

THE FROGNAL

UCS NEWSLETTER — ISSUE JUNE 2020

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



Huge food and PPE donation from UCS community

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UCS in and out of lockdown

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Welcome To The Summer Edition Of The Frognal



This has been a term like no other. During the Blitz, UCS carried on regardless, not letting a few stray bombs detract from the importance of school life. Indeed, *The Gower* magazine from that year made far more mention of the down-to-the-wire (111 plays 44) cricket match against Bancroft's than it did the War. And, when the school burned down in April 1978, lessons carried on in portacabins on the tennis courts. No doubt the disappointed Middle School boys of the day invoked their T. S. Eliot, that "April is the cruellest month".

It probably was this year. By the time Summer Term commenced on 16 April, the country was nearly a month into lockdown and had just suffered what still remains the highest daily death toll due to Covid-19: of nearly 1,000 souls. All too many of those poor folk will not have had loved ones beside them at the end, nor have received the usual funeral rites surrounded by friends and family. "I will show you fear in a handful of dust," Eliot pens in his first section of *The Waste Land*.

Yet, despite the horrors, spring sprung. The new planting along the front of the school sprouted plenty of new greenery and the established gardens started to bloom. Very few were able to witness it at Frognal – but life wanted to carry on regardless.

And here is the uplifting part. With thanks and awe in equal measure, the UCS community responded so very strongly to the new conditions we found ourselves in. Life did persist. Doubtless responding to JFK's observation that the Chinese word for 'crisis' is composed of two characters representing 'danger' and 'opportunity', UCS staff upskilled during the spring break and launched a truly impressive online learning experience for their pupils. In an almost certainly rare feat of keeping the regular timetable running while also putting on Enrichment programmes for two year groups who would normally have been on exam leave, Virtual UCS has worked really well indeed. It could only do so with the buy-in from the

Welcome To The Summer Edition Of The Frognal



pupils and the support of their parents; and so it really has been a team effort to make it work. As the Head of Middle School reflects in *his* letter to parents, the pupils really have lived up to the four Learning Values this term. It is said you can measure the quality of a community by how it responds in times of duress and I can only observe what a strong community the UCS one is.

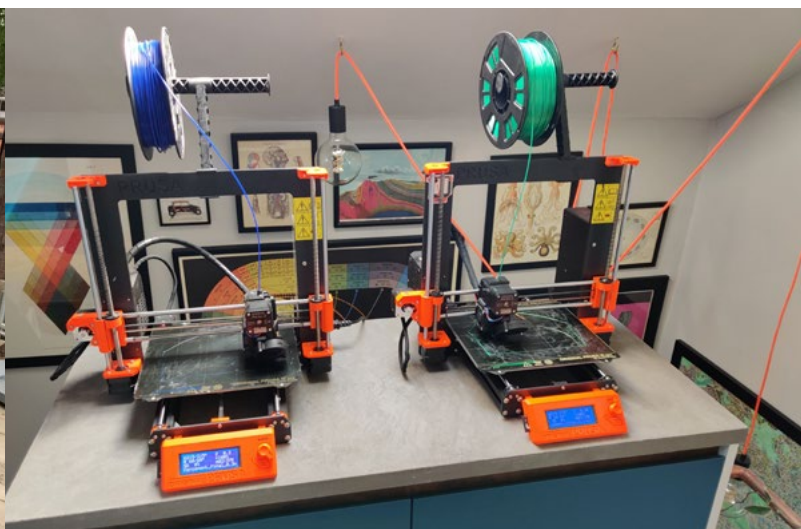
Such strength and positivity have been very much to the fore while the Black Lives Matter campaign gathered traction. There is no place in a civilised community for prejudice or inequality of any kind, and I am most grateful to the very many members of the UCS community who have offered to help ensure this is something that can be eradicated. As per recent communications, we have established a Steering Group and look forward to receiving recommendations by the end of this calendar year.

I started this message by reflecting how this term was one like no other. But, in fact, just look at what has been achieved alongside the ongoing formal academic education of 900 young people. Not just Academic Enrichment, symposia and tutorials but a remarkable outpouring of creative arts unlocked even during this very lockdown. If you have not browsed the material then you must. [Click here.](#)

And then, once you have read this Frognal newsletter as well – including important and varied examples of excellent community spirit – I hope you will feel that, in a good many ways, life at UCS has continued in a meaningful and positive way.

— Mark J. Beard, Headmaster

UCS Community In Action



As UCS and the UK went into lockdown in mid-March, it was inspiring to see the UCS community pull together on a range of initiatives designed to help those who needed it most across the capital.

With the school closed and with the country's healthcare professionals seemingly short of protective equipment, Mr Vliegen used the 3D printers in the DT department to produce a stack of protective visors which were swiftly donated to the Whittington Hospital. Mr Vliegen also collected every single piece of PPE from his department and delivered those to the Whittington. A second donation of safety glasses, visors, gloves and goggles was taken from the UCS Science departments by Mrs Bull and Mr Roberts to the Royal Free Hospital, Spring Grove and Magnolia Court care homes, and the Henderson Court Health & Positive Living Hub. Fifty litres of alcohol hand gel were also delivered by Ms Newman to the Royal Free Hospital. Dr Choi, one of the recipients of the PPE donation, said: "Thank you so much for the safety glasses. My colleagues and I have used them a number of times already when visiting and caring for our patients."

After the Easter break, a weekly collection of food and other essential items was organised for North Paddington Food Bank. The response from parents, pupils and the local community was staggering and thanks to the tireless support of the maintenance team and colleagues from UCS Active, contactless donation points were set up at the Senior School and the Pre-Prep. James Quayle, manager of the North Paddington Food Bank, was delighted: "These donations from the UCS community have allowed us to fully stock a new distribution point which supports 600 families in NW1 and NW8 and gives them the access to the food they so badly need. The number of donations to our food bank has decreased in comparison to the rise in demand during lockdown and I would like to thank everyone who contributed to this collection. We value our link with UCS and we hugely appreciate the vital support which the school and its community regularly give us." Mr Beard added: "The food bank usually works with around 30 families so we were keen to try to help them cope in some way with the extra demand. We were pleased with the response from the UCS community and the residents of Hampstead. It was wonderful to see

UCS Community In Action



our neighbours delivering groceries to the drop-off points and we estimate that at least three thousand meals were inside these boxes.” During lockdown, over 300 boxes of food were delivered to the food bank which we estimated would mean more than 3,000 meals.

Pupils were keen to help deliver the food donations but social distancing regulations prevented them assisting. A number of pupils found ways to support the NHS and other charities during this period. Raphael Milne and his father decided to raise money for the St John Ambulance service by performing a series of online concerts. Over £1,200 was eventually raised. Georgia Krok and her friends produced an online cook book called ‘Cook With Love In Quarantine’. The book contains more than 100 recipes including Georgia’s favourite chocolate chip cookie recipe! All proceeds are donated to Corona Care Challenge and if you would like to buy the book, [click here](#). Raquel Menasche organised a fantastic scheme through Cards of Care and, as

the football season restarted in June, James Nolan devised a fundraising project which was linked to the success or otherwise of various football teams. Staff and pupils joined in enthusiastically! Jack Tafler and Harrison Riche joined forces on the penultimate weekend of term to play what was their longest ever round of golf. They played over 100 holes during an epic 18 hour day and raised almost £6,000 for four charities through this effort. Also during June, Alex Radhakishun completed a sponsored run which raised over £2,700.

These are just a sample of some of the work carried out by members of the UCS community. So much more has been going on and hearing about it from pupils, colleagues and parents has been truly uplifting.

— Contributions by E. Roberts

Lower School In Lockdown



“Boys found the Zoom lessons helped to keep motivation high and competitions involving Science experiments and Maths kept everyone on their toes.”

After Easter, Zoom lessons, form periods and a slight restructuring of the timetable enabled the smooth take-off of remote learning in the Lower School. Using Zoom, teachers could explain things to their pupils as they would in a normal lesson and they could easily spot when a pupil was finding things difficult. Boys found the Zoom lessons helped to keep motivation high and competitions involving Science experiments and Maths kept everyone on their toes.

Pupils became adept at using emails to communicate with their teachers and in form period teachers were able to check on the well-being of their charges. These daily sessions allowed boys to interact with each other and their Form Tutors who introduced quizzes, riddles and games to the sessions. There was even a Bring Your Pet form period which certainly would not have been possible during normal school! Gleb Chalov, in SSMH, took a form period himself by doing a presentation on his design – a reusable butane candle lighter – that earned him a place in the final of an international competition organised by the Rijksmuseum in the Netherlands.

The Shell year group took end-of-year exams remotely but there were plenty of activities going on outside lessons to keep spirits up. The Lower School play continued by becoming an audio play; and House competitions in football (keepy-uppies), Art, public speaking, Music and photography were launched. There were also magic trick and chess competitions, as well as a contest to recreate iconic sporting moments. The Entry had a knockout Step Cup and boys from both year groups took part in the remote running fixture.

Lockdown has certainly brought out the very best in our pupils but we can't wait to get back to school in September!

— Contributions by A. Barnish

Lower School In Lockdown



Pupil view:

Going into lockdown, I was very nervous. I thought school would be boring and confusing. I was wrong. As soon as we started, it was clear that every lesson used the resources available to its very best, whether it was videos, quizzes, PowerPoints, or virtual whiteboards. Music was especially interesting, using a website so we could compose our own tunes. Even the practical subjects were made interesting by the fun, interactive projects we were tasked with. But it got even better.

By the second half of term, almost every lesson had a video meeting, which I think has put the UCS remote learning well above any other school's. The meetings truly created the special, iconic UCS spirit. Furthermore, the effort which had clearly been put into our remote learning was utterly astounding. Morning registration allowed us a chance to connect with our friends and Form Teachers, and we did

debates and quizzes just like at school. The school timetable gave us a structure to our days which I think has made lockdown easy! A scheme to award Paulatim points was created, not to mention the inspiring messages from our Headmaster.

With everything that's happened, it really has made this lockdown pass by in a flash and has made me and my friends as interested and excited by school as we always have been.

— Contributions by Jake Park Lovering (Shell)

Middle School In Lockdown



“The PE department encouraged all to stay in good shape with lessons to keep everyone moving whatever space was available.”

Middle School during lockdown has been a fascinating place and testament to the flexibility and resilience of the boys and staff alike. Live lessons were the norm and the way in which boys adapted and threw themselves into these was really impressive. Upper Remove had the challenge of online assessments following the disappointment of not being able to prove themselves in front of the examiner in the fashion they wanted and deserved. Stoic and mature, they moved from these to engage in the Gower Projects: two sessions of tutorials per week with research and reading leading to presentations that allowed them to start working like Sixth Formers and seeing what an EPQ course might look like. Such diverse fare as ‘Five questions that (should) keep chemists awake at night’ to code-breaking analysis, language and translation saw many stretched and enthused.

Alongside these compulsory courses boys taught themselves to draw, they took part in cookery lessons and were invited to enrol on a plethora of MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses). Fiction Writing at the OU, How to Write Your First Song at Sheffield University, and Football: More than

a Game at Edinburgh sat alongside the more traditional such AI with IBM, Japanese (Waseda) and Stargazing (Oxford). After half-term Upper Remove engaged in work associated with potential Sixth Form subjects they will start to study from September. The enthusiasm generated by these taster courses bodes well for the future.

The Lower Remove and Remove kick-started their term with normal timetabled lessons. Technical hiccups and the occasional Wi-Fi outage aside, boys engaged effectively with their peers and teachers alike. They sat remote internal assessments either side of half-term. The number of commendations awarded for academic achievement only goes some way towards indicating how well they adapted to Zoom and Google Classroom within their full programme of Guided Remote Learning.

The PE department encouraged all to stay in good shape with lessons to keep everyone moving whatever space was available. Clear to everyone was how challenging it is to be sitting in front of a computer: the timetable was adjusted with longer change-over times and homework was relaxed to

Middle School In Lockdown



“Many of us initially felt afraid of the new landscape of remote learning along with a fear of potential loneliness due to school being closed. Those fears were unfounded and the UCS community pulled through together, ensuring nobody was left behind.”

Kristian Partridge (Lower Remove)

allow boys quality family time after a long school day. It was possible towards the end of term to welcome Remove boys back into school by Deme in order to review their academic progress. They also had Games sessions at Farm Avenue. Meeting face to face and hearing the noise and fun generated by these events reminded us all what we have been missing for so long and why we are so keen to return to school proper as soon as we can safely do so.

Forms in all three year groups often through their Deme Wardens and Form Tutors met for a wide range of virtual activities from quizzes and book appreciation to pupil-led Desert Island Discs, Debating Club and Deme sports challenges. Along with lunchtime and after-school societies/clubs/seminars, and activities such as Careers Talks

and Joint Lecture Series with other schools, not to mention the vibrant and exciting Drama, Dance and Music UCS Unlocked programme, there was a lot on offer.

The goodwill and support of parents and boys alike made this work well. No one pretended that it was easy or, indeed, perfect. A steep learning curve across all schools led to varied responses but most would say that the experience was enhanced by the adaptability and good sense of our young people.

— Contributions by S FitzGerald

Sixth Form In Lockdown



“It has been ‘the best of times’ and ‘the worst of times’; both interesting and challenging, in a multitude of ways.”

When I first thought about the fact we were going into lockdown my immediate response was panic. I had no idea how or when we would adjust back into normal life. As the lockdown eases, so too has my anxiety. We as humans, and as a school community, adapted. Lockdown has taught me many things: that you are never truly alone even if you are physically; to not put so much pressure on yourself; that the abnormality of life may start to feel like the new normal and, like all things in life, this too shall pass.

The UCS community has been incredible during this challenging moment. Form times have been a respite from the monotony of working from home, especially when everyone has their cameras on! I have met many of my teachers’ pets and children and had a glimpse into the personal lives and bedrooms of my peers, that I am sure I would never have had the opportunity to see beforehand.

It has been ‘the best of times’ and ‘the worst of times’; both interesting and challenging, in a multitude of ways. Many rites of passage, things taken for granted and the mundane normality of school and structure have become something that most, if not all, students miss. It was easy to feel cheated in the beginning and to still feel cheated now, but I have learnt you can’t wallow in what could and should have been, but rather to focus on the positives: a stronger sense of community, family, a responsibility to give back and help and a greater appreciation for nature. I am sad that my first year at UCS was cut short, and that I will never experience a full Summer Term and year at school, but I am so proud to be a part of the UCS community.

— Contributions by Georgia Krok (*Transitus*)

Sixth Form In Lockdown



“Pupils have been working with charities to help the most vulnerable during Covid-19.”

The lockdown has been very surreal for everyone. The Sixth Form went from working and beginning to revise for our A-Levels to leaving school for the last time, all within the space of a few days. Rather than taking A-Levels and finishing our two-year subject courses, we had nine days of intense portfolio work for each of our subjects. For my subjects, I had to write essays on specific topics from the courses, do a presentation on an extended project and do some past paper questions. We are now eagerly awaiting our results in August!

The year group as a whole has remained in contact and has continued to lead both in the UCS community, and the wider Hampstead community. Pupils have been working with charities to help the most vulnerable during Covid-19 and have signed up to mentor Transitus-year students, both at UCS and our partner schools, through their upcoming UCAS applications. While we have finished ‘physical school’, we are all currently doing a virtual

pre-university tutorial programme once a week taught by UCS teachers until the end of the school year. This new initiative has been very welcome for our year group as it has given us an insight into what university work will look like. Discussing our work in small groups has enabled us to engage further in the subject which we will be taking at university and the feedback has been superb. While we are sad that our last few months at UCS finished so abruptly, it has been great that our Form Teachers have remained in touch with us.

We are all now really looking forward to our Leavers’ Party which Mr Beard has kindly invited us to at the earliest and safest time possible.

— Contributions by Asher Glynn (Sixth)

Equality And Diversity



“There is no place for discrimination or prejudice of any sort, on the basis of race, gender, religion, sexuality, or disability. At UCS, the process of reviewing and refreshing our strategic approach to diversity and equality has begun.”

On Tuesday 9 June, the funeral of George Floyd, whose tragic death in police custody has generated global condemnation, heard impassioned pleas for racial justice and equality. Speakers in the church lined up to remember a man whose “crime was that he was born black”. This, and other recent events across the world, have made me reflect on the importance of diversity and equality, neither of which should be taken for granted nor presumed to be established. There is no place for discrimination or prejudice of any sort, on the basis of race, gender, religion, sexuality, or disability. At UCS, the process of reviewing and refreshing our strategic approach to diversity and equality has begun. Tolerance and respect must be at the forefront of all aspects of our education. A time when every single pupil and member of staff can say truly that they have enjoyed and benefitted from our distinctive liberal ethos and the values that make the UCS community strong and inclusive.

We are currently in the process of establishing a steering group that will comprise current pupils and staff, and Old Gowers. This group is being led by Ms Baxter. Along with understanding better the pupil experience, the steering group will review our PSHE programme, our taught curriculum and the co-curricular and Enrichment programme. It will also consider our recruitment and equal opportunities policies. I expect the recommendations may include improvements to all of these areas, along with opportunities for staff and pupil training in, for example, diversity and unconscious bias. We promise to develop an open and transparent approach and to ensure that our culture will enable everyone to feel involved and valued. We are also interested to see how UCS can contribute to the debate on the nature and content of the nation’s school curriculum.

Equality And Diversity



“We need to keep listening and asking questions, and we want very much to involve the student body in shaping the strategy and ensuring effective implementation throughout our schools.”

I am very grateful to current and former pupils who have already come forward to tell us their views or relate their experiences and suggest ways of raising awareness and understanding. We need to keep listening and asking questions, and we want very much to involve the student body in shaping the strategy and ensuring effective implementation throughout our schools.

I hope laying out these plans is of reassurance to you that UCS remains committed to providing an environment in which every one of our pupils can be the best version of themselves, rooted in a community of individuals bound together by their common humanity. If you have ideas or experiences you would like to discuss, please do share them with any member of staff, and I thank you all in advance for your help in making UCS the best possible version of itself.

— Contributions by M. Beard

Work Begins On Building New Sixth Form Centre



On 11 May, the process of emptying the Sixth Form Centre of furniture, computers, books and equipment was finally completed and the area was handed over to a firm of contractors who have now commenced the long-awaited and highly anticipated building of the new Sixth Form Centre. The extension and renovation of the centre has been entirely funded by the AKO Foundation and staff and pupils are already eagerly awaiting the eventual opening of these new facilities. The building has been designed by Lewandowski Architects whose work on the recently opened AKO Centre, UCS's stunning library and creative learning centre, was so impressive. With that in mind, the sense of expectation is sky high!

The new Sixth Form Centre will be significantly larger than its predecessor. There will be extensive space for pupils to work, unwind and play. The café area will be bigger and pupils will find that the new space will have a more open-plan feel.

Throughout the Autumn Term, Sixth Formers will be able to use a temporary common room which will be built on one of the tennis courts to the rear of the Senior School site, and it is hoped that the new Sixth Form Centre will be ready for use at the start of the Spring Term in 2021. We all have our fingers crossed for this completion date as this new facility will certainly take the Sixth Form experience at UCS to another level.

— Contributions by E. Roberts

Academic Symposium



“Twelve LAE pupils joined UCS pupils from the Transitus, making this the biggest symposium yet.”

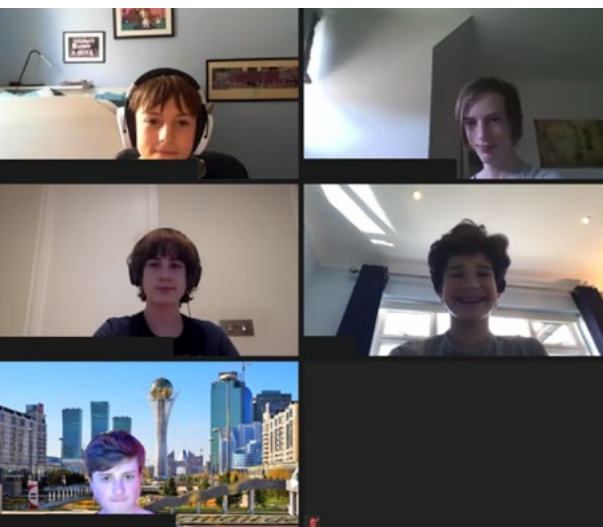
Despite the lockdown, the annual Academic Symposium ran without a hitch on the third Wednesday in June. Twelve LAE pupils joined UCS pupils from the Transitus, making this the biggest symposium yet. Pupils had been tasked over half-term with carrying out some detailed research into an area which related to their potential course of study at university. They used this research to deliver an eight minute presentation to a small group of their peers and teachers. Each presentation was followed by an eight-minute discussion around the topic of the presentation with the speaker answering questions from the floor. Pupils researched topics that were outside the A-Level/Pre-U specifications and the quality of the presentations was exceptional. The whole event was carried out using Zoom and I was particularly impressed by pupils’ technical skills in presenting remotely. They remained calm throughout despite the challenging nature of both the subject matter

and the questions they were asked! Topics this year spanned the cultural horizons: from ‘What is the most effective heat protection system in spacecraft?’ to ‘Do prisons do more psychological harm than good and what are the alternatives?’ via ‘Historically, how does a country’s political climate affect music?’.

The Symposium gives pupils a chance to practise discussing academic subject matter in advance of potential university interviews next year. Despite the virtual nature of the occasion, the commitment of all students was unquestionable and staff were impressed by the engaging presentations they delivered.

— Contributions by H. Franks

Maths Competitions



“This is the first year that UCS has taken part in the competition and we are very proud of the commitment and enthusiasm shown by all eight participants.”

Caribou Competition

The final two rounds of the six-round Caribou Contest took place in May and June. This is the first year that UCS has featured in the competition and we are very proud of the commitment and enthusiasm shown by all eight participants. In total, 18,024 students took part internationally and all eight UCS pupils were placed in the top third, making the average UCS score more than double that of the average competitor. A special mention goes to Asher Hill who came 432nd, Lucas Verpoest who finished 846th and Jack Leader who came 1,082nd.

UKMT Maths Challenges

UCS pupils continued to shine in the individual UKMT Maths Challenges this year, with a total of 137 medals being awarded in the Intermediate and Senior competitions, including 24 in the Senior challenge and 16 in the Intermediate challenge. We are delighted that in these competitions, 40 students qualified for the follow-on Kangaroo or Olympiad rounds. Well done too to the six pupils who gained merits in Round 1 of the British Mathematical Olympiad. Further congratulations go to Alex Burns, who not only received a distinction in this round, but also qualified for the second round of the BMO where he attained a merit. This is a truly remarkable achievement, especially considering that he was taking part as a Year 12 pupil and the competition is designed for Year 13s. Lower School pupils also made history, taking part in the first-ever online Junior Maths Challenge – well done to everyone who participated!

— Contributions by J. Verran

Young Enterprise



“UniforMe put together a fantastic company video presentation, outlining their business model and how they had developed as a team.”

Since being selected to take part in the competition, UCS's two Young Enterprise teams have been busy developing and running their companies. UniforMe established a platform for the sale of second-hand uniform and Balanced created a task management app.

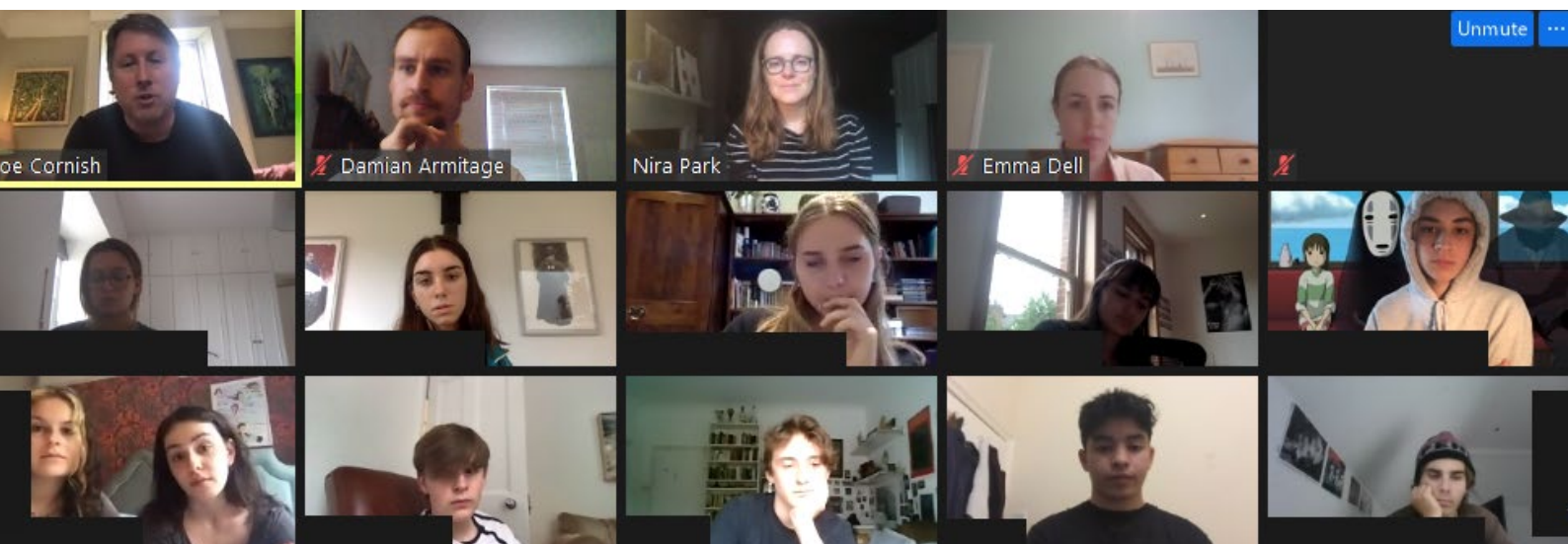
During the final months of Young Enterprise, teams are invited to participate in a competition which pits them against other schools for podium positions that recognise particular company achievements. Unfortunately, the start of the competition coincided with the UK going into lockdown and time constraints meant that Balanced had to concede. However, UniforMe put together a fantastic company video presentation, outlining their business model and how they had developed as a team. They also completed a vast report listing their management, marketing and financial details.

From more than 60 schools, almost 100 teams featured in the Young Enterprise competition across Central London. It was therefore, a huge achievement that UniforMe was awarded the trophy for Best Customer Service, commended for not only thinking about the customer but responding to feedback throughout the process to improve the viability of the product and continue to develop the service on an ongoing basis.

The Young Enterprise competition has now come to a close and both teams have officially shut down their companies. However, this is not necessarily the end. Teams have the option of reopening as a private company and profiting from all of their hard work. I am very much looking forward to seeing Balanced and UniforMe grow in the months and years to come and hope to one day see them on the FTSE 100.

— Contributions by D. Armitage

Careers



Careers education has continued in earnest throughout the lockdown period. The fortnightly Careers Lunches have become a regular addition to the UCS diary, and each event has welcomed different pupils who wanted to hear more about a wide range of careers. In the year-to-date, we have welcomed speakers from Science, Business and Real Estate to name just a few. The lockdown made it easier for speakers to join us as many professionals found themselves at home, with access to Zoom, and were happy to dedicate a lunchtime to talking about their jobs. As a result, UCS hosted eight online Careers Lunches, which included talks from Paul Goldstein, with a fascinating insight into working for Google, and from producer-and-director pair Nira Park and Joe Cornish who discussed working on their films, including *Attack the Block* and *Shaun of the Dead*.

A significant date in the Remove calendar is the annual Careers Afternoon which takes place each June. During the afternoon, pupils hear from a

carousel of speakers, from a variety of industries, who discuss their jobs and careers. Although this year's event could not be held in the classrooms at Frognal, pupils were able to take away just as much useful information from Zoom meetings with the volunteer speakers. This year's presenters came from backgrounds in Law, Finance, Technology, Medicine and Media and each meeting started with a presentation before questions from the floor. The afternoon was a great opportunity for the Remove to appreciate what all their hard work and training could be leading towards and they also heard how some professions have been affected by Covid-19.

I would like to thank all our guests who enabled the lunches and the Careers Afternoon to be so successful. Thank you.

— Contributions by D. Armitage

GreenImpact UCS



“It has been a privilege to see the enthusiasm and can-do attitude that the students have shown during these weekly meetings.”

A fresh focus on the environment is the driving force behind the creation of GreenImpact UCS, a new student-led society. Pupils from across the Senior School have been ‘meeting’ virtually throughout the Summer Term with the aim of promoting greater sustainability within the UCS community. It has been a privilege to see the enthusiasm and can-do attitude that the students have shown during these weekly meetings. The quality of ideas and tangible action that GreenImpact UCS have managed to achieve, without even physically meeting each other and in such a short space of time, has been extremely impressive and bodes well for the future of this young society.

The highlights of GreenImpact’s early endeavours this term include Charlie Benjamin setting up an excellent social media campaign platform called [greenimpact_ucs](#), which I very much encourage you to look at on Instagram. On the back of

this, Simon Abehsera-Cohen, along with other society members, launched several ‘Lockdown Eco Challenges’ such as going vegetarian for a week, with the goal of fostering greater awareness of the environment during this time of social distancing. It has been great to see the UCS community take up this challenge during lockdown!

Alongside the new society, students have also been collaborating this term with other schools throughout the London area. A new Eco-network was set up with ten other schools, with UCS’ Ava Dance and Eddie Fairhurst working alongside representatives from these schools via Zoom to develop a very strong partnership. The Eco-network has produced newsletters, letters to MPs and is currently in the process of putting together an extremely ambitious virtual Youth Climate Summit next term. It has been wonderful to see UCS pupils getting so involved in such exciting collaborations.

— Contributions by J. Firth

UCS Partnerships



Spring Break Design Challenge

“As lockdown began, Mr Franks organised a Design Challenge for pupils across the country.”

The Summer Term is usually an extremely busy period for our Partnership work with other schools. Alas lockdown meant over 20 events including Drama workshops, Science and Language immersion days, Kentish Town Primary activity day, the UCS Summer School, and rugby taster days had to be cancelled. However, a number of other events and activities took their place.

As lockdown began, Mr Franks organised a Design Challenge for pupils across the country. He asked them to design a product to improve the quality of people’s lives during the lockdown period. Pupils were encouraged to consider various contexts and each entrant had to submit at least three pages of drawings. Over 200 entries were received and first prize was won by Isabel Ainsworth from The Friary School in Lichfield who certainly impressed Mr Franks: “Isabel’s designs for a collapsible home office were exquisite. Isabel’s creativity, ingenuity and her design communication skills secured her first place.”

Pupils in the Sixth Form volunteered to support Year 12 pupils at Westminster Academy (WA)

and Michaela Community School (MCS) with their preparations for university applications. Sometimes, this simply involved a couple of phone calls between the two parties where advice could be shared and academic matters discussed. However, a number of links were extremely successful and weekly discussions took place throughout the Summer Term. Captain of Monitors, Sima Ogden, thoroughly enjoyed mentoring and said, “My mentee and I have spoken every week to discuss her UCAS application. I have been able to share suggestions for online courses, articles and books. It has been really rewarding to work with someone who has similar goals and interests to myself, and, as she did not have the opportunity to study Psychology at A-Level, we spent time going over important concepts. This simultaneously solidified information that I have learned so I feel it has been a useful experience for both of us.”

In June, a dozen pupils from London Academy of Excellence, Stratford attended the Academic Symposium. These pupils were placed in groups alongside UCS pupils and presented on topics which ranged from “To what extent is mass

UCS Partnerships



“UCS pupils were invited to join the Dare to Know lectures run by Westminster Academy.”

incarceration a contemporary form of the Jim Crow laws?” to “Does trophy hunting help the conservation of big game?”. The extra pupils were an extremely positive presence and we hope to continue this arrangement in the future. Mrs Hawes noted, “The LAE pupil in our group asked excellent questions and gave a fascinating and well-researched presentation.” LAE pupils also joined the fantastic Sixth Form Enrichment lessons arranged by Mr Johnson during the second half of term. Again they excelled. Ms Bennett remarked, “I was so impressed by the confidence and ease with which the LAE pupil joined our group. Her contributions were sharp, grounded in proper reading and added a really valuable perspective for our pupils.” UCS pupils were invited to join the Dare to Know lectures run by Westminster Academy and despite the timing of these – 4pm on a Friday(!) – a large number of UCS pupils tuned in via Zoom every week.

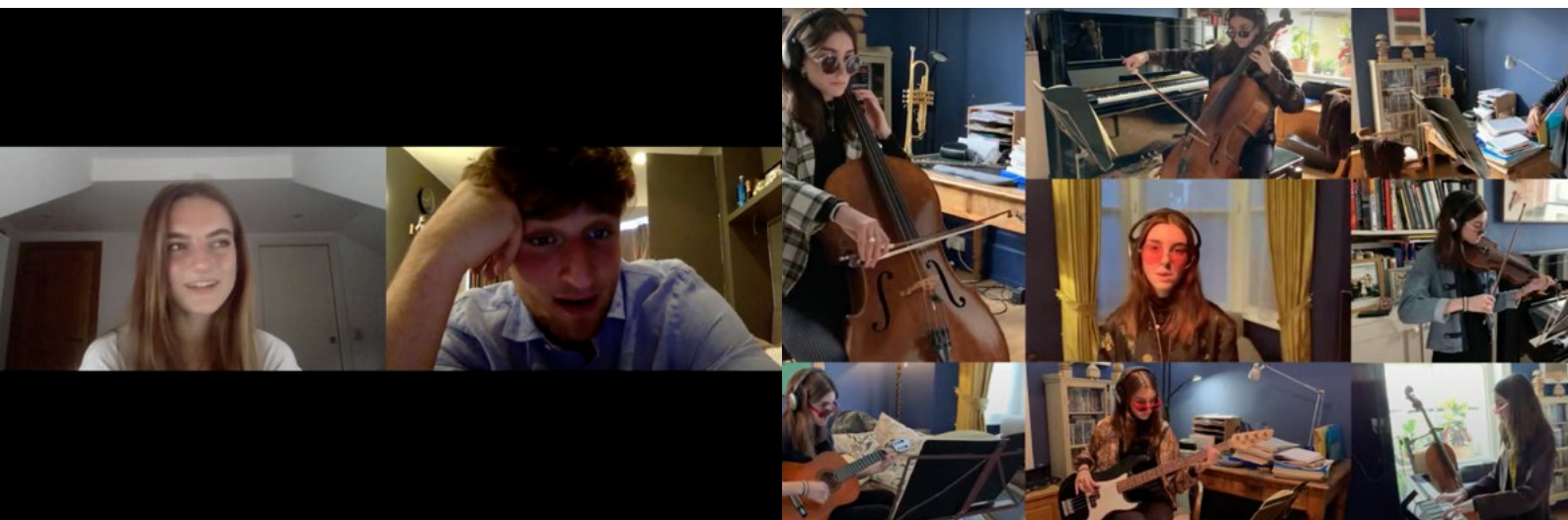
Mr Grant designed a series of workshops to help pupils develop the skills required to speak confidently in public. Feedback on these Zoom

sessions was universally positive, and pupils at WA and MCS appreciated his advice and being given the time to practise a skill that they did not find easy. A teacher at WA remarked, “I was so impressed by Mr Grant and by the session in general. I think it was very beneficial for our Year 12 students who were engaged and asked many questions. One of the students only moved to the UK last September and she stayed behind after the session to do a one-to-one. She really opened up about her lack of confidence in speaking English and I could hear this confidence growing as the call went on. Mr Grant’s work has been fantastic!”

I would like to thank the large number of UCS staff and students who worked so hard to ensure these Partnership ventures ran so smoothly and had such a positive impact on all the pupils involved.

— Contributions by E. Roberts

UCS Unlocked



On 20 March 2020, UCS shut its doors, and everything changed. The school migrated to virtual learning, and our once thriving community was scattered to the many different corners of London. However, from within their homes, students from across the school community continued their creativity. With theatres and cinemas and various other arts outlets migrating to online, it seemed that a Virtual Arts Festival would offer a platform for pupils to share and showcase their talents, even in lockdown. And thus UCS Unlocked was born – a month-long festival of the arts, with events broadcast daily on UCS YouTube, with Drama, Dance, Music and English all represented. Drama created several series of performances.

Scenes of Isolation saw scenes from plays recreated separately, and edited together – Daniel Kohn playing all the mechanicals from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* on a Zoom call; Darcey Willing playing all the characters in *Non-Stop* from the musical *Hamilton*; Emilia Taddonio and Gabriel Hartwill in scenes from *Constellations* via Zoom; and Sima Ogden and Karan Rakhit doing a socially distanced scene from Ionesco's *The Chairs*.

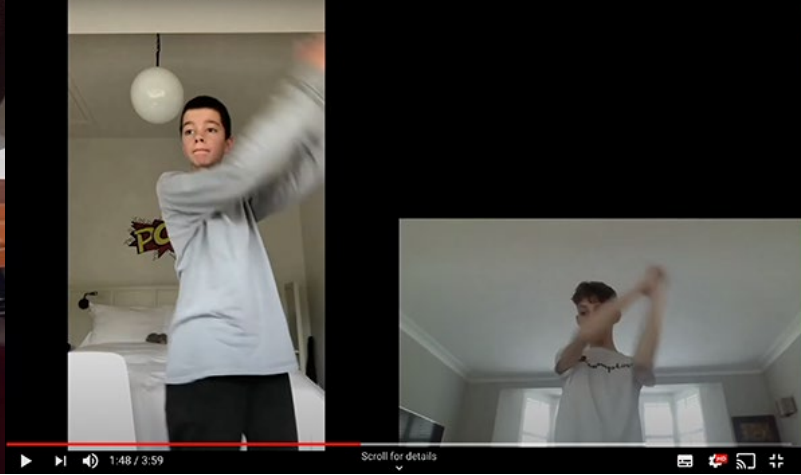
Locked Down Voices was a weekly stream of monologues written and performed by boys from Upper Remove – Amiran Antadze, Ollie Sykes, Emilio Revel-Chion, and George Whittingham – borne of lockdown, and based on the premise of isolation and its effects. Featuring brilliant acting, well shot with carefully considered angles, masterfully directed and curated by Mr Abbott, *Living with Lockdown* was another offering from the Drama department – a one-off special which explored what students are up to in quarantine through real-life footage.

In Music, students from many different year groups performed from their living rooms, and these performances were compiled into weekly concerts. There were many highlights: Geno Racklin Asher, multiplied by six, singing Erroll Garner's *Misty*; Charlie Sneader singing Puccini's *O mio babbino caro*; Monty Charles performing Kenneth Leighton's *Elegy*, and many, many more. In the final week the concerts were daily, as the instrumentalists and singers of UCS came back together virtually to entertain the community.

UCS Unlocked



UCS Unlocked - Dance Unleashed - Part One



Musicality was also alive and well in the two Dance events – *Dance Unleashed*. The Transitus created a piece of work inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement, and the Entry Dance Company created and performed their own original choreography.

Finally, from the English department, two different events across the festival, showcasing the literary talents of students throughout the school. In *Lines Let Loose*, Darcey Willing and Julien Van Eeten shared their original poetry, which had previously featured in the poetry competition. *Literature from Lockdown* saw teachers reading sections from their favourite books, involving Mr Orchard, Ms Birchenough, and Mr Hughes among others.

The atmosphere and connection of a real live audience cannot be recreated online, and there's no substitute for the crackle and joy of performance. But what UCS Unlocked lacked in real life experience, it made up for in character, effort, charm, and engagement. Students from all over the school community came together, via their own homes, to sing and dance and perform, and their efforts were enjoyed online.

— Contributions by R. Baxter

Sport In Lockdown



Throughout the lockdown, the PE department have endeavoured to give our pupils the opportunity to explore ways they could exercise. Our mantra was to get everyone to do at least 30 minutes of exercise each day and I was amazed at the variety of ways our pupils took up this challenge! Some pupils decided to look at improving their 5km run times, some wanted to cycle over 30km. Home sprinting and power workouts became a new experience for many. Numerous pupils performed daily circuits: press-ups, sit-ups and planks seemed to be the main exercises. Those with access to bands and weights came up with conventional lifting and moving patterns such as squats, lunges, shoulder and bench presses and the favourite bicep curl (going for those 'bigguns'!). We also had amazing reports back about scootering and inline skating sessions. It was also great to see that some pupils continued to practise their favourite sport. Hockey, football and rugby skills were fine-tuned at home, both inside the house and out in the back gardens.

As lockdown eased, it was great to see our pupils get some sporting competition back into their lives with our House & Deme Tennis & Cricket tournaments. In the Entry and Shell competitions SSMH and EAEM took the top spots. The Lower Remove and Remove tournaments were keenly contested in the blazing heat of the final week of term.

With the summer holidays now upon us, we ask that pupils don't take their foot off the exercising and sports gas! The Remove to Entry are being set an assignment on Google Classroom that we will evaluate when they return in September. For the few that didn't manage to get off computers or away from PlayStations – now is the time!

— Contributions by E. Sawtell

Old Gowers News



“Several year groups and sports teams held virtual reunions and catch-ups.”

Under normal circumstances, I would be writing to tell you all about the events we held over the last few months – the 1970 Leavers Reunion, the 2010 Leavers Reunion, the House of Lords event, the OG Guild event and the Summer Drinks party. However, none of those events were actually able to take place because of, you guessed it, Covid-19.

So, instead of hosting in-person events, we pivoted to doing everything online. Several year groups and sports teams held virtual reunions and catch-ups, we created a quiz on the history and alumni of UCS and we started doing a monthly newsletter to help people feel connected with their school and fellow Old Gowers. It is difficult to replicate the experience of an in-person reunion at the school, but it was still lovely to sit in on various Zoom gatherings and listen to everyone’s updates and reminiscing of their time at school.

At the moment, we have still planned a full schedule of events for the 2020-21 academic year. However, this is all subject to government guidance and social distancing rules in place. We are hopeful that we will be able to meet in person again soon, but not until it is safe and appropriate to do so.

Wishing you all a wonderful, healthy summer.

— Contributions by E. Dwek

