*
- *We played dozens of football, netball and hockey matches;*
- *We held ten different concerts to celebrate the musical talent of our pupils;*
- *We witnessed the talented and the enthusiastic strutting their stuff in the Deme Dance Competition;*
- *The Parents' Guild held its first Supper and Quiz Night for three years;*
- *We were awarded the United Nations' gold award for the Climate Neutral Now initiative;*
- *The Lund Gallery curated an exhibition named We Shall Overcome as part of our focus around International Women's Day;*
- *We entered Chamber Music competitions, debating championships, Model United Nations conferences and our first eleven won the Middlesex Tye Football Cup;*
- *There was a dinner to thank the representatives of the Sixth Form Union and Gender Politics Society;*
- *The Lower School House system was re-launched with purpose and the Forms have been allocated to Bannister, Bonington, Kendall, Macarthur and Seacole Houses;*
- *A number of academic trips went out to London and beyond as we learnt to live with Covid;*

Welcome To The Spring Term Edition Of The Frognal



- *Will Shakespeare caught Covid but the delayed Middle School Play brought sheer delight to its audiences.*

So, we have been busy – which is, of course, a good thing. I think if you are actively engaged in and beyond the classroom in a variety of different areas, you are more likely to succeed in juggling competing demands later in life.

But, I am always mindful of a school becoming so busily focused on school life that it loses sight of its role in the wider society of which it is a part. I know that we need to find time as a community to reflect upon the bigger issues beyond our gates so that when our pupils eventually leave here they do so aware of the challenges before them and ready to play their part in society rather

than be apart from it. Certainly they have been very involved in that regard, working with local schools, volunteering in the community and collecting for North Paddington Food Bank.

This term we have, of course, been jolted out of our comfort zone by an unfolding humanitarian crisis in Europe, the likes of which I had never expected to see after the brutal civil war that engulfed the Balkans when I was at university 30 years ago. Then, the destruction and suffering wreaked upon so many innocent people, including genocide against Muslim Bosnians and Croats, by brutal warlords and their followers gave rise to major refugee and humanitarian crises.

UCS pupils naturally have wanted to help, and have established a Humanitarian Crisis

Welcome To The Spring Term Edition Of The Frogнал



Fundraising Committee formed of representatives from every year group. This committee has chosen The British Red Cross (Lower School), UNHCR (Middle School) and UNICEF and UN Women (Sixth Form) as the charities it would like the school to support. Our pupils have been working to coordinate fundraising events across the school before and after the spring break, so do bring cash or card with you to all school events! We will also be ready to work with Camden Authority and local charities over helping Ukrainian families who find their way to this area.

Longer term, I envisage the Humanitarian Crisis Fundraising Committee working to help others around the world who suffer violence, oppression and displacement – perhaps even when less prominently reported in the news.

It has been a very successful term. I remain in awe of UCS pupils' continued achievements. And I love being Headmaster of a school where, aside from the occasional adolescent moment, the boys and girls really do seem to care about each other, really do value the difference in one another and genuinely see themselves as having an active rôle in the future in helping to make our world a better place.

That is what I take from this term: the school community's willingness to look outwards as well as inwards. This edition of The Frogнал illustrates that balance very well and I hope you enjoy reading the articles.

— Mark J. Beard, Headmaster

A Spotlight On... Clubs and Societies



Restrictions and year bubbles failed to put a stop to the clubs and societies of UCS – and now that this rich and varied provision is fully restored post pandemic, there is even greater energy and enthusiasm for the entire co-curriculum. That is the view of Ms Lewis as she speaks to The Frogнал about her role as Assistant Head (Co-Curricular) and the latest developments in this area of school life.

Can you describe your role and responsibilities as Assistant Head (Co-Curricular)?

In short, I oversee the non-academic side of the school. That includes Sport, Music and Drama – the Performing Arts – as well as school trips, clubs and societies, the school calendar, charity fundraising and the Community Action project, and Activities Week.

I also run the school's Inclusion and Representation work, which involves staff and pupil committees, plus responsibility for staff training around inclusion, representation, equality and diversity.

Moreover, I oversee the student publications which are a big part of the co-curriculum. Pupils can write for The Tortoise magazine and also our Classics and Art History journal Bocca, our Modern Languages publication Interlingua, and the Poetry Anthology. Pupil journalism is really important.

What kind of clubs and societies go on at UCS?

All sorts of clubs and societies! We have academic societies, including subject-specific language clubs mainly for the Lower School; Maths Club, Maths Boost, History Society, Politics Society are all

A Spotlight On... Clubs and Societies



closely aligned with academic subjects. Almost all subjects are covered – Philosophy, Classics, DT, Drawing, etc.

Then you have clubs that aren't pinned to a subject such as Robotics, Chess, Debating and Model United Nations. They would be the more team or competitive societies. And you have interest-based clubs like Boardgame, Gender Politics, LGBTQIA+, Allotment Club which plants, cultivates and looks after animals, and Wellbeing Society. You can interact at all levels, whether tailored to academic interests or to broader ones.

Any new clubs that have really taken off recently?

Boardgame Club is a successful example of a club that started this year and is loved by all sorts of year groups. The whole start-up process is quite individualised: another new club, Coins and Stamp Collectors' Club, originated from two pupils wanting to share their interests with their year group and beyond.

In terms of really broad appeal, we have lots of Reading groups which are popular among the Lower and Middle Schools, and Running Club and Debating which are really well populated across the school.

Has the scope of our clubs and societies changed at all?

This academic year, my aim has been to promote Wellbeing, Sustainability and Equity, something apparent in the new clubs and societies formed. Wellbeing Society is new and has really taken off with a powerful following. We have expanded the religious groups, so Hindu Society has just started and there is an Islamic Society in the works. We have a Cultural Awareness and Racial Politics Society that's also new and successful.

Additionally, the already existing Green Impact Society has morphed into a working group that's tremendously popular with pupils, and a powerful lobbying force.

A Spotlight On... Clubs and Societies



How does a child go about creating their own club, and what support can they expect from teachers?

If a pupil wants to start a club, they start by having a conversation with me. They pitch their idea and we work through how to get it off the ground, what kind of support they need, and the logistics – how would they meet, the format of sessions. There have been clubs that have started and then fizzled out, so an important consideration is ensuring longevity for a club, including looking at the contributions required of different pupils, which subject matters would be explored, what the early sessions might look like – potential speakers and trips – and which staff patron could help.

Once we have figured these things out, we decide a launch date, find a location and start advertising through the bulletins. Our brilliant staff are extraordinarily willing to help and support these clubs, and to give up their time. They are a huge part of making this rich and varied programme work.

Where can pupils learn more about clubs and societies?

The co-curricular schedule is on My School Portal and can be accessed by pupils, parents and staff. The Pupil Bulletins are important because they tell you what's coming up each week events-wise. Twitter and Instagram inform you about various departmental offerings, likewise the screens around school.

To what extent have our clubs and societies received fresh impetus since the end of lockdowns and restrictions?

We have seen such huge appetite and energy for the whole co-curriculum this year. Pupils have been really excited to get back into Sport, Music or Drama. Teachers have really wanted to take school trips, and clubs and societies are no exception. It was amazing how we were able to run our clubs and societies the way we did last year. Not having those restrictions and year bubbles – with pupils now able to re-engage with and learn from other year groups – is so important.

A Spotlight On... Clubs and Societies



The Lower School, in particular, have been absolutely raring to go, with Entry and Shell pupils trying as many clubs and societies as possible.

In the Lower School, I get the sense that the majority attend multiple clubs and societies. And thinking about pupils' co-curricular commitments in general, I'd speculate that they are probably playing a bit of sport, going to a training session, playing in a musical ensemble, doing Trinity Acting lessons and going to a club or two.

In what way does the co-curriculum reflect the school at large?

The co-curricular provision is so pupil led, and the fact that pupils have the enthusiasm and engagement to want to set up these clubs and run them for the benefit of others, is what lies at the heart of its success. That individuality and pupil drive is so characteristic of how UCS operates.

Running LGBTQIA+ Society can be tiring but we have learnt a huge amount with so many interactions and initiatives around the school. Getting really involved in one club that you think is important and interesting allows you to meet people with common interests and to make friends with pupils of different ages. — J. Katz Roberts

I led Gender Politics Society as part of a team. One of us would choose a topic and run the session with a discussion and a presentation. It helped to develop my public-speaking and organisational qualities as well as to bond with other year groups. I already knew about the UCS co-curriculum from the prospectus and it was one of the reasons I came here. — C. Gray

— Contributions by J. Lewis

A Spotlight On... Clubs and Societies



Clubs and societies help you integrate into the school community because you meet younger years. I started Cultural Awareness Society where people will talk about their culture or parts of History that they feel the curriculum doesn't touch upon sufficiently. I met a lot of my friends through these co-curricular activities. — A. Radhakrishnan

I am really interested in the co-curriculum. It takes you beyond just academic subjects – it is a broader vision which helps you to understand more things. I personally started the Hindu Society, trying to share opinions and thoughts and to learn from other people. My Mum cooks for us every week too, things like samosas! — V. Shandilya

We bring coins and stamps from our own collections to Coin and Stamp Collecting Club and we have a teacher supervising. The best thing is the really fun atmosphere – we are one of a kind. But I have an activity every single lunchtime, with Swimming, Chess, Lower School Book Club, Debating, Drama and Games! — S. Swarup

UCS Is ‘Excellent’ Across the Foundation



The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) visited and inspected all three schools in the UCS Foundation in November 2021. We were delighted this term to receive the news that ISI has reported the quality of education as being consistently excellent across all three schools. This is the highest descriptor awarded and the educational quality is measured in terms of both pupil achievement and personal development. Also, crucially, the three schools were fully compliant in all statutory regulations, including safeguarding, staff recruitment and health and safety.

The team of inspectors conducted a number of staff and pupil interviews as well as lesson, tutor time and assembly observations. They also examined a wealth of policies, evidence and pupil work to arrive at their judgement. We are incredibly proud of the outcome and grateful to all staff for committing the necessary care, skill and dedication to educating our young people so successfully here at UCS. We are also especially proud of the confident way in which UCS pupils were able to communicate and share their experiences of a UCS education.

In the inspection report, inspectors commented on our pupils’ excellent communication skills, well-developed social awareness and positive approach to work and other activities in school. Pastorally, inspectors noted the strong sense of moral character and passion for defending what they believe as right among the pupil body. The outstanding provision academically was also praised by inspectors who, in their report, cited the impressive examination results at GCSE and A Level as well as our pupils’ ambition and personal responsibility for their learning. They remarked that the independence and initiative that characterise our students’ approach to lessons and enrichment often suggest engagement on an undergraduate level.

The full report is available on our website, for further detail on the inspectors’ findings.

— Contributions by S. Bennett

The Lower School



Over the last three months our Lower School pupils have worked hard and played, dare I say it, even harder. In early March we enjoyed a fabulous Ensembles Concert in the Great Hall and at the end of term I was delighted to see so many Lower School pupils feature in the Spring Concert. The Trinity Showcase Evening in the Lund Theatre was inspiring and I hope that many of these pupils progress with the next stage of these acting awards next year. Our Lower School play, Peter Pan, will be staged in the Lund in May and is shaping up to be an entertaining production. Our football and hockey teams have competed well throughout the term and I enjoyed hearing about the exploits of several Rugby Sevens teams at recent tournaments. Enrichment Weeks have broadened everyone's academic diet, meanwhile, with the Pyrotechnics Lecture in Science Enrichment Week and the mass Tai Chi sessions during Dance, PE and Psychology Enrichment being particular highlights.

Every term in the Lower School has a theme – this one's was wellbeing and at various points pupils have addressed the concept of mental health and

wellbeing across all subjects, in form times and assemblies. Examples of this include: looking at utopian and dystopian landscapes in Entry Art; empathising with characters in various Shakespeare plays in English; exploring the concept of the 'good life' and examining stoicism and epicureanism in Latin; looking at the effects of light on sleep in Entry Science; and hearing from pupils in assembly about the positive influence that voluntary work can have on people's wellbeing. Discussing wellbeing in different lessons has allowed pupils and colleagues to raise the profile of mental health and explore cross-curricular links. Next term's theme is risk-taking and teachers are already planning how to tackle this in each subject.

Spring Term also witnessed the return of the Peer Education Project. During the first half-term, Entry pupils received six lessons on mental health delivered by members of the Transitus (Year 12). These students had undergone a rigorous training programme during the autumn and the lessons I observed were excellent: creative, inventive and informative. Our Entry pupils benefited from these

The Lower School



topics being discussed with them by older students rather than their teachers, and the pupils were able to talk openly about some very important issues. In March we launched the Headmaster's Lower School Award and the Young Leaders Award for the Entry year group. They will have the next 12 months to complete these two awards and I am thrilled with the initial pupil response to the new projects. Mr Reiderman and I look forward to seeing how the boys progress through each. On the question of leadership, I was delighted to see a number of Entry pupils establish clubs and societies this term. Magic Club and Coin Collecting Club have been well received but the most popular pupil-led initiative has been the weekly Hindu Society which is impressively led by Vaajas Shandilya (Entry).

Throughout the term, our thoughts have been with the people coping with the conflict unfolding in Ukraine. I was so pleased with the response of Lower School pupils to the charity fundraising undertaken for refugee charities as they raised a considerable amount of money for these causes. The collection for North Paddington Food Bank

was also extremely well-supported and I thank everyone for their generous donations.

I now wish all Lower School pupils and their families a restful holiday and look forward to seeing the boys return ready for action in April. resourcefulness, responsibility and relationships) or the Lower School Life Values (aspiration, bravery, compassion, decision-making and self-reflection) and the new names will be revealed in early 2022.

As the days have grown shorter, I have been buoyed by the spirit of the pupils in our two youngest year groups. The weather may have been biting cold but they have worked hard and played hard. They have raised money for numerous good causes through Community Action events, played wonderfully in recitals and concerts, and competed tenaciously on the sports field. Their work on the school allotment is remarkable and the engagement of the Shell pupils in the Big Draw art workshops was tremendous. I wish all our pupils a restful festive break and look forward to seeing them in 2022.

— Contributions by E. Roberts

The Middle School



A busy school is a happy one and as the Spring Break looms, I look around our Middle School and see many tired faces ready for a well-deserved rest. They are happy tired faces, however, that should feel proud of their achievements – as our Middle School Awards Assembly reveals such an impressive breadth of contribution. It is a ‘good tiredness’ because the boys have been so remarkably busy. Just in the last few weeks it has been a real joy to hear the variety of Music performed by Middle School boys: the Middle School Platform, the Ensembles Concert and the Spring Concert were among fantastic opportunities for those in the Lower Remove, Remove and Upper Remove to share their talent. Shakespeare in Love has been the first production on stage for some time (due to Covid) and, again, the time, effort and enthusiasm put in by cast members and back-stage

crew led to a fantastic evening of entertainment. Our pupils’ passion and excitement to be in front of a live audience was tangible. The Middle School Council continues to sensibly discuss arising issues and I am keen to further develop the opportunities available for student voice particularly through these meetings. Weekly, the boys have represented the school on the sports field and they should never think that goes unnoticed. It is always good to see their involvement in clubs and societies, too, and there have been cracking Enrichment opportunities that some have supported really well. Throw into this mix Deme sports competitions and preparations for the likes of Deme Dance and we start to understand the need for a holiday.

It is good that the boys are tired; they are pushing themselves. Alongside all their co-curricular

The Middle School



contributions they have kept abreast of their work and so have stretched themselves in and out of the classroom. This is not always easy and I admire the determination they show in challenging times. It has been encouraging to hear them talk about their subjects and aspirations within online consultation events. Increasingly, I want them to take control of these and tell their teachers what they enjoy and what they want to polish. The four UCS Learning Values encourage Resilience, Resourcefulness, Relationships and Responsibility and working with pastoral staff the boys reflect on their progress and self-evaluate within the framework of these values. I like the fact that as they move through Middle School, they are taking growing control of their own destinies. Alongside the online subject consultations, it has been a pleasure to welcome parents and boys into school within the consultation process at key times such as the selection of GCSE or Sixth Form subjects. Boys have engaged with this in a mature and reflective fashion.

I wish our pupils a good holiday. They all have assessments of some description coming in the Summer Term. Of course they will want to do some preparation but I urge them to balance this with rest in order to begin a new term full of renewed excitement and energy to face the opportunities ahead.

We are living in difficult times and each of us deals with the anxieties naturally arising in our own ways. I find the resilient cheer and mature outlook of our Middle School boys when talking about these issues refreshing and a source of strength. Well done to them all. Enjoy the break.

— Contributions by S. FitzGerald

The Sixth Form



This term has ushered in a very studious season for both Sixth Form year groups. For the Sixth the focus has turned in earnest to the graft of A Levels. Dominated by weeks of mock exams, this term has been a productive and charged time as final exams come into view. For the Transitus, too, spring has brought a renewed focus on academia; the term starting with progress tests and students assessing which subjects they wish to continue studying through to the end.

Transitus pupils have also been introduced to the world of options that lie beyond UCS. With their first few steps into the UCAS process, students have started to connect current studies with future destinations. The Spring Term culminated in a week of events and workshops tailored towards expanding Higher Education horizons. Indeed, looking beyond the end of school and into the near future is pertinent for the Sixth too; as this term closes, we begin to seek out new school leaders – Monitors, Sixth Form Union Officers, Deme Wardens – as the Sixth prepare to hand over their roles of responsibility. The Transitus will step up and into these roles, like so many have before them, and take on the positions of role models within the wider school.

Beyond the classroom, the Sixth Form has had an active and impressive term. Transitus and Sixth girls threw themselves into Women in Sport Week, participating in a wonderful array of activities, and the boys' 1st XI footballers were victorious as champions of the Middlesex Tye Cup. Musically, our pupils took part in concerts throughout the term. The International

Women's Day concert – organised by two members of the Transitus – showcased talent and originality, and the term climaxed with the triumphant Spring Concert which captured a remarkable range of musical endeavour. Theatrically, these months have also been busy, with a group of Transitus girls featuring in the Middle School production of Shakespeare in Love, uniting two different sections of the school through the majesty of theatre! This term has also seen the inaugural Transitus Public Speaking Competition, which involved students preparing and delivering three-minute talks on a subject of their choice. The final, in the Lund Theatre, came down to four fascinating individuals, who extended their speeches and – courageously – delivered them to the entire year group.

In short, a busy, productive, packed-out term of endeavour and excellence!

— Contributions by R. Baxter

The Lund Gallery: We Shall Overcome



Curated by the Lund Gallery for International Women’s Day 2022, *We Shall Overcome* brought together work produced by UCS pupils who worked with research conducted by subject departments from every part of our school. The work on display was hung in the form of a peaceful protest or march, reminiscent of marches that have taken place throughout time, all over the world.

In viewing and exploring the exhibition, pupils met the working-class, athletes, royals, politicians, doctors, criminals, queer people, celebrities, teachers, students, parents and more. All of the voices the exhibition spotlighted were those of brave, bold and transformational women. They each contributed to a movement to inspire change and radically alter history. Some suffered immensely, some have used their platforms to communicate ideas, some have been recognised during their lifetimes, and some died before having the opportunity to witness the effects of their efforts. Together, though, they helped pave the way for us to pick up the mantle and continue to seek equality.

As well as viewing the artwork on show, our pupils had the chance to scan QR codes for further resources and reading. These QR codes were purposely not labelled to encourage a sense of discovery while viewing the exhibition. There was access to a playlist and videos, a larger QR code for a reading list, a special coin lent to us by Entry pupil Shaurya Swarup that celebrates Florence Nightingale, and selected stamps from Mrs Anthony’s own collection. The weaving hanging in the window belonged to Miss McVicker’s Shell class who responded to learning about Jayaben Desai.

Special thanks to Mr Smith’s Politics students for their extended work on this project and to our performers Taliah Spencer-Jacobs, Rhea Kapoor and Minnat Mohammed who read out speeches during the evening event.

— Contributions by V. Trinder

A Focus on the House System



The House system is an integral part of the Lower School. House competitions are taken seriously and some allow the opportunity for Shell and Entry pupils to work together. This year we have increased the number of competitions and pupils have responded well to this provision. This term the boys have taken part in basketball, swimming, engineering, art and quiz competitions. Pancake Flipping and Taskmaster competitions were also introduced and proved extremely popular. I have been delighted to see the pupils get so much enjoyment from all these events. The winners of the Pancake contest were awarded with a 'Golden Spatula'!

Points are allotted to each House following each competition and a House Cup will be awarded at the end of the academic year. Blue is currently in the lead but only just!

When the Lower School was established on the Senior School site at UCS in the late 1990s, the Houses were named after birds of prey. We thought that it was time to ring the changes and I was delighted by the suggestions put forward by the pupils. Some 140 names were considered and, after

much debate, the following five names were chosen (in alphabetical order):

Bannister (Black) — EBVL & SAKC

Bonington (Silver) — EAEM & SEJK

Kendall (Blue) — EPJO & SCMA

Macarthur (Green) — EHJF & SRCT

Seacole (Yellow) — ENBU & SSMH

Sir Roger Bannister was a former UCS pupil. His achievements as an athlete are well-documented but his work in the field of neurology was equally if not more impressive. Sir Chris Bonington, another Old Gower, is a renowned mountaineer and has climbed Everest on several occasions. He is also a passionate supporter of motor neurone disease charities. Guy Kendall was a forward-thinking UCS Headmaster of the early 20th century. One of Kendall's greatest achievements during his 20-year tenure was increasing the number of assisted places. By the mid-1920s, 25% of the pupil body at UCS received a 100% discount on fees, thus opening up a UCS education to more pupils

A Focus on the House System



than ever before. Mary Macarthur was a Scottish suffragist who lived locally. She championed the cause and rights of female workers, was responsible for raising awareness of women's poor working conditions and encouraged women to speak out against injustice and inequality. Macarthur's work on a 1910 strike which lasted over two months, resulted in women receiving the country's first minimum wage. Mary Seacole was a Jamaican nurse who, at the age of 50, came to England with the intention of travelling onto the Crimea to provide medical care to soldiers fighting in the Crimean War. After the War Office refused her application, Seacole raised the funds herself and journeyed to Eastern Europe to establish a hospital close to the front line.

All five names have connections to North London and during their careers these men and women exhibited a number of our Learning Values and Life Values. They all faced and overcame challenges. However, what really links them in my eyes is that they all made a difference to the world through a shared sense of compassion and humanity.

Last week, we revealed the names of our first ever House Captains who were presented with badges

by Mr Beard. The Captains will be responsible for leading House assemblies and assisting at school events including the induction of new pupils in June.

Bannister (Black) — *Jake Portnoi & Nicholas Petoussis* (SAKC)

Bonington (Silver) — *Blake Kaye & Christian Dillon* (SEJK)

Kendall (Blue) — *Boris Buyakin & Jason Gholami* (SCMA)

Macarthur (Green) — *Zachary Hirschovits & Arjun Jayaraman* (SRCT)

Seacole (Yellow) — *Charlie Wake & Josh Schneider* (SSMH)

Mr Barnish, Ms Orlans and I would like to congratulate our House Captains and we look forward to working with them next term.

— *Contributions by E. Roberts*

Careers



Careers Fair

On Friday 4th March, UCS hosted its annual Careers Fair for the Transitus and Sixth along with other schools, including Michaela Community School and UCL Academy. There was a real buzz to the evening; the students were all looking smart and the feedback from companies was resoundingly positive. Many said how impressed they had been with the questions the students posed and the knowledge they displayed.

During the evening, our students got the chance to speak to a wide variety of companies – from Google to BBC, and ADAM Architecture to PwC – and it was wonderful to chat to these young delegates and hear about the different careers they were considering as well as the stands they had attended. We were also delighted to host a selection of inspirational speakers in Engineering, Medicine, Finance and Journalism; these proved particularly popular and, in light of their successful participation, we hope next year to increase the range further.

The evening was still going strong right to the end, and we cannot thank all the staff and visiting

speakers and representatives enough for their support for what was a super event. Many thanks also to a number of Old Gowers who came along to help, including Adam Thomson, Zara Elstein, Michael Leberman and Alex Baker.

Careers speakers and events

We have also been thrilled to welcome a number of excellent Careers speakers this term, including Old Gower Dr Jon Goldin, a Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist at GOSH who spoke to our pupils about his career in Psychiatry, and Claire Valoti, VP International of Snap Inc who came to talk about her career path through companies including Facebook, Instagram and now Snap. Unsurprisingly, this talk proved hugely popular with Snapchat users.

Finally, we held the Transitus Networking Evening on 28th March where students were able to hear from, and ask questions to, a hugely varied selection of speakers.

— Contributions by H. Yovichich

LGBT History Month



Throughout February, pupils and staff commemorated LGBTQIA+ History Month at Froggnal with a number of events and discussions. The Sixth Form Union delivered a powerful whole-school assembly addressing the history of queer liberation movements and exploring, in particular, the devastating impact of Section 28. Miss Bennett gave a Lower School assembly on the American civil rights leader Bayard Rustin, and LGBTQIA+ History Month quizzes featured in Sixth Form form times.

In addition, the school hosted two Morris Lectures to celebrate the month. Ms Lewis addressed pupils with a lecture entitled *Beyond the Archive: Reconstructing Queer (Hi)stories* and contemporary artist Adam Hennessey spoke about how he has

used his art practice as a vehicle to explore his experiences of “growing up gay”. These events were both thought and discussion-provoking and ensured that our pupils continued to engage with and inform themselves about issues facing the LGBTQIA+ community.

— Contributions by J. Lewis

Group Achievement Award Dinner



Each term, a group of pupils are presented with a Group Achievement Award by the Headmaster for their collective involvement in an excellent project, team, ensemble, cast or initiative. At the end of the Autumn Term, this award went jointly to the Sixth Form Union and Gender Politics Society. These two groups celebrated their success with a dinner hosted this term by the Headmaster and also attended by their staff patrons, Ms Lewis, Ms Baxter and Mr Davis.

Emmy Crawley, Events Officer for the Sixth Form Union, reflected on the evening and her leadership role.

Following a letter to the Headmaster and an election hustings in front of our year, I was appointed as one of the Events Officers for the Sixth Form Union. In my form we are always encouraged to take on new challenges and go for any opportunity we can, so when the new officer positions were announced the chance could not be missed. Although the application process was competitive, I felt it gave all the candidates, myself included, a new sense of motivation and drive to help the wider community

as well as our peers and teachers at school. Throughout our time in Transitus and Sixth, the Sixth Form Union organises and helps out with several different events: from Women's Aid and an LGBTQIA+ fundraiser to mixers and a cabaret.

Recently our accomplishments were further recognised when we were awarded the Headmaster's Group Achievement Award. We were able to discuss our efforts and consider new ideas over dinner with the Headmaster, Mr Beard, and our Head of Sixth Form, Ms Baxter. We were also accompanied by members of Gender Politics Society as well as Ms Lewis and Mr Davis. This made for an evening of spirited conversation paired with delicious food and drinks. Following our complicated year with COVID, it was refreshing to enjoy an evening of normality, and be able to talk enthusiastically about upcoming events instead of worrying about looming restrictions and the like. With our final examinations creeping nearer, this evening was just what we needed to inspire us to complete whichever activities we'd been working on and then enjoy them when they come around.

— Contributions by S. Bennett and E. Crawley

Sustainability Update



This has been a momentous term for the Senior School regarding sustainability as the Foundation has become the first school in the UK to become carbon neutral. The achievement of being awarded the Gold standard across all three elements of the UN's Climate Neutral Now initiative (measure, reduce, contribute) is testament to the hard work across the Foundation to prioritise environmental initiatives. Over the coming years, our Green Impact Society will continue to report the latest carbon audits and will target areas of greatest CO₂ emissions.

Green Impact Society has continued to work on such a range of initiatives around the school that it is often hard to keep up with everything that is going on! The DT Department, in particular, has been incorporating recycling and upcycling into its schemes of work and now has in place the facilities to recycle its own plastic to be used as filament for 3D printers. Green Impact also joined forces with the Coding Club as part of an air-quality monitoring project run by Camden Clean Air, Google and PPL PWR. This involved pupils

building their own air-quality monitors and coding them. An extremely impressive feat that resulted in the manufacturing of 15 air-quality monitors, which students can now use as part of their wider campaigns to limit numbers of pupils travelling to school by car.

The Sixth and Transitus elements of Green Impact Society have shifted their focus to work on the upcoming Sustainability Open Evening, where they will welcome pupils and parents from across Camden to discover solutions and actions that we can all take to reduce our individual carbon footprints. From creating quizzes and information stands, to working with Google on virtual reality headsets that allow attendees to 'visit' the rainforest during the event, it promises to be an exciting evening that will hopefully result in many pledges to make positive lifestyle changes. Do go to the UCS box office to get your ticket for this 21st April after-school exhibition.

Sustainability Update



Our Biodiversity team, consisting of Tuesday-lunchtime Entry and Shell pupils and the Sixth Form’s Friday-afternoon volunteers, have been extremely busy preparing a large section of the school’s gardens to be rewilded as part of a Memorial Biodiversity Garden. In partnership with the Camden BeeLine initiative, students have planted over 300 hedging trees to create a habitat suitable for hedgehogs, among other animals. This was the first step in the project, with a wildflower meadow being seeded over the Easter holidays, which will create a space for our community to savour and learn about the rich biodiversity that the school site holds. Further, the allotment continues to be a particularly vibrant part of the school, with pupils growing flowers for use in Art lessons, alongside preparing the beds for the spring–summer growing season.

As we enter warmer seasons, Green Impact Society would like to make a final encouragement that all students and parents reassess their need to drive to

school. The impact that driving has on air quality is one of the greatest and the school’s close proximity to many public transport options means that, wherever possible, pupils should avoid arriving by car. We are thrilled that many students have signed up for the upcoming bike mechanic workshops, taking place in May, where they will work with a professional bike mechanic to learn how to repair punctures, adjust brakes, replace brake pads and maintain gears and chains. By developing their knowledge of bicycle maintenance, we hope our pupils will grow in confidence when cycling, thus encouraging them to travel more sustainably.

— Contributions by J. Firth

Launch of UCS Research Review



The inaugural issue of the **UCS Research Review** – University College School’s educational research journal – was published in January. The journal showcases a vast array of innovative and original research carried out by staff at the school into their own teaching practice. Ultimately, it is a publication dedicated to promoting original research carried out by staff, some of which consists of abridged versions of papers that have been submitted as part of an Education master’s being undertaken by the author. Indeed, the skills and expertise demonstrated in the journal illustrate the time and attention paid by our practitioners to the close consideration of their teaching, as well as the school’s commitment to evidence-informed policy and practice.

Furthermore, the journal is modelled on a traditional academic journal, with all articles reviewed and edited by an editorial board comprising members of staff from across the Foundation who provided invaluable feedback on the layout, design and structure of the publication and advised on its aims and scope. The journal has also proved a useful way of sharing other forms

of writing such as book reviews, whereby five members of staff have read and reviewed books that might be considered of interest to the school community.

Excitingly, one of the articles in the journal will form the basis of the next meeting of the UCS teachers’ Journal Club. This is a half-termly gathering of teachers who discuss educational research and its impact on and applicability to our classroom practice.

Many thanks to everyone who contributed to this first issue of the UCS Research Review – I very much hope it will be the first of many!

— Contributions by E. Taylor

Enrichment Weeks



Spring Term has seen the bulk of this year's Enrichment Weeks whereby groups of subject departments arrange a host of activities in and outside of lessons to stretch students' knowledge under a particular topic. The term started with Economics, Geography, History and Politics Enrichment Week titled 'Borders'. Among other events, our pupils had talks on peacekeeping in Sudan from UN veteran Chris Sharwood-Smith and on 'breaking digital borders' by Snapchat vice president Claire Valoti. After half-term it was Modern Languages 'Translation of Languages' Enrichment Week where students went on a range of trips including the Tate Modern, the Science Museum, and the Goethe-Institut. Pupils had interactive Chinese restaurant sessions and a range of translation competitions. A particular highlight was Mrs Hess's lecture on the link between AI and linguistics.

With one week of regular school between the two, next came Biology, Chemistry, DT and Physics Enrichment Week titled 'Growth'. In Chemistry, pupils tested the colour-changing properties of rhubarb and investigated the rate of reaction of rhubarb with potassium manganate. As a lunchtime activity, pupils entered a Materials Chemistry escape room where they puzzled through a maze of challenges involving a variety of colour-changing, heat-sensitive and water-sensitive materials to solve the code. Miss Holland ran daily STEM challenges whereby students competed in a range of engineering problems. The Entry were lucky enough to be treated to a pyrotechnics display and compete in a Faraday Engineering Competition, along with reinventing gardening tools of the future in DT – modelling them out of old milk bottles.

Enrichment Weeks



Dr Dell delivered a fascinating lecture on growing artificial atoms, leaving our Materials Science-loving pupils awe-inspired. This was just the tip of the iceberg in terms of events available for students to attend.

Last in the set were the Dance, PE and Psychology Departments with their week titled 'Matter Over Mind'. With morning Tai Chi sessions, visiting Psychology professors and a talk from young Arsenal player Charlie Patino, there was something for everyone. Mrs Tran organised a huge number of dance workshops, bringing in specialised professionals to run sessions on everything from breakdancing/b-boying to street dance. Pupils made their own energy balls in the Refectory, learning about sports nutrition, and the Transitus and Sixth dissected a sheep's brain one lunchtime

(but not for lunch!). Even UCS parents got to participate in this Enrichment Week as Richard Shorter, aka 'Non-Perfect Dad', delivered his talk for parents on techniques to support high-performing young people based on his experiences with England's hockey, rugby and cricket teams, Bath Rugby and Manchester United. These Enrichment Weeks give our students a chance to explore the world beyond the regular curriculum and are entirely the work of our extraordinary UCS staff that plan and host countless extra-curricular activities. Thank you to all staff members who helped set up such incredible experiences.

— Contributions by H. Franks

World Book Day 2022



World Book Day is always a highlight in our calendar. This year we ran two competitions for Senior School pupils and the AKO Centre Library played host to the youngest members of the Foundation for a special World Book Day storytelling session.

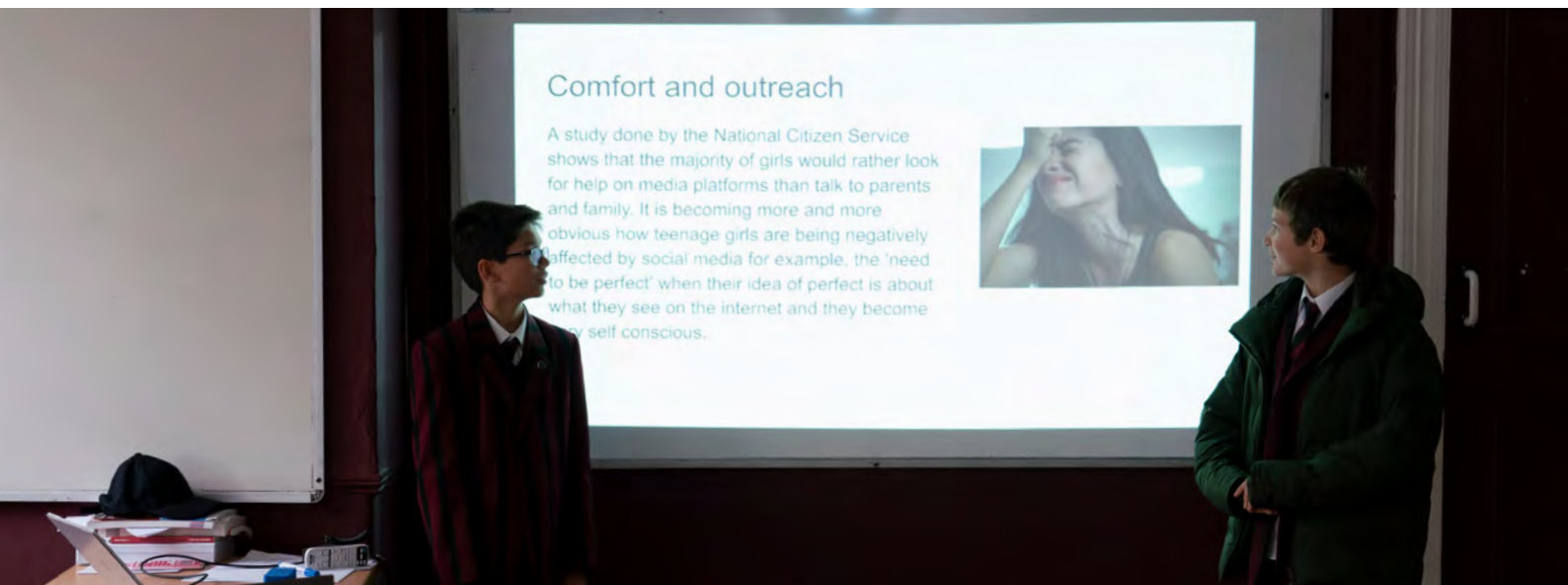
Entry and Shell boys entered enthusiastically into the special World Book Day quiz devised by the Library Team. There are clearly some very good readers in the Lower School! The Six Word Story competition for Middle School, Upper School and Staff produced a number of thought-provoking responses which made it incredibly difficult to choose the winners from such a high-quality field. Why not try and compose a six-word story yourself?

The real WBD highlight this year was welcoming our Pre-Prep pupils back to the AKO Centre Library after the pandemic. Dressed up as their favourite book characters and guided by their intrepid leader, the good witch (aka Ms Lenton),

the boys came on an adventure to the AKO Centre Library. Once settled on the carpet, the young audience of Harry Potters, Willy Wonkas, Superheroes, Monkeys and more were entertained by exciting stories read to them by Entry boys from the Senior School. It's hard to say who enjoyed it the most – the readers or the listeners! We look forward to welcoming our youngest pupils back soon.

— Contributions by P. Davison

The Lower School Symposium



In February, we held our inaugural Symposium for the Lower School. Just over 90 Shell pupils took part and the event focused on aspects of wellbeing which has been the Lower School theme this Spring Term. Our pupils were challenged with researching an area of wellbeing which they had not previously considered. They chose an impressive range of topics: sleep, gaming, exercise, social media and gardening, for example. The boys used this research to prepare talks for their peers and at the end of a morning of hard investigation, they presented their ideas to a panel of teachers and pupils. The talks were exceptional. Our pupils responded brilliantly to the brief and the quality of their talks was extremely high. I was particularly impressed by the variety of topics and by how differently the pairs reacted to questions. The boys demonstrated that they could think quickly on their feet and the level of subject knowledge on display was outstanding. The questions asked by the panels were excellent too – serving as testament to the quality of the talks.

The following pairs of pupils were awarded certificates of excellence at the end of term for producing first-class work:

SRCT: Daniel Harding and Ethan Deng; Constantin Kudimov-Campeanu and Haru Maruyaman

SAKC: Sammy Assael Francis and Daniel Domingo Bugaev; Jake Portnoi and Zac Sender

SEJK: Sebastian Reneby and Paolo Ceccoli; Tom Taylor, Charlie Loble and Pascha Soames

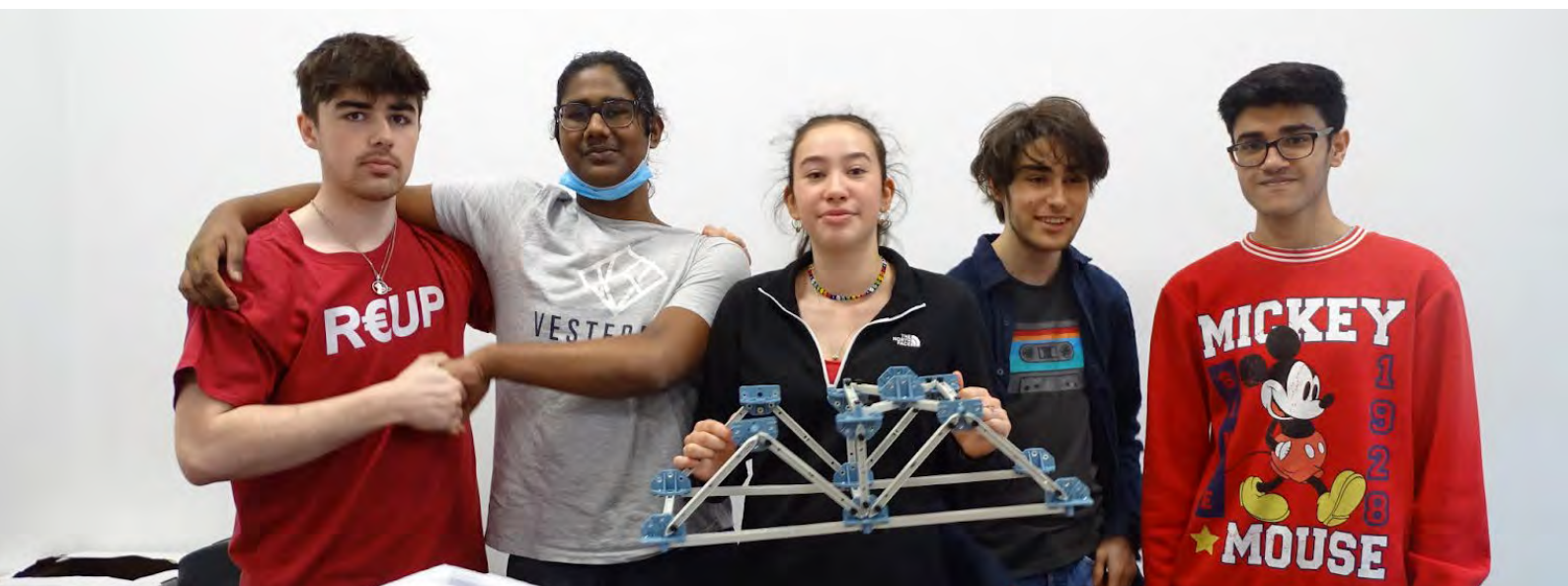
SCMA: Oliver Cheng and Ethan Mordue; Matteo Ceccoli and Dylan Kremer

SSMH: Dylan Rock-Joffe and Yash Kedia; Yoni Cohen and Josh Schneider

Congratulations to all the pupils who delivered such impressive work! Well done.

— Contributions by E. Roberts

British Science Week and Tania Boler Visits UCS



British Science Week is a ten-day celebration of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths that takes place annually during March. This year, British Science Week coincided with Biology, Chemistry, Physics and DT Enrichment Week which meant there was a whole host of activities on offer at UCS. These activities aimed to fuel a passion for Science and promote the scientific field outside the classroom. The theme was 'Growth' and the departments worked together to enrich the pupils and encourage a love for STEM subjects.

During the week, pupils were inspired by Dr Dell's Morris Lecture on 'Growing Artificial Atoms' while George Rollo in Transitus presented a lecture for the Astrophysics Society on Special Relativity. The week also witnessed a collaboration between the Biology and DT Departments whereby pupils designed and built hydroponic systems. Cooperation abounded between year

groups too as Entry and Transitus pupils took part in a Pyrotechnics workshop. Lower School boys developed their teamwork and design skills by creating a prototype to solve a real-world engineering problem in the Faraday Challenge with Mr Jenkins. These were just a few of the many activities staged during British Science Week, when STEMdaily challenges also returned to give pupils a daily challenge incorporating all the subjects and the theme of the week. These tests were shared beyond UCS as pupils from our partner schools, both primary and secondary, submitted entries to the competitions. The challenges allowed pupils to hone their practical skills and think about the world of Science outwith school.

British Science Week also saw our weekly breakfast club STEMgirls welcome Tania Boler, CEO and founder of Elvie and an internationally recognised women's health expert. Tania has held leadership

British Science Week and Tania Boler Visits UCS



positions for various global NGOs and the United Nations and is passionate about tackling taboo women's issues. Tania spoke to 20 Transitus girls who are interested in pursuing careers in STEM and Engineering. She was an incredibly inspiring speaker who empowered our girls and was an outstanding role model to them. She explored reasons why the number of girls entering the field is low and discussed how her company Elvie intends to address this matter. The girls were energised by Tania and look forward to working with her in the future. She is certainly keen to continue working with UCS and our partner schools to encourage young women into a field in which they continue to be under-represented.

As part of Women in STEM week UCS hosted Tania Boler, an award-winning engineer, UNHCR Woman Of The Year and one of the BBC's '100 Most Influential'. Tania spoke to us about her experiences

as a woman working in STEM, including starting her own femtech business [Elvie]. She also discussed her goal to encourage more girls to feel comfortable and confident pursuing further study and careers in STEM fields. This is a goal UCS shares with Tania as it acts as a pilot school for Elvie's new scheme to get more girls into STEM – which hopefully will include a trip to the company's Bristol base. I think we speak for everyone when we say it was a truly inspiring talk and we really appreciated being able to hear about the realities of a career in STEM, including both positive and negative aspects, from what we felt was an unbiased voice. — T. Crown & L. Dafter

— Contributions by A. Holland

Beyond UCS



Spring is a busy and exciting time of year for the Higher Education Team – a time when we are still receiving exciting news of offers from our Sixth, while preparing for the start of the application process with the Transitus.

The vast majority of our current Sixth students are holding attractive offers from some of the UK's most prestigious universities and for some of the most competitive courses. Despite the increasingly challenging Higher Education landscape – including the impact of Covid, the hike in 18-year-olds applying for university and the cautious offer-making of institutions – our pupils continue to achieve offers at the institutions of their choice. Medicine has been incredibly challenging over the last few years, with a 25% rise in applications and a 47% increase in reapplications, but our Medics have won places at Brighton and Sussex, Bristol, UCL, Nottingham and UEA. Our latest data shows that 90% of our offers come from high tariff providers and Bristol, Manchester and Leeds rank as the top three institutions making offers to UCS students.

Pleasingly, many of our students are recognising the very great diversity of courses available and are

obtaining offers for courses such as Plant Sciences, Astrophysics, Urban Planning, Film Production and Fashion Design as well as in the more traditional fields of study. Balanced against this, of course, is the disappointment that some Oxbridge students faced, along with the extreme competition for some Economics courses we have seen this year – however, our pupils have chosen wisely and in most cases have attractive alternative offers.

For the Transitus, their turn is coming and in the final week of this term there were many events to get them thinking about this exciting and important process. This included our annual BeyondUCS event which provided the opportunity for pupils to research their options and consider the pathways open to them. They were assisted in this by a group of wonderful Old Gowers who gave up their time to share their experiences, ably hosted by UCS staff, of course. We also held our first in-person University Fair and were delighted to welcome representatives from, among others, Imperial, Bath, Warwick, Exeter, Durham, Bristol, Birmingham and Manchester. In the Summer Term, Transitus students will each have a one-to-one meeting with a member of the HE Team to

Beyond UCS



discuss their plans and to receive advice on their applications and then much time will be devoted to research, personal statements and the UCAS application itself. It is certainly a busy time – but also one of great importance as our young people ready themselves for independence and the next phase of their lives.

— Contributions by L. Jenkins

My experience of UCS' Higher Education programme and the Higher Education Team has been nothing but positive. They have provided excellent resources, information, and hands-on support and guidance throughout my time in the Sixth Form.

The team helps to guide you from the early stages of the process in Transitus, to submitting your applications, considering your offers, and confirming your choices in the Sixth. They give relevant and helpful information regarding the UCAS process without overwhelming you. This allows students

to make their own decisions with the input of their parents and there is then plenty of time to work on your application, with lots of support with your personal statement in particular.

The personal approach of the Higher Education Team meant that I felt confident throughout my application as there was always a member of staff available to help and further my efforts. The new Sixth Form Team office in the Sixth Form Centre makes it much easier to speak to a member of staff if you have any queries or worries regarding your application.

Oxbridge, Medicine and Veterinary application support is also provided by the school in great detail and with much care. Speaking from my own personal experience and that of my fellow students, departments thoroughly prepared us for interviews and other specialised areas of these processes.

— Contributions by T. Milward

Transitus Public Speaking Competition



During the Spring Term we launched the first ever Transitus Public Speaking Competition. This was a daunting affair for all who entered. The process involved an initial training session in public speaking for the 19 courageous students who put themselves forward. Competitors then contested a qualifying round in front of each other and staff; only four were selected to compete in the final. The qualifying rounds featured talks on ‘Why you should think like a dog’, ‘Why lying is essential today’ and ‘Are we living in a game?’, to name a few. Finalists received 1-2-1 guidance and then finessed their speeches and delivery. The stage was duly set for the final – The Lund, packed with 200 students and staff, with the finalists being judged on their originality of thought, variation in tone and pitch, audience engagement and stage presence. What followed was incredible. Minnat Mohammed explained with confidence and clarity why she finds the hijab liberating. Dylan Ireland described in depth why he hates swans. Taliah Spencer-Jacobs detailed why TikTok is addictive and how to combat it, and Virja Mehra asked us all to find our own little bit of sunshine. The process was nerve

wracking, yet exciting. A special thanks goes to Ms Desmond and Mr Abbott for giving up their time and expertise to help all involved. A special credit to Cameron Bard too, for helping the finalists with lighting. All finalists should be incredibly proud of what they accomplished and for pushing themselves way out of their comfort zones.

— Contribution by A. Hurst

Participating in a public speaking competition for the first time at UCS was enriching, fun, and yet challenging. Not only was researching and delivering my speech exciting, but listening to all the other speakers was incredibly thought-provoking – there are so many talented speakers and thinkers who were given the opportunity to shine in this competition.

I chose to share my thoughts about why I view the hijab as a symbol of liberation. I had been thinking a lot about why I wear my hijab prior to entering the competition. I found it fascinating that something I may think so little about when getting ready in the morning could have such profound justifications. Considering the stigma surrounding Islam, I also

Transitus Public Speaking Competition



aspired to contribute to dismantling this, especially as the hijab is such a highly controversial and misunderstood subject.

I feel that the Public Speaking Competition allowed me to grow as a person and a speaker, particularly due to the expert training generously provided by UCS teachers. I would without doubt recommend it to anyone and everyone as there is so much to take away from it – not only a prize.

— Contribution by M. Mohammed

My speech unpicked the factors that make TikTok so addictive and presented the threats that the app poses to our lives today, hopefully to make people view the app in a new light and then: not view it at all. It was an empowering experience to explain an interest of mine that also concerns my peers. Preparing the speech allowed me to research things beyond the usual curriculum, and even drastically reduce my own use of TikTok. Performing the speech, even in front of a huge and mortifying audience, was adrenalizing and enabled me to gain skills for the future in terms of communicating effectively and coping under pressure. Although initially daunting, I thoroughly recommend developing your expertise in public speaking as it is not only fun but beneficial.

I must also take this opportunity to remind you to take some time away from your phone, especially TikTok, and just as Viraj advises, find your own sunshine instead.

— Contribution by T. Spencer-Jacobs

I chose to talk about swans for my speech in the Transitus Public Speaking Competition. Specifically, why I dislike swans as much as I do. I chose this topic because I thought that the most interesting and engaging speech I would be able to write would be about something I'm really passionate about – but also something that is lighthearted and funny. Taking part in the competition was fantastic, and I had the opportunity to improve my public speaking skills, specifically in terms of body language and tone. I learnt the importance of staying calm when having to give a speech in front of 200 odd people, and overall found it to be a great experience. I had a lot of fun writing and performing the speech, and hearing all the other participants' speeches, and would definitely recommend it to future members of the Transitus that want to gain more confidence in speaking in front of others, as well as improving their persuasive writing skills.

— Contribution by D. Ireland

Green Impact Coding Challenge

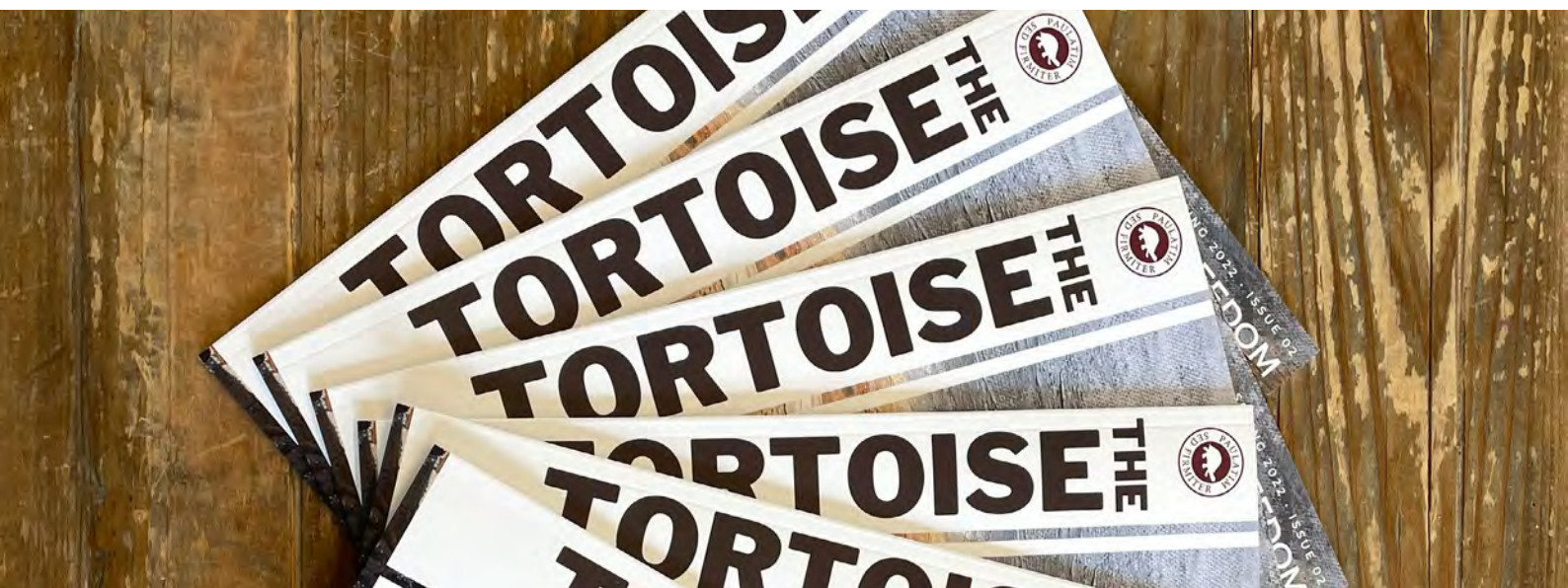


Over the last month, UCS teamed up with PPL PWR, Camden Clean Air and Google, as part of the Community Air Pollution Sensor project. This initiative aimed to create portable, low-cost air-pollution sensors, which can measure the levels of the three main air-pollution particulates and assign this data to the time and exact location where the reading was taken. The devices automatically take readings every 15 seconds, which makes them simple to use, but very effective. There were three workshops – in the first, we were taught about the effects of air pollution and how it is often neglected in climate change initiatives. I found this very interesting and surprising how such a key issue is rarely acted upon. In the second, we soldered all of the wires onto the correct circuit boards and other components – this was quite fiddly but very rewarding when it all fit together. In the final workshop, we used a variation of C++ to write the code for the devices, so that they could store all the data correctly. I really enjoyed this and was delighted when my device started working.

I am looking forward to using the sensor to gather and analyse the particulate matter measurements, so we can therefore better tackle air pollution. Many thanks to Saul, Valeria and Georgina for the workshops and the incredible opportunity!

— Contributions by B. Kotok Nicholls

The Tortoise



This spring marked the publication of the second edition of the UCS student magazine, The Tortoise. The magazine, launched at the end of the last academic year, is a fantastic showcase of some of the many talents of pupils across the school, including student photography, art work, and articles on some of the key social and political issues facing young people today.

For this edition, the editorial team, led by Sixth student Isabella Wartski, focused on the theme of 'Freedom' and what this means to them. From hopeful perspectives on the possibility of life returning to some kind of normal following a reduction in Covid cases, to a review of the works of director Wong Kar-wai, via a commentary on the national response to the climate crisis following COP26, this issue is full of thought-provoking content and is a testament to the mature and thoughtful way in which our pupils engage with issues in the world around them. There is also an incredible array of artwork and photography produced by our Transitus and Sixth students, who

have used a variety of mediums to engage with the theme of 'Freedom' in their work.

For the next edition, due to be published in the Summer Term, the new editorial team have selected the theme of 'Borders' and will be considering what this word means and how the idea of borders influences the world around us.

— Contributions by A. Caplin

Oxbridge: A Pupil's Perspective



The Spring Term sees pupils in the Sixth learn the results of their applications to Oxford and Cambridge. Two pupils who received offers, Anjali and Bella, have written about their experiences and success for The Frognaal.

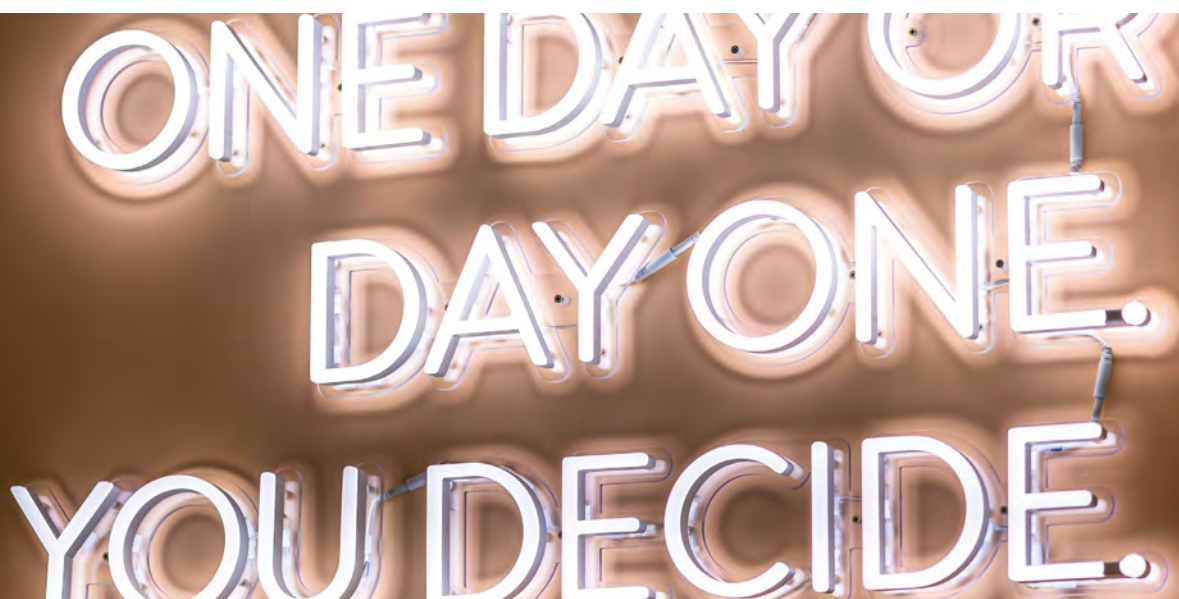
In the Summer Term of Transitus, I decided I wanted to apply to Oxford University for Experimental Psychology. As soon as I expressed my interest, the Sixth Form Team and the Psychology Department were immediately supportive of my decision and gave me a few ideas of how to start building my application.

Over the summer, I read a large range of journals, books and attended talks to help broaden my understanding of Psychology beyond the A Level specification. I received guidance from different teachers while writing my personal statement and I really enjoyed being able to talk about the subject I love, even if it was only 600 words.

For Oxford, I also had to sit the Thinking Skills Assessment which is a mixture of Logic and Maths questions. At first, I found the papers difficult and time-pressured, but I attended weekly TSA sessions with Dr Dawson which helped me improve significantly. When I got invited to interview, Mrs Hawes conducted weekly interview sessions in which we developed interview techniques and discussed eclectic answers to different questions. Even if I had been unsuccessful, I still would have gained a number of different skills from the process and an extremely profound passion for the subject.

— Contributions by A. Cheung

Oxbridge: A Pupil's Perspective



Like many others, I began the Oxbridge process with mixed feelings. Although we were supposed to begin the preparation process with plenty of reading over the Transitus summer holidays, I needed that classic last-minute pressure to kickstart things. Many late nights during those first few weeks of September were spent questioning if I was actually passionate about anything at all – let alone Art History, which I was applying for. Eventually a breakthrough came when I recalled a scene from Ferris Bueller's Day Off which, to me, summarised the importance and relevance of Art. That helped me develop a clearer picture of what I wanted to say and, after countless drafts, I was ready to send my personal statement.

The interview preparation was where the hard work really had to be put in and, admittedly, if I had not been pushed as much by my Head of Department, Mr Mee, my interview would probably have been disastrous. He gave me a book to log my reading, which he threatened to check a week later, and the reading I did during that week was invaluable. Although I didn't use everything I'd read or learnt in

Enrichment lessons – which were equally invaluable – in the interview, having a broader understanding and clearer grasp of my subject made me feel much more confident.

The first mock interview I did was with Westminster – a huge learning curve. However, by the time I came around to the real interview two weeks later, I'd practised enough to feel confident that, no matter what they threw at me, I would at least be able to keep my cool. In the end, I loved my interview: being able to talk about my subject with people who were equally passionate and incredibly knowledgeable was such an enjoyable experience. On the whole, the process was challenging but very rewarding, and was definitely worth giving a go.

— Contributions by B. Wartski

Debating and Model United Nations



This year, my experience with Debating has taught me many things. Some are more complex than others but they all matter to me. It all started with just picking a club I wanted to join. I'd been told by my parents to join Debating Club, because they said 'he always argues' and 'debating would be perfect'. I guess they were right. I went the first week and learned the basics of debating along with doing my first debate. It wasn't special, I wasn't very good but it was a start. Later it progressed week on week and I developed skills in fun debates. Next it was my first tournament at South Hampstead – nerve-racking but an opportunity. Whatever the result, I enjoyed the tournament and it was a learning curve. Another tournament followed, again at South Hampstead. My team came second, a great moment. With another tournament looming, I will get the chance to improve and compete. I've really enjoyed debating, I think everyone should try it.

— Contributions by A. Heslam

Model United Nations is an extra-curricular activity at UCS which, as the name suggests, is a simulation of the real United Nations for students interested in current affairs and/or international relations. I've been a keen member of the club since Year 9 and have definitely seen an improvement in my public speaking, debating and critical analysis skills. It's an activity I would encourage everyone to try, especially with the opportunity to get involved not just at after-school meetings but at conferences, like HABSMUN, to which UCS recently sent two delegations, comprising nine students.

Large conferences like HABSMUN, which regularly attract over 500 students from dozens of schools across the UK and Europe, allow students to be the representatives or delegates of a particular country and work together with other countries to solve a particular issue, with topics ranging from humanitarian issues such as the refugee crisis, to

Debating and Model United Nations



active conflicts like the War in Tigray. HABSMUN this year was a special one, as it was the first in-person event for three years due to the pandemic, and therefore also the first in-person MUN conference for all UCS students except myself. It promised to be an interesting challenge too, following recent events. Five of us were assigned to represent Russia, and Jonah especially felt the wave of international hostility towards Russia due to his position on the Crisis Committee discussing Ukraine. I'll pass over to Ben now to give you a breakdown of his experience at the conference as a Canadian delegate across the weekend...

Walking into the main conference hall at Habs, I was struck by the enormous number of students eager to begin debating and the scale of the event. Being Canada's delegate in the committee titled SOCHUM 1, I had to discuss a range of social, humanitarian and cultural issues, including matters as pressing as child trafficking, literacy rates and the refugee crisis.

As a member of this committee, it felt particularly interesting and current to debate different strategies to ensure the safety of refugees. I started to appreciate how many different opinions nations can have on the same issue, and how they might differ from my own. One of the highlights was the opening ceremony, featuring an exhilarating Olympic-style flag procession. This really set the tone for the conference.

It was an incredible experience and helped me gain a much broader awareness of current global affairs. I feel my debating skills have improved greatly as a result of both the club and the conference. Many thanks to Miss Desmond for helping us prepare for, and take part in, such an exciting and stimulating event.

— Contributions by A. Kassam and B. Levene

The Return of Academic Trips



Classics Trip to Bath

In January the Lower Remove Classicists were taken on a trip to see the Roman Baths of Bath. After a three-and-a-half hour coach journey we arrived in the magnificent city of Bath. Before entering the Baths, some of the group were led by Mr McAra on a five minute walk to The Circus, a historic terraced ring of beautiful Georgian townhouses which are decorated with Ancient Greek emblems and symbols.

Upon arrival at the Baths, we were handed audio guides that would tell us the history of what we were seeing, and worksheets to be filled out with what we learned. We then got the chance to set off around the Baths. The first part of the complex was the balcony, which looked down onto the Great Bath, and was decorated with regal statues of those Roman emperors considered most influential on Roman Britain. We moved on to a room where it was explained how the baths had been built, and saw a Roman stone carving of what some archaeologists reckon to be a gorgon (although no one's really sure, because it is male – gorgons were female -- and looks like the Roman gods Neptune and Helios).

Next stop, a museum area that described what life was like for people living in Bath – in Roman times

called Aquae Sulis – during the era in which the baths were functioning. We looked at a man's skeleton which had been proven scientifically to be Syrian, wealthy and dead over the age of 40, and some artefacts found during the excavation of the baths, including lead curse tablets which Romans used to tell the gods to punish someone who had wronged them. In the vicinity was the site of a temple dedicated to the goddess Sulis Minerva. The latter was a mix of the Celtic goddess Sul and the Roman goddess Minerva, with both credited with healing and the creation of the spring that heated the baths; the Romans decided to make them the same goddess to please the locals!

Then our tour took us to the hot springs that produce the same amount of water, at the same temperature, as in Roman times – precisely, one million litres a day at 46 degrees celsius. The Great Bath still steams and bubbles to this day!

When we left the museum, we had a session with a historian in which we translated engravings on some ancient Roman gravestones and altars, and examined many objects which would have been found in the Roman Baths in the times of Aquae Sulis, e.g. oil lamps and sandals.

The Return of Academic Trips



Although by the end of the day we were all quite tired, we had definitely found the trip both highly informative and interesting. Our personal highlight were the hot springs because we found the Science behind them fascinating.

— Contributions by E. Saxby and J. Jeffes

Art History Returns to the National Gallery

On a Friday afternoon in March, we embarked on our first trip as a group of Art Historians to the holy grail of the Art world, the National Gallery, which contains some of the biggest and most big-ticket painting collections on the planet.

We arrived at the Sainsbury Wing and as we stepped into the National Gallery and travelled up the awe-inspiring stairs, we left behind a world of social media and entered a world of History and Art. We swiftly turned left with Mr Mee, who was leading the pack, and chronologically travelled through the brilliance of the Renaissance era. Mr Mee's in-depth and engaging analysis of our favourite paintings attracted groups of fellow Art admirers and we were forced to promptly progress through the gallery. Observing the detail which legendary artists such as Sebastiano del Piombo, for example, incorporated

into his 'The Raising of Lazarus' (1517–19) – with its vibrant colours and sense of perfection – was an experience like no other. The story behind this painting is, of course, Jesus resurrecting Lazarus from the tomb, and this resonated with us since we felt, after a Covid-riddled few years, fully restored to normal life and finally allowed to visit the National Gallery with UCS and experience everything that we had been dreaming of doing.

Overall, our visit to the National Gallery with Mr Mee was the perfect way to cap off a busy week as well as a peerlessly rich cultural experience

— Contributions by Z. Robinson

Classics Trip to UCL Production of Euripides' Electra

In February pupils and teachers from the Classics Department went to see a performance of Euripides' Electra by UCL. At its core, Electra is about the matricide committed by Electra and her brother Orestes. The story includes only the middle and most important part of the narrative: the murder of Clytemnestra and her husband. UCL put on an incredibly faithful performance, including some extra comedy and modernity. While the dissonance

The Return of Academic Trips



between modernity and other inherently ancient themes and the modern interpretation, e.g. use of the word car, plastic water bottles and telephone wires, was jarring, it was certainly an interesting and unique rendition of the play. There was clever use of the colour red – Orestes wore a red shirt, Electra red slippers, Clytemnestra a red crown – as a not-so-subtle allusion to the slaughter to come.

Another interesting detail was the chorus, displayed here as friends of Electra; they appeared more like characters on stage and overall represented a creative take on the classical chorus. Perhaps for budgetary reasons, the whole play was set against the same backdrop, Electra’s house. While this limited the visual storytelling potential, it provided lots of opportunities for creative workarounds. Most memorable of these was Pylades’ visceral description of the death of Aegisthus which was incredibly well acted and staged. Electra acted incredibly well and clearly portrayed the character, especially when arguing with her mother about the morality of Clytemnestra’s killing of Agamemnon. She describes Agamemnon as the “best of the Greeks” (I’ll allow it this time but we all know there’s only one blood-raging Aristos Achaion), showing how much she idolises her father and hates her mother. This

contrasts with Orestes who feels immense grief and is very torn over the decision.

Overall, the play was very enjoyable and it is always interesting to see interpretations of classical works.

— Contributions by J. Sinker

Science Museum Classics Trip

In February, we visited the exhibition ‘Ancient Greeks: Science and Wisdom’ at the Science Museum.

The exhibition explored the tendency of Ancient Greek thinkers to try to rationalise, even calculate, unscientific things such as music and nature. It showcased a broad range of exhibits that demonstrated the determination of the Greeks to attain a full, logical understanding of themselves and their surroundings.

One memorable exhibit was a statue of an athlete’s body. The caption explained that this statue had been made to represent the “ideal Ancient Greek body”. The statue had been carved using a certain formula, devised to calculate the proportions of this ideal body

The Return of Academic Trips



based only on the length of a certain bone in the little finger. To me, this was a mathematical effort at understanding nature.

Another exhibit showed a string held at both ends. A slider in the middle could be moved to change the vibrating length of the string. This was evidence of a system of tuning musical instruments invented by Pythagoras: when plucked, a string of length $2x$ sounds one octave higher than a string of length x . A ratio of 2:1 therefore represents an octave. Ratios of other intervals could be calculated this way to tune instruments in a standard way. This, again, was an attempt by the Ancient Greeks at understanding and standardising music mathematically. Music had previously been regarded as unexplainable and 'disorganised', but this was the Greeks' crack at rationalising it.

Finally, in a small display cabinet was a very intricate device made up of many gears. The caption explained how it had been used by the Ancient Greeks to calculate the positions of the planets, in advance. The inventor of this instrument, through

careful observation, had monitored the planets and programmed their movements into a small machine. Other than the electrical and physical components, I see no difference between this and a modern computer: an input would be processed to determine an output. Therefore, devices such as these are huge discoveries in revealing how the Greeks were very much ahead of their time. I believe that this longing for explanation through Science and Philosophy, more than any other civilization, was what defined the Ancient Greeks. The exhibition demonstrated this through its many very beautiful objects.

— Contributions by J. Kouyoumijan

Pupil Humanitarian Crisis Fundraising Committee



Following the invasion of Ukraine on 20th February, our school community has been deeply distressed by the crisis that is rapidly unfolding. There was and is a desire within the school community to respond and support the people affected by this humanitarian crisis and, especially, those millions of people being displaced by it.

A Humanitarian Crisis Fundraising Committee was formed of pupils in every year group, selected by their Heads of Section, who have been working to coordinate fundraising events across the school before and after Easter. This committee has chosen The British Red Cross (Lower School), UNHCR (Middle School) and UNICEF and UN Women (Sixth Form) as the charities they would like the school to support.

Ready with buckets and card readers, pupil volunteers fundraised at flagship UCS Co-Curricular events including the Trinity Showcase, Middle School Production and Spring Concerts. It is no exaggeration to say that we and the pupils have been blown away by the generous donations received at these events. A similar story can be told of the Mufti Day held in March, which harvested the most money ever raised at the school on such

an occasion. So far, these efforts have raised a total of just over £4000 and this will be split between the charities nominated by the Committee.

After the Easter break, the pupils on the Committee have some exciting and innovative ways lined up to raise money for this important cause. Watch this space and, if you'd like to be involved, please speak to either of us or your year group's representative on the Committee, details of which can be found in the Pupil Bulletins.

— Contributions by J. Lewis and S. Bennett

LAE Oracy Skills



In January and February, teachers from the Drama Department delivered a series of oracy workshops for pupils at the London Academy of Excellence. The workshops focused on preparation for university interviews and covered topics such as Alexander Technique, body language and interview technique.

The 20 pupils involved in the workshops admitted to having little or no experience of theatre or Drama and many confessed to finding public speaking challenging. Nonetheless, LAE pupils embraced the opportunity and committed to the sessions with their characteristic diligence and focus.

It was wonderful to witness these pupils slowly evolve in confidence with each session and, by the end of the workshop series, they were able to apply their newly learnt oracy and presentation skills in their own mock interviews.

The oracy workshops were a highly positive experience for the pupils, who provided enthusiastic feedback on the experience. They appreciated being given the chance to develop and hone an essential skill and the UCS staff enjoyed the experience of working with LAE pupils and teachers.

— Contributions by C. Abbott

LAE Art Project



This year, we launched a new Art partnership project with the London Academy of Excellence, Stratford. The project is called Connect/Disconnect and represents a creative collaborative project exploring the different ways that we connect with the environment around us.

So far, Connect/Disconnect has consisted of six sessions – four in person and two online – in addition to two forthcoming exhibitions, one at UCS which will run after Easter at our Lund Gallery and one to be held at LAE towards the end of the Summer Term. The workshops included drawing, installation, design, digital manipulation and screen printing.

A total of 14 LAE students joined us at UCS to explore a range of experimental approaches to Art that enabled them to think of different ways in which we connect with the surrounding environment. The first session involved working with charcoal and students created their own utopian and dystopian drawn collages. These were imagined spaces from observed patterns, buildings and urban cityscapes around London. The pupils also created their own mini sketchbooks and worked with ink to recreate different urban sounds – experimenting with layering and opacity.

Another session saw students joined at UCS by some of our own Transitus artists. We responded to Tsahabala Self's Self shape exhibition: where the artist asks viewers to consider the significance of our bodies as symbols and icons, what are the ways in which your body is politicised? What would you do if given the power to represent yourself? And if you were a shape, what would it be? After discussion, our students created a light installation and realised how they could move their bodies to achieve a range of shadows, symbols and distortions. From these, they drew with scissors, using a range of materials, and worked with a printing process to render a variety of shapes, textures and forms with which to answer the questions above.

From these different drawings and printed images, the pupils then had to produce separate repeating and tessellating designs using a stencilling screen printing technique. The tessellating designs were subsequently turned into wallpaper and different designs for clothing. All students took home with them an item of clothing with their design. Many of these can be seen in the Connect/Disconnect exhibition.

— Contributions by A. McVicker

Minimus at New End Primary



Every Friday afternoon this term, some of my peers and I have given introductory Latin lessons to the brilliant Year 5 pupils at New End Primary School, offering an insight into both the language and the culture of ancient Roman civilisation.

There was a palpable nervousness as we walked through the school gates for the first time; we had undertaken a teacher training course the week before, which, while quelling some nerves, had necessarily exemplified both the many joys of teaching and also its many pitfalls. So there was an unspoken worry among our number that, if we didn't perfectly balance the teaching equation and translate every minute instruction, then we would be lampooned. After all, children are famously the harshest critics.

*Each week would start with a presentation led by one of us on a classical myth, which varied from such staples as *The Labours of Hercules* to more obscure retellings of the villainous *Procrustes*. It didn't take longer than this for the pestilent cloud of nerves hovering above us to disappear. Almost every child*

*was engaged, quick-witted, personable and ready to learn. Almost as soon as it came to actually teaching – and there were two to four children per 'teacher' – the techniques and methodologies that we had studied began to contextually make sense. Moreover, the balance of entertainment and education which we, as external tutors, needed to provide was struck by Week 2. The *Minimus* textbook supplied the basis of the lessons, which flitted between explanations of language and grammar and elements of Roman civilisation. The textbook centred on a villa in Roman-occupied England, allowing the elements of culture depicted to both feel relatable to the children and very literally display to them the direct link between our civilisation and the Roman one. Indeed, we explained how understanding Roman society aids a little in comprehending our own. After very little time, we had formed bonds with those we were teaching, had an idea of which activities were enjoyable and productive, and actively looked forward to the lessons. I only hope our pupils felt the same!*

— Contributions by O. Sykes

North Paddington Food Bank Collection



On a sunny but windy Friday morning in March, pupils and staff across the school community came together to make their donations for North Paddington Food Bank. Over the gusty morning, we collected numerous boxes of sanitary products, baby formula and nappies, and Easter chocolates.

This follows a longstanding Black Hawkins partnership with North Paddington Food Bank, and we have been lucky enough to continue these collections over the last few difficult years. We think, as a school community, it is our responsibility to do as much as we can to help other people in the wider community – something that’s been more necessary than ever in the aftermath of the pandemic.

Prior to the pandemic, the numbers of those relying on food banks had soared to a record high for 50 years, which was only worsened by the devastating effects of Covid. Now, amid a cost-of-living crisis, cuts to universal credit and a planned rise in National Insurance, millions of people once again

find themselves in desperate financial situations. Although the deepening poverty across the UK has been recently overshadowed in the media by other events, the 4.3 million children living in food poverty and 18% of Brits living in food insecurity have not had the fortune of being spared from the reality they now face. It can be too easily forgotten that food banks' existence is based on demand and not the other way around – but while destitution is a reality for many families across the country, we are proud of the school's efforts.*

The scale of our latest donations shows the impact of collectivity and generosity towards other people. The school community displayed great empathy and enthusiasm in helping run and donating to the collection. Thank you to all who donated – we are really grateful for everyone's support.

**statistics from Turn2us research*

— Contributions by X. Mesquita and D. Ireland

North Paddington Food Bank Collection



A ginormous thank you to everyone at UCS who organised this wonderful drive and those who were able to donate. We were overwhelmed by your generosity, as the boxes just kept piling up! The sheer quantity of products has allowed us to get up and running quickly and start meeting the demand of a range of families and women in the area, already.

A majority of our customers are women – 45% of those customers have children and 35% are single mothers. Alongside a nationwide cost-of-living crisis, childcare costs have increased twice as fast as the inflation rate in the last decade. In response, we have set up a Baby Bank that provides families with access to nappies, baby wipes, baby formula and a range of sanitary products, in conjunction with the food bank's provision of supermarket vouchers. This way we can ensure our customers are able to spend their vouchers on food and household items, rather than essential baby products and sanitary items.

The response from women and families so far has shown us how vital a service of this nature is for the community – so thank you, UCS, for making this possible!

— Contributions by M. Melluish (Project and Volunteer Coordinator at the North Paddington Foodbank).

Online Courses: Transitus and Sixth Form Volunteering



This academic year, a number of Transitus and Sixth pupils have participated in online courses run by charities as part of our Partnerships and Volunteering programme.

I signed up to do the online British Sign Language course for many reasons, but primarily so I could understand and interact with someone who uses sign language in real life. The tasks were initially quite basic, such as learning the alphabet and numbers, but as you progress you learn to convey and understand emotions, sign about your family, your hobbies, animals and food and drink, along with much more. By the end of the course, I felt I had gained sufficient ability to understand some of the foundations of British Sign Language so that if the time comes, I can use it to communicate effectively and make a real difference. — M. Conway

Eduspot's Leadership and Action course taught me a lot about how to have a proactive approach to

solving problems but I also used this course as a guide to running a successful business in the future. As a BSc Management applicant, I am interested in learning why leaders make the decisions they do as well as their process of researching and applying this to their decisions; for that reason, I found this course very valuable. Every week I learned something new and, in addition, I was able to interact with students from other schools who were also taking the course. We commented and gave feedback on each other's work. Peer feedback was a great way to recognise the factors I had missed when first completing the task. I would highly recommend this course to anyone aspiring to become a leader in the future. — F. Batra

We continue to be amazed by the flexibility demonstrated by UCS pupils keen to engage with good causes despite the challenges presented by the pandemic.

— Contributions by M. Reiderman

Vaccination Volunteering



*“Does it have a chip in it?” “You’re killing people!”
Not quite the introduction I was expecting to my first
ever job.*

*As an aspiring Medic, I was determined to get
involved when the Covid vaccines were first rolled
out. Initially starting as a support volunteer in
January 2021, I quickly applied to be a vaccinator.
A year on and I’ve spent around 700 hours in
vaccination centres, given over 3,000 vaccinations
and worked all across London.*

*It was a nerve-racking experience to start with and
a steep learning curve. I can now recite at least 50
different common medications and what they are for.
The open-ended ‘any serious medical conditions?’ is
a relative question. From food allergies to HIV, I’ve
heard it all.*

*Due to the nature of vaccines for everyone, I have
seen a cross-section of London’s entire population.
People of all ages, social backgrounds and
nationalities. My first 12-hour shift at Romford mass*

*vaccination centre, seeing almost 100 patients, I was
exhausted; quite the introduction to the working
world of the NHS. The vast majority of patients are
kind, considerate and polite. Some are not. I can
safely say I have become an expert in de-escalating
situations with our more dissatisfied customers.*

*Working with the housebound outreach team, I
visited hundreds of households across Hackney
to vaccinate some of the most vulnerable in our
population. Needless to say, the privilege of going to a
private school in Hampstead was made abundantly
clear! I spent a few shifts working in SEN schools
which was quite the role-reversal from my previous
experience of school vaccinations back in Year 9. It
was here that I experienced every vaccinator’s worst
nightmare: that rarest of reactions, anaphylaxis. A
999 call and three minutes later, we were joined by
half of the London Ambulance Service.*

— Contributions by C. Tyler

Drama



Success and Celebration at the Inaugural Trinity Showcase

Since introducing Trinity Acting Exams for the very first time in September 2021, some 67 pupils have attended weekly lessons and been examined on their performances, achieving great success. What better way to end the Spring Term, then, than by celebrating these students and their achievements at our inaugural Trinity Showcase in the Lund.

On 16th and 17th March, pupils from Entry to Sixth performed their scenes in front of a packed crowd of parents and peers. Mr Swanson, our Trinity Coordinator, hosted the evening with Mr Bhantoa presenting certificates to the deserving recipients. Audience members echoed what the Trinity examiner had said when she examined the students: that they were talented, well-behaved and an asset to the school.

The evening ran so smoothly that nobody would have guessed that these pupils were actually performing a week *early*, owing to Covid-related rescheduling. The Trinity cohort demonstrated real resilience and responsibility in getting these pieces onto the stage at short notice, and we hope to see

them in next year's classes going for the next grade up!

To book a place for your son or daughter at Trinity, visit [ucsdrama.com](https://www.ucsdrama.com). September 2022 bookings are now open.

— Contributions by C. Bhantoa

Shakespeare In Love

Shakespeare In Love is a deceptive play – it may initially appear to be a simple tale of love, longing and the 'mystery' of theatre but I believe its roots delve deeper and that it delivers an important message to young audiences to hold steadfast in your ambitions and dreams. When the film was released in 1998, it stole the hearts of the audience, winning Oscars galore and, some say, stealing the limelight from other more worthy winners! Tom Stoppard was enlisted to add his touch of magic to the script and the interplay between life and art creates both comedic and touching moments. The subsequent stage script is a fast, farcical insight into the backstage world Shakespeare may have inhabited (throwing caution to historical accuracy!), alongside the trials and hardships presented by being part of the 'theatre

Drama



biz’ – especially resonant now to so many creatives. The qualities of resilience, self-belief and optimism are tested to the extreme and the light that shines through at the end is hope above all.

One of the most appealing aspects of this show was the opportunity to accommodate a large and diverse cast. This also brings quite the logistical challenge! The Middle School Production welcomes pupils across three year groups and, in addition, the necessity for female characters from *Transitus* meant we had four year groups represented on stage in our cast of 30. Throw in a dash of mock exams and a sprinkling of Covid for good measure – and you can imagine the challenges. Throughout all of these hurdles the cast stayed positive and truly embodied the school’s learning values of resilience, responsibility, resourcefulness and relationships. From the backstage crew tea-staining hundreds of sheets of paper to Zoomed rehearsals, the whole team played their part.

It has been a genuine pleasure and privilege to work with these young people. They will tell you that I once said “I’m not really a fan of Shakespeare”, and this has now taken on the mantle of a classic urban myth! What I meant was, as a student, Shakespeare

always felt out of reach for me – intangible, too high brow. It didn’t help that I saw some really, really dire performances! But as I got older, and went on to see some fabulous productions, the beauty of Shakespeare became apparent – how it transcends time, cultures and even language itself.

— Contributions by S. Alborn

They say there’s a fine line between comedy and tragedy, and it is probably fair to say that in the final week of the rehearsal process for *Shakespeare In Love*, the cast and crew didn’t know whether to laugh or cry! With hours to go until the opening night, our cast were struck down by Covid and we were unable to perform. After a quick rejig of dates, though, and a generous dollop of determination and dedication, the cast delivered three outstanding performances of this much-loved production to delighted audiences. Our thanks are extended to the UCS community and the parent body for their agility and understanding, and for embracing this production a week later than planned. We really didn’t want to put it on without the students who had worked so hard on it for so long, and we’re glad we didn’t have to.

— Contributions by C. Bhantoa

Drama



Life Of Pi

On 9th March, A Level Drama students went to see Life of Pi at Wyndham's Theatre in Leicester Square. The storyline centres on the protagonist, Piscine (Pi), with his family's move from India to Canada and the sea voyage they must undertake to get there. Their ship, however, encounters a strong storm and sinks. Pi makes it to a lifeboat and the story is told of how he lived on this boat for 227 days.

Because Life of Pi uses an end-on stage, it was easy to show setting, as well as change setting through the use of hydraulics; what's more, stage crew were able to move set pieces on and off stage, or even move items such as gates from one area of the stage to the other – which really emphasised to audience members that we were now somewhere else. The production was brilliant. Its use of hydraulics to reveal location, as well as for quick and easy transitions, was effortless and effective. For example, the hydraulics lifted the lifeboat up and down the stage – and when it rose, there was a clear and evident lifeboat, half a metre high, while it could also sink fast into the floor like it had never been there.

Furthermore, the revolving stage made the presence of the boat even more fascinating, allowing it to change direction mid-scene, giving the audience better angles for certain moments within scenes. Projections and lighting were deployed to stunning effect, producing waves from the ocean, while placards were projected onto the boat, the back wall or other on-stage items to tell the audience specific things for the storyline, such as how long Pi had been on the boat.

The puppetry was also incredible. How the actors were able to embody the shape of the animals they were puppeteering, never mind the noises they were making to express emotions, was brilliant. For example, the actors controlling the tiger who was with Pi on the lifeboat for the majority of the play, generated its breathing and mannerisms to such great effect that certain roars were starkly different to others.

— Contributions by G. Leviton

Music



Smorgasbord of Lunchtime Concerts Hits the Spot

The Spring Term saw the Lunchtime Concert series in the Giles Slaughter Lecture Theatre continue to thrive, with a number of concerts spread out across the weeks and months. January witnessed impressive contributions from an exceptionally talented cohort of Shell Musicians, with standout performances from Oliver Cheng (violin) in William Ten Have's *Allegro Brillante* and Joseph Sainsbury (piano) in JS Bach's *Fantasia in C Minor*. Entry pupils followed in February with an equally fine concert; Max Chen (violin) brought fire and sophistication to Vittorio Monti's 'Czardas' while Jonty Dryer delivered a mature and poised performance of the second movement of Haydn's *Trumpet Concerto*.

The Senior Jazz Band dazzled too in February, led by Head of Jazz, Mr Da Silva, and played a range of songs from across the jazz genre. Highlights included 'Moanin' by Bobby Timmons and 'Some Skunk Funk' by Randy Brecker. The group

were expertly conducted by Mr Da Silva, and particularly notable performances came from Leo Sassoon and Liam Lichy-Lightman on trumpets and Seb Zamet on guitar. This year's Sixth have made such a brilliant contribution to the jazz scene at UCS!

In March, an impressive concert was arranged by members of the Sixth Form to commemorate International Women's Day. The programme featured songs from a range of inspirational female artists like Amy Winehouse, Norah Jones and Ella Eyre. With Xavi Mesquita, Adam Kassam and Charlie Tyler each on the piano throughout the concert, drums by Charlie Cash and vocals by Sofia Rehman, Oliver Sykes, Sophie Andrae and Ananya Radhakrishnan, the audience were treated to some outstanding talent.

Two more Lunchtime Concerts rounded off the term's series in March. First, the Upper Remove and Transitus Rock Bands took to the stage in the Great Hall and played songs from greats like Jimi Hendrix, The Beatles and Radiohead. The Great

Music



Hall really does make for a formidable and exciting backdrop to a rock concert and the acoustics aren't bad either!

Our UCS Singers starred in the final Lunchtime Concert of the term with performances by pupils across the age range of the school, including Jack Howell who made everyone smile with his rendition of 'Rainbow Connection' from *The Muppet Movie* and Tanya Kendix's stunning rendition of 'If I Loved You' from *Carousel*.

UCS Hosts South East Schools Music Competition

After a gap of three years due to Covid, the South East Schools Chamber Music Competition made a welcome return to the UCS Music calendar. This is one of the most prestigious music competitions in the UK, involving some of the top schools in the south of England.

On Wednesday 2nd March, UCS played host to groups from South Hampstead High School and Queenswood School as part of the first round of the competition. They were joined by four ensembles from UCS, all of whom performed in front of Head Adjudicator Michael Dussek, renowned pianist and Head of Accompaniment at the Royal Academy of Music. All of the groups also received insightful and invaluable coaching from Mr Dussek on their pieces.

Subsequently, we were delighted to hear that two of the UCS groups had been chosen to go through to the Finals' Concert at St George's Hanover Square. This represents a very significant achievement for the Shell String Quartet (Haruya Maruyama, Oliver Cheng, Matthew Likhosherstov, Sammy Assael-Francis) and Senior String Quartet (Finn Kjaergaard, Issy Lesser, Jaren Ziegler, Ananya Radhakrishnan) as only 14 groups were selected out of the 70-plus that had originally entered.

— Contributions by C. Dawe

Music



UCS Senior Jazz Dazzle at LAE

In the penultimate week of this term, the day before the Spring Concert no less, UCS's Senior Jazz Band travelled to one of our partner schools to provide an afternoon of jazz and music for the pupils and staff there.

The sun was shining in Stratford as UCS's jazz musicians arrived at the London Academy of Excellence and set up to perform to UCS House there. Our Head of Jazz, Mr Da Silva, expertly punctuated each song in the set with some history of the genre of jazz and contextualised the ways in which the songs had developed and were different to one another.

UCS musicians worked their way through a number of jazz classics including Jive at Five by Count Basie and Boplicity by Miles Davis. Standout performances are hard to pick given the outstanding quality of the whole band but Tom Wykes' stamina on the baritone saxophone can't

be forgotten and neither can the cool synergy of Jonathan Shaw and David Verran on the clarinet.

The performance certainly left an impression on the students and staff of LAE and it was impossible not to notice the infectious involuntary foot-tapping that spread throughout the room. We look forward to continuing working with LAE and our other partner schools to develop music partnerships.

"What a bunch of talented musicians and Simon's lecture through the years was fantastic. It is the talk of the town among students since they got in this morning with many left jealous they didn't get a chance to come along. The musicians certainly left their mark on our students which is fantastic."

— F. Bedding (Co-Curricular Manager at LAE)

— Contributions by S. Bennett and C. Abbott

Opportunity Knocks at Women In Sport Week



At UCS we are keen to increase female participation in sports. Data shows that girls are far more likely to stop playing sport in their early teenage years than boys.

We wanted to encourage girls in all these categories by serving up a return to sport for girls who self-avowedly ‘used to be sporty’; more sporting opportunities for girls who are ‘sporty’; and a range of activities to stimulate interest in a variety not just of competitive sports but also exercise and all-round activity.

The week began with synchronised swimming, led by UK under-19 gold medallist and UCS Classics teacher Miss Desmond, who had a group of teachers and pupils performing a neat little routine in ten minutes, generating both synchronicity and laughter. This was followed by some wildly competitive water polo; for me, this was a real highlight of the week. Three staff had played water polo at university, and the girls were good swimmers with excellent ball skills; they quickly picked up the basics, with notable skills from Lily Dafter and Issy Spooner. The game was so

successful that we will be launching a UCS Water Polo Club in the Summer Term.

The competitive vibe continued into the Staff v Students netball match. Despite a superb return to netball from Mrs Foster debuting as GS, and Miss Kumarasinghe spearheading the attack, backed up by Mrs Tidey in defence, the pupils wiped the floor with us; the standard of UCS netballers is now so high that even our club-level staff players decreed some of them “un-markable”. Well done, girls, and thank you to Talia Dicks, Sara Zamet, Skyla Madhvani and Cara Willmott for your excellent and well-judged umpiring, whereby you allowed certain staff veterans some flexibility with the rules!

Lunchtime sessions included Dodgeball, which elicited hitherto hidden pace and tactics from Olaide Oduntan, Jess Ezechukwu and Bea Harker, and Acro Yoga, where Ms Tyson led an extraordinary session requiring strength, balance, teamwork and communication; again, we had so much fun, and left planning to revisit this incredible activity.

Opportunity Knocks at Women In Sport Week



Lily Dafter again demonstrated her multi-sport skills, quickly picking up bowling in a cricket session with Miss Cannell, which bodes well for our Summer Term sports offering. Two final activities were led by our own pupils: Anna Meade's table tennis session provided the opportunity for girls to try something new, as she had done when she couldn't play tennis in lockdown; and 'Dance with Sofia' saw our very own Dance expert Sofia Jimenez Berruecos choreograph and teach a routine to fellow pupils. Sofia took the lead with much of the planning for Women In Sport Week; her positivity, athleticism and the joy she took in all the activities were hugely inspiring. I am so grateful to her.

We finished with another competitive event, a swimming gala, where Lola Barnard stunned us with her individual medley and freestyle exploits, narrowly beating former national swimmer Ms Harris in an incredibly fast race.

On the final day our footballers and netballers watched UCS interview France women's football head coach Corinne Diacre. Our A Level French pupils had translated the entire interview, and in a very short time frame produced a fantastically fluid and accurate interpretation of Corinne's very powerful words. In the ensuing discussion, the girls reflected on the many varied barriers there are to female success in sport, and on how good it is to observe progress in the portrayal of female sports and female athletes. During the week we also put up UCS Women In Sport slides around school, and it was wonderful to see the general response to some of the awesome talents which had remained hidden until now.

Women In Sport Week 2022 was another engaging and important vignette of school life, and I really hope that next year more girls will take part so we can move even closer to our objective of getting more women in sport.

— Contributions by C. Hawes

Football



1st XI Celebrate Victory in Middlesex Tye Cup

As the 2022 football term comes to a close, we can reflect on some excellent football played and a cup triumph that will undoubtedly live long in the memories of our players. The First XI won the Middlesex SFA Tye Cup after what I am convinced was one of the most extraordinary cup runs UCS has ever produced. A total of 22 players contributed and all should be proud of the commitment and grit they showed to help win those games.

The first two rounds featured impressive wins over Fortismere (5-0) and Alexandra Park (10-1). The boys played with flair and cohesion in dominant displays which gave us confidence and momentum for the tests to come. Our pre-season evening training sessions were paying off as we felt we had the organisational advantage during these matches and were able to play our own game which we'd worked on: playing the ball on the ground and maintaining possession in the opposition half. The team had very high morale and confidence after these matches. In

hindsight this belief and conviction was exactly what we required to get through the quarter and semi-finals – both games really tested the boys' mental strength.

For the quarter-final we were up against St Ignatius College. A big physical team, accompanied by a bobbly and boggy pitch (we were away), meant the players had to adapt their game and match the hosts' aggression. It was a battle that really stretched the boys physically and mentally. We were 2-1 down with five minutes to go but would this cohort give up and drop their heads? Absolutely not. We had not travelled all the way to Enfield to come home without a victory. Right at the death, Chase Calvert popped up to score his second of the day; this game was going to penalties. All eyes were on Louis Laniado, our goalkeeper, who stepped up to the plate when most needed. He's had a phenomenal season and didn't fail to deliver here. The young man saved three penalties, one after the other, and with all our penalty takers managing to slot home, UCS were through to the semis. The players were on top of the world as they

Football



trudged back to the coach with cuts and bruises. Probably our most physically demanding game of the campaign and the boys' attitude was immense throughout.

The semi-final, versus Barnet and Southgate College, was a remarkable one. The team were really up for it. The football was fluent and we felt very much in control. Leonard Knight and Joe Kanerick were dominating the midfield but the boys failed to convert our chances. Despite going 1-0 up from a John Terry-esque header by Toby Crawcour, we found ourselves 2-1 down with five minutes left once again after the opposition grabbed a late goal. The boys had been in this position before, though. They had the belief and were not ready to give up until the final whistle. The last play saw Ollie Shah drive forward and he was brought down in the box. Penalty to UCS and Joe Abrahams made it 2-2. Full time and once more the drama of penalties. We had earned another chance and knew we couldn't blow it. Although nervous, the boys stayed composed. The opposition went first; all of the first five penalties

each were scored and sudden death ensued. Pressure built, but the boys refused to let this game slip away. When the opposition scored, we scored. When the opposition missed, we missed. This led to 32 penalties being taken before the match was decided. Yes, you read that correctly: 32 penalties. Even the goalkeepers converted theirs nicely. It fell to Sam Harding to score the concluding, winning penalty. As he stepped up to take it, the boys were praying that he'd score so that we could all get inside before it turned dark. Wearing the No9 shirt and the captain's armband, he placed the ball into the top-left corner with great composure and UCS had won it. What an extraordinary sequence of events. The boys could not believe it. We were through to the final and now there was just one game that stood in the way of glory.

The players were heading to Rectory Park to play against the London Oratory School. Our meeting with Mr Sousa the day before was extremely helpful. He taught us how to approach the final tactically and psychologically. We also had the privilege of hearing Toby Crawcour's 'This Team' motivational speech

Football



which got us in the mindset. The game started with both sides understandably playing a bit nervously. As cup finals sometimes go, neither team really produced their best but the defensive discipline and contributions were highly commendable. The contest stayed at 0-0 for the majority. With ten minutes to go, however, UCS got their chance and it came in the form of a free-kick given 20 yards away from the centre line. Joe Abrahams took it and the rest of the team lined up to receive what they expected would be a cross into the box. However, Joe let fly a superb strike that arrowed into the top-right corner. A moment of brilliance had made it 1-0 to UCS. The boys were ecstatic at this slightly freak goal and perhaps wondered whether Joe had meant to shoot. There were ten long minutes left though and we had to stay focused and see the game out. Hearing the whistle finally blow was music to our ears. The Tye Cup was coming home and the boys couldn't have been happier in their celebrations.

It has been a pleasure to play this season with this group, and the players cannot thank Mr Sousa

enough for his efforts in managing the team. There have been highs and lows throughout, but this cup victory is a tribute to all the commitment and enjoyment experienced by all 22 players this term. It has especially been an honour to play alongside those in Year 12. The depth and quality in the years below sets them up nicely for what will be a really promising season next year.

— Contributions by S. Abrahams

Under-14As

The Under-14 A team's season began against an older St Paul's team – a promising start, albeit a losing one. We moved on to Fortismere, who had beaten us 5-3 in the cup earlier in the year; however, the sequel was much closer as we took an early lead. It finished 1-1, with late chances missed. Then we turned our attentions to Mill Hill where another decent display against a very strong side earned only a 2-0 loss. The next week, away to Latymer School on a rough, muddy pitch, we secured a big early advantage with goals from Louis Woolf McColl, Oli Benjamin and

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Anton Diamond; however, due to certain penalty decisions, they brought it back to 3-3 – and we had a goal chalked off!

Even so, we were playing better and had found some rhythm in our play. We comfortably beat Colfe’s School, helped by a fantastic strike by Gully Lewis, another Oli Benjamin goal and Hugo Gale Carravilla’s effort. After a few postponements, we faced Forest School: they scored early and we couldn’t find a way through their defence, despite late opportunities. It was a disappointing result from a winnable game against a formidable footballing school.

Next came an early kick-off against Highgate, who looked well-organised and well- drilled. A long-range stunner by Oli Benjamin handed us the initiative, but poor communication at the back led to an equaliser. Again, we didn’t take our chances and eventually it ended 3-1 to Highgate. The MVP plaudits went to Will Gordon. The following Thursday, we again struck first, this time versus

Wetherby, with that man Oli Benjamin’s free-kick. A great goal from Noam Rechtman gave us some comfort, which was consolidated by the excellence of Ben Berman and Anton Diamond’s second-half clincher.

Some results didn’t go our way but, taking the long view, we finished up playing some very decent passing football and can be satisfied with a season of gradual improvement.

— Contributions by O. Kramer

Shell starlet Harry Roberts Wins Master-at-Arms at Public Schools Fencing for UCS



The Public Schools Fencing Championships are the longest-running fencing tournament in the world, originally held in March 1890. They are also the largest multi-weapon combat event staged in the UK, and for 2022's edition there were 1,250 entries from 90 schools across the country. This year's marathon three-day event was hosted by Lee Valley Athletics Centre in London.

Shell pupil Harry Roberts represented UCS in all three weapon categories – epee, foil and sabre – in the Mount-Hayes event which is for boys in Years 8 and 9.

Harry won all but four of his 32 fights over the three days covering all three weapon categories, which is an incredible achievement. In addition to a

bronze medal in foil, this outstanding performance across the duration of the event meant that he was successful in winning the highly coveted Master-at-Arms trophy for the best overall swordsman of the competition.

— Contributions by S. Bennett

Netball Finishes on a High Against Highgate



Although lockdown restrictions have not been imposed this term, we have not yet managed to escape the pandemic fully, with a number of Covid absences preventing us from playing a consistent team throughout. However, despite any logistical difficulties, there have always been seven of us ready to play and fight for a UCS win. Training has included a mix of match play and strength-and-conditioning sessions focusing on improving speed and agility as well as skill. This term we have played matches against Mill Hill, Highgate and our UCS teachers. Indeed, the Staff v Students match was one of my highlights of the year!

The Spring Term, however, has come to a close, bringing with it an end to the 2021–22 netball season, albeit not without one final fixture against Highgate. We produced some amazing play all around. Carys Nicholas and Phoebe Walkington

formed a great defensive partnership, with some similarly impressive intercepts allowing the team to bring the ball back down the court to our Sixth shooters Ella Scheinmann and Molly Drown, who proceeded to score a number of stellar goals. Unfortunately, while our Transitus players can look forward to another year of netball at UCS, it is goodbye from the Sixth formers whom we wish the very best of luck to. We hope to find equal and promising replacements from next year's influx of Transitus girls. Finally, a massive thank you to Mrs Hawes who continues to dedicate her time to cultivating and promoting girls sport at UCS, whether that be in the form of organising and running netball training and matches or supporting our endeavours to start up new sports such as water polo.

— Contributions by L. Dafter

Forward Momentum Continues for UCS's Velodrome Cyclists



It has been a busy term at the Velodrome in Herne Hill – most recently lashed by the tail end of winter weather, which saw the crew of 11 UCS track racers heads down into the wind and slinging rain, driving hard into the turns as ever. UCS sit well in the peloton, pushing the fixie bikes through their paces, setting seat height for aggressive attack, and sitting low in the drops: the Frogna! Flyers have been more than a match, in this first year of the sport, for girls and boys racing long-term for Alleyn's School and Dulwich College. Competition has been all about encouragement of peers, about pushing for the line, and is always high-spirited.

Our sessions have focused on the inter-school competition taking place this summer: UCS hope to send what Mr Sawtell suspects might be Frogna!'s first-ever cycling team (can anyone correct or confirm this?) to compete at the epic and historic Herne Hill venue.

Strong PBs have been posted this term by Oli, Seth – who drives against his Dulwich nemesis each

week, and has me surreptitiously counting the teeth on his rear cog to check for mechanical advantage – and Cameron, as well as Jackson, who makes a strong contribution on both the berms and the straights. Kristian, I suspect, makes the Velodrome into a philosophical metaphor for life, and gives his all every week, registering increasingly strong times against Tony's whistle. Xavier and Ben have very much taken the season at their own pace, but in fairness bounced back in good humour when defeated on the track by a legend of HHV, albeit one 30 years their senior. Unlucky, boys...

Summer beckons and I, for one, cannot wait.

Interested in joining the Velodrome dream on Wednesday afternoons? Speak to Mr Mee in the first instance.

— Contributions by A. Mee

Eye-catching Cross Country Results Put Seal on Ross' Farewell Season



Every Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday morning, between 7.30 and 8.15, you can find some of the finest students and staff of UCS making their way gamely to Parliament Hill, enjoying the company of 20 other like-minded individuals along with the glory of a Hampstead Heath sunrise! It has continued to be a pleasure to share this routine with pupils and teachers throughout this term and is a highlight of each week.

The club has competed in several races this term, producing some of the best performances in recent memory. Thomas Chadwick, Joseph Hayes, Alex Evers and Ross Doran all qualified to represent London in the English Schools' Cross Country Championship – a record UCS representation at this event – and they continue to perform at the very peak of London running. Further to this, students from across the year groups spent a most enjoyable afternoon running around Harrow, with

Paul Opie finishing 8th after almost a three-year competitive hiatus. It has been good to see many Entry runners competing in races, too, and I hope this experience will continue to inspire them as they make their way up through the school.

A special mention needs to be paid to our soon-to-depart captain Ross Doran. Ross has epitomised all that is good about the club, chatting away with students of all ages and encouraging everyone to get out and run with weekly training schedules. It goes without saying that he will be missed greatly when he leaves at the end of the Summer Term. The club is very grateful for all that he has done in creating such a vibrant community.

— Contributions by J. Firth

Eye-catching Cross Country Results Put Seal on Ross' Farewell Season



The last year of cross country has been very successful by increasing our competitiveness in cross country races with our team growing significantly. We have very strong upcoming runners who will hopefully make for a very strong running future for UCS and, in every cross country event, have done incredibly well in all its fixtures with particularly notable performances including the LSAA XC Championships, Harrow and the ESAA. The intermediate and senior teams all won their races for the ESAA and qualified for the second round in St Albans, a challenging race against many other successful cross country teams. Other notable successes during this season include the 3 runners who went to represent the London team at Kent in the English Schools Cross Country Championship. A special congratulations must be extended to Joseph Hayes and Thomas Chadwick for their dedication to training which has led to a fantastic cross country season for them both. Paul Opie also deserves special mention for coming back from serious injury to take 9th in the Harrow race.

Outside the cross country races, runners have continued to work hard on Friday morning running club with consistently high attendance from across the middle and lower school. Evan Verpoest has almost never missed a Friday running club morning. We have also experimented with new training options outside Friday morning running with new training plans being introduced for various different levels of experience and running ability which have led to better performances on the cross country course.

It has been an honour to be the Captain of the Running Team for the past couple of years and to run alongside other athletes who are also dedicated to running. Thank you all so much and good luck for the future!

— Contributions by R. Doran

News



In the autumn the Old Gowers Club were hopeful about the prospect of a return to in-person gatherings. Two successful gatherings, the Class of 2020 Graduation Party and the Act of Remembrance, were held and a number of events were lined up for the start of 2022. Unfortunately, once again, Covid developments meant that some activities, including the Old Gowers' Annual Dinner, had to be postponed. The Old Gowers' AGM in February was virtual – hopefully for the last time – but nevertheless well attended. In February, the Old Gower Community received their copies of the latest, 2021 edition of *The Gower* magazine which included various updates, stories and insights into the lives of Old Gowers across the world. *The Gower* can be found on the UCS website.

We are now looking forward to a spring filled with exciting events – the Class of 2012's 10-year reunion, the Class of 1997's 25-year reunion, the Class of 1972's 50-year reunion and the Old Gowers' Summer Drinks.

We hope that you can enjoy the longer and brighter days of spring and we look forward to seeing many Old Gowers at the coming get-togethers.

— Contributions by E. Malmvarn

