

The

Ashbeian

Summer 2022



Well done to all our fabulous awards winners. Full story on page 3.



Audiences were treated to a performance of 'Return to the Forbidden Planet', exactly 20 years since the production was last staged at Ashby School.

Former student Tom Hopper (pictured centre), now best known for roles in shows such as 'Games of Thrones' and 'The Umbrella Academy', who appeared in the show back in 2002, surprised students by returning to help with rehearsals. He also took on the role of narrator, recording his video performance in advance.

Head-lines...

The start of the summer term is such an exciting and busy time. While students in Years 11 and 13 are entering the final stages of their exam preparations, we are also finalising key summer events like sports days and rewards trips and seeing plans for next year start to come to fruition, including preparations for the arrival of our first Year 7 classes. We are also planning induction days for both our Year 7 and Year 10 arrivals, too - scheduled for 29 and 30 June - and are very much looking forward to seeing our current Year 10 and Year 12 students become their mentors within this process.

This is also a time to reflect on the previous term, including our production of 'Return to the Forbidden Planet'. This was my first Ashby School musical experience and it was an absolute triumph. I am so proud of the students who gave so much of their time and dedication to make this such an amazing success and grateful to the staff who gave their time and energy to support them. To have achieved all this against a background of Covid restrictions makes their achievements even greater and I am so pleased the show was able to go on.

In this newsletter, you can also read about many of the sporting achievements recorded by both current and former students, the school's commitment to supporting people affected by the events in Ukraine and find out a little more about our new Deputy Headteacher, Helen Wakefield, who we are delighted to have welcomed this term.

We should also take this opportunity to acknowledge all the students who contribute so much to our school, day in and day out, by attending well, wearing their uniforms with pride and giving their full commitment to their studies. We have worked hard this year to

ensure that every child has the best possible learning experience in a school that promotes high expectations. Our relentless focus on a culture where everyone shows respect, accepts responsibility and supports students to build resilience has led to many positive changes and we are grateful for the support of our community in this. It is this learning environment that will support our students to be the best that they can be in their exams this summer and I want to take this opportunity to wish them luck and encourage them to try their best in these last few weeks.

Have a great summer term.

Dr Mellor
Headteacher



Supporting our community

Our local residents have recently reported concerns about parking close to the school. We are working hard to resolve these issues, and I would like to take this opportunity to ask parents who drive their children to school to be mindful of the impact on local residents as they park or drop students off around our site. We are also making a number of changes to the arrangements for Sixth Form students who choose to drive to school as this is contributing to the parking challenge. Again, parents' support with these changes will be much appreciated as we all work together to be good neighbours. Full details of these changes can be found in our [open letter to residents](#).

Got a query? Can we help?

Schools are big and busy places, and Ashby School is no exception. Sometimes, this means that parents have questions or concerns about how their young people are doing or want to know more about events they have been involved in. If this is the case, please drop us an email or give us a call and we will be happy to talk to you about your concerns and work with you to resolve any issues.

Sometimes, parents choose not to take this option and instead submit complaints to external organisations without engaging with the school directly. Following this route means that schools have to spend

significant time talking to external organisations, rather than engaging with young people and parents directly to help address any issues and work with them to make things better.

If you are worried about something, the local authority has produced a guide for parents to help resolve any concerns - you can find a copy of this [here](#) along with our contact details. Please talk to us if you need help or are concerned; we are here to support our young people and their families in any way we can.

Celebrations for Award Winners

Awards for achievement and involvement were presented to students at the school's annual awards evening, which was held in front of an audience of family, friends and members of the school community for the first time since 2019.

The evening of celebration included awards for academic endeavour across all faculties, as well as recognition for students who had excelled in other areas and gone the extra mile in their commitment and contribution to school life.

Audience members were treated to a performance by GCSE Music Award winner Fred Kershaw (pictured centre right) who sang 'Empty Chairs and Empty Tables' from 'Les Miserables', as well as speeches from members of the student leadership team and the president of the Student Council. Guest speaker was former student Tom Coleman, who also presented the awards.

Winners included Connor Sign, captain of the school hockey team who also plays for England under 18s, who was awarded the Sumanjit Minhas Award for his conscientious approach to study and contribution to sport.

Grace Betts picked up the Maureen Marfani Community Award for her role in the school's charity fundraising over the last academic year, which included helping to set up the Sixth Form charity prefect team and coordinating fundraising appeals for Ukraine and Ewan's Kind.

Thank you to all the sponsors who helped to make the night possible.



Grace Cheriyan accepts the GCSE History Award.



Annie McCarron was the winner of the A level PE Award.

Fundraiser for Ukraine Tops £2,600

A series of charity events has helped to raise more than £2,600 for the people of Ukraine. Staff and students were asked to pay £1 each to take part in a non-uniform day to show their support for the victims of the conflict.

During a day of fundraising activities, stalls were set up during both lunch breaks by members of the Student Council, the student senior team and Sixth Form charity prefects.

Students were able to try their hand at a range of pop-up challenges, including a basketball shoot out, and to treat themselves at one of the stalls selling sweets and cakes.



Assistant Headteacher Roger Skervin added: "The response to our Ukraine fundraising has been amazing. I'm pleased to announce the final grand total was £2682.10! In addition to this, we also filled several vans with items to support the victims of the crisis.

"I would like to thank everyone for the support they've shown. A special mention must go to our charity prefects Grace Betts and Rhiannon Goodwin and the Student Council led by Keira Pagett who helped to organise the day of fundraising."

Taking Action on Gender Stereotypes

Ashby School has been awarded Gender Action Supporter status.

As a Gender Action Supporter, the school is committed to challenging gender stereotypes and ensuring all young people can achieve their full potential.

Teacher Kirsty Milner, who is working with students on a Gender Action programme, said: "At Ashby School, we feel very strongly that we want to address the gender imbalances that exist in society and to make it possible for students to pursue their interests and ambitions, regardless of gender."

"Our student diversity group is now working on an action plan which will be submitted to Gender Action, outlining our priorities, our goals and how we will make, and measure, a real difference to students' lives by promoting gender equality across the school."



Members of the school community, including the student diversity group (pictured above), marked International Women's Day by learning how to #BreaktheBias surrounding gender stereotypes.

Wat-er Achievement for Lexi!



Water polo player Lexi West has been selected for the GB under 18s squad.

Lexi, who is in Year 12, was already playing regularly for Rotherham Metro and England when she was invited to trials for the GB team.

She is now hoping to compete for Great Britain in the EU Nations competition in 2024.

Lexi, who began her career in the pool as a county level swimmer, decided to have a go at water polo four years ago after watching her sister play.

Lexi now trains 15 hours a week and is already planning to incorporate water polo into daily life when she moves on to university.

Becca is Game Changer

Keen footballer Becca Wells has been appointed as a Barclays Game Changer, one of just 300 young ambassadors across the UK chosen to advocate equal access to the sport for both boys and girls.

Becca's selection follows her attendance at an FA-backed 'Let Girls Play' event to promote equal access to football in schools for girls by 2024. Millie Norton, Ella Bird and Jemma Willday from Ashby School also shared their footballing experiences on the day.

Becca will now help to inspire and engage other girls, as well as parents, teachers and key decision makers.



Top Ten Finish for Philip

Congratulations to former student Philip Armson who rode in this year's Grand National race, finishing in 10th place.

Jockey Philip made his Grand National debut on Romain De Senam. The race is watched by 600 million people around the globe.



David Pipe @DavidPipeRacing · Apr 9
Absolutely delighted with Romain De Senam's 10th in the @RandoxOfficial Grand National, lovely ride from @philipa2000 on his debut in the big race.



Lucky seven(s) for Ashton

A rigorous training regime has paid off for Year 10 student Ashton Adcock who has been selected to play for England girls' rugby sevens by the National Sevens Academy.

Ashton will join some of the most talented young female rugby players in the country when she steps out to represent England.

After starting out at Ashby Rugby Club, she moved to her current club, Leicester Forest—and is not deterred by previous injuries or the six-day-a-week training schedule.

Scrum half Ashton said: "I love the whole feistiness of rugby and it doesn't matter what shape or size you are—there is always a position for you."



Josh Uncovers Hidden History

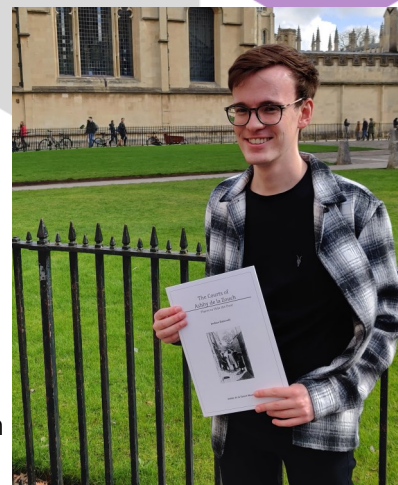
A book exploring the hidden history of Ashby has been written by a former Ashby School student.

Josh Bancroft, who is studying history at Oxford University, researched and wrote 'The Courts of Ashby-de-la-Zouch' over two months. The courts were groups of dwellings behind some of the Ashby's main streets, including Market Street, Kilwardby Street and Wood Street, where residents endured horrendous living conditions which included leaking rooves, overcrowding and disease.

Josh said: "The research is important because it uncovers the truth about Ashby's prosperity in the industrial era."

For anyone considering studying history, he said: "The best part is just how diverse it can be. There are just so many topics to explore that absolutely everyone can find an interest somewhere."

Josh's book has been published by Ashby Museum.



Sekou Hits High Note at Beckham's Wedding



Few former Ashby School students can say they have performed at an A-list celebrity wedding – but that's exactly what Sekou Sylla did when he sang at the star-studded nuptials of Brooklyn Beckham and wife Nicola Peltz in Los Angeles.

Since leaving Ashby School last year, singing sensation Sekou has been named as an 'artist to watch' by BBC Radio 2, and caught the attention of fellow musicians including Bruno Mars and Griff. Sekou moved to London to focus on his musical career but has also spent time working in LA.

Faculty Focus on...English



A celebration of reading to mark World Book Day was led by English staff (many dressed as their favourite characters!) and included creative writing workshops led by visiting author Sophie Sparham for Year 10 and 12 students. Sophie also spoke to students about her route into writing,

All students took a break from their usual English topics for the day to solve a Sherlock Holmes-themed interactive mystery.

English staff will also be hoping to enthuse and engage Year 7 students from August 2022 with an exciting and diverse curriculum.

Brooke Keating-Rogers, Head of English, said: "We want to instil a passion and enthusiasm for literature in all of our students, from Year 7 right through to Year 13. For Year 7 students, the spacious classrooms in our new English block will allow us to adapt our teaching methods and adopt a fresh approach as they embark on a curriculum that is designed to excite, inspire and challenge."

Faculty Focus on...Science

The highlight of a busy year for most science students and staff has been the return to labs following Covid restrictions. Since these were lifted, students have enjoyed the reintroduction of 'hands on' practical sessions.

Work has also continued to make up for lost learning and to bridge any gaps for students. Students have been invited to attend target revision sessions in all three A level sciences, since the beginning of the academic year. These have been run and coordinated by the heads of biology, chemistry and physics.

For students considering a career in medicine, the Med Club meets every Monday after school, facilitated by biology teacher Ben Clarke. Sessions are student led and have included:

- Interview practice – using drama students to act out scenarios that students will need to face (pictured right)
- Researching the best universities
- Raising awareness of specific medical conditions
- Case studies/patient diagnosis
- Basics of GP assessment
- Mock university lectures

There are also plans for the return of the Ashby School Primary Science Fair later this term.



Faculty Focus on... PE

Respect, resilience and responsibility have been key to sporting success over the last few months.

Ashby's KS4 rugby team beat Kibworth to reach the County Plate final while the KS4 girls' football team were crowned champions of North West Leicestershire.

The girls' futsal team made it through to county finals, narrowly missing out on the title.

In badminton, the KS4 boys became North West Leicestershire champions.

Although there is no competitive league for the Sixth Form girls' football team, they did test their skills in a friendly five-a-side fixture.

Away from competition, many other students have been getting active.

The Girls Active programme—which offers fun sporting opportunities to girls who are not usually active outside of school—recorded the highest uptake in recent years. Run with the North West Leicestershire School Sports Partnership, the programme included six weeks of after school zumba sessions which were also opened up to female staff members.

Multi sports sessions after school on Wednesdays have proved so popular with basketball enthusiasts that they are now dedicated to basketball only, with plans for some external fixtures.

An open and inclusive sporting programme for all students has been launched after school on Mondays. The focus is on the three components of health (social, physical and mental) and students are encouraged to bring their friends down and try something new to de-stress during a busy exam period and round off a challenging year. It's also an opportunity to get outside and play some summer games!

Sports leaders have continued to play an active part in school life. Seven leaders delivered two sessions each with Year 6 students from Ashby C of E primary school, many of whom will be joining Ashby School in August and enjoyed a tour of the PE faculty. Leaders previously led a 'personal best' festival, a tag rugby event at Ashby Rugby Club and a dodgeball tournament, all aimed at primary aged pupils.

Awards for endeavour and prowess have been handed out to more than 120 Year 11 core PE students, to celebrate those who repeatedly and consistently are respectful, helpful and try their best. PE postcards praising student achievement have also been sent home throughout the year.

Students can find lots of useful information by following @ashbyschool_PE on Instagram. This platform is used to celebrate student success, motivate students and provide student reminders. It is also an educational tool where students can find GCSE PE revision resources, including a weekly topic and interactive stories with short, content-based questions.



Talking Heads



PE teacher Helen Wakefield has joined Ashby School as Deputy Headteacher overseeing curriculum and progress with a special focus on age range change

Why did you decide to become a teacher?

I have always enjoyed participating in sport and physical activity. At primary school, I played netball and was the only girl in the football team (thank goodness attitudes towards equality in sport have improved over the last 20 years!). At 13, I was the youngest 'woman' in Nottinghamshire to qualify as a football referee and spent many Saturday and Sunday mornings during my teenage years officiating youth football matches.

While completing my post 16 education I had a part time job as a swimming teacher. This is where I got my first taste of 'teaching' before deciding to study PE further and become a teacher. Being able to encourage and support young people to improve and achieve is an honour and a privilege.

What were your first impressions of Ashby School?

Apart from "This place is huge!", I have been overwhelmed by the support and kindness shown by staff and students during my first week. Ashby has a strong sense of tradition and I am looking forward to becoming part of the Ashby School community.

What most excites you about your new position?

The opportunity to lead and develop an innovative Key Stage 3 curriculum as part of an all-through education at Ashby School is unbelievably exciting!

How do you like to spend your spare time?

I enjoy spending time with family and I'm never too far away from a good book.

What piece of advice would you give to your younger self?

Don't worry unnecessarily about what others think and be true to yourself.

What's the one favourite song that you always go back to?

I love listening (and dancing!) to Northern Soul and Motown. Choosing one song is impossible!

Revision sessions are taking place most nights after school to help students prepare for GCSE exams. Details of all these, along with useful revision information for all subjects, can be found in the GCSE revision hub on the school website. Parents can also find a video about revision to help them support students. Students can also use the handy [student revision planner](#) which includes a timetable of revision sessions.