

THE FROGNAL

UCS NEWSLETTER — ISSUE MARCH 2023

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



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Welcome To The Spring Term Edition Of The Frogнал



Here we are, at the end of the Spring Term 2023 – though ‘Spring’ has been something of a misnomer for this particular term. The North Wind seems to have been blowing for much of it, delivering frozen pitches on Saturday mornings and sustaining all manner of coughs and colds which any of you will have done very well to avoid.

Whatever we might choose to call this Term, it has most certainly been an action-packed one. On the one hand we build on the academic momentum of the first term, proceeding with an array of scholarly activities such as:

1. the challenge of Progress tests and Mock Exams for the Transitus, Sixth and Upper Remove;
2. immersing ourselves in the Enrichment Programme, this term punctuated by Enrichment Weeks in Science, Maths &

Design Technology (entitled Collaboration); Psychology, Dance & PE (Better); and Economics, Geography, History & Politics (Power);

3. a remarkable variety of publications curated by subject departments, showcasing the contributions and editorial efforts of pupils, and including Economics Journal, EcoReview, Politics Journal, Interlingua, Bocca and Brain Wave;
4. success in national competitions such as the Oxford Computing Challenge and the Intermediate Maths Challenge, with highlights including reaching the finals of the UCL and Oxford debating contests and the Hans Woyda Maths competition; and our Young Enterprise team winning the Sustainability Award and Second-Best Company Award at their Showcase Competition.

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On the other hand, there has been quite the full range of sporting and cultural activity too. Dozens of football, netball, hockey, rugby 7s, swimming and cross country fixtures have taken place. In football, 46 teams played 152 fixtures, including the girls' team enjoying their best season for several years and beating local rivals such as South Hampstead, Westminster and NLCS (twice!). Our netballers enjoyed a powerful campaign including an impressive second place in the Highgate Festival. The Under-12 hockey team reached the London Schools finals. The U19 and U13 table tennis teams, both in the top four in the country, are through to the upcoming National Finals on 23rd April. The U15 rugby team were the Merchant Taylors Rugby Sevens Bowl winners and the Senior boys cross country team came third in the London Schools Championships.

With the pandemic firmly behind us (incredible

to think that three years ago we were at the end of the first week of the first lockdown), pretty much every department has put on either a day visit or a residential trip this term. Along with achieving a plethora of top grades in the Trinity Drama qualifications, this term's theatrical highlight was *Lord of the Flies*, the gripping and chilling Middle School Production staged dramatically within the startling wreckage of a plane crash. It was also a privilege to marvel at the performances in our inaugural Dance Show, *In Motion*, featuring an eclectic mix of ensembles – including our first GCSE Dance cohort – and soloists.

We held 12 different concerts to celebrate the musical talent of our pupils, including an incredible Spring Concert of truly remarkable scope and standard, and at which we bade thanks and congratulations to the Sixth musicians for whom this was their last formal school concert.

Welcome To The Spring Term Edition Of The Frogna!



You can read about these things, and so much more, in this edition of The Frogna!

We could, therefore, stop our reflections at this point. Whether or not pupils received any particular trophy or certificate over the course of this term, they should, each and every one of them, be proud of their achievements – small and large. And I am equally proud for them and of them. So we could stop now and look to the spring holiday for a well-deserved rest. In each of their recent sectional certificate assemblies, the three Heads of Section – Mr Roberts, Mr FitzGerald and Ms Baxter – each in their own way suggested the pupils now relax, recharge and regroup. To go again next term productively does require a moment of self-reflection; what's gone well, what can I improve on, how will I do that?

But I believe there is another component to consider in all this. I am not sure that the term's many successes bring, of themselves, a complete contentment. I think it is more the collaboration, participation and competition that underpin these successes that probably do. In other words, there is something nourishing and stimulating about the work itself that we all do here at UCS. Such nourishment comes from feeling connected to the people you work with, feeling that your work has meaning, that your talents are somehow making a difference. As a school, that is an overarching focus of how we operate, so that our young charges can apply their learning, skills and knowledge to make a positive difference in this world.

This may be exemplified deliberately, such as the work of our Humanitarian Crisis Fundraising

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Committee. Or it may be expressed in random acts of kindness, such as the group of Remove boys watching Puss in Boots in the cinema who allowed and looked after a three-year-old who sat with them; or the UCS boy on a train platform who disrupted the unwanted attention of a male passenger on a nearby girl from another school; or the group of Sixth Formers walking home from Games who helped a lady load a heavy chest freezer into her car.

We end this term, then, in good heart. The pupils have all achieved a great deal both personally and collectively over the last several weeks and I hope they will feel nourished accordingly. I hope you enjoy reading this magazine and I wish you a very happy spring break.

— Mark J. Beard, Headmaster

A Spotlight On... Careers



'Beyond UCS' is an oft-repeated phrase at the Senior School but within the Careers team at Frognal there is a determination to add real substance to the slogan.

Head of Careers Helena Yovichich explains her vision and ambitions for a department that opens up horizons and opportunities for all pupils, particularly in the years leading up to their departure for the worlds of university and employment.

What are the principles and aims behind the Careers provision at UCS?

Helena Yovichich: The key principle is to ensure that all pupils have access to the widest possible range of career information and opportunities. This is our core focus, but in our department myself and Ms Cieslak have a real drive to encourage pupils to explore career paths they may not have previously considered, which includes talks we have introduced on charity work with Shelter and MSF (Médecins Sans Frontières), sports marketing, TV production, psychiatry and interior design.

Another key aim is to enable students to leave with the right employability skills. This is a work in progress but we have already put it at the centre of Lower School Careers lessons. It has also influenced our most recent Transitus (aka Year 12) Networking Evening, as this year we added in open networking for the second half of the event, allowing pupils to develop and practise skills of communication, active listening and questioning which they had looked at during form time. While work experience and consideration of future career paths is useful during school years, the development of employability skills is absolutely essential for future success.

Are there any key highlights in the calendar?

We have lots – it just depends which year group you are in! Perhaps the biggest is the Careers Fair which is open to UCS students (primarily Year 12 but with Years 11 and 13 welcome too) as well as outside local schools. We have a wide range of companies come in to talk, from BBC to HSBC with some fantastic speakers, and this year we have added one- on-one Careers advice. It is a great

A Spotlight On... Careers



night which follows on from our fantastic Transitus Networking Evening, so the Year 12 are pretty lucky with the incredible people they get to meet.

If you are in Remove and Upper Remove (Year 10 and Year 11), the dedicated Careers Afternoons expose them to speakers from a wide range of industries. We've had speakers from the World Bank, Foreign Office, *The Athletic* magazine, in fields from marketing to computer game translation and architecture.

Finally, I should also mention the Young Enterprise programme which nurtures and challenges the entrepreneurial capabilities of students. UCS Year 12 pupils have won two awards – Sustainability and Second Best Company – in this year's Showcase competition.

What sort of careers are UCS pupils most interested in learning about? How do you accommodate for that and how does the wider UCS community, including Old Gowers and parents, assist?

We find that particular preferences change year on year but medicine, engineering, law and finance are always high. What I have been really pleased to see is an increasing willingness to come to lunchtime Careers talks and explore more roles. Interest in journalism and architecture have become particularly popular too.

We use our parent and Old Gower networks as well as personal connections to try to ensure we get in the speakers that pupils are interested in – and we have benefited hugely from the generosity of those connected to UCS in giving up their time for our students. I hope the pupils realise how fortunate we are to be able to hear from so many experts in their field, because these are not opportunities the average student gets.

We also ask the pupils themselves, via Form Tutors or surveys about who they want to hear from in advance of big events. We also actively seek out feedback to see how we can improve for next time. We really want students to help shape the provision we provide.

A Spotlight On... Careers



What are your ambitions for UCS Careers in the future?

A big focus is on trying to integrate the tools on Unifrog, our Careers and university platform all students have access to. It has a lot of potential but it needs to be worked into the overall pastoral structure from the Lower School upwards and that requires a lot of planning and collaboration for it to be effective.

Secondly, as mentioned, I want to concentrate on skills development. The hope is that next year we can start to provide some mini-courses and projects which pupils can work on, looking at certain industries such as engineering, advertising and city planning. The aim would be to develop skills while also giving insight into the type of work involved in different jobs.

Finally, I continue to push opportunities through our media channels about degree apprenticeships. I firmly believe that the quality of learning and work experience these provide, alongside a degree, is exceptional and while they are not right for everyone, I hope to see more students looking into them as an option beyond UCS. We had PwC come in to talk about their schemes but

most major employers offer them now, in areas such as TV production, banking, marketing, AI, business management and engineering. The degree apprenticeship schemes are exceptionally competitive, but for driven pupils they offer a great route into industry, often with a guaranteed job at the end of successfully completing the course. Imagine finishing your degree with a job offer from Rolls Royce or Barclays!

Of course, we are always looking to see how we can tweak and improve the provision but over the last year and a half, I believe Karolina and myself have really developed upon the excellent work of my predecessor, Damian Armitage.

How can interested UCS pupils and parents find out more about the work you do?

The best way is through the pupil and parent bulletins as well as our Careers Instagram and Twitter accounts – @UCSCareers for both. Twitter is great for links, especially for work experience and degree apprenticeship information, while the Instagram page is great for competitions and Careers talks. Keep an eye on them!

— Contributions by H. Yovichich interviewed by P. Hart

The Lower School



The Spring Term has been a roller-coaster ride in the Lower School. Our inaugural Life Values Week in January gave pupils the opportunity to discuss how these can be developed across their time at UCS. In the Lower School, these values are aspiration, bravery, compassion, decision making and self-reflection and, during this dedicated week, pupils examined how to apply the concept of a growth mindset to their school work. They also explored the difference between an empathetic approach and a sympathetic approach, and discussed how to handle certain challenging scenarios with compassion and sensitivity. Thirteen Shell pupils followed up on this week by completing the Pupil Champion Course run in March. Here, they discussed the role that vulnerability and humility play in our lives today. They also looked again at bravery and considered the importance of allyship.

Last term, much of our work focused on the theme of global connectivity and since Christmas we have been looking at wellbeing. This has been covered in assemblies, PSHE and form times, and the Entry found their Peer Education Project sessions on mental health and wellbeing extremely useful. The Shell took part in the annual Wellbeing Symposium and a small group presented their talks to the Entry at the end of March. Meanwhile, 1st February heralded LGBT History month and related assemblies were given by staff. In PSHE lessons, Entry pupils examined discrimination in the UK; gender stereotyping, relationships, gendered language, stereotyping, misogyny, and LGBTQIA+ were also studied. In March, we marked Neurodiversity Celebration Week with an assembly and specific PSHE lessons, and pupils found it insightful to hear about the experiences of their peers and teachers.

The Lower School



House competitions have performed a key role in bringing Entry and Shell pupils together this term. Competitions have included a University Challenge-style quiz, football, basketball, pancake flipping, engineering, debating, Science, a Maths relay and swimming. All competitions have been hotly contested and at present Macarthur (green) narrowly lead the table. However, only 160 points separate the top and bottom Houses, so there really is all to play for. At the February half-term interval, our first cohort of House Captains handed over the reins and we were delighted to welcome ten more pupils to take up these positions. These pupils are:

- **Bannister** – *Stanley Hogg and Krischan Rajendra*
- **Bonington** – *Michael Hirschfield and Mika'Eel Rahman*
- **Kendall** – *Jonty Dryer and Ayal Schwartz*
- **Macarthur** – *Avi Schliesser and Rory Lynch*
- **Seacole** – *Sebastiao Reis Lobo and Tarun Mistry*

The captains have only been in post a short time but have already impressed with their ideas for community work and by attending events to cheer on their Houses.

We now look forward to the Summer Term. The weather will improve and we are all excited to see the Lower School play *The Wind In The Willows* on stage in the Lund in May. End-of- year assessments loom for the Shell but the pupils can approach these with confidence, knowing they have already put in the hard yards over the last seven months. Have a great break.

— Contributions by E. Roberts

The Middle School



Writing this a week after the Ensembles Concert, a day after receiving news of a newly crowned UCS national fencing champion and the Under-15 rugby 7s team taking gold, the day of watching *Lord of the Flies* and a week prior to the Spring Concert, one is reminded that UCS is not a 9-to-5 experience. Add to this a pupil with a movie presently showing on Sky Movies and the Irish dancer who spoke with the Pre-Prep about St Patrick's Day, and one starts to get just a flavour of what Middle School pupils have been up to over the course of a most productive and energetic term.

Fresh from the theatre, I am still struck by the powerful performances of a Middle School cast showing maturity, passion and real connection with their craft. This epitomises the talent and drive within our section of the school. What was also most gratifying was the number of boys who came to the theatre to watch the performance and support their friends: a real sense of community.

Academically, we have seen the Upper Remove respond to their Mock results and start looking

forward to the challenges of Public Exams in the summer; they are in a good place and should feel well in control of their own destinies. Internal Exams for the Remove are upcoming and the Lower Remove have a little longer to get ready as they finetune their GCSE choices in readiness for Year 10.

And yet so many of these pupils still represent the school weekly in sports fixtures; they debate, present assemblies, appear on the concert stage and all with good cheer, with marvellous endeavour in a selfless manner gives them, their families and their school much credit. I hope that each and every one of the members of Middle School can identify moments when their school day was not a 9-to-5 experience and they can further develop through what they are doing outside the classroom as well as what they achieve within it.

— Contributions by S. FitzGerald

The Sixth Form



The Spring Term has brought a period of intense focus for both year groups in the Sixth Form. For the Sixth, now in their final months of school, attention has turned decidedly towards A Level studies. The term has been dominated by mock exams, but has also been highly productive and charged for all these students as they prepare for their final exams.

Similarly, for the Transitus, spring has brought a renewed emphasis on academia, starting with progress tests and the students assessing which subjects they wish to continue with. In addition, Transitus pupils have been introduced to the options available beyond school, with the UCAS process beginning to connect current studies with future destinations. The term culminated in the BeyondUCS day and conference – an afternoon of events and workshops designed to broaden higher education horizons.

Looking beyond the end of school and into the near future is pertinent for the Sixth too, as they prepare to hand over their roles of responsibility to the Transitus. The latter cohort will step up into these positions and take on the mantle of role models within the wider school – as Monitors, Officers in the Sixth Form Union, and Deme Captains.

Outside the classroom, the Sixth Form has also had an active and impressive term. From both year groups' participation in Women in Sport Week, to the fixtures taking place across London for our football, netball, hockey and basketball teams, via the many trips that have headed out under the banner of Friday Academic Enrichment. Students have also showcased their musical talents in various concerts these past few months, including the International Women's Day Concert and the triumphant Spring Concert.

Theatrically too, the Spring Term has been busy, with a group of Transitus beginning to create their show for the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. Moreover, the second annual Transitus Public Speaking Competition took place, with four individuals delivering speeches to the entire year group in a final held in the Lund Theatre.

Overall, it has been a busy, productive and successful term for the Sixth Form, underlining their commitment to academic and extracurricular endeavour and excellence.

— *Contributions by R. Baxter*

LGBT+ History Month



The theme of 2023's LGBT+ History Month was 'Behind the Lens', a call to recognise and celebrate the contributions of LGBTQ+ people in the film, television and visual art spheres. More broadly, though, LGBT+ History Month is an opportunity for communities to reflect on the progress made in the civil rights of LGBT+ people, and the struggles and sacrifices made by the activists who forged this progress. Over the course of February UCS pupils discussed queer history and the legacy of Section 28 in form times and heard from Mr Davis in a whole-school assembly about the gay rights movement and why we must learn from history in order to continue moving forward. QueerSoc and Feminist Society hosted special meetings exploring the Stonewall Uprising and the concept of 'queer female joy' in music and film. The Lower School and Middle School Reading Groups read works by Patrick Ness and EM Forster, and Transitus

Drama Academic Enrichment students learnt about the New Queer Cinema movement of the 1980s and 1990s. The Warriors exhibition in the Lund Gallery, featuring work by pupils throughout the age range, opened towards the end of the month, bringing together work celebrating figures throughout history who have been activists and champions for marginalised communities.

— Contributions by J. Lewis

Tulip Siddiq Visits UCS



On Friday 17th March, we were fortunate enough to have the chance to listen to and learn from the remarkable politician, Tulip Siddiq, who has been the MP for Hampstead and Kilburn since 2015. Siddiq captivated the audience, which was filled with eager and engaged future politicians from multiple year groups, by describing her day-to-day life as an MP and her duties as the Shadow Economic Secretary to the Treasury.

The role of an MP is wide-ranging and varied, and Tulip gave an insight into the different duties that she carries out. Tulip was clear about her desire to represent her constituents and their values as much as possible. She provided an interesting account of her time under the leadership of Jeremy Corbyn, where she felt it necessary to stand up for many of her constituents. It was also incredibly intriguing to learn more about Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe and her astounding and shocking experience as a prisoner in Iran. Nazanin, a member of Tulip's constituency, only returned after the determined campaigning of her husband, with the support of Tulip and many others. I hadn't realised how prominent a part Tulip Siddiq played in raising awareness of the problem and lobbying in Parliament to help get Nazanin home. This highlights the close constituency link

that Siddiq holds, which is a key feature of an MP's responsibility.

Furthermore, Tulip Siddiq went into detail about the horrifying murders of MPs David Amess and Jo Cox. She explained the ripple-effects that these murders had, including on MPs' daily lives and in discouraging future politicians from pursuing high-profile and public-facing careers in Westminster, given the frequent abuse that MPs receive and in the wake of those terrible murders. It was eye-opening to learn about the pressures that our representatives face. Having said that, Tulip was determined to convince us that an MP's career was an important and exciting role – and one we should all consider.

Tulip Siddiq's appearance at UCS offered an invaluable insight into the inner workings of Parliament, and to be able to hear directly from a leading politician was a unique opportunity that kept her audience spellbound. On behalf of the Politics students and enthusiasts who attended this event, I thank you, Tulip Siddiq.

— Contributions by Harry Owen (Transitus)

Student Support Service



Launched this term, the new Student Support Service combines peer mentorship with pastoral support as an important addition to the Senior School's pastoral provision.

We speak to three of the service's Year 12 volunteers about their involvement in the scheme, from training through to participation in sessions with fellow pupils.

Why volunteer with the Student Support Service?

Maya Selby: I wanted to get involved not only to help other people but to immerse myself in a process that would enable me to act in a qualified and professional manner.

Oskar Gershfield: The support given by young people for young people is a genuinely effective way

of dealing with trials, tribulations and pressures of life at home and school. Having been fortunate enough to receive support when I've needed it, I understand how valuable it is to seek help. I want to help provide that support.

Samir Rahman: Joining UCS was a daunting experience, but there was abundant support from the pastoral care system, including Form Tutors, Year Wardens and others. This enabled me to settle and school became like a second family. This showed me the value of an immediate point of support that covers every potential concern in a child's school career. With the service, I hope to contribute to the welfare of others, as others contributed to mine. I am using my experiences to support the wider school community.

Student Support Service



What training have you received?

MS: We did group training every Friday for four months. Together, with the guidance of teachers, we were equipped with the tools to use in, and facilitate, our sessions with students. We explored PowerPoints, exercises, and worked in pairs and larger groups, as well as examining serious topics with teachers.

OG: We received comprehensive training over four months from Miss Kumarasinghe and Mrs Matthews, who were generous with their expertise and insight. The support from Mr Wilkes and Ms Baxter regarding safeguarding and administration also helped affirm us as qualified coaches.

SR: Every member received extensive training from September onwards, including coaching and safeguarding. This training gave me a new perspective on school life and the difficulties faced by students. I also learnt the importance of the dynamic of a conversation; a dialogue led by the

pupil is key to achieving a satisfactory resolution and understanding.

What gets discussed in a session?

MS: The topic of discussion in a session depends on the pupil and what they want, from worries or doubts related to school and work, through to problems outside school. In addition, we can sit back and listen to a student if they prefer, and prioritise listening to them. We can adapt to whatever they feel comfortable with; the sessions are for their benefit.

OG: No matter is too trivial, no worry too daunting to address. Having experienced the pressures and concerns inherent in joining a new school, sitting exams or making friends, we encourage pupils to bring whatever they wish to the table. Workload and subject choices frequently arise, likewise relationships with friends, family and teachers.

SR: No two conversations are the same. The

Student Support Service



discussions can revolve around any topic, from stress of workload to emotional issues. Pupils can also book multiple sessions if they feel they would benefit from a longer-term conversation with a service member. A unique aspect of the service is that members do not require expertise in every aspect of school life – the training provides the key ability to ask effective questions and to empathise.

What is the USP of the service compared with other support options?

MS: The scheme offers a different type of support than going to a counsellor or a teacher because, important though that is, being a similar age can aid the conversation. Likely, we have had similar experiences. Moreover, the discussions are discreet and private; however, we can still work with teachers if we need to address larger issues.

OG: While the existing pastoral channels are wide-ranging and effective, this service is unique. It strikes a balance between the formal and the informal, with our professionalism guaranteed by our training. The service can erode stigmas around mental health and ensure a forum for vulnerable and open communication within the student body.

SR: It is inevitable that students come across issues they do not feel comfortable discussing with a staff member, but feel more secure discussing with a peer. Many pupils take comfort in knowing that peers or SSS members have had similar experiences.

What excites you most about volunteering?

MS: I'm excited for pupils to know that we are here and ready to listen, even if they don't choose to come. We can offer reassurance and relatable guidance that may help them resolve issues.

OG: I enjoy connecting with students of all ages, helping them address concerns and encouraging them to find solutions.

SR: I am relishing the chance to have a wide variety of conversations with pupils across the school. This opportunity undoubtedly comes with challenges; however, I am using my training and experience to learn from these challenges and see them as an opportunity for self-reflection and growth.

— Contributions by Maya Selby, Oskar Gershfield and Samir Rahman (*Transitus*) interviewed by P. Hart

Evening of Economics



On the evening of Monday 30th January, Economic students from UCS and several partner schools including LAE, Stratford and Michaela Community School were treated to a presentation from HM Treasury (HMT), lending insights into the role of this key government department. As the UK's finance and economic ministry, HMT manages public finances (controlling government expenditure and taxation), implements government policy of levelling up (focused on increasing employment and productivity), and ensures macro-economic and financial stability. The presentation centred mainly on enriching our understanding of what it is like to work at HMT by giving examples of the skills and types of work undertaken by the 1,800 staff. In addition, the speakers provided a deep dive into more specific work streams currently prioritised at HMT. This included a detailed overview of the policy objectives behind levelling up – i.e. to bring the GDP per capita in the south and north of the UK up to the higher levels of London and more in line with international comparisons – and the policy actions to achieve it. And given the increasing importance of sanctions against regimes such as Syria, Russia, North Korea and others, the speakers explained the functions of the Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation (OFSI), which targets those

responsible for the misappropriation of Ukrainian and other state funds and punishes those responsible for human rights violation in Ukraine and other states.

Many pupils interacted with the speakers by asking questions of varying angles – one question that stood out was “What is the problem with insufficient land use and levelling up?” and another was “How does the treasury prepare and plan for unforeseen events in the future, considering the global financial crisis (of 2007–08) and Covid?”. Finally, students received guidance on how to apply for apprenticeships, direct entry and generally how to get a job in HMT in the future.

Overall, the session was very informative about the central part played by HMT in managing the UK economy and finances, and instructive as it provided pupils with a pathway to working there. Without a doubt it enhanced us, as Economics students, with content beyond the syllabus!

— Contributions by Beatrice de Souza-Girao (Transitus)

Inside Frognal



Launched in the lockdown at the start of 2021, Inside Frognal has evolved from an event designed to virtually welcome parents to UCS and share aspects of the provision here to an event that now seeks to inform and inspire parents about important and topical issues in education more broadly. Previous Inside Frognal events have focused on educational research, sex and relationships education and how to revise effectively.

For our very first in-person Inside Frognal held in January in the Great Hall, the focus turned to Mathematics at UCS. Maths is the most popular subject here at A Level and is, of course, a feature of every single pupil's timetable in the Lower and Middle Schools. It was unsurprising (though very pleasing all the same!) therefore when we had a record number of parents registering to attend this event.

Planned meticulously by Mr Armitage, Head of Maths, the evening included the following talks:

- **Mathematics at UCS – The Student Journey**
Damian Armitage, Head of Maths.

- **Teaching, Learning and Support in Mathematics** – Joseph Verran, Coordinator of Senior School Maths.
- **Enrichment and Stretch in Mathematics** – Brad Schumacher, Teacher of Maths and Assistant Head of Higher Education.

Following an introduction by Mr Underwood, Assistant Head (Academic), parents of children across the entire age range were treated to insights and tips on how the UCS Maths Department deliver their subject here and how parents can support this at home. An ensuing Q&A session then covered a variety of thought-provoking issues spanning the Prime Minister's proposal to make Maths learning compulsory to 18, Maths Oxbridge entrance and acceptance rates, and the impact of ChatGPT.

I am really grateful to Mr Armitage, Mr Verran and Mr Schumacher for their super slick and professional talks that taught me so much about Maths at UCS! Stay tuned for next term's topic.

— Contributions by S. Bennett

Parents' Guild Supper Quiz



The Parents' Guild Supper Quiz is always a tremendously fun social event for our competitive teachers, parents and, this time, even some Transitus students. A vegetarian dinner and a series of tricky but fun quiz questions from our very own Junior Branch teacher Andrew Walliker made sure that the evening was a huge success.

The nominated charity this year was the Bursary Co-Curricular Fund for UCS pupils. Two (young) Old Gowers came to speak to the assembled dinner guests to explain how bursaries created opportunities for them at UCS which would otherwise have been unattainable.

The generosity of donors on the night, of donors of raffle and auction prizes, as well as ticket sales, helped the Guild raise a wonderful total of £6,000 for the Bursary Co-Curricular Fund.

To find out more about the fundraising aims of UCS please read Edd Pickering's [Development Update](#)

— Contributions by T. Levenfiche

Life Values Week



The inaugural Lower School Life Values Week ran from 30th January to 3rd February, with form time dedicated to the Entry and Shell's five Life Values – the ABCDs of aspiration, bravery, compassion, decision-making and self-reflection.

The Lower School Life Values were introduced at the start of the last academic year and they complement UCS's existing Learning Values – resourcefulness, responsibility, relationships and resilience. The Life Values Week was a space for reflecting on and fostering what you might call 'character education, as the pupils reflected on how they go about things and staff talked to them about their choices and behaviour.

The week's course looked slightly different for Entry and Shell and it dovetailed nicely with the wider PSHE programme. Form Tutors delivered the

sessions, which contained video content from Sixth Formers and featured various staff members.

The 'aspiration' element of the Life Values invited a discussion about growth mind-sets. Year 7 pupils were asked "is it OK to fail?" and learned that failure isn't something to avoid, because a willingness to embrace failure and learn from mistakes is an admirable quality.

This exploration was further developed for Year 8. They made comparisons between a fixed mind-set and a growth one – that embraces challenges, accepts criticism, embraces failure and persists, equates reward with effort, finds inspiration in others' success, shows grit and determination, and "will do its best".

'Bravery', 'compassion' and 'decision-making' were

Life Values Week



other major threads of the course. The pupils discussed compassion; how to be better friends, be more empathetic and respect vulnerability. They considered how they would react if they saw certain things happening; the priority being to help them to do the right thing.

The boys also investigated what makes a hero and studied scenarios whereby they may have to intervene rather than ignore poor behaviour. The Entry's analysis of role models or heroes and their attributes concluded with pupils writing personal reflections on such qualities.

Bravery and compassion were strands interwoven through the Shell material, with the reminder that in order to truly stand beside someone and show support, a person must exhibit such qualities. Decision-making was also aligned with

taking responsibility for one's actions – and being prepared to apologise.

Moving forward, the pupils will look at these attributes in greater depth, including in the new 'Pupil Champion' course. For now, though, the Entry and Shell can be happy in the knowledge that Lower School heroes do not necessarily wear capes.

— Contributions by E. Roberts

Trip to Geneva



In January, the Upper Sixth had the opportunity to visit CERN – the European Organization for Nuclear Research and its particle physics research facility in Geneva, Switzerland. After a very early 2am start we landed in Geneva with little sleep but lots of excitement for the upcoming weekend. We dropped off our bags and spent our first day exploring what the city had to offer, starting at the beautiful St Pierre Cathedral in the centre of Geneva’s old town. Next, we visited the Jet D’Eau, a famous Geneva landmark. This fountain shoots water up to 140 metres into the air. We also visited the Flower Clock, which is made up of over 6,500 flowers. After a long day of travelling and sightseeing we had an early night ready for the main event the following day.

Saturday was dedicated to our tour of CERN, which began at 2pm. Our guide provided us with

an overview of the research being conducted at this, the largest particle physics laboratory in the world. We learnt about the Large Hadron Collider and its experiments such as ALICE, ATLAS, CMS and LHCb. We also got to see some ‘in repair’ experiments and meet scientists working at the facility. Larger experiments like the LHC could not be seen due to the high radiation and security risk when switched on and active.

I was particularly fascinated by the work carried out in the antimatter factory. Antiparticles have the same mass but opposite charge as their particle pair. When matter and antimatter come into contact, they annihilate each other, releasing large amounts of energy, making it very hard to store. The scientists’ main aim here is to study the properties of antimatter, and one way this is done is by producing

Trip to Geneva



and storing large quantities of antihydrogen (an antiproton and a positron) and seeing if it behaves differently from regular hydrogen (a proton and an electron). This could help explain why there is so much more matter than antimatter in the universe – a fundamental question in physics. It was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to witness the vanguard of particle physics research!

Finally, on our last day we visited the Natural History Museum, with its extensive collection of taxidermy animals and exhibits showcasing the diversity of life on earth. (In my opinion, better than the London equivalent!) Overall the trip was incredibly enriching and aligned perfectly with the particle physics we were currently studying. We all had great fun and a fantastic time, so definitely a highlight of my UCS experience!

— Contributions by Tia Crown (Sixth)

Lund Gallery: Warriors



What does it mean to be a Warrior in life?

Students from Entry to Sixth have explored ways of interpreting this question. As viewers browsed the work in this exhibition they discovered projects from an assortment of subject departments, assemblies and enrichment activities all demonstrating the importance of and willingness to enter dialogue concerning identity and fighting for the right to express it. This was a timely show, being open during LGBT+ History Month and on International Women’s Day, and hoped to shine a light on a whole range of issues surrounding equality and diversity, across all walks of life. Some of the works in the show were:

Power Poses

Transitus and Sixth students explored the concept of power poses within their life making session. Working in clay and from a life model, the pupils discussed body language, powerful poses and the use of props. Each student made a sculpture of a

female body sitting in a position that they agreed communicated strength and power. There is a grateful yet stoic essence to the works, dipped in granule glazes that shift and glisten in the light. The shadows cast by the sculptures nod towards the controversial theory of the ‘power pose’. Since its promotion in a 2010 Harvard Business School *Working Knowledge* post, social psychologist Amy Cuddy has been the most visible proponent of power posing in the public sphere. Her interest in “studying how people can become their aspirational selves” stems from her own experience of recovering from head trauma after a car accident. The power posing ‘hack’ gained wide attention after a TED talk she gave in 2012, where she demonstrated the posture and argued for its benefits. The technique was then covered by CNN and Oprah Winfrey. It was the centrepiece of Cuddy’s 2015 book *Presence: Bringing your boldest self to your biggest challenges* and by 2017 her TED talk had been viewed by about 47 million people, becoming the second most popular.

Lund Gallery: Warriors



Lunar

The South China Morning Post's (a Hong Kong-based English-language newspaper) Lunar initiative aims to highlight stories for women and by women, as well as gender equality issues. Transitus Mandarin students explored the articles produced by Lunar and discovered the latest news, analysis and opinion on key issues facing women in the Asia region. They were then asked to pick one article that particularly interested them to showcase in this exhibition and explain their choice as well as express their thoughts on the matters.

Kafka Inspired Story Bugs

Entry pupils have been discussing Kafka's novella *Metamorphosis* and considering the parable that lies within it. The students pondered what it might be like to go through changes to their bodies or

sense of self and the obstacles they may face. These obstacles involved mental health, gender identity, physical body changes and mood changes. As a response, the pupils wrote their own stories and used printed versions to create a series of origami bugs. These sculptural works embody the concepts discussed in class. Among these examples, there was plenty more to explore about what the word *Warrior* means and when one might embody this persona.

— Contributions by V. Trinder

Sustainability update



Another busy term draws to a close with several stand-out achievements to report. Green Impact Society have now completed their third full carbon audit of the UCS Foundation with the support of One Carbon World. We are now in the strong position of knowing, with high confidence, our annual emissions (1.48 tCO₂e per pupil per year) and we will be reporting this figure annually with the stated aim of matching the recommended UN target of reducing this number by 7% per year.

The first step to tackling our biggest emission area, energy, has been to switch all energy providers to a 100% renewable energy source from April. The Sixth form students were, in particular, heavily involved in achieving this step, calling up energy brokers and putting in the foundations last year to allow this decision to be made now. In this term's

latest *EcoReview*, edited by Oskar Gershfield and Evan Verpoest in the *Transitus*, the school's Head of Estates Sean Sweeney highlights the importance of individual behaviours in being energy efficient, and Green Impact continue to campaign hard on this around school. More broadly, the Estates team are continuing to upgrade lights to LED, investigate the implementation of PV on the Junior Branch and Senior School buildings, and are progressing with putting in place further insulation around the school site.

Meanwhile, Miss Johnson and the students in Green Impact Society have run several major sustainability events, including an extremely popular 'Swap Shop' with the staff and *Transitus* and Sixth year groups, where Anna Meade, Tamsyn Alston, Gioia McKenzie, Tristan Jenkins, Samir

Sustainability update



Rahman and Oskar Gershfield led from the front! This same team put together a detailed proposal to improve the sustainability of the catering, which has now been taken forward to create a new menu. Additionally, the Upper Remove transport group have developed an extremely persuasive campaign to encourage students and staff to cycle into school, especially as the weather warms up. With only 30% of pupils being driven into school, they are making excellent progress, and I would very much like all parents to review whether the school drop-off by car can be avoided where possible.

Mrs Anthony has continued to marshal her dedicated team in maintaining and developing the allotment area and promoting biodiversity across the school site. From 20+ frogs being spotted in the ponds, to Rian in the Shell year group raising money for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees by setting up a plant sale, this area of the school continues to be a particular jewel! Green

Impact look forward to several further projects such as rewilding a section of the Sports Fields over the next two terms as they work alongside Hampstead School in creating a wildlife corridor.

— Contributions by J. Firth

Ski Trip to Bardonecchia



After a gap of nearly four years caused by the pandemic, an intrepid band of 48 Lower and Middle School boys and six staff headed off to the Italian resort of Bardonecchia for a week of skiing.

To say we were blessed by fabulous mid-winter weather would be one of the understatements of the year. For four days we did not even see a cloud and the whole party took advantage of the wonderful conditions to make great strides with their skiing.

Beginners and experts alike were able to enjoy the range of slopes available, which were in large part free of other skiers, a real bonus when skiing at half-term. Five and a half hours a day were spent on the slopes, which is hard work without doubt but clearly time well spent judging by the progress made. The end of the week saw races being held across the five ski groups and, among many medal

winners, both Velay boys took home silverware while the overall winner, Freddy Beard, achieved a time about a second quicker than everyone else.

When off the slopes, the party relished a range of different activities including retail therapy in the delightful resort centre, a fabulous pizza night in a local restaurant, the traditional quiz and, perhaps best of all, our annual bingo evening hosted by one of the great callers of the 21st century Mr Cooke.

The boys were excellent company throughout their stay and it was particularly gratifying that the hotel owners went out of their way to say how much they had enjoyed hosting them. Trips like this are great for their development. Not only did the party need to show resilience to cope with the demands of the physical exercise on top of quite arduous travelling, they exhibited great resourcefulness when dealing

Ski Trip to Bardonecchia



with the idiosyncrasies of the hotel; developed excellent relationships across four different year groups; and took responsibility for their own organisation on a trip that requires considerable self-discipline.

Seth Lockwood (Upper Remove) added: “The trip was so much fun. From the second we touched down in Bardonecchia to the sad scenes of departure from the lovely Hotel Sommeiller, the whole experience was wonderful. We were blessed with stunning weather providing us with fabulous views of the beautiful Alps. The entire holiday was perfect: the skiing, the food and the quaint town of Bardonecchia made for an exceptional amalgam of memorable moments. A big thanks to all the teachers for giving us such a great time.”

— Contributions by A. Wilkes

Shell Wellbeing Symposium



Excellent pastoral care is a pillar of a UCS education – and this term our pastoral provision had the added bonus of a dedicated wellbeing day for the entire Year 8 cohort.

The Shell Wellbeing Symposium took place on 22nd February, with all Year 8 pupils spending the morning researching aspects of wellbeing before, in the afternoon, presenting their research to peers and staff. The main purpose was to further educate the Shell about wellbeing – which meant to dive deeper than the important, if routine, promotion of good habits such as giving, continuous learning, being active, taking notice and making connections.

Therefore, pupils discovered why learning about wellbeing – something the WHO defines as “a state

of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” – is so important. For instance, there are significant links between wellbeing and physical/mental health, recovery times from illness, productivity at work, exam results and educational attainment, and healthy lifestyles.

Importantly, the symposium’s format enabled the Shell to develop skills in research and presentation as well as note taking, IT, collaboration, asking/ answering questions, and time keeping. The boys worked in pairs to produce their talks on various related subjects, including the impact on mental health of exercise, nutrition, sleep, social media or stress. In putting together their presentations, the pupils had to follow a logical structure of introduction, explanation and conclusion, while

Shell Wellbeing Symposium



also enhancing their presentations with the use of slides. Moreover, they had to consider carefully their choice of language and the style of delivery for the talks, which they gave to fellow pupils and teachers, and which segued into Q&A sessions.

The presentations were assessed according to the criteria of presentation and content, structure and pace, clarity of explanation, evidence of research, and ability to ask/answer questions, with certificates of excellence awarded for the best work.

— *Contributions by P. Hart*

We know that supporting pupils' wellbeing is key to their achieving fulfilment at school, and that is why we work so hard at getting across the right messages, not just in a one-off event like the symposium but day to day and week to week, through the entire pastoral care network that's available to pupils.

— *Contributions by E. Roberts*

Lower School Competitions



During the Spring Term, the school calendar has been jam-packed with Lower School House Competitions. These events are intended to be a light-hearted dose of fun and often bring Shell and Entry pupils together. However, nothing was light-hearted about the University Challenge-style quiz which ran for four weeks during the first half of term. Sparks flew from the buzzers and after several extremely impressive rounds, Kendall were crowned quiz champions. Engineering, Science, a Maths relay, basketball and football soon followed.

From the laboratory to the fields at Farm Avenue, the Lower School pupils represented their Houses with pride and commitment. February's pancake flipping contest was a delightful event and Macarthur triumphed in both the Entry and Shell editions. The noise at the House swimming gala was deafening and eventually the relay races proved the turning point in the competition, with Kendall taking home the trophy. Teamwork was evident and it was wonderful to see the House Captains cheering on their teams, even if they were not actually competing. House debating took place for

the first time since the pandemic and Dr Mackenzie devised a new format to allow all five Houses to compete at once. Bonington took the honours there.

Only 160 points separate the five Houses at the end of term. Any House could lift the trophy in June and we now look forward to chess, cricket, Taskmaster, Art and athletics... and maybe a few more challenges. The glitter cannons have already been reserved for the end- of-season ceremony in June. Will Kendall repeat their 2022 open-top bus ride around Hampstead showing off the trophy?

— *Contributions by E. Roberts*

SFU International Women's Day Cabaret



This term, on 20th March, UCS held its annual concert in celebration of International Women's Day. The event was designed to celebrate female artists and composers as well as the many talented musicians in the Upper Remove, Transitus and Sixth at UCS. This year a variety of musical genres were explored, from the Romantic period through to 21st century pop.

A BBC study found that only 13% of headliners from the UK's top 50 music festivals in 2022 were all-female bands or solo artists compared with 75% all-male bands or male soloists, so it is clear female artists are being under-represented on Britain's biggest stages. Many claim this is a result of a wider problem within the male-dominated music industry and therefore it is important that we at UCS represent female musicians in the multitude of recitals and concerts held at the school. The IWD event was an ideal opportunity to give them a spotlight.

Some highlights of the concert included a performance of *Proud Mary* by the Upper Remove band and Clara Schumann's *Piano Trio Op.17* performed by Sixth students. The concert took place in the Giles Slaughter Lecture Theatre and was a great occasion to discover new artists and enjoy a little live music on a Monday lunchtime.

Special thanks to Ms Walker and Mr Dawe from the UCS Music Department for helping to put this concert together.

— Contributions by Ananya Radhakrishnana
& Daisy Ellis-Thomson (both Sixth)

Beyond UCS



In the final week of term, as part of our BeyondUCS programme, the Transitus had the opportunity to hear from and meet Old Gowers, current Sixth Formers, university representatives, as well as guests talking about, for example, ‘Routes into Law’, ‘Studying in the US’ and ‘Making the Academic Leap to Higher Education’.

On Tuesday 28th March at lunchtime, Transitus students sat down with their Sixth counterparts to hear about their experiences of making applications to university – every year we hear that this is one of the most valuable sources of information and there is certainly always a great buzz in the Great Hall!

The following day, the Transitus benefited from our BeyondUCS Day and Convention. Here they met Old Gowers to hear about studying specific subjects at university; learned about what competitive universities are looking for in applicants; and received hands-on help with researching courses in detail. At the Convention, which took place after school and to which parents were also invited, pupils could speak directly to university

representatives as well as get tips from the so-called ‘Speakers’ Corner’ – listening to ten-minute presentations on ‘Student Finance’, ‘Open Days’, ‘Top Tips for Oxbridge’, etc.

If the Transitus now feel better prepared to make important decisions about life BeyondUCS then the week will have been as purposeful and exciting as we hoped. As ever, we are grateful to our Old Gowers and guests who are always so kind and willing to give up their time – and I am indebted to the amazing Sixth Form Team for their hard work in bringing this event to life.

— *Contributions by L. Jenkins*

Academic Enrichment



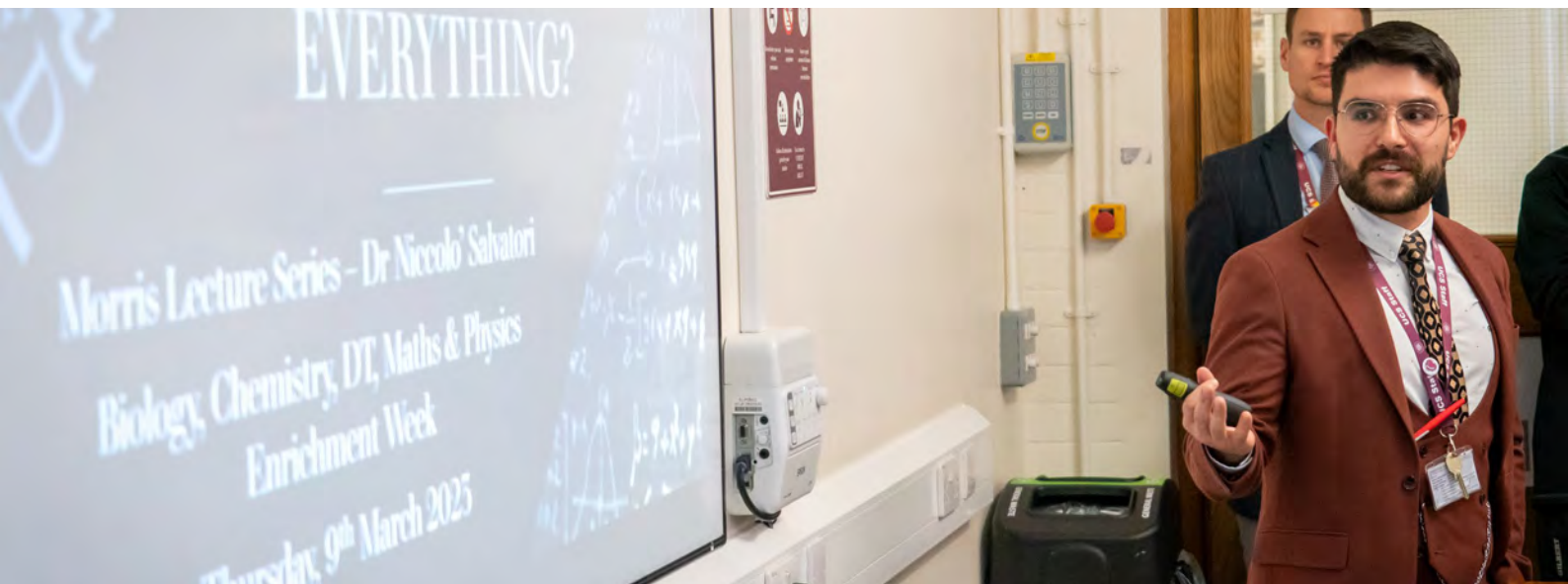
Question: What do Baroness Finlay of Llandaff, a Team GB hockey player, best-selling author Tim Marshall and our very own Mr Bradshaw have in common? Answer: They all featured in this term's Enrichment Weeks!

'Power' was the theme of the Economics, Geography, History and Politics Enrichment Week, and each department brought their own perspective to it, planning a rich variety of activities for pupils of every year group. Entry and Shell pupils were invited to claim a free copy of Tim Marshall's *The Power of Geography* to use as the basis for a presentation on how every nation's choices are limited by mountains, rivers, seas and concrete. All Shell pupils also went on a trip to the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich and took part in a sobering series of workshops on the

transatlantic slave trade. Among the multitude of other activities, Mr Bradshaw gave a sell-out lecture on nuclear diplomacy during the Cold War to pupils from all year groups, who resorted to sitting on the floor of the Fleming Lecture Theatre rather than miss out.

Next up were the Biology, Chemistry, DT, Maths and Physics Departments whose theme of 'Regeneration' prompted pupils to use rhubarb to investigate the effect of surface area on the rate of reaction, use spaghetti to build a bridge, and use discarded plastics to design and create key rings. The Fleming Lecture Theatre was once again packed out to hear a member of staff deliver a Morris Lecture; this time Dr Salvatori gave a mind-bending presentation on string theory.

Academic Enrichment



Finally, Dance, PE and Psychology took centre stage under the title 'Better'. Pupils had the opportunity to test and analyse their own lactate thresholds, participate in early-morning tai chi sessions and hear from Old Gower and Olympian Laurence Halsted, who recently published a book titled *Becoming a True Athlete: A Practical Philosophy for Flourishing Through Sport*. Enrichment Weeks are a wonderful occasion for pupils to engage in co-curricular academic enrichment that takes them outside the classroom and nurtures interests beyond exam-board specifications.

"[Upon arrival at the National Maritime Museum] we viewed a silhouette of a slave called Flora whose name had been changed by the slave owner. This showed how the identity of these slaves was often altered by slave owners. We then split up into two groups and did various activities. We learnt that places such as the kingdom of Benin had moulding technology far ahead of its time. Later, we returned to the lecture theatre where we were handed iPads and a sheet containing questions so that we could

look around the gallery noting down ideas and taking pictures of the objects relevant to our question. After that, we used this collective information and the descriptions next to each object to try to come up with the answer to our final question. In my opinion, this was the best part of the trip as we could look around in groups and work collaboratively to find the answers. This part was also one of the most intuitive as you had to decode and analyse different types of sources such as images and text and the answer wasn't just on a wall somewhere, but you and your group had to use the available information to figure it out."

— Contributions by Shell pupil

This term also saw all Transitus pupils take part in Friday-afternoon academic enrichment lessons. Pupils chose two subjects and engaged in university-style tutorials in each of their two elected subjects for four weeks. These lessons were often more pupil-led than traditional lessons and encouraged debate, discussion and problem-solving. The content of Transitus academic enrichment lessons was more complex than typical

Academic Enrichment



A Level/Pre-U course material and teachers produced schemes of work that deliberately stretched students. Transitus pupils really rose to the occasion and were brilliant in embracing a challenge.

— Contributions by M. Reiderman

“The Friday-afternoon Academic Enrichment Programme was quite different to normal lessons, with the main difference being the amount of collaboration involved. In both Physics and Chemistry enrichment, we were shown difficult problems that we would not know how to solve ourselves, but working with others often resulted in the right answer. Another way that enrichment lessons were different was that we were constantly being challenged with engaging problems, instead of the usual questions that we have done repeatedly

in lessons. Overall, the programme was very useful in informing what course I wanted to study post A Level and in teaching me valuable skills and concepts that will be useful going forward. My ability to collaborate with others and to problem-solve when a tough question was posed was improved greatly.”

— Contributions by Transitus pupil

“When I was in Transitus, I couldn’t decide whether I wanted to apply for History or English at uni. The fact that I could take both subjects for academic enrichment in Transitus was so helpful in making it clear to me that English was the subject I enjoyed going deeper into and the degree I should apply for.”

— Contributions by Sixth pupil

UCS Debaters at Oxford Schools' Finals



On Saturday 11th March, four UCS debaters – Ronny Levy, Oskar Gershfield, Jacob Shapiro and myself – attended the national finals of the Oxford Schools' debating competition at the prestigious Oxford Union.

We were competing in two teams of two and were up against more than 100 other teams from around the UK and beyond, with contestants having flown in from the Philippines, Hong Kong and Canada (which certainly put our complaints about the one-hour train ride into perspective!). Getting there, figuratively, had been no easy feat – both UCS teams had finished in the top seven from dozens of teams in the West London regional round a few weeks before. Even so, we were shocked, terrified and elated in equal measure.

The Finals' Day debates covered a diverse range of topics, from feminism to whether schools should teach vocational subjects via the role of AI in future society. Pitted against the aforementioned foreign

teams, as well as students from schools like Eton and St Paul's who had years of debating experience, we took on "some of the best debaters nationally and internationally", to quote my team-mate Ronny.

Competition rules demanded that we had only 15 minutes between being told the motion and making our case – a timeframe further abridged by the confused dash to find the rooms allocated to our debates. Without being allowed to use books or the internet, the style of our speeches constituted a major break from the essays we were used to writing, and no points were awarded for style. It was entirely a question of the solidity of our arguments.

My team came tantalisingly close to being among the eight teams to reach the semi-final round. We won enough debates overall but lost out to the other teams on the more granular 'speaker points', meaning both UCS teams bowed out after the fourth round. It was still an incredible, if

UCS debaters at Oxford Schools' Finals



intimidating, experience to debate at the Oxford Union, and a deeply valuable one.

Debating is the challenge of attempting to build a rock-solid argument in a short space of time, which every other team will do everything in their power to rip to shreds. From a cynical point of view, you could say it is ideal preparation for university. But really, this was an incredibly fun challenge and we were very proud of how well we did.

— Contributions by Jake Altmann (*Transitus*)

Oxford Computing Challenge



In January, our Computer Science pupils took part in the Oxford University Computing Challenge. This is a competition that allows those who achieved a top 10% score in the Bebras challenge to develop their skills further by creating programmed solutions to computational thinking problems. Participants came from all year groups and we are pleased that so many performed well in this year's edition which was particularly testing.

The competition required pupils to use Python code to solve a series of problems related to algorithms, logic, abstraction and other computing concepts. Despite the challenges, our pupils demonstrated an impressive level of skill and creativity in their approach to problem-solving.

We are particularly proud of Entry pupil Tomasz Grygiel who achieved a Distinction in the competition and the highest mark in the school.

The Oxford University Computing Challenge is just one of many competitions that we offer every year in the Computer Science Department. Also

running this term has been the Perse Team Coding Challenge for the Remove and Upper Remove, which also allows pupils to put their programming skills in Python to the test. Practice for these competitions is available all year round and we recommend anyone who wants to perform well in competitions to spend time completing past challenges whenever they have the chance. Such competitions are also a great way to prepare longer term for the programming exams in GCSE and A Level Computer Science.

— Contributions by C. Spence-Hill

Intermediate Maths Challenge



The United Kingdom Mathematics Trust (UKMT) is a charity founded to help with the education of children in Mathematics. The UKMT runs a series of Maths challenges to help develop secondary-school students' mathematical skills. The challenges comprise 25 multiple-choice questions, with more marks being awarded for the later, more difficult questions, and with marks being deducted for incorrect answers.

This January, 165 pupils from Shell to Upper Remove sat one of these challenges, the Intermediate Maths Challenge (IMC). Pupils had one hour to complete the multiple-choice paper under exam conditions. Students scoring in the top half nationally receive either a bronze, silver or gold certificate depending on their individual performance. UCS saw 30 pupils receive a gold certificate, 54 silver and 39 bronze. This was another strong showing by our pupils, with 18% obtaining a gold certificate, compared with the national average of 8%.

Top scorers get the chance to participate in either a 'Kangaroo' challenge or the more demanding 'Olympiad' challenge. There are two types of Kangaroo, Grey and Pink, depending on the year

group. The Olympiad is sat by the IMC's top 500 scorers from each school year and consists of three different papers for different year groups – named 'Cayley', 'Hamilton' and 'Maclaurin' after famous mathematicians.

The Kangaroo follows a similar, multiple-choice format to the IMC, although the questions are more challenging. The Olympiads have a different format of six longer-form questions to be attempted in two hours, where getting two fully correct solutions is considered a very good outcome.

Thirty pupils sat a second-round paper, with four of those tackling one of the Olympiads. The scores have yet to be announced but we have every confidence in our talented pupils.

The Junior Maths Challenge (JMC) is another challenge organised by the UKMT, following the same format as the IMC. This will be taken by all Entry and Shell pupils and we are looking forward to seeing our younger students test their mathematical thinking!

— Contributions by S. Prajapat

The Gunn Essay Prize



Writing an essay about the challenges facing our planet, as expressed by poetry, was something that I found quite a challenge. I didn't begin with any particular idea of which poets to write about. Or with any understanding about how a poet would address environmental decay through literary themes. Having decided to enter the competition, just to give it a try, it took me a while to find where to begin.

For me, the answer was in the name of the competition: The Gunn Prize. It's named after Thom Gunn, who was a pupil at UCS that wrote poems which gained attention from the start. His work was direct, while being rigorously organised, even formally elaborate. I wanted to write about other poets who, in their own way, took a similar approach to their craft.

That's how I came to look at Marianne Moore and Mary Oliver. Both of them are poets who write with intensely personal voices that, paradoxically, speak for their time. Moore wants

to examine the precision of the natural world, and compare it with our inability to describe it successfully. It's as if language comes between us and nature, and keeps us apart. But her voice is optimistic. Through her efforts to describe the world adequately, we can appreciate it better, and be its custodian.

By contrast, writing 70 years later, Mary Oliver is concerned with loss. She mourns the woods that are gone, she sees the failing vitality of the natural world around her. Her tone is provocative. It's asking us, the reader, to change the world around us by changing how we think and feel about the world.

Thom Gunn said, approvingly, "My old teacher's definition of poetry is an attempt to understand." Though Marianne Moore and Mary Oliver were different, their work was about making the attempt to understand what needs to be said.

— Contributions by Titus Graham (Transitus)

Oxbridge



Founded in 1096 and 1209 respectively, Oxford and Cambridge Universities have long been distinguished institutions for undergraduate and graduate study in the UK. They've educated some of the finest and most influential scientists, writers, poets, and thinkers of the past 1,000 years – and every Prime Minister. And every year, a cohort of UCS students join the hopeful ranks of applicants vying for a place. This time, almost half the year group went through the process of applying, pushing themselves academically beyond the boundaries of A Level. The journey is a lengthy one, challenging and rewarding in equal part. Beginning in the January of Transitus with the question of 'Is Oxbridge for me?' and culminating, for some, the following January – when Oxford and Cambridge release their final decisions. The preparation involved in an Oxbridge application is extensive. Reading, researching, delving into subjects, thinking, discussing, preparing and then sitting admissions tests, and ultimately preparing for and then attending interviews. However, there is an enormous amount to be gained from going through the process, even if the outcome isn't an offer! The

academic rigour, the opportunity to discuss your subject at a higher level, and the inherent challenge of the process itself are all valuable experiences in this final crucial year of A Levels. Students were successfully offered places at both Oxford and Cambridge, on a wide variety of courses: Material Sciences, Medicine, Chemistry, History, English, and more. A remarkable achievement, in such a very competitive process. They join the students from across the year group who have been offered places on similarly competitive courses across the UK – Computer Science at Edinburgh, Medicine at Leicester, PPE at Warwick, Neuroscience at Bristol, Biomedical Engineering at Imperial, to name but a few. Our pupils have worked hard for these opportunities and should embrace the pride and sense of achievement that comes from these offers. We wish them the very best of luck as they head into the final stretch of their A Levels, where they can make these possibilities a reality.

— *Contributions by R. Baxter*

Teaching & Learning and Learning Support



Teaching & Learning is always a buzzing hive of activity at UCS, with all teachers engaged in their own Professional Development Portfolios (PDPs). We currently have six teachers undertaking master's level qualifications, 12 colleagues enrolled on the UCS Leadership Pathway, as well as numerous active research projects well under way. Our colleagues have been fantastic at sharing their learning journeys during TeachMeets, and I am always amazed at the breadth of topics covered.

TeachMeet Topics 2022–23:

- Vic Trinder – *Experiential Learning*
- Mina Marche – *Why I recommend being an examiner!*
- Maryam Al-Anizee – *The role of the Learning Mentor*
- Patrick Milton – *The Reverse Revision Timetable & Dochub Chrome Extension*
- Charlotte Hawes – *Graphs to Aid Learning*
- Simon Hoyle – *UCS Learning Values*
- Michael Edwards – *Online Quizzing*
- Maria Pia Maggioni – *The Curious Fridge*
- Patrick Milton – *The Metacognition Toolkit*
- Adriane Martini – *'Emotional Contagion' in the Classroom*
- Faria Griffiths – *Equality, diversity & inclusion*
- Jess Harris – *Effective Team Teaching*

In January 2023, the second edition of the UCS Research Review was published. It includes full details of the research projects which have recently taken place within the school, as well as other research-informed articles and book reviews. I would like to extend a huge thank you to Adriane Martini, Head of Research, and all other colleagues who contributed to this impressive publication.

The titles of the action research include:

- *Boys and Writing: What Works?* (Charlotte Carter)
- *'Reflections on developing strategies for checking understanding through questioning in Year 12 Geography lessons.'* (Emma Kindell)

Teaching & Learning and Learning Support



- ‘*Why Languages Need a Rebrand.*’ (Helen Laurenson)
- ‘*Developing effective practices for teaching partners in shared sets.*’ (Jessica Harris & James Firth)
- ‘*What impact does a Geography-based soft CLIL framework have on KS3 Mandarin students’ self-efficacy?*’ (Maria Pia Maggioni)

Another exciting development this year has been the launch of our school-wide Teaching & Learning Priorities for 2022–23:

Teaching & Learning Priority: Metacognition

Metacognition simply refers to taking the time to think about one’s own thinking, and the strategies adopted to complete learning tasks. According to the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), research evidence shows that metacognitive strategies have a very high impact on pupil outcomes, so long as the delivery and

implementation are carefully embedded. As such, we have developed the UCS Metacognition Toolkit, which sits alongside our Focus and Revision Toolkits, and includes clear and consistent advice for pupils to be more reflective about their learning. We launched the Metacognition Toolkit in the Autumn Term and arranged for dedicated time during form periods for pupils to learn and engage with the strategies. Departments have also ensured that metacognition is discussed at departmental meetings and that teachers incorporate these strategies into their lessons. Early feedback into the impact has been very positive and we are currently undertaking some action research to measure this impact more objectively.

Teaching & Learning Priority: Cognitive Load Theory (CLT)

Cognitive Load Theory encourages teachers to think carefully about the pressures on working memory in the delivery of instructions and the tasks undertaken by pupils during lessons. The

Teaching & Learning and Learning Support



purpose is to maximise learning and reduce the mental effort involved in tasks unrelated to the central learning objectives. During the Autumn Term, we delivered a series of teacher workshops about the theory behind cognitive load, so that colleagues were equipped with the knowledge to reflect on their practice. It has been fantastic to see how colleagues have made simple cognitive load adjustments to accelerate the core learning that takes place during lessons. This has included: reducing the ‘noise’ on lesson resources and slides, adjusting the amount of ‘teacher talk’ and bolstering the amount of pupil ‘think time’ during lessons.

I am writing this article in the week that our annual pupil shadowing expedition started. A total of 17 pupils from all sections of the school are being observed throughout a whole school day, followed by a structured interview to gain insight into their experiences of teaching and learning at UCS. We are hugely appreciative of colleagues and pupils

who have been involved in this incredibly valuable annual project. The findings of this pupil shadowing allow us to examine closely what is working well and to identify areas where we can further refine the provision we offer. This includes an analysis of the impact of our teaching and learning priorities and to pinpoint the priorities for the next academic year. A full report of the findings will be published in the Teaching and Learning Review at the end of the academic year.

— Contributions by P. Milton

Tuvey Scholars



The Economics Department at UCS has announced the latest recipients of its Tuvey Economics Research Prize, following a competitive process in which pairs of applicants from Years 12 and 13 submitted proposals to research an Economics question of their choosing.

The two winning pairs who assume the mantle of UCS Tuvey Scholars for 2023 are: Kristian Partridge and Jack Harding (both Year 12), with the topic ‘Is nationalisation (or partial nationalisation) of utilities necessary in the UK? A comparative study’; and Jeremy Feiereisen and Jamie Abehsera-Cohen (also Year 12s), with the question ‘How do firms use the insights of behavioural economics to make consumers buy more?’. The two sets of pupils will now produce paired dissertations.

The Tuvey Prize is a sum of money donated to the Economics Department by the Tuvey family (Old Gowers). The department uses this to support pupils in genuine economic enquiry and in collaborative work, where students investigate questions of their own choosing.

In conducting their research, students develop knowledge and skills that take them well beyond

the A Level syllabus. Their research will include active investigation and the gathering of real world, primary data. This will be used to test a hypothesis; the Tuvey Scholars will present their findings alongside their reading and review of academic literature.

A condition of the prize is that pupils work in pairs. Alongside the requirement to use primary data, this makes the prize unique at this level of study. Students have the full support of the Economics Department and the Library where they can access worldwide academic journals.

Given the imperative to produce research and resulting findings of the highest standard, the scholars have plenty of time to conduct their work. Their findings and dissertation are due for submission in September 2023.

If you would like to discuss further philanthropic opportunities at UCS, please contact Edd Pickering on edd.pickering@ucs.org.uk

— Contributions by K. Shah

Hans Woyda



The Spring Term brought both success and challenge for the 2023 Hans Woyda team. The team comprised Haoxuan Huang, Samir Rahman, Sammi Shapiro, Jake Park Lovering and Yash Kedia. A Hans Woyda game typically involves a variety of challenging Mathematics problems designed to test one's mathematical ability, ranging from mental arithmetic to team rounds. After three thrilling matches in the group stage during the Autumn Term, we placed second in our group and found ourselves in the Plate knockout stage. These matches differed from previous games in many ways: not only were the questions going to be tougher as we progressed through the rounds, but we knew that a loss at any point would put us out of the competition. Our first match was against NLCS. A few missed questions left us trailing on points. But then our saviour came: a binary team question, which propelled us into the lead and had us thanking our Computer Science teachers. The calculator round was next. Knowing that every second was counting and every question vital, the disappointment was immeasurable when we entered our answers into the calculator and were met with two words: Maths error. The round continued, back and forth, both teams straining to get ahead. The algebra and calculus found us scrambling to steal points before

the final round, the race round, where pupils go head-to-head with each other in a desperate attempt to find the correct answer before the opponent does or time runs out. Each question offered two points, so there were eight possible points to harvest. As we held a slim lead of three, we knew the fight would come down to the last question. With the Year 9 from NLCS entering her answer a split-second before Yash, our advantage was down to a single point. A tricky question left both Year 11s stumped. The whole round narrowed down to this penultimate question: if each edge of a cube that meets at a vertice is coloured differently, what is the minimum number of colours needed. I shot down an answer, almost unreadable, but now there was a choice: enter the answer and risk it being incorrect, thus conceding our lead and likely getting eliminated; or wait to double-check if the answer was correct, but risk the NLCS Year 12 stealing those precious two points. The clock was ticking, the pressure palpable. With a shaking arm, I submitted my answer, fearing the worst. The answer was right, however, and we were through, banking a 35-32 victory.

Our semi-final was against Cardinal Vaughan Memorial School. It was evident from the very first questions that this round would be far more testing

Hans Woyda



than previous outings. We knew that as points would be more difficult to score, taking our opportunities would be the key to victory and further progress. As the contest unfolded, the scores remained relatively even, and it seemed that yet another game would go to the wire. The team round looked like our best chance to claim vital points, and despite the difficult nature of the team question, Jake's quick thinking and ability to effectively dissect the problem gave us a cushion that we just had to maintain until the final question. However, the concluding race round was still to come, a pivotal moment in any game with a large number of points up for grabs.

Thankfully, it proved successful for UCS as we extended our lead and triumphed 27-20. It had taken an incredible display to earn ourselves a Plate final against St Paul's!

The day of the final arrived, and after a team warm-up and pep talk in the library ten minutes prior to the start, we felt confident and ready. After a brief overview of the history of the competition, we set off tackling the questions. The geometry proved tough and left both teams stumped, and St Paul's pulled away with a narrow lead after securing the only correct answer of the round. The team question was

about the 'Grime dice', a collection of dice known for forming a non-transitive set. Some impressive probability calculations from both sides boosted the points' totals, but two more correct calculations by St Paul's allowed them to steal a valuable point and they now had a 11-point lead with three rounds to play. The algebra and calculus section featured some devious sets questions, albeit the teams scored evenly. The last round was the race. We all worked hard and performed well, but ultimately it finished 28-43 and St Paul's were champions. It had been a great battle from both teams, and Yash, Jake, Samir, Sammi and Haoxuan all did brilliantly.

Our loss heralded the end of our 2023 Hans Woyda Mathematics Competition. The campaign may not have ended in glory, the team acquitted themselves admirably throughout the year. We now look forward to October, when the next iteration of the contest commences and we bid to go one step further!

— Contributions by Sammi Shapiro & Samir Rahman (Transitus)

Weizmann Institute



On Monday 6th February, Transitus Physics A Level students listened to a variety of talks delivered by PhD students at the Weizmann Institute.

The first talk was about the creation of a novel state of matter called a Bose-Einstein condensate (BEC). The speaker discussed how atoms are cooled so that they are slowed and become 'ultra-cold'. Eventually, due to the Heisenberg uncertainty principle, the position of the atoms becomes sufficiently vague that they act as one single atom.

The trapping of ions using electric fields was the topic of the second talk. This was especially pertinent for the UCS pupils, who will learn about this topic in the Sixth. Applications of ion trapping were referenced, including ultra-precise trapped-ion clocks, force sensors and quantum computers.

The final talk was on the fascinating subject of attosecond science – and, in particular, the process of capturing motion that evolves within a tiny fraction of a second and the history of frame rates.

Overall, it was an incredibly enlightening day which gave pupils a taste of what it is like to study Physics and Science at a higher level. Students were also introduced to experimental equipment such as lasers, radio frequency generators, vacuum chambers and optical equipment.

If, following these talks, any pupils are interested in taking their Science further, then the Weizmann Institute has a summer school for Year 13 pupils, to which UCS students are invited to apply. If interested, please contact Dr Edmunds.

— Contributions by Dr P. Edmunds

Italian Breakfast



On Thursday 9th February, the Upper Remove and Remove Italian classes joined together to enjoy an Italian breakfast. This breakfast enabled the students to converse with each other in Italian while ordering a delicious breakfast, thereby improving not only vocabulary but also fluidity. After ordering, a short Italian quiz about food was presented to the pupils to further test their knowledge of Italian dining. The breakfast also played a vital part in the Upper Remove contingent's preparation for GCSE oral exams. As an Upper Remove student myself, I can proudly say that I feel much more comfortable about ordering in Italian during my next trip there. Overall, the Italian breakfast was an enjoyable and educational experience for teachers and students alike.

— Contributions by Joe Ashely-Wilson (Upper Remove)

Before half-term Ms Bandera kindly organised an Italian Breakfast for all Remove and Upper Remove pupils studying Italian. The breakfast included classic Italian delicacies which we had to practise our language skills to order. The exercise featured fake money which we used to purchase the food. Personally, I think it was a nice experience and it also helped with our role-play skills. I particularly enjoyed being behind the till receiving orders in

Italian, which sharpened up my listening and attentiveness to the words being spoken.

— Contributions by Matiss Gelwan-Williams (Upper Remove)

I think the breakfast was useful as it allowed us to learn in a different environment outside of the classroom. It also let us practise our Italian with our peers without too much pressure and we got to have some fun and food from it. Additionally, it was similar to possible scenarios for the photo card and role play assessment elements, and helped familiarise us with certain vocabulary and the practice of speaking rather than writing.

— Contributions by Daniel Brunas (Upper Remove)

Ieri anno 10 e 11 hanno fatto colazione all'italiana. Abbiamo mangiato cereali, cornetti, yogurt e bevuto latte, tè e cioccolata calda. Abbiamo parlato in italiano e abbiamo usato soldi falsi per pagare il cibo. Abbiamo tutti interpretato il ruolo di clienti e camerieri. È stata un'esperienza divertente.

— Contributions by Max Gelfer (Remove)

Classics trip to Bath



After a smooth journey from the cold and refreshing early morning at UCS, some 75 Lower Remove Latinists finally arrived in Bath at half past ten.

As soon as we stepped off the bus, we strolled through the streets with the magnificent Bath Abbey on our right until we reached the Roman Baths, where the learning experience was taking place. Taking possession of audio guides and worksheets, we made our way through the complex.

We started off by climbing the stairs and taking in the view of the fantastic hot spring from above. It was amazing also to have views of classical buildings in the background. Then we made our way downstairs to view the hot spring from its level. We even got to taste it! Next we explored different rooms that were part of the Roman spa, including the tepidarium (warm room), the caldarium (hot room) and the frigidarium (cold room). It was fascinating to see the prodigious engineering behind the baths, and it is a wonder how the Romans were able to invent such brilliant technologies back in those days. That was the experience I most enjoyed. We also got to look at authentic manuscripts which gave us more insight into the religion and texts of the Romans.

The most educative and useful experience, however, was the handling session, which followed an exciting class where we all sat together as a group and deciphered different texts in teams, using grammar skills learnt in lessons at UCS. This led directly into the handling session, where we held two thousand-year-old artefacts and put on togas. One of these artefacts was a strigil, a tool used by the Romans to clean any oil, dirt or sweat from themselves at the baths.

Overall, the trip to Bath was a tremendous experience, one which I really enjoyed.

— Contributions by Markus Chartouni (Lower Remove)

Italian trip to the Tate Modern



On 25th January, Remove Italian students braved the extremely cold weather to explore futurist-inspired artworks at Tate Modern.

The trip directly followed a lecture the previous day on Italian *Futurismo* – an artistic movement developed in the early 20th century, emphasising aspects of modern life such as dynamism and speed – and *Arte povera* – a trend developed in the 1960s as a reaction to industrialisation, valuing daily objects, mixing natural elements and industrial materials.

Pupils were intrigued by the topic, and eager to see examples of these very provocative and controversial artefacts with their own eyes.

At Tate Modern, our excellent guide, Maurizio, led us on a personalised, intercultural, multilingual

tour. Pupils not only had the rare opportunity to listen to a professional tour guide and art expert giving them important information in the target language, but they also had the chance to show their linguistic skill. For instance, viewing *Linen 1913*, a futurist-inspired painting dealing with social and gender roles, by Russian artist Natalia Goncharova, Max was able to read and translate some Russian words painted on the canvas. Isaac, meanwhile, explained to the group the story of the Tower of Babel, in order to provide the context to understand *Babel 2001* by Brazilian artist Cildo Meireles. This was probably the most impressive piece of the tour. A tower, approximately eight metres tall, made up of hundreds of second-hand analogue radios, all functioning and turned on at the same time.

Another highlight was *Ten Minute Transmission*

Italian trip to the Tate Modern



by Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla, a suspended structure made of metal wire that can be connected via radio to the International Space Station. Italian Futurists would have appreciated these works, as our pupils certainly did.

— Contributions by Dr M. Orsi

On 25 January, the Remove Italian GCSE students embarked on a journey to the Tate Modern via the Jubilee Line. Once there, we were greeted by our excellent tour guide who took us around the incredible museum and explained the deeper meaning and history behind many of the paintings and sculptures. We finished the tour by looking at an incredible tower consisting of radios. Afterwards, we travelled back to school all very happy after a fantastic trip. Thanks to Ms Bandera and Dr Orsi for organising and taking us on this day out!

— Contributions by Toby Davis (Remove)

English trip to the Roald Dahl Museum



It was a very eventful day for EMCR when we travelled up to the village of Great Missenden in Buckinghamshire. The sky was overcast with clouds and the wind blew briskly as we waited excitedly outside UCS Active with our packed lunches.

Once we had arrived in front of the replica gates from the original film version of Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, we proceeded to enter the Roald Dahl Museum and Story Centre and passed into a lunch hall, where we were greeted by Helen, our tour guide for the day.

Promptly energised by our lunches, we started to learn about Roald Dahl. We went to see the writing hut where the author had worked. Helen told us

about how Dahl got his ideas to write his fabulous books, including real objects such as a ball of chocolate wrappers and even part of his hip bone which had been removed during surgery (and which Dahl asked if he could keep!).

We then looked into the two autobiographies that Dahl wrote – namely Boy and Going Solo, which is about his life away from home (and the text we were about to start studying in English that half term). We didn't just learn about Dahl's writing though, but also about how to make our own stories more interesting.

We also examined important dates in Roald Dahl's life, for example when he was born, when he served

English trip to the Roald Dahl Museum



in WW2, and what his first story was. And we had the chance to test our knowledge of his children's books – unfortunately, none of us could get past 'Grandpa Joe' from *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*.

Finally, we went to see various famous buildings and places within the village itself which provided inspiration for his books. We saw the library which inspired *Matilda* and the window through which 'Sophie' first glimpsed the giants in *The BFG*. We were even lucky enough to see where Roald Dahl's grave was.

In the end we gained so much knowledge about what we were going to learn during that half term in English, and I think learning about other people

is important because you get to understand how life was in earlier times and see how (un)fortunate we are to live now. For me, Roald Dahl is a role model for the generations to come due to his positivity, creativity and numerous innovations. As one of the most influential people in children's literature, his legacy will only grow.

With a great trip ticked off the list we headed back to school with a delightful bus journey home.

— Contributions by Aarav Aswani & Alexander Stothers

History trip to Greenwich



In the Spring Term, Year 8 went to the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich to take part in a workshop on the transatlantic slave trade. This enabled our pupils to build on their classroom learning which has explored the relationship between West Africa, the United Kingdom and the Americas. In particular, it was important for the students to see the unique artefacts in the museum's collection which helped them to understand in greater detail the impact of the trade on these three regions.

One of the best parts of the day was that the museum curators brought out some incredibly rare documents for our students to see. They had original copies of the 1837 Emancipation Proclamation as well as copies of the Jamaica Observer from the early 19th century. The pupils

were especially drawn to the newspaper which contained adverts for slaves as well as notices about runaway slaves. The students represented the school magnificently. They were engaged and brought some fabulous questions to the curator.

— Contributions by T. Bradshaw

The day began in the lecture hall where we viewed a silhouette of a slave named Flora whose name had been changed by her slave owner. This made us think about the idea of identity and how the slaves' personal identities were impacted by the slave trade. We then split up into two groups and we did various activities. Our group started by handling replicas of precious artefacts. We learnt about the origin of these artefacts and their use in society. Among them were replicas of the 'Benin Bronzes' sculptures which we had studied at the beginning of Year 8. We learnt that

History trip to Greenwich



kingdoms such as Benin had moulding technology far ahead of its equivalent in other countries. Next, we examined items that the slave owners used on their slaves such as whips and collars for identification. These collars bore not the name of the slave but that of the owner, so if they escaped they could be easily identified and returned. This showed how the identity of the slaves had been removed.

Later, we went off in groups and used iPads to explore the Museum's gallery on the transatlantic slave trade. We each had a sheet containing questions and we proceeded around the gallery, noting down ideas and taking pictures of the objects relevant to our questions. After that, we used this collective information and the descriptions beside each object to try to come up with the answer to the final question. For me, this was the best part of the trip as we hunted in groups and worked collaboratively to

find the answers. This part was also one of the most intuitive as you had to decode and analyse different types of sources, like images and text, and the answer wasn't just on a wall somewhere. Rather, you and your group had to use the available information to figure things out.

— Contributions by Hunter Sadd (Shell)

Drama trip to *Mandela*



On 12th January, Transitus Drama students took a trip to the Young Vic to watch Mandela, a new musical by Laiona Michelle. This musical explores the life of the freedom-fighter Nelson Mandela and his role in altering the course of modern history – the sacrifices he made as a husband and father, and the global movement that inspired him and his comrades to keep fighting. The play itself was moving and powerful, using both song and dance to grapple with a complex, multi-dimensional story. The play swept over the course of Nelson Mandela’s life, with a particular focus on his arrest and prison years at Robben Island, torn away from his family and the movement which he sparked and held close to his heart.

Despite the gravity and weight of the story, the musical evoked a feeling of community, conveying

the potential beauty and harmony of a culture that was lost during apartheid. The ensemble served as a constant reminder of this community, with joy pouring out of the musical’s closing number ‘Mandela’. The actors themselves were consistently pitch perfect, with strong powerful voices, providing nuanced tear-jerking performances. Overall, this trip was enjoyable, enriching my knowledge of global modern history and shedding light on the world-changing man that was Nelson Mandela and the revolutionary movement he ignited.

— Contributions by Thalia Kermisch (Transitus)

Mandarin trip to the BFI



On 19th January, the Remove Mandarin students went on a trip to the British Film Institute in order to take part in a Chinese cinema immersion day. We set out after assembly and reached the BFI by Tube at around 10am. The event started half an hour later and we spent the morning using a workbook in which we completed activities about the four short clips of Chinese films that we viewed.

During the morning, we learnt a fair bit about China and its education system during the late 20th and early 21st century. The most memorable part was when my friend and I took to the stage of the theatre to carry out a short Mandarin conversation in front of a few hundred other students. The experience was fun but also quite scary as we were reciting a new script in a foreign language in front of a crowd of strangers, most of whom we had never met. But, I believe, we did really well!

At 12.30pm, after two hours of sitting in a packed theatre, we got to go out for some fresh air and lunch. We split up to find something to eat and then regrouped in the lobby of the National Theatre to eat

and talk about the morning's events.

The afternoon was spent watching Shang-Chi and the Legend of The Ten Rings due to the fact it was the first Marvel film to have a majority Asian cast and to be largely set in China. The film was very entertaining and full of the action-packed sequences which Marvel are famous for. When the film finished, we left the BFI and returned to Waterloo Tube, talking all about it.

Overall, the day was very enjoyable and provided a nice break from the routine of lessons and working in a classroom.

— Contributions by Edoardo Saxby (Remove)

History of Art Articulation Competition



Articulation, one of the biggest events in any Art Historian's calendar, is a national competition in which students have free rein to present on an object or image of their choice.

This year, Eva triumphed in the school heats (thank you, Dr Bugler, for your sage judging!) to compete at Dulwich Picture Gallery, a fitting and beautiful venue for such a prestigious event. Speaking on Waterhouse's 1888 'The Lady of Shalott', here are Eva's words on the experience. Speak to Mr Mee if you are interested in entering next year!

— Contributions by A. Mee

On 2nd January, Mr Mee and I made our way down to Dulwich Picture Gallery for my participation in

the Articulation competition, which consisted of delivering a ten-minute presentation on a piece of art of my choice. I decided to present the painting 'The Lady of Shalott', by John William Waterhouse; an interpretation of the Alfred, Lord Tennyson poem by the same name, which depicts a young woman with flaming red hair and a pitiful expression as she lies in a small boat passing through a stream. What intrigued me in this painting was the helplessness the woman exuded, though at the same time she was independent, and her existence didn't appear to be conditional on the presence and protection of a man; rather than waiting for her knight in shining armour to come and rescue her, she took her death into her own hands and drifted down the river towards the town of Camelot.

History of Art Articulation Competition



At the Dulwich Picture Gallery, I was among ten other young art historians who offered original and creative insights into other works, from 'Les Nanas' by Niki de Saint Phalle to Cornelia Parker's 'Cold Dark Matter'. Hearing all of these presentations inspired me to view the works of art in new and interesting ways, since each participant produced a presentation peculiar to them, and each take was a personal one, through which to perceive a small part of that person's life.

Although I didn't win the competition, I learnt many things from this experience and feel very grateful to have been given the opportunity to practise my skills in Art History in a public setting. Witnessing all these young people around me express themselves and

their passion for art in such articulate and eloquent ways truly has inspired me and reminded me why I chose Art History as one of my A Level subjects in the first place.

— Contributions by Eva Bielawski (Transitus)

History of Art Academic Enrichment trips to the National Gallery



Transitus students are offered a four-week course at the National Gallery during the Spring Term, exploring the landscape tradition, the portrait, the life of Christ, and the birth of the contemporary world. This is effectively a crash course in how to apply Art Historical theory in a real-life gallery context.

There is no substitute for seeing art in the flesh, and members of the group had an opportunity to present in front of a painting – with some of them even attracting a crowd of tourists! Art History is a much-loved subject at UCS, and between five and ten students attend each of these trips. The National Gallery, in Trafalgar Square and conveniently on the Northern Line from Hampstead, is a great place to learn the basics of Art History and to take one of a thousand thematic routes through the collection – from mediaeval to modern.

— Contributions by A. Mee

Last Friday's Art History enrichment theme was very much in the realm of landscape. The pupils were split into three groups: Mimi and Ben looked at Cuypp's 'River Landscape with Horseman and

Peasants' (1658), Lauren and Freddie examined Hobbema's 'The Avenue at Middelharnis' (1689) and Sky viewed Peter Paul Rubens' 'A View of Het Steen in the Early Morning' (1636). After a time of reflection, the group came together and discussed how the different artists present landscapes, from the linear lines of Hobbema to the wide sweeping views of Rubens. After an obligatory look at 'The Arnolfini Portrait', Constable and Stubbs, UCS students were unleashed onto the National Gallery to take in anything from Titian to Turner, Monet to Manet and Gainsborough to Van Gogh. A thoroughly intriguing visit: can't wait for the next one!

— Contributions by Sky Quinn (Transitus)

Academic Enrichment trip to Bank of England Museum



UCS Year 12 students visited the Bank of England Museum as part of our Academic Enrichment programme. The main purpose of the trip was to take in the 'Slavery & the Bank' exhibition about the history of transatlantic slavery through the trade's connections with the Bank of England and the wider City of London.

I found the exhibition, which opened midway through 2022, so very compelling. The particularly interesting thing for me was that it acknowledged the Bank of England's role in the slave trade. Indeed, 'Slavery & the Bank' charts in detail the transatlantic slave trade, with information on the Bank's part in financing the trade and the compensation paid to slave owners following the 1833 Slavery Abolition Act which affected most parts of the British Empire.

The exhibition was an important reminder of the institution's complex history and role in the transatlantic slave trade. I believe it is important to recognise this history in order to understand the ongoing impact of slavery on the world today and to work towards a more just and fair society.

When we first arrived at the Museum, located in the same building as the Bank, the exterior was a sight to behold. It loomed like a fortress over Bank Station, such was the scale of the place. The bank was rebuilt during the first half of the last century, but it has occupied the same site since 1734. It certainly gives meaning to the word 'imposing'!

Among the most notable exhibits, apart from 'Slavery & the Bank', were a game where you attempted to balance the UK inflation rate, a genuine gold bar that you could pick up in a case, and some display cases containing fascinating artefacts such as vintage banknotes, coins, swords, and machines used to print banknotes.

Overall, I loved visiting the Bank of England and learning about its importance in the UK and global economy.

— Contributions by Jackson Neumann-Naimski (Transitus)

Drama trip to the 'The Lehman Trilogy'



On Wednesday 1st March, Transitus and Sixth A Level Drama students saw the latest run of the Tony Award-winning 'intimate epic' The Lehman Trilogy. Stefano Massini's play tells the story of the Lehman family, from Henry Lehman's arrival in New York to the global powerhouse Lehman Brothers investment bank, and finally its collapse and bankruptcy during the 2008 financial crisis.

Apart from brief scenes at the beginning and end of the play, there were only three actors on stage throughout the performance: Michael Balogun, Hadley Fraser and Nigel Lindsay. Each actor both narrated the story and took on the roles of different characters, with all three performers managing to portray the play's various figures with uniqueness and individual charm.

Throughout the piece, the action was set to Yshani Perinpanayagam's filmic piano score with simple projection utilised to show a wide range of locations and events; notably a terrible fire in Alabama during

the brothers' time as wool brokers and a scene which depicts the terrible power of modern technology as the actors dance the twist. This projection was behind the set, a sleek revolving space resembling a modern office building which, as the narrative progressed, transformed into different locations and even dreamscapes before the audience's eyes.

The play was a tour de force, with a muscular script and an unflinching portrayal of American greed, yet still retained a sense of humour and playfulness – Lindsay transforming into a woman by closing his jacket and leaning to the side got an especially strong laugh. Throw in sublime direction by Sam Mendes and a wholehearted embracing of theatricality and the age-old art of storytelling, and this astonishing work was easily one of the greatest pieces of theatre I have seen.

— Contributions by Sam Fulton (Sixth)

Classics trip to UCL's 'The Symposium'



What is love? crooned the singer Haddaway in his breakout 1993 single. But the Greek philosopher Plato had asked the same question some 2,400 years earlier in a hit work of his own known as *The Symposium*. On 8th February, this eternal conundrum took centre stage when students of Latin and Greek in Remove and above travelled to the Bloomsbury Theatre to watch a dramatic adaptation of the play.

The original *Symposium* involves a dinner party at which male Athenian thinkers, including philosophers and playwrights, debate the meaning of love. The play featured some daring reinventions of the ancient Greek text, the most obvious being the casting of women to play all the parts. In Plato's text, the philosopher Socrates retells his encounter with a wise woman named Diotima; in the play, Diotima becomes a character in her own right, complete with a fabulously sparkly dress. Inevitably, questions of love refuse to stay theoretical, as Socrates and other characters appear to engage in

a few love affairs of their own – hinted at in the Greek, but more thoroughly explored in the new production.

Other elements were truer to the ancient text, such as the fact that much of the dialogue appeared to be a translation (rather than an adaptation) of the original. The slapstick humour of the comic playwright Aristophanes translated particularly well into this raucous and energetic production.

The theatre was packed with Classics aficionados, many of them school or university students, and a few new friendships seemed to be forming in the interval. It was energising for us to be surrounded by so much enthusiasm for the Classics – yet another form of love.

— *Contributions by J. Glueck*

Primary school STEM visits



Across the Spring Term, UCS has welcomed local primary schools three times for exciting practical-based Science sessions. In all, over 75 pupils have donned their lab coats and tried their hands at space engineering, cardiac surgery and genetic decoding, all within our Frogna laboratories.

Different pupils from Holy Trinity Primary School, Camden, have visited twice for Physics and Biology mornings, with a further session for Chemistry scheduled after Easter. Aably led by their mission leader, Mr Burke, and engineering assistants, Jackson Neumann-Naimski and Otilie Whiteman, taking time from their more usual roles as UCS Transitus pupils, the Holy Trinity students designed and built parachutes to help spacecraft land successfully on the planets of the solar system. In Biology, Mrs Ward and Ms Abuchain Sousa led the pupils on an expedition at a more microscopic

level. Our young guests examined organisms, looking for key physical characteristics to help categorise them – work probably most famously started by Charles Darwin.

In the Biology laboratories again, Mrs Ward and Ms Abuchain Sousa guided pupils from Fleet Primary School in an exploration of a dissected sheep's heart. Alongside Transitus students Pia Roy and Harry Abrahams, the children tracked the path of blood through the heart, giving an excellent demonstration of the concepts they had been learning in class about the muscle and the importance of cardiac health. My personal highlight was discovering that 'pulling at one's heartstrings' comes from the eponymous valve controlled tendons. (Mrs Ward, apologies if I have got that wrong!)

Primary school STEM visits



The sessions are fantastic for all involved. The primary pupils are given an opportunity to see Science in action and develop their laboratory skills. For our *Transitus*, meanwhile, it allows them to convey their own infectious love of the Sciences and challenge their knowledge, since there is nothing quite like the inquisition of a ten-year-old.
— Contributions by M. Baron

“The pupils were so enthusiastic recalling the trip and what they learnt. It really enriched the children’s learning and we all thoroughly enjoyed it!”
— Contributions by Holly Kingham (Teacher, Fleet Primary School)

“Being able to help out the younger students was a great experience. I have always loved Physics, so I enjoyed showing other younger pupils how fun it can be.”
— Contributions by Jackson Neumann-Naimski (*Transitus*)

UCL Academy reviews of Lord of the Flies



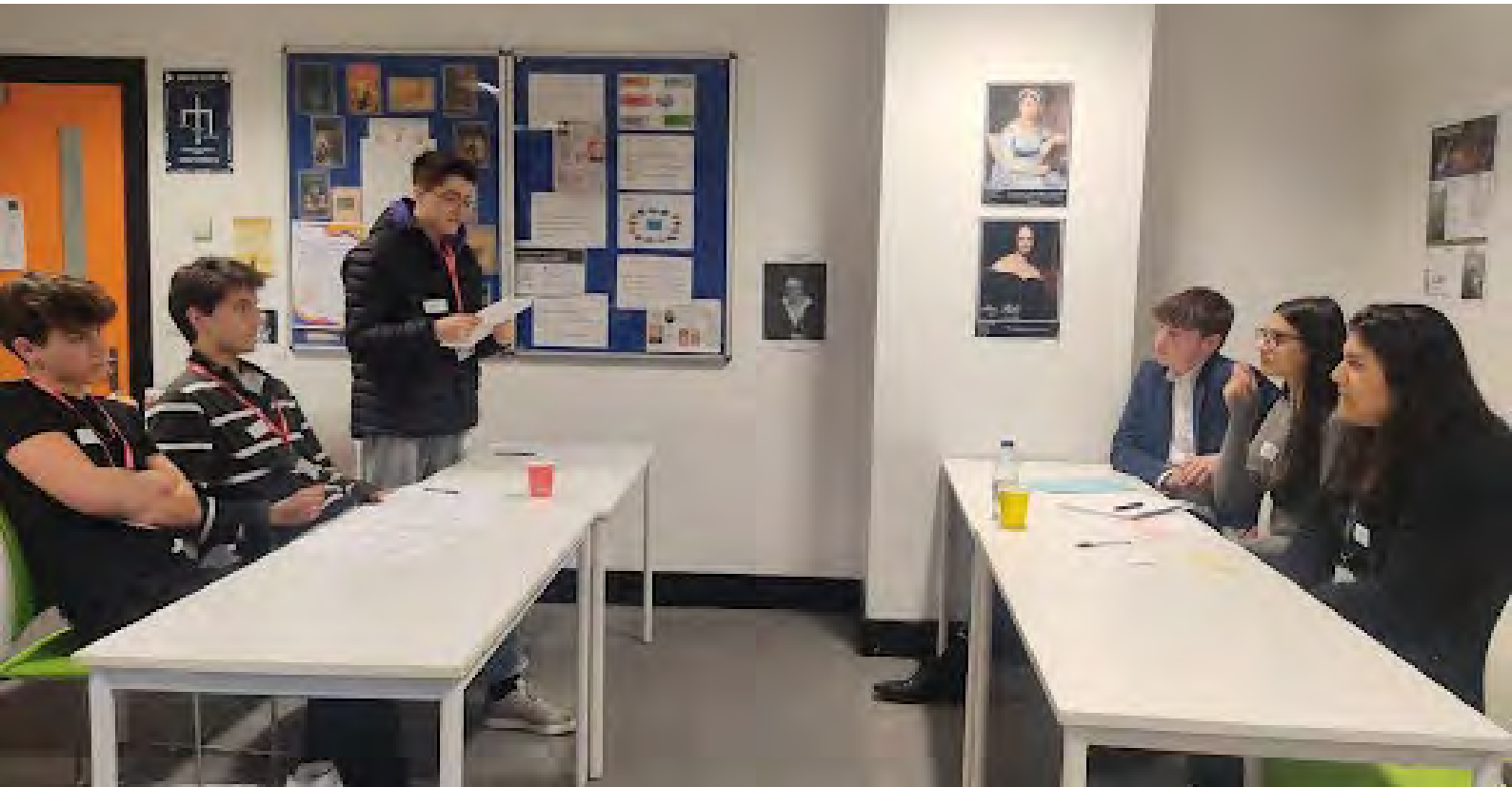
On 15th March, the Journalism Society at the UCL Academy was invited to watch a production of Lord of the Flies at UCS. The play was sensational to say the least. Two hours of marvellous acting, beautifully held together by vivid visual and sound effects that made us feel like we were actually part of the gripping story. They did an excellent job of keeping all the important scenes from the book, since Lord of the Flies is by no means an easy story to act out while keeping it child-friendly. This underlines just how exceptional a production it was.

The Middle School cast successfully embodied the metaphorical meaning behind each individual character, allowing the audience to therefore recognise the consequences of such negative characteristics as greed and egotism. We were majorly impressed by two main aspects: the acting ability of the entire cast, and the attention to detail in the props, costumes and set, which made it so easy to get sucked into the story. For its exceptional acting, captivating visuals and flawless execution, this compelling play not only portrayed the story of Lord of the Flies brilliantly, but left a lasting impression on the audience.

What we also found particularly intriguing was how they used a time-freeze effect to switch the focus between Ralph and Jack. It made the play all the more captivating. Additionally, the production team did an outstanding job of providing refreshments and a comfortable waiting room for us before the play started, which added to the overall experience. In conclusion, we highly recommend UCS's production of Lord of the Flies to anyone who loves a well-performed play. Cast and crew deserve all the praise for their hard work and dedication in bringing the story to life in such an exceptional manner. The UCL Academy Journalism Society grants a five-star rating to this production and also thanks UCS for the opportunity to appreciate such an incredible performance.

— Contributions by Muji, Subhan and Delal Kayy (Editor & president, UCLA Journalism Society)

LAE French Debating



On Wednesday 22nd February, we visited the London Academy of Excellence, Stratford sixth form college to take part in a debate against some of their Year 12 students. My team were debating against the motion ‘The high rate of divorce in France is not such a bad thing’. There were three people on each team, and I took part in the ‘lutte acharnée’ as well as reading the summary of our points. What I liked most were the activities we did before and after the debate in order to get to know the other pupils better, as this helped to ease nerves. Overall, my listening skills in French were tested as I really had to focus on understanding what the others were saying, as well as speaking clearly and concisely to get a point across.

— Contributions by Lucien Akle (Transitus)

I really enjoyed all the activities; however, my favourite was the final speaking one, as I felt I learned a lot from speaking in French to the LAE pupils. They shared ideas on themes that I have never thought about, so it was really interesting to hear the perspectives of pupils from another school, who have been taught by different teachers. Responding to the intense questioning of the opposition really challenged my French grammar and vocabulary skills, as well as improving my overall confidence in speaking the language.

— Contributions by Charlotte Goodgame (Transitus)

Humanities Partnerships



We have continued to develop our partnership with Michaela Community School (MCS) this term.

We have welcomed students from MCS to participate in Transitus and Sixth Academic Enrichment. These sessions take place for the whole of the Transitus on Friday afternoons in every subject as part of their curriculum at UCS and it has been brilliant to welcome visiting pupils from MCS. Equally, it has been brilliant to see our pupils meet new people, and network and collaborate with them in their learning.

From our Economics Treasury talk to Mr Bradshaw's Friday-afternoon History sessions on Vietnam, this has proved a really fruitful and enjoyable initiative. We very much look forward to this cooperation growing and developing further

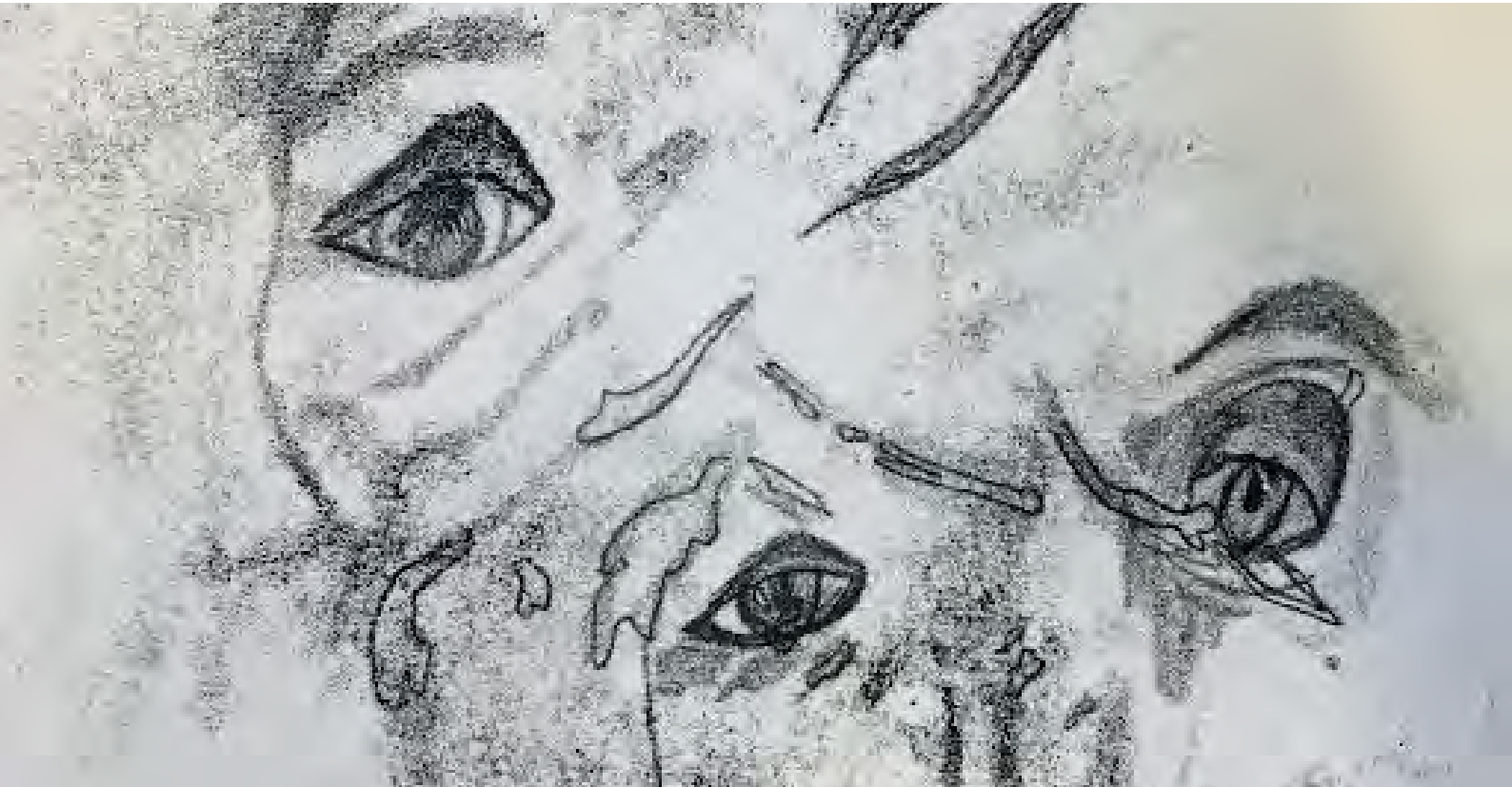
as we move through this year and into the next academic year!

— Contributions by J. Jenkinson

Having partnership students join the Economics group was an excellent experience. Their contributions brought fresh perspectives and ideas that challenged our pupils to think outside the box. It was great to see each group pushing the other's limits. Overall, a fantastic collaboration!

— Contributions by P. Fernando

Past Present & Future, and Art & Drama Partnership



In March, UCS Art and Drama collaborated to invite our partnership school LAE Stratford to participate in a workshop based around building narrative, in response to the current Mohammed Sami exhibition at Camden Arts Centre. The objective was to give an example of different ways to interact with, or take in, an art exhibition and how you can use what you see to help you come up with your own ideas, and help you with your own practice.

In the exhibition at Camden Arts Centre, the artist has produced paintings which complicate and interrupt attempts at easy classification or straightforward narrative readings. Instead, his paintings provide momentary glimpses into spaces

charged with a pervasive sense of unease and the unsettling intimation of what may have taken place, within or beyond the frame of the image.

In Drama, students were encouraged to create a character and short play from an image. Each group was given an image showing a piece of art on a postcard, and the students worked together to design their own story. Thus they learned the process of creating a simple story arc and protagonist, as well as thinking about how situations and other people can affect characters.

In Art, students were introduced to the concept of the uncanny. They discussed their own experiences of seeing something familiar and yet

Past Present & Future, and Art & Drama Partnership



alien at the same time, and we discussed how this device crops up in film and TV. We investigated Sami's process of working; reading how the artist works by often recalling moments from his past. And we considered how the artist draws on, and exposes, the unreliability, subjectivity and peculiar persistence and precision of memory.

When it comes to creating artwork, the artist has a unique approach. Rather than relying on photographs or sketches as reference, Mohammed Sami prefers to let memories and emotions guide him. He creates a mental space where these feelings, moments, incidents and places can come to the surface, albeit they are not necessarily captured in their original form. Time and distance

have a way of subtly altering memories, and Sami embraces this transformation in his creative process. The end result is a piece that may evoke certain memories or experiences, but with a new and unique perspective open to the viewers' interpretation.

From this, our pupils experimented with drawing an object as they saw it, an object as they remembered it, and an object as they imagined it. They drew this into their own different scenarios, and used the process of monoprinting to draw from memory or imagination and create their own scenes.

— Contributions by A. McVicker & D. Swanson

Lord of the Flies



This term, the Lund Theatre was transformed into the site of a plane crash. A huge broken wing and a skeletal fuselage dominated the theatre, setting the stage for a thrilling Middle School Production of *Lord of the Flies*.

Although William Golding's story about a group of schoolboys who, when trapped on a desert island, descend into a barbaric and sinister reality, was written in 1954, this production thrust the play into the 21st century with stand out performances from a cast of pupils in Lower Remove to Upper Remove.

Featuring a cast of twenty pupils who, for the majority of the play, were all on stage together. As such, this production was a showcase of their excellent ensemble skills. Together, they created the switches in contrasting atmospheres of dizzy excitement at a desert island to adventure

to paranoid terror of 'the beast' with effortless believability. The play was realised with careful and detailed direction from Miss Alborn, who had worked tirelessly with the cast in rehearsals to explore the complex morality of the characters in rehearsal.

As ever, an excellent set design by Carys Bedford framed the explosive action of this production - with the opening plane crash sequence masterfully brought to life by Martin Hutchings' lighting design.

Both cast and crew deserved their standing ovation on Thursday's performance for creating a gripping and chilling Middle School Production which will be long remembered in the history of productions in the Lund Theatre.

— *Contributions by C. Abbott*

Lord of the Flies



Harry Lee Born (Upper Remove) and Toby Davis (Remove) give the inside scoop on this thrilling Middle School production:

What is the play about?

Harry: *Lord of the Flies is about some schoolboys who get trapped on a desert island after a plane-crash.*

Toby: *And then they split into two groups - one group want to find a way off the island whilst the other group become more feral and seek to dominate the island through survival of the fittest.*

What were your favourite aspects of the production?

Harry: *The set was amazing.*

Toby: *Yeah, and the sound design was terrifying in a good way. It's a well-known story with some excellent acting.*

Who did you play?

Toby: *I played Sam, one of the twins. We're like a double act. We're always on stage together and we finish each other's-*

Harry: *-sentences.*

Harry: *And I play Ralph, my character is one of the older characters in the play. He is voted chief at the start of the play but he quickly loses power as the group divide.*

What's the best thing about being involved in a Middle School Production?

Toby: *Doing activities like this is a big part of being at UCS school, whether it is music or drama, it is a good way to meet people and is good fun.*

Harry: *It's a really good opportunity to meet people in the school and it's a fun way to spend time.*

What was the best moment in rehearsal?

Toby: *Rehearsing the rugby scene with a conch as a rugby ball.*

Harry: *Mine is rehearsing one of the big dramatic events in the play - but I don't want to spoil it.*

Trinity Drama



This is the second year that UCS has run a Trinity acting programme as part of its co- curricular offering and it has gone from strength to strength. The Trinity pupils excelled themselves in their acting exams at the start of February. Stephanie Sales, the visiting examiner was highly impressed with the standard of their acting and their engagement with the texts. We currently have 95 pupils taking the course across all age groups. This year 60% of pupils achieved distinction (the top mark possible) and 40% achieved Merit.

The lessons take place after school in the Autumn and Spring Terms and they are a mixture of hard work and lots of fun. Trinity pupils get to explore improvisation, vocal and movement skills, naturalistic acting techniques, and are introduced to a number of diverse scripts. Each session is different but they all aim to build technique, knowledge and confidence.

The Trinity sessions really develop acting and communication skills and would be useful in many walks of life. Participants also get to know each other well and work together in a friendly and supportive environment. The week after the exams there was a very well attended Trinity Showcase with the scripted exam pieces performed in the Lund Theatre.

Later this year there will be a spontaneous improvisation evening to raise money for charity, where the pupils will ‘compete’ against each other in a series of quick-fire drama games.

They will have practised these in lessons but will need to think on their feet on the night – and will have no idea what suggestions the audience are coming up with! Having a great time, giving your absolute best and taking the acting work seriously is what Trinity is all about.

— Contributions by D. Swanson

“Trinity has been an amazing experience. Each session is engaging and enjoyable, and we are always given powerful pieces that challenge us and allow us to thrive as actors. It has taught me how to receive feedback, how to take responsibility in diligently preparing for a piece, how to immerse myself in my performance effectively and develop a strong worth ethic – where I tackle a task in small, manageable parts, constantly improving it. The teacher is excellent not just at teaching us to perform our best, but at making each session informative and enjoyable. Improvisation classes taught me critical thinking and spontaneity which is valuable in other situations.”

— Contributions by Matt Goldberg (Upper Remove)

South East Schools Chamber Music Competition



The South East Schools Chamber Music Competition is one of the most prestigious music competitions in the UK, involving some of the top educational institutions in the London area. On Wednesday 22nd February, UCS played host to groups from South Hampstead High School and Henrietta Barnett School as part of the first round of the competition, which involved 65 separate ensembles from 13 schools across five venues.

They were joined by four ensembles from UCS who 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 the Maruyama String Quartet (comprising Haru Maruyama, Oliver Cheng, Matthew Likhosherstov and William Travis) had been chosen to go through to the Finals' Concert at St George's

Hanover Square. This represents a very significant achievement as this is the second year in a row that the quartet has reached the final; a rare accolade indeed.

All UCS chamber groups involved were a huge credit to the school and to the inspirational work of Ms Cohen and Mr Robinson in coaching them. And the Chamber Music Concert, held in the Great Hall the following Tuesday, was testament to the exceptionally high standards achieved by UCS musicians in this deeply rewarding form of music-making.

— Contributions by C. Dawe

The Ensembles Concert



The Ensembles Concert on Wednesday 8th March showcased the smaller ensembles, celebrating the sheer diversity of what is going on in the Music Department in those relatively unglamorous and snatched 30-minute rehearsal slots before school and during lunchtime. The evening provided confirmation that Lower and Middle School music at UCS is in rude health across all instrumental families.

Mr Gibson drew a full and confident sound from String Orchestra in Sustato's *Moorish Dance*, Guitar Ensemble achieved pinpoint precision in Lou Ward's *Spanish Garden* and Flute Ensemble continue to develop in confidence and stature under Mr O'Riordan's direction. Enthused by Mr Da Silva's expertise and passion for all things Jazz and Funk, Big Band have emerged as a big hitting

ensemble and continued their Stevie Wonder odyssey with a scintillating account of *Sir Duke*.

There were also distinguished contributions from senior musicians. In recent years we have enjoyed a golden age of Brass playing and Brass Sinfonia treated us with their gorgeous, ringing tone in Linham's *Berkley Fanfare*. The concert also featured another memorable contribution from Percussion Ensemble who dazzled with their rhythmical precision in Steve Reich's Minimalist classic *Music for Pieces of Wood*. As ever, the quality of the music making was a tribute to the dedication and expertise of our Ensemble Directors and the talent, enterprise and commitment of UCS musicians right across the school.

— Contributions by C. Dawe

The Spring Concert



A packed Great Hall provided an excited buzz of anticipation for the Spring Concert on Thursday 23rd March – one of the high points of the UCS musical calendar. Concert Band opened proceedings and proved their versatility and prowess across a set that traversed the Glam Rock of *Don't Stop Me Now*, with saxophonist Elijah Lifton being an eloquent stand-in for Freddie Mercury, the rhythmic complexity and Shaker simplicity of Copland's *Appalachian Spring* and the Big Band brassiness of Paul Murtha's arrangement *Duke Ellington in Concert*. Next up were Chamber Orchestra who treated us to highly sophisticated and accomplished playing in Suk's *Serenade for Strings* and Grieg's searing *Elegiac Melodies*, rounding off with the gutsy rhythmic drive of Rameau's *Les Sauvages*. Senior Jazz closed the first half with big hitting accounts of Tower of Power's *Diggin' on James Brown*, showcasing Sophie Andreae and Leo Hall on vocals, followed by a blistering rendition of Jack Wasson's arrangement of *Caravan* (recently featured in the film *Whiplash*) with Aidan Pick proving a powerhouse on the drum kit.

The centre piece of the second half was a magnificent performance of Elgar's *Cello Concerto* by Ananya Radhakrishnan that projected every nuance and ounce of pathos to the very back of the hall. Members of Symphony Orchestra proved sensitive accompanists but also relished the opportunity to seize the musical limelight in Berlioz's fiery *Hungarian Dance* from 'Damnation of Faust' and the warmly lyrical first movement of Brahms' *Second Symphony*.

Huge congratulations are due to the almost 80 performers involved and to Mr Gibson, Mr Walton and Mr Da Silva for their fantastic work with these ensembles.

— Contributions by C. Dawe

Football



The Girls 1st XI footballers have made superb progress this season. After gaining valuable experience on the circuit last year as a predominantly Transitus year group playing against sides a year older, the team were able to complete an unbeaten run of four games and reach the second round of both ISFA competitions. The main body of the team was similar to last year while adding a few new faces from the year below. The team achieved victories against North London Collegiate, Westminster and South Hampstead Girls. After losing to South Hampstead last year, beating the same opposition 8-2 showed how much the group had improved. Sadly, UCS were knocked out of the ISFA Cup (5-3) in the second round by a strong Bromley High School but competing well against such a strong outfit was indeed a highlight of the campaign. The 1st XI played seven matches, winning four and losing only those two games in

the cups. The group have made a huge amount of progress and have worked enormously hard in training. They have set the bar high for future girls' teams!

— Contributions by W. Jones

With the UCS Girls football team re-forming for the first time in a while last year, this season started promisingly as the Sixth and Transitus gelled together to really work as a unit. This was seen in our results with a smashing 6-0 win against NLCS, 8-2 against South Hampstead and 2-0 against Westminster. Our prospects looked bright after such a strong start and safely navigating the first rounds of two separate cup tournaments, the ISFA and the ISFA Girls' Shield. However, we encountered some seriously strong opponents against whom we had to give everything in order to compete. Our first of two losses was to City (5-4), mainly because of inflated

Football



egos following earlier results and because we lost focus when we fell behind. We soon realised that we had to do two things: keep confidence in ourselves and trust our team-mates to succeed in their jobs. Mr Jones never failed to remind us and help us work on these two things. Throughout each practice and each game, Mr Jones's motivating words and sheer passion to improve us made everyone excited to show up and be part of the amazing team we had built. Although results towards the end weren't as strong as at the beginning, we finished the season with each and every player working their hardest and wanting to leave a legacy. Overall, we had stellar performances from all the girls, and the Sixth will depart knowing that girls' football at UCS will only grow and become yet more integral to UCS sports in the future. The Transitus are eager to push even harder to have a great campaign next year. One last thank you to our coach, Mr Jones, and all the staff who helped girls' football progress across the year; it's been an incredible season.

— Ellie Afek & Ruby Koppel (Sixth)

In one of the busiest terms in recent memory, 46 football teams played 152 fixtures, averaging

around 15 games a week between them. With House and Deme football squeezed into the last week of term, it was certainly a busy and lively season on the pitch.

Despite the cold, wet and snow, the buzz around Farm Avenue on a Games afternoon was fantastic to see, with boys all eager to show off their skills and represent UCS to the best of their abilities. A particular highlight, and one which demonstrates the enthusiasm for football at UCS, was the Friday afternoon against Cardinal Vaughan School, where for the first time UCS put out eight teams in the same year group, with every boy in the Entry involved in the fixture. Being able to fulfil that many Under-12 fixtures was a real credit to the boys' commitment, and UCS won seven of the eight games played that afternoon.

Unfortunately, the 1st XI were unable to successfully defend the MSFA Tye Cup that they proudly won last year, losing to Barnet & Southgate College. However, they did beat KCS Wimbledon on penalties in the London Schools Cup following a superb showing. Sam Harding's long throws and

Football



Charlie Gordon's finishing took the game to extra time and penalties, with goalkeeper Alex Clarke proving the shoot-out hero. A narrow quarter-final loss to Forest School ensued, but the team can be proud of pushing their opponents all the way to the final whistle, coming back from 0-3 down to 2-3.

The U16B team have gone through the season unbeaten, with only KCS Wimbledon preventing them achieving a 100% win rate. An outstanding 35-yard strike from Johnny Laniado kept the unbeaten record intact in a 1-1 draw in South London. Arshaun Mireskandari, Nico Parpos and Joe Michaelson have impressed in midfield, while Charlie Wheeler and Noah Myers have marshalled the defence superbly. The U15Bs also have had a hugely successful campaign, winning five out of six fixtures, with their highlight being an impressive 3-1 victory over Highgate. Tristan Lewis, Zekie Healy and Jacob Colman are just some of their stand-out performers.

One of the teams to have shown the most promise are the U13As, winning a very encouraging eight of their 13 fixtures. They followed up an eye-catching

National Cup run in the autumn with some brilliant displays this term, including two victories over St Paul's – building on a 1-0 home victory in January with a 2-0 win at St Paul's in March. Ollie Ezro has led the way with 16 appearances, with Alfie Heslam and Nat Babich regularly putting in outstanding effort as well as ability. The successes of the U12A and B teams (both with five wins out of six) is hugely encouraging for the future of UCS football, and I would like to thank all the boys for their dedication to their varying teams this season.

— Contributions by R. Sousa

Netball



Midway through a full-on term, UCS netballers travelled (just slightly) north to the annual Highgate Netball Festival, where they met with local rivals including Mill Hill, St Benedict's and, of course, Highgate. The team was a mix of 1sts and 2nds, led by outgoing captain Skyla Madhvani, who was as stellar in defence as ever, winning game-changing interceptions but also stepping up for a match at centre, demonstrating the versatility we will so miss next season. There was also a first-team debut for Liv Seddon Dean, who has grown markedly as a defender and possesses one of the best attitudes to team sport we've had at UCS; a true team-mate and champion of netball both on and off court. In the round robin the girls won all but one of their games, advancing to the final where they faced St Benedict's. This was a real challenge; earlier this season UCS won a very competitive and fiery full-length match against the same opponents, but having lost to them in the group stage on the day the girls came out absolutely driven to win. They kept the scores level at half-time, with great ball-feeding work up the court from Bea de Souza-Girao, Ruby Millward and Issy Spooner, and relentlessly effective defence from Carys Nicholas and Annie Swimer. The attackers had a very tough match, and yet the team recognised the sporting

pro prowess of our phenomenal shooters, voting for Cara Willmott and Thalia Kermisch as MVPs for the tournament. Both were relentless and brilliant under intense provocation. Netball is a game of discipline – our girls maintained their exceptional standards and were very unlucky to lose the final by a slim margin. They finished runners-up and had an absolutely fantastic experience on the day. We're looking forward to more tournaments next year!

The best thing about the Highgate tournament was the sense of dedication from all the players, and most importantly it was simply a lot of fun. We still managed to come second which was an amazing achievement despite us not having our full team!
— Contributions by Bea de Souza-Girao (Transitus)

— Contributions by C. Hawes

Rugby Sevens



It has been a highly encouraging term for Sevens at UCS.

The Under-12 squad demonstrated much potential for the future, as illustrated by their semi-final finish in the Ibstock Place Tournament (losing to eventual winners Hampton), followed by an equally strong showing at the Middlesex Tournament. Alexander Macadam and Julian Wickham were the leading lights, making valuable contributions on both sides of the ball.

The U13 side made much progress across their three tournaments. The season opened with an encouraging performance at the Fulham Boys Tournament, winning two games, losing two and drawing one. Next up was Ibstock Place, where like the U12s the squad were knocked out in the semis by Hampton. The campaign culminated in an excellent showing at the National Schools Sevens at

Rosslyn Park, with Ben Velay, Olly Ezro and Alfie Heslam leading the scoring.

The U14s are perhaps the most improved team in the school. They came third at the Fulham Boys event, with Sammy Kain and Tomoya Hartley named joint players of the tournament. The squad also reached the Ibstock Place semi-finals, their tries being shared among Michael French, Tomoya Hartley, Kit Kemp, Sammy Kain and Nikolas Petoussis. The side were drawn in a particularly difficult group at the QEB Tournament, but acquitted themselves well and were unlucky to lose narrowly to Dulwich College and Ipswich School. The season finished with a brilliant display of sevens at Rosslyn Park, where Conall Cawley and Tomoya Hartley performed well in a strong pool.

The U15 squad opened their campaign with a disappointing display in the Haberdashers' Elstree

Rugby Sevens



Sevens Tournament. Frustratingly, they then had to contend with the cancellation of both the Fulham Boys and the Ibstock Place tournaments due to poor weather. However, the season ended with a superb effort at the Merchant Taylors' Tournament, where UCS were crowned Bowl winners following notable victories over Tonbridge School, Haberdashers' Elstree and Mill Hill. Monty Jones and Ollie Kramer distributed the ball well from the middle, allowing Benjamin Krol, Leon Velay and Eugenio Coppola to run with ball in hand. Matteo Roberts proved himself a destructive tackler, while Rafi Bartfeld was a tenacious hooker, running excellent support lines.

Overall then, a successful season. It has been pleasing to see the boys improve over the term, which is testament to their hard work in training and the invaluable input of the coaches.

— Contributions by D. Brown

Running



The last few months of cross country have been very successful for the UCS Running Club. The team have grown significantly and we have increased our competitiveness in cross country races, with particularly notable performances recorded in the London Schools XC Championships, Harrow and the Radley Relays. The intermediate team (of Thom Macdonald, Thomas Chadwick, Joseph Hayes and Jared Morris) deserve a special mention, coming third in the Radley Relays against an extremely strong field. Furthermore, the senior girls squad have done very well, coming third at the Harrow Ten Schools Competition and fifth at the Radley Relays. Other successes include runners who went to represent the London team in Kent at the English Schools Cross Country Championship, where Thomas Chadwick finished 27th, an outstanding achievement.

Outside of the races, our runners have continued to be a delight to accompany during the Friday and Tuesday-morning running club, with consistently high attendance from across the school. We have even welcomed Junior Branch runners! It has been exciting to observe the potential coming up through the ranks and as always it has been particularly heartwarming to see students of all ages enjoying each other's company.

— Contributions by J. Firth

Swimming



An excellent, if slightly stressful, season for the UCS swim team came to a head in the finals of the Herts Middlesex League at the end of February.

As always, UCS had an excellent team but, as always given the various competing demands on pupils' time, the hardest part was getting the whole squad to a gala at the same time. Led by veteran co-captains Billy Shepherd and Sam Harding (often swimming with an ankle issue), the team typically over-achieved in this elite level of competition.

The intermediates had a splash of brilliance from the usual suspects of Luca Ridard, Samuel Wang and Adam Hoff, but the stars of the show were the entire squad. Yes, there was outrageous skill in the form of Jason Gholami and Oscar Williamson, but to reiterate, it was the squad's granite will that led them to dominate time and again in the league and also to help the older age groups.

Whenever we had clashes with Mock Exams, theatre productions or university visits, the juniors would fill in for the intermediates and seniors – and while they didn't win any events themselves, they didn't lose either, thus gaining valuable league points en route to qualification for the final.

All in all, a superb season in which the galas came thick and fast from mid-October through till February, and while we are sad to see the seniors leave, the future of the team looks very bright indeed.

— Contributions by P. Dillon

Cycling



Winter training can really show a track cyclist's true grit: literally, sometimes, since the spray from a rain-drenched back wheel can, in the very wettest conditions, get between the teeth of the rider behind.

Summer awaits and fortitude always pays off.

News from Herne Hill this term: the entire fleet of cycles has been replaced by lighter, slicker bikes; Upper Removers in their new kit and in their youthful enthusiasm have made vital contributions of formation and pace; the team have been taught track-starts; tiramisu was confirmed as the peloton's ice-cream flavour of choice. And there was some pretty tough competition for the latter.

Gelato aside, training over the winter has really paid off: Frogna! Flyers look forward to their prospects in their first-ever inter-school

competition, scheduled for the very end of term at the Herne Hill track. Good luck to both UCS teams – we will be cheering you on from the stands!

As Emily Chappell says, "Take what you think you can do, and multiply it by ten."

— Contributions by A. Mee

Table Tennis



UCS's Under-13 and U19 boys' teams have made it to their National Finals, which take place at Aldersley Leisure Village, Wolverhampton on Sunday 23rd April. This achievement positions our U13 and U19 teams in the category of TOP 4 Schools in the country in table tennis. For the U19s, it is the second year running that they have reached the National Finals. They missed out narrowly last year, so can they secure the gold medal this time? My answer is: YES, THEY CAN.

The U19 team members are:

Toby Crawcour Ben Barbarash Oskar Gershfield
Tommy Lyons Elijah Chesterman

The U13 Boys' team members are:

Shai Chesterman Zhengxuan Xi Ruben Michaud
Avi Schliesser Krischan Rajendra

The U13s have won all their matches up to this

point. They have remained unbeaten so far. Can they take this level of performance to the National Finals? My answer again is: YES, THEY CAN.

Potentially, we could be looking at bringing two trophies back to UCS at the end of this tournament, at both U13 and U19 levels. Best wishes to all UCS players.

— Contributions by J. Enemuwe

Hockey



The Spring Term of hockey at UCS has been a very successful one, in terms of both participation across the Foundation and results in regional competitions.

The 1st XI have had a very strong season, ending with a positive goal difference of +18 from their fixtures. In addition, we have seen some of our promising Remove players make 1st XI debuts, all of them putting in accomplished showings in the U18s London Schools' tournament at Haberdashers' Elstree, where we were depleted by injuries and Mock Examinations. The young team we took to Habs earned a fifth-place finish which, if not the result we wanted, shows huge promise for the coming years. Congratulations are in order for Oscar Sharland in Transitus, who has made his National League debut for Hampstead & Westminster HC 2nd XI, playing six matches in total.

The Under-15s have a particularly strong core of players, who are also all team-mates at their clubs, resulting in some very high-quality hockey. Following victories against notable hockey schools such as Habs and Hitchin, hopes were high going into their London Schools' tournament. In a closely contested event, UCS finished in the bronze medal position, with every match in the competition decided by a single goal, showing the universally high standard of hockey. Milo Sharland was outstanding, scoring four goals on the day.

The U14s entered their London Schools' competition at Mill Hill full of confidence after admirable displays against Hitchin and Windsor Boys'. They performed extremely well, winning three out of four fixtures in the round-robin format to come out as champions. Lewis Papworth struck an incredible seven goals to be tournament top

Hockey



scorer. George Skrypec was also outstanding on the day, heavily involved in both attack and defence, earning himself a place in the U15s alongside Lewis.

The U13s were hugely unlucky not to place better in their London Schools' North Group Tournament, winning two matches in the round robin 8-0. After a high-quality 4-4 draw with Forest School, UCS had to beat Aldenham to stand a chance of placing first or second and progressing to the finals, but unfortunately succumbed to clinical counter-attacking to lose 3-1. This result, coupled with an earlier 1-0 reverse to eventual London Schools' runners-up Highgate, left UCS stranded in fourth place. Hunter Sadd was absolutely superb in defence, tackling everything that came too close, cementing his place in the successful U14 team for the following week, alongside David Costea, Otto Schott and Sahil Prasad.

The U12s have been thoroughly enjoyable to coach, exhibiting fantastic team spirit, competitiveness and sportsmanship. They claimed a spot in the London Schools' finals by coming second in their North Group Tournament behind Forest, with whom they contested a remarkably good game full of skill and tenacity. In the finals, UCS were

severely hampered by traffic across London to Eltham College, arriving five minutes before the start. The team showed fantastic resilience to get out onto the pitch and play as best they could without any warm-up, but unfortunately lost their opener to St Dunstan's. They rallied superbly to beat Kingston Grammar 2-0, meaning a draw in the final pool match against Royal Russell would secure them a semi-final. Sadly, UCS went down 2-1, largely due to an incredible save from Charlie Mackay's shot, a feat commended by our players who magnanimously congratulated the opposition goalkeeper. UCS won the crossover match 3-0 against Alleyn's, gaining fifth place overall. Roshan Ayaru was outstanding in defence, along with Raif Ceric in midfield, who played more minutes than anyone other than Sam Morris in goal.

— Contributions by J. Hillyer

Development Update



Preparations continue apace for the celebration of the school's 200th birthday in 2030. Central to this are our ambitions around bursaries; removing barriers to opportunity through the provision of not just fees, but also additional support so that pupils can enjoy the extraordinary co-curricular options available at UCS.

An essential part of this is raising awareness of the impact and importance of donations to the school. Philanthropy has long been an important feature of UCS, right the way from the school's move from Gower Street.

Our goal is to secure funding for our bursary programme as we approach our third century. We want to work with as many parents and Old Gowers as possible, at levels of giving with which they are comfortable. A huge chunk of the work of the Development Office is demonstrating that gifts at all levels make a vital difference to the life of the school and our pupils.

As part of this we were thrilled that for their annual Supper Quiz (*see page 20*) the Parents' Guild decided to support the co-curricular element of the school's bursary provision. It is not just the education in the classroom that makes a difference

at UCS, but the experiences gained outside of it. From being able to go on a theatre trip to joining in with a sports team, it is these experiences that often result in life-long memories and friendships.

The co-curricular support for bursary pupils is a real demonstration of the value of all donations. There are parents and Old Gowers who are in a position to be able to support a student throughout their time at the Senior School by donating the fees. Obviously this is not true of everyone. We want all our communities, parents and Old Gowers alike, to be excited about supporting the school philanthropically. For example, a bushcraft trip for a Shell pupil is such an exciting and important opportunity for any child, and a gift of £100 enables a pupil to take part in this with their classmates.

If you would like to talk about donating to the school at any level, please get in contact with the Development Office at development@ucs.org.uk

— Contributions by E. Pickering

Old Gowers' Annual Dinner



On 23rd February, the Annual Old Gowers' Dinner was held in the UCS Refectory. It was a tremendous success, attended by over 130 Old Gowers; with OGs who left the school in the 2020s mingling with those who had experienced UCS in the 1950s, 60s and 70s. As the Old Gowers reminisced about school days, the evening was filled with laughter and warmth.

The dinner was also an opportunity to thank Adrian Paterson, outgoing President of the Old Gowers' Association, for his years of loyal service. Adrian handed over the presidency to Mark Alden (OG, 1980–89).

This dinner is a central part of our ongoing aim to keep Old Gowers engaged with the school where so many spent happy years. The chance to share stories, swap anecdotes and hear about the UCS Foundation's current plans was greatly appreciated by all who attended.

"Visiting the school is like travelling in a time machine which never fails to arouse pulchritudinous memories." Philippe Bobroff (OG, 1965–70)

"I thoroughly enjoyed it and it was great catching up with former students and staff. It was a splendid occasion and great to see it back in the calendar after a few years out." Ian Barr (OG Former Staff, 1991–2016)

"It was a very enjoyable evening and great to renew contact with so many people." David Lightstone (OG, 1966–71)

— Contributions by E. Malmvarn

