

AIGLON

THE MAGAZINE



ISSUE 13 WINTER/SPRING 2020

School: Why there's nothing like the feeling of getting a parcel in the post
Mountain: Preparing the pistes – the team behind the secret life of the slopes
Ideas: Why lifelong friendship is the key to wellbeing
People: We meet the Aiglonians with a passion for flying high

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Contents

Aiglonology

- 02 Letters
- 03 News
- 05 View from the mountain
- 06 Around the mountain
- 09 Here's looking at you
- 10 Private passions
- 13 Staff room
- 14 Laid bare

A+

- 41 Class notes
- 44 Personal best
- 46 Behind the scenes
- 48 Why I love...

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Features



09 Here's looking at you

Cora Sheibani and the inspiration behind her thriving jewellery business.



24 High flyers

The Aiglonian pilots living life with their heads in the clouds.



34 Secret life of the slopes

Going behind the scenes with the team responsible for preparing the pistes.



16 Red letter days

Why there's nothing quite like the feeling of getting a parcel from home.



28 As time goes by

Friendships made at Aiglon can be some of the most enduring bonds you'll have.



44 Personal best

The Aiglon students aiming for the very top in ski mountaineering.



WELCOME TO ISSUE 13

This summer, over one long, hot weekend in June, we were treated to a thrilling sight: more than 700 Aiglonians, of all generations and alongside friends and family, gathered on the mountain to celebrate our school's 70th anniversary.

What did we get up to? Campus tours, reunions, meditation, expedition (of course!)... and much, much more. Read all about it in *Seventy Things*, the souvenir you'll find enclosed in your magazine pack.

Of course, many of you have forged strong bonds of friendship at Aiglon – bonds that can, and often do, endure a lifetime. On page 28, you tell us what makes your friendships so special.

Elsewhere, on page 34, we meet the team responsible for preparing the ski slopes that are such a feature of Aiglon life. And finally, as Aiglonians of all ages will tell you, there is nothing quite like the excitement of receiving a parcel or package from home. On page 16, we hear first-hand from students about the joy of post – and the sometimes unusual things they have received.

I hope you enjoy this issue and I look forward to hearing your thoughts, memories and anecdotes, whether by electronic or actual mail!

Valerie Scullion
Director of Admissions
and Marketing
Send your comments to
communications@aiglon.ch.



THEN AND NOW

In the Then and Now feature (Issue 12) there is an unlabelled expedition photo (below) – it's me!

Expedition Master Derek Berry took that photo of me as we were making our way to the Hörnli Hut on 25 July 1971. We summited Mt. Cervin the next day. On ascent the views from the Hörnli Ridge were spectacular, with only the summit socked in.

The weather turned on our descent and we lost the route, running into others also in that predicament who were waiting on guides to come and bring them down. But we kept at it, re-found the route and made it back to the hut after dark – a 16-hour day. We were able to stay overnight, then hiked down to Zermatt on my 17th birthday.

Noting how many have come to fully value their time at Aiglon in hindsight, I count myself as one of the lucky ones that actually did realise, while I was there, how fortunate we all were. I enjoy the magazine, staying up-to-date on the school's evolution, and reading the perspectives and stories of students, alumni and staff.

Dave Trigg (*Alpina, 1973*)



GREAT STORIES

Thanks for the digital and hard copy of the latest magazine. I think the stories and the appearance of the magazine are outstanding! I love the then-and-now stories and the personalities covered. I think that is a great way to tell a story.

Robert Liu (*Alpina, 1968*)

THREE GIRLS

I really enjoyed the feature covering the brief history of Aiglon College. (Issue 12). However, I should point out that from 1952 to 1954 there were actually three girls enrolled in Aiglon: me, my sister, Faune Yerby, and Sandra Harris, who may have stayed longer than we did. We lived in Riant Coteau, as did our brother, Jacques, and Sandra's two brothers. We were living in Nice during those years and enrolled in Cours Devienne in Nice in 1954, as did Jacques.

Nikki Yerby Taussig (*Riant Coteau, 1960*)

MY FAVOURITE

The *Aiglon Magazine* is always my favourite and the one I enjoy reading cover to cover. From the elegant design and photography to the compelling stories about alumni and current students, it draws me in and provides an important connection with the school and a nice balance of nostalgia and pride for how Aiglon has evolved over time.

Darlane Hunt (née Osborne)
(*Exeter, 1986*)

Join the conversation!

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We are delighted that Lea Henaux (Exeter, Year 13) and Nikolay Demishin (Alpina, Year 12) have joined *Aiglon Magazine's* editorial board. Alongside the rest of the board (chaired by the Director of Admissions and Marketing, Valerie Scullion), the students will advise on ideas for forthcoming issues.



SCHOOL



MOUNTAIN



PEOPLE



MIND



BODY



SPIRIT

NEWS



New Head of School

Mrs Nicola Sparrow has been appointed to the newly formed position of Head of School. Nicola, who joined Aiglon in 2012, will focus on whole school improvement and head all aspects of school life – academic, pastoral, co-curricular, admissions and marketing and communications. —

Class of 2019

Our warmest congratulations to the graduating class of 2019. As a cohort, they scored our highest IB results yet – 35.8. Aiglon is now the only Swiss school ranked among the Global Top 50 IB Schools by IB-Schools.com. The class of 2019 have secured places at highly competitive universities, including McGill, UBC, Kenyon College, Stanford, King's College London, LSE, UCL, Edinburgh, NYU Abu Dhabi and Yale. —

Aiglon Life

Looking for a new way to stay in touch with your Aiglon community? Come and join Aiglon Life, our online community platform. You can find old friends, organise and promote your own events, and offer and seek out professional mentoring opportunities. Plus, you can share your own photos and updates, as well as catching up with the latest Aiglon news. —

Meditation podcast

We have launched a new podcast to celebrate the Aiglon Meditation, one of the school's most beloved traditions. The podcast will capture and archive both today's meditations and ones from years gone by. Visit www.aiglon.ch/spirit/meditation —

Eagle Citation Award

Congratulations to Marc Borelli, who has been presented with the 2019 Aiglon College Eagle Citation Award, given each year to one or two alumni, parents or friends of Aiglon College. It honours loyalty and commitment to Aiglon College, in conjunction with an instance of exemplary service to the school. —

Record enrolment

This autumn term, we welcomed 125 news students to the school. This brings the total enrolment to 375 – the highest number of new students enrolled in the school's history. The major renovation of Le Cerf and the improvements to Clairmont have allowed the school to offer an ever-improving quality of residential accommodation. The Campus Masterplan includes a new boys' boarding house, allowing for the redeployment of Belvedere. —

I am

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In defence of curiosity



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IN OUR SOMETIMES
IMPETUOUS DESIRE
TO GET THE ANSWER,
WE MAY MISS OUT ON
THE JOY OF LEARNING



Richard McDonald
HEAD MASTER

LAST SUMMER, COMFORTABLY settling down to dinner in a cosy restaurant in Florence, my eye was caught by a picture on the wall opposite. Dining alone, I was able to indulge my passion for curiosity and focus my attention on decrypting the puzzling image. What on earth was “Biribissi”?

My initial obstacle was that I have never really studied Italian. The mash-up between long-neglected school Latin and French (surprisingly effective when communicating, alongside much

gesticulation, in Italian supermarkets and service stations) would have to do. My second obstacle was a reluctance to pester a waiter with a question unrelated to the menu or wine list.

It then occurred to me that I simply needed to pull out my phone, search Wikipedia and my quest for understanding would be solved. I paused however: was I really that impatient to have the mystery revealed, or was I interested in taking a longer but more rewarding path to knowledge? Readers of whodunnits do not (generally) turn to the back pages of the novel to see the identity of the miscreant: they relish the twists, blind alleys and self-examination, because the real satisfaction is working it out for yourself.

I would not want to disparage Wikipedia, as it is sometimes fashionable for educators

to do; it is a remarkable manifestation of human ingenuity and intellectual emancipation. But in our sometimes impetuous desire to get the answer without deriving it for ourselves, we may miss out on the key elements that generate the joy of learning.

So back I went to the Biribissi on the wall and, little by little, built up my theory. I began to feel a growing confidence that I had come close to understanding what lay behind the arcane image, but the absence of certainty remained titillating. It was the intoxication of unresolved curiosity.

What would education look and feel like without curiosity, I wondered? We have all experienced at some point in our life the feeling of being instructed, with no real interest in the matter at hand or the doors it might unlock. It is at best dull; at worst it may embed a resentment and turn us off a subject for life. A teacher has to find the trigger for curiosity; little has greater power to achieve this than the unanswered question.

At the time of the visit to Florence, I was on a course for teachers and school heads. We had each been asked to bring in and display on the screen a photo showing an aspect of the city that had marked us. There was the Ponte Vecchio; we had all walked across that and taken a photo. There was the statue of David; everyone had seen it before. There was a sunset; everybody liked that but nobody asked a question. There was a pizza; nobody asked about the ingredients or the name of the restaurant. Then the Biribissi picture popped on the screen. Puzzlement gave way to curiosity and minutes later our facilitator had us in groups trying to solve the riddle.

The power of group deduction – yes, despite our collective ignorance we worked it out – conveniently proved the very point of the session: the human mind loves to solve things. An unexplained stimulus along with carefully framed questions shifts the emphasis from what we know to how we think. So, if you’re still curious about Biribissi, don’t look it up in Wikipedia: follow the link and work it out with a friend! 🍷

If you would like to satisfy your curiosity and see the picture that inspired this column, visit aiglon.ch/biribissi

Bains de Villars

With its stunning views and upgraded facilities, the swimming pool complex is the perfect way to explore the great indoors.



ALL AIGLONIANS KNOW THE core mantra of mind, body and spirit. Those with a love of the outdoors have the stunning backdrop to enjoy, but there's also plenty to satisfy those who love activities in the great indoors.

As part of Aiglon's rich curriculum, today's students have the chance to work on their fitness in the swimming pool at the Bains de Villars – as part of the school's PE programme or, for the keener ones, in the school swim team. But their experience may be slightly different to the memories alumni may have of the pool.

"In the past, we had a very simple, basic structure," says Paola Dubi, assistant manager at Bains de Villars. "It was really just a swimming pool, and the changing rooms were old and tired. It was all in need of improvement. The whole place has changed enormously now; it's a completely new experience."

Students have long taken the short trip from the school to the pool here as part of their sports lessons, to learn to swim, train hard or take part in competitions. But what was once a very basic leisure centre with just a training pool has now become a beautiful contemporary wellness complex.

Of course, the setting around the Bains has always been spectacular – it's hard to beat stepping out after a training session to such dramatic mountain views. But today, the Bains is almost unrecognisable. It now boasts a new 25-metre pool for training, as well as an outdoor pool where bathers can lie back in the underwater bubble lounge,



Words: SANDRA HAURANT
Photography: IAN G. C. WHITE

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IT'S NOW
A COMPLETELY
NEW EXPERIENCE



dip under the swan-neck fountain and work out tension with the massage jets, while breathing in the fresh air and taking in the mountain views. And inside the brand new wellness centre, there is plenty of scope to kick back and relax, with two hammams, or steam rooms, two saunas and a cold water pool to plunge into after the heat treatments have done their work.

The building itself has been completely redesigned and built to benefit fully from its impressive backdrop, with huge windows providing a stunning panoramic view of the mountains surrounding Villars.

With such an attractive complex, it's no longer just the students who take advantage of the modern new facilities. "We often have the families of students who live in the area coming to use the pools and the wellness centre," says Paola. "It's become a very special place." **A**

Inside out —
The revamped Bains de Villars offers a whole new experience.

JANUARY - JULY 2020



Diary



Chris Masters (Belvedere, 1969) sledging by Alpina in December 1966. Photo: Patrick Roberts (Staff 1965-1987)

January – April Global Aiglon

The Admissions team will be hosting events in: Mumbai and Delhi (13-18 January); Israel (17-20 January); Moscow (25-27 February); Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur (20-24 April); and Istanbul (25-26 April). Join us!

5-7 May Domaine de Barbossi

Weekend programme of events hosted by Aiglon trustee and current parent Mr Iskandar Safa and his son, Akram (Belvedere, 2017).

28 May Sports Day

Time to get active – or at least watch the students getting active!

30 May Graduation

One of the highlights of the school calendar, graduation is our chance to celebrate this landmark moment. Save the date, and don't forget to book your accommodation now as it's sure to be a popular time of year.

3-5 July Reunion weekend

If your class is interested in celebrating this year, we are happy to help with all aspects of event coordination – please contact us at alumni@aiglon.ch

For more information or to share ideas, contact communications @aiglon.ch



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Cora Sheibani

— (Exeter, 1998)



Words: HELENA POZNIAK
Photography: ASHKAN SAHIHI

CORA SHEIBANI (EXETER, 1998) likes to push boundaries. “I rarely did anything wrong in my time at Aiglon, but I do remember trying to beat the system,” says the jewellery designer. “But I learned that sometimes this just isn’t worth the stress.”

Cora has continued to set her own challenges. After an art history degree at New York University (NYU) and a course in gemology – the science of gemstones – she set up as a jewellery designer in London at 22. By that time, she was already married and five months pregnant; three years later she had two children and a blossoming business.

“I was young and naïve,” she says. “If I knew then what I know now, I may not have done it. Doing the illogical and risking failure was worth it for what I learned.”



Hidden gems — Cora Sheibani's collections fuse the worlds of jewellery and art.

She'd nurtured her creative streak at Aiglon, where she was allowed to study art during the sixth form without taking a formal exam. “Later, I realised jewellery allowed me to be creative without being too directed. I like design more than pure art – it’s practical and problem-solving.”

Based in the UK, Cora sells directly to clients around the world, all of who prize the exclusivity and startling beauty of her designs. “I don’t want the security risk of a shop, and my clients are quite happy to buy something that not everybody has. Today, you can buy luxury goods anywhere in the world – that’s not so interesting to high-end consumers any more.”

Self-motivated and driven, she’s up every day, shortly after 5am, to walk her dogs and see to her three children before her assistant arrives. “Maybe the reason I adored boarding school was the routine and predictability, and to some extent I have that now in my life.”

Inspiration comes to her at odd times. “I’m at my most creative just sitting in the garden, or on a flight with no distractions. Opera is good for this too – you can allow your mind to drift.”

While her social life is now Ascot, exhibitions and coffees on the King’s Road, she remembers the intensity of shared experience during her schooldays. “You make the closest friends as a teenager, not by sitting next to someone in a chemistry lesson but in the space in between. Figuring out together how to set up a tent or going through the hell of hiking in wet shoes.”

And this has made her tough, self-reliant and able to tackle problems. It means too that she appreciates the diversity and internationalism of Aiglon, and still cherishes her Aiglon friends. “They are comfortable in very down-to-earth places as well as in black tie. I, too, can find a lot of pleasure in very simple situations. Not that I want to go camping any time soon.” **A**



Hands on decks

Mr Rory Kilgour spins the disks with Dmytro Shumakher.



Words: HELENA POZNIAK
Photography: JOE MCGORTY



“ WHEN AIGLON PUPILS FOUND out that their geography teacher used to be a full time DJ, after-school music became a whole lot more interesting. But not your standard music; this is a chance to share a love of the decks and creating unique sounds. Twenty years after **Mr Rory Kilgour** started DJing as a university student – before going on to have his own radio shows and perform live as a professional – his lessons have never been more in demand.

Once Mr Kilgour had put his DJing on ice to qualify as a teacher, he spent time teaching in London and Rome before joining Aiglon. It was there that he first taught students how to spin discs – “it fits easily with the school’s guiding principles,

CAS and with all aspects of challenge, respect, responsibility, diversity and service” – and since then the numbers of pupils taking lessons and attending his “Battle of the DJ” sessions have soared.

One pupil stood out for his willingness to try things out and make mistakes – 16-year-old **Dmytro Shumakher** (Delaware, Year 11), who was first transfixed by DJing after attending a concert back home in Ukraine. “Dmytro reminds me of myself when I started out – he’s hooked, he wants to be the best, he practises whenever he has time, he’s experimental and he’s making his own music,” says Mr Kilgour. “He gets the same adrenaline rush I used to get from the music.” According to him, student entertainment has improved considerably since Dmytro took to the decks.

When he teaches Dmytro, the barriers come down. As Dmytro explains: “I think it’s easier to learn when you don’t feel the distance between the teacher and the student. When we’re mixing, it works better if we’re more collaborative.” Performing alongside a critical companion

is more engaging, he says. “You feel they are a sort of audience, it’s easier to learn.”

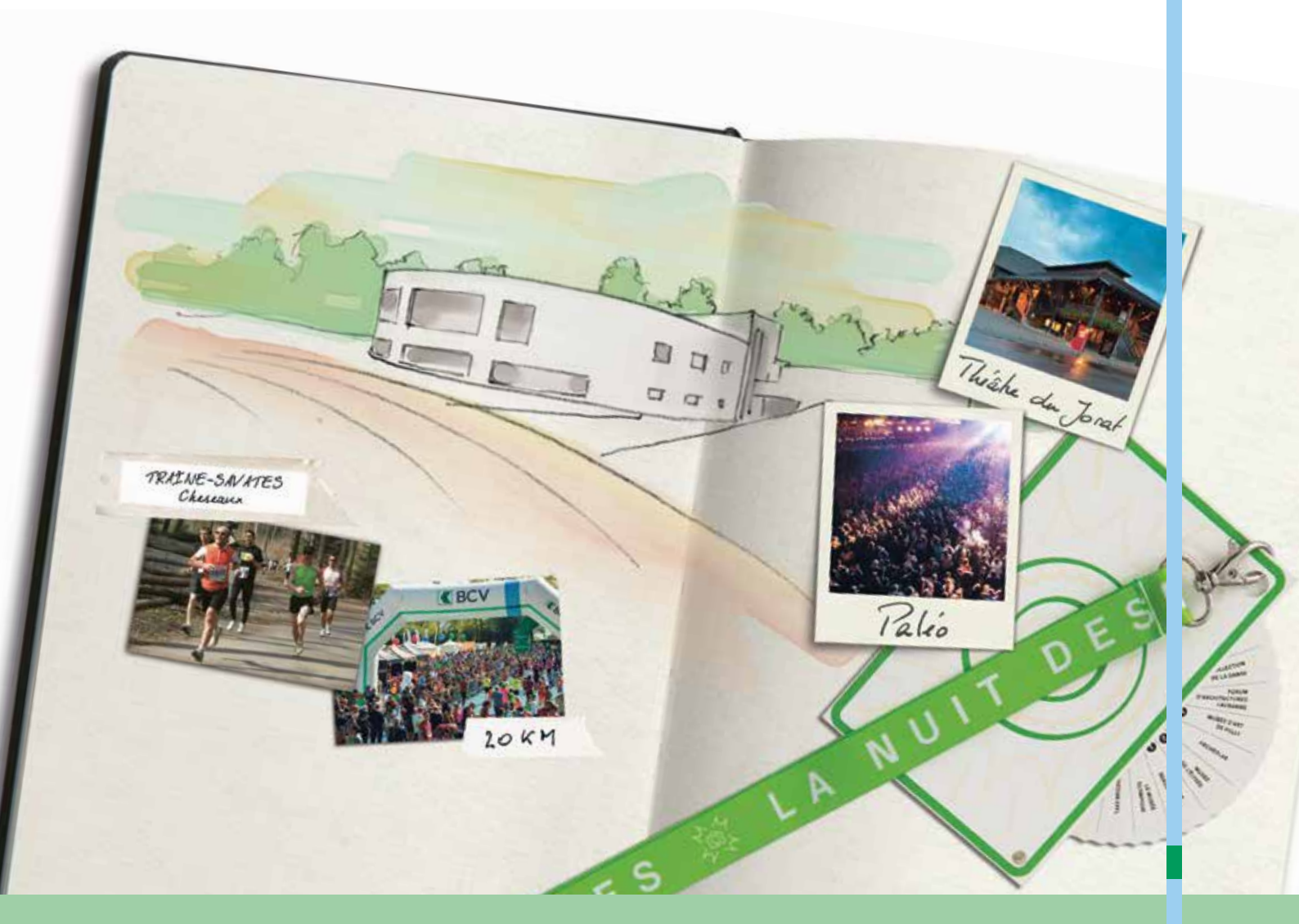
Before he arrived at Aiglon, Dmytro had never touched a DJ deck, though he’d experimented making music online. Now he’s played at a number of school events – supported by Mr Kilgour. “DJing is a big part of my life at Aiglon,” says Dmytro. “It’s very much about the communication between you and your audience – it’s an incredible feeling when you get that feedback.”

Mr Kilgour adds a word of caution. Whatever the appeal – the promise of becoming famous, influential, desirable and rich – none of these are good enough reasons to become a DJ. Instead, it should be “purely for the love of wanting to share a musical experience with others”. At Aiglon, he says, it’s helped students bond and made music accessible to many more in the school.

As for Dmytro, he’s interested in a career in business, though he won’t quit DJing. “It makes me really happy. If you don’t make people scream and jump, you won’t be a successful DJ.” 🎧

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Delivering the IB



From left —
Mr Esmond Tweedie,
Mr Nicholas Rumbold,
Mrs Laura Hamilton and
Mr Simon Rowntree.

Words: DIANE SHIPLEY
Photography: JOE MCGORTY



WAS MATHS DISCOVERED OR INVENTED? Is all history biased? Does science allow for intuition? These are just some of the questions at the forefront of the minds of Aiglon’s International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma students – and their teachers.

And it all leads to success. This year students at the school achieved some exceptionally high results and are now heading to top universities around the world, from Stanford in the US to Imperial College London.

And the magic happens in a small room in Aiglon, where the team charged with coordinating the IB gather to decide what

their very international pupils need. IB teacher **Mrs Laura Hamilton** is part of that team; she teaches Environmental Systems and Societies and oversees students’ extended essay – from gender politics and Simone de Beauvoir to Bhutanese environmental policies and the effect of fish farming on the Greek economy, students’ choices for their essay are broad.

“We’re here to support, encourage and motivate students,” she says. “I’ve never worked with so many different nationalities,” says Mrs Hamilton. “A class of 10 students will come from 10 different countries – it’s enriching.”

At the helm of the IB diploma is **Mr Esmond Tweedie**, Economics teacher and senior tutor, who has delegated key parts of the IB this year to colleagues Mrs Hamilton, philosophy teacher **Mr Simon Rowntree** and **Mr Nicholas Rumbold**. Mr Rumbold’s role is to coordinate all the Aiglon activities and ensure the IB students

have a required number and appropriate balance of Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS) options so that they engage and reflect on what they do outside the classroom.

Aiglon is now in its 10th year of offering the IB, and teachers have been tweaking and improving continuously – students’ results are well above the global average. This year, 20 per cent of students scored 40 or more out of a possible 45 – two of them hitting full marks, spurred on by some healthy rivalry.

And the IB demands more from teaching staff too, says Mr Rowntree, who has just taken charge of the Theory of Knowledge element of the IB. There are more deadlines and more coursework than

“
SOME OF THESE
STUDENTS ARE
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students get on A-level courses, he says, and he relies on colleagues to bring the Theory of Knowledge into every subject.

Success for him is the ability to push his students beyond the bounds of their knowledge. “We are all good teachers, we know how to teach. But some of these students are brighter than us. I got a message from one who told me he couldn’t sleep, he was thinking so much about a subject. When something sticks, when they want to take it further out of genuine academic interest – and you’ve made that happen – that is incredibly satisfying.”

Mrs Hamilton agrees: recently a delighted student contacted her after he’d been out to dinner with friends. “And he said, ‘Because I know so much about sustainability, when I spoke, they listened to my ideas.’ That to me is a sign of success – not that they hit a perfect high score, but they can engage in the world and speak from an educated point of view.”



Photography:
JOE MCGORTY

Geography

With a focus on global citizenship and future sustainable management, geography students could not be more hands-on.

- 1 Digital flowmeter for river fieldwork
- 2 Ranging poles for surveying
- 3 An orange (for when technology fails!)
- 4 1:25000 map of the local area
- 5 10 metre tape measure for surveying
- 6 Measuring cylinder
- 7 Digital anemometer
- 8 Hand-held anemometer
- 9 Max/min thermometer
- 10 Smartphone for spatially locating data
- 11 Folding ruler
- 12 Metre ruler
- 13 Simple clinometer for slope surveying
- 14 Clipboard
- 15 Wellington boots
- 16 Pencils for notes and field sketches
- 17 50cm quadrat for sampling
- 18 Rain gauge
- 19 Digital thermometer
- 20 Hygrometer
- 21 Barometer







Words: LUCY JOLIN
Photography: JOE MCGORTY



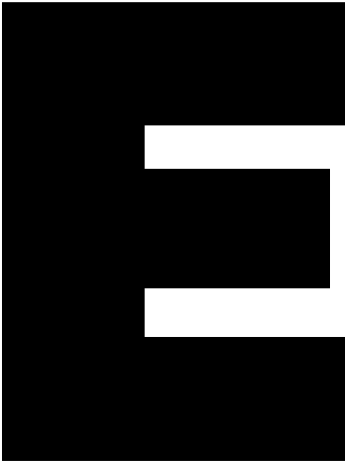
RED LETTER DAYS

A taste of home or a surprise gift – there's nothing quite like the feeling of getting a parcel through the post.



**FEOFANIYA (FIFA)
NOVIKOVA, LA CASA,
YEAR 7**

The anonymity of the ubiquitous Amazon box is not an option for Fifi Novikova's mother. Rather, she gives each letter to her daughter the personal touch. "I get beautiful decorated envelopes from my mom," says Fifi. "Usually she will write something like she misses me. Sometimes inside there will be something like a fake tattoo because I really like them, or a picture of my favourite bird. It makes me feel that people love me. It's so special that my mom decorates the envelopes herself and doesn't buy them from the shop." Her mother's decorations have inspired Fifi to do the same with her own letters. "I don't decorate envelopes when I send things to her, but I do draw little pictures of my dog Didi, who is a husky." →



VERY MORNING, AT AROUND EIGHT O'CLOCK, DELIGHT comes to Aiglon. Clothes, sports gear, food, toys, keepsakes, stationery: all these treasured things and more make their way up the mountain in the post van and wait to be claimed by their owners.

That doesn't take long, says **Ms Annemarie Gruter**, one of the school's receptionists, because there is nothing quite like receiving a parcel from home. "We have a system which allows us to scan a parcel's code and enter the name of the student it is for, and that sends an email to the student telling them to come to reception," she says. "I have seen children arrive to collect their parcels only two minutes after the email has been sent! It's a very nice part of the job to hand them out. Sometimes they even open it in front of you because they are so eager to see what's inside."

It's a big part of her role, too. Last year, Aiglon received 5,529 parcels, and this year, with an extra 30 students, it's on course to beat that record, with 687 arriving in the first few weeks of term alone as new students discover gaps in their wardrobes or their menu. At Christmas, 400 parcels turned up. Ms Gruter is kept busy not just handing parcels out but also checking that they are in the right condition to be handed out: she tells students not to accept damaged parcels and to arrange a new delivery. Some parcels arrive with customs duties to pay, too, or forms to fill out, which she helps students complete.

Of course, it's not just the parcel's named recipient who gets the surprise of receiving it. Ms Gruter recalls the time that a staff member sent off for a large quantity of dry dog food. "The parcel

was torn! So, you could see trails of food coming all the way to reception from the track, then following the route of the person who collected the parcel, all the way out to her car." Rather more pleasant was the pupil who received a delivery of a hundred fresh roses and distributed them to all and sundry. "She had so many, she didn't know what to do with them all. The school smelled very sweet during that time!"

This ritual of receiving a parcel is a big part of boarding school life, says **Mrs Alanna Rowntree**, Houseparent at La Casa. "Whenever someone gets a parcel and you see them coming back home, you see them carrying this box, a little package and they are just so happy," she says. "You know that it's made their day. They just look radiant. It makes them feel so special, that someone has taken the time to pick something, put it in a package and go to the post office. It's so different from just ping-pong across an email – I never hear anyone talk excitedly about getting an email from their parents. It's completely personal and makes them feel really special."

While the younger students might be a little more vocal in their delight, the joy of a parcel doesn't wear off when you get older, says Mrs Rowntree. "The older ones don't get blasé over it and neither do I. My mum sends me parcels still, with little home comforts, and I still can't wait to open them. It never gets old because it's unexpected, it doesn't happen regularly, it happens every now and then and it's just such a lovely surprise." Her favourite gift: chocolate from the UK. "Swiss chocolate just isn't the same!" she insists. "We like Cadbury's!"

There's no such thing, says Mrs Rowntree, as a particularly special parcel: if a loved one has sent it, that's enough. "Every single parcel always has the right thing. It doesn't matter what it is. It's been picked for that child because someone special was thinking about them, and it makes them feel connected. It just lights them up." →



**EMILY WANG,
LA CASA, YEAR 8**

For Emily, a parcel is a little piece of home. "I often get food, Chinese food, like noodles and rice. You can't really get them here," she says. "And they send clothes for the changing weather and some things that you wear at home." When her parents send her things, she says, it makes her feel their love from far away. "It's like they really care about you. The things that they send are not just what you need for living. It is like getting love from your parents, or like getting a birthday present. It's special: it's not like getting a present from your friend or something. When you get a from-home present you feel nice in your heart and that feels good."

**BRODY SANDLER,
LA BAITA, YEAR 7**

There is just one small problem with Brody's baseball catcher's mitt: it's for the wrong hand. But this is unlikely to deter him from using it – or, indeed, his houseparent, Mr Hamilton, who suggested it might be a fun thing to receive. “I like throwing balls and it's fun to play catch with a glove. It is special because my parents sent it to me and I was expecting it, but I was disappointed because they had got me the wrong handed glove and I wasn't expecting that!” He's still pleased with it, though. “It feels good when you get something, because it tells you that your parents still care about you and it shows that they want to keep in touch while you are at boarding school.” →





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It tells you they
care and they want
to stay in touch

BRODY SANDLER

“

It is expensive to send things to Switzerland so when I get things from home, I am very happy!

YOSUKE MATSUMOTO



**YOSUKE MATSUMOTO,
LA BAITA, YEAR 7**

Uniquely among Aiglon students of a certain age, Yosuke claims to not get too excited about sweet things coming through the post. "I don't like sweet things that much!" he insists. "I do get them sometimes, but my mother doesn't like me eating too many of them." He prefers the practical presents. "My parents send me clothes that I need for the weather. If it is getting colder, they send me a jacket or warm pyjamas." But whether it's sweets or a sweater, he still loves the feeling of getting that parcel. "When I get things from home, I am very happy. It is expensive to send things to Switzerland, but my parents don't mind doing it for me, so I feel very good that they do that for me. I always feel like I should say thank you to them!" 🍌





Words: MEGAN WELFORD
ILLUSTRATIONS: JONAS BERGSTRAND

HIGH

Up, up – and away!
For some of us, life in the clouds
is not just exhilarating,
it's a way of life.

FLYERS

JEFF GLASS (BELVEDERE, 1974) HAS ALWAYS LOVED flying, but there is one flight in particular that remains seared on his memory. “I am eight years old, on a Swissair night flight from New York to Geneva. The attendant is looking for restless little boys, and there is only one – me.

“She tells me to follow her and takes me into the cockpit, where one guy puts me in the seat behind the captain. All I can think is: ‘Wow!’ It’s like being in a spaceship. Then I see the sun rise over the north Atlantic and it’s gorgeous, with these beams of light radiating straight up. I’m listening to the chit-chat of the three guys and I just think, ‘I want to be like them.’”

Love at first flight is far from unusual. “People either can’t wait to sign up or they say it’s the scariest thing they’ve ever done in their life,” says Jeff, who is now a pilot – of course – and owner of private jet company, Glass Aviation. “On my first solo flight I felt like I was king of the world. My fear just went – I was so focused, so riveted. People talk about pilots being some kind of Type A personality, but I don’t know about that. I just think it’s so exciting and so beautiful. When I fly over Greenland in the spring and summer and see the ice sheets breaking into pieces, I still have to film it. My younger brother says, ‘How can a guy who has made this flight so many times over 45 years still get so excited over a videotaping of Greenland?’”

John Gerhardt (Alpina, 2003), Aiglon’s Senior Computer Services Technician, who flies helicopters in his spare time, is another swept away by the thrill. John still has a VHS tape of the time, aged 14, his parents bought him a helicopter discovery package. “I was in awe. We went in a little back door at Bristol airport. Our helicopter was parked next to a 737.”

Jeff and John are testament to the shared sense of wonder among pilots: having unparalleled access to parts of the world, seeing sights others will never see and enjoying an entirely different view, changes you. “You really see things differently from a helicopter,” explains John. “It’s a 360-degree angle because you can see underneath too. It’s like being in a bubble.

“People get lost, they don’t recognise where they are because your experience, even of a place you know well, is so different. In a car it can take an hour and 20 minutes to drive from Gryon to another valley. In a helicopter you can drop down to the other side of the mountain in six minutes.”

But he understands it’s not for everyone. “You think you know someone,” he says, “but you don’t know how they will react when they get into a helicopter. One friend screamed; she hadn’t realised it takes off vertically. Another more calm, collected guy sat with white knuckles not saying a word the whole way. He hated it.”

For those with that sense of awe and childlike excitement, however, it can turn into a lifelong passion. “In the split second when I’m not completely focused on flying, I giggle to myself,” says investment manager **Nick Carnahan** (Delaware, 2008), who holds a commercial helicopter licence and flies for fun. “It’s so fantastic you find yourself thinking, ‘This is ridiculous!’ It’s like being a kid all over again. It’s so wild and exciting.

“My family took on a heli-ski business just over the border in the Italian Alps,” recalls Nick. “I’d sit next to the pilot and the base was halfway up the mountain, so we’d drop down first, falling down into the valley and then float for a split second before climbing back up. I loved that feeling. →





“

On my first solo flight I felt like I was king of the world. I was so focused, so riveted

JEFF GLASS (BELVEDERE, 1974)

“And then there’s the fact that you have a completely different level of accessibility in a helicopter. You only need 20 square metres to land anywhere. You can load up a barbecue, some fishing poles and land on a beach no-one’s been to for 20 years. It’s such a big machine, you can feel the power of it, the vibrations, the butterflies in your stomach, weightlessness. I’d been working doing admin for the business, but I thought, ‘I want to be doing this all the time.’”

Nataly and **Ernst Langner** are parents to **Alexander Namer-Langner** (Belvedere, 2019) and own a Global jet and an Embraer Legacy, which they fly together for fun, although Nataly has been involved in several special missions. In 2013, she flew with Prince Harry to Antarctica for his polar trek with war veterans, *Walking with the Wounded*. “He was very friendly, very determined, very focused,” she recalls.

Mainly though, the couple fly themselves and their friends, but note that they always try to order the very latest technology to ensure they stay as environmentally efficient as they can. “We like going fast and going far,” she says. “We love the freedom and the flexibility. You can just pick up and go wherever you want. You can land on a strip by a safari lodge in Africa, flying low and seeing the animals all around you. In those situations, you’re in control of everything; it’s like building your own airport. It’s wonderful. When we were crossing the North Pole we spotted a polar bear and just dropped down above it to get a closer look.”

Steve Dettwiler (Belvedere, 1975), now runs a helicopter brokerage company in Vancouver, BC, having recently retired from a life flying helicopters out of Canada. He recalls the summer he spent flying 3,500 miles across the Arctic Circle, tracking satellites to make new maps. He had got his pilot’s licence flying out of British Columbia in a Bell 47 G2 helicopter not long after his time at Aiglon (which was where he says he developed his sense of adventure). “In Alberta they said, ‘Here’s a tent and a sleeping bag – go and fight fires,’” he explains. “It was a steep learning curve, with a lot of responsibility.”

Fighting fires meant getting firefighters as close as possible to the blaze for them to lower themselves down a 300ft line. “That’s called rappelling or a ‘Rapattack’. You teach them to use a breaking

system to descend and you send their gear down in cargo nets on a long line.” Steve’s flying career has included tracking wildlife, tagging polar bears, GPS mapping and search and rescue in the world’s most remote places. “It’s a great feeling to rescue someone who might not have been found,” he says.

As with driving a car, pilots develop bodily learning, where you no longer have to think about what your body is doing, or about the risk you are taking. And that’s lucky because when it comes to this kind of work the stakes couldn’t be higher. Steve recalls having engine failure out of Inuvik in the Arctic, where it was -52°C on the ground. “We were stuck in a blizzard for three days. Then minutes after we took off, the engine went quiet. It had just died. There’s a free wheel unit that disengages when that happens and the blades twist, maintaining the RPM, so we managed to autorotate down and land in one piece. You only get one shot at that. We have all lost a lot of friends in this business.”

“If you have an accident in one of these things it’s not a fender bender,” agrees Nick. “You can feel it if you’re not focused and then you shouldn’t fly. I’ve turned back many times if I feel that way. You need confidence, but also self-awareness.”

And maybe you need a certain personality type, where excitement and curiosity are stronger than fear. “We were flying from Goose Bay in Canada to Sondrestrom, Greenland, on New Year’s Eve,” recounts Jeff. “The forecast had been clear, but it can change in five minutes. Suddenly we had half-mile visibility in the snow, with not enough fuel to turn back. The US Air Force guy on the ground had to talk us through the descent; my heart was pounding out of my chest. I looked up and there were two lights on the snow, one blue, one red, and that meant the runway was underneath. They had just ploughed a line through the snow for us. It was really exciting. The guy on the ground was wearing a tuxedo because he’d had to leave a New Year’s Eve party. He was less happy.”

Death-defying excitement aside, Aiglon’s flyers agree that the real allure of flight lies in the unique experience of how it feels to soar through the air. “You feel like you’re dreaming,” says Nataly. “Looking at the clouds, looking at the stars. It’s so beautiful and peaceful. And there’s always sunshine when you fly.” 🌞

As time goes by

Precious, enduring and good for your health.
The friendships made on the mountain
are among the most enduring bonds many
Aiglonians have, creating an invisible thread
that stays with them for the rest of their lives.



Words: LUCY JOLIN

*"Our friendship is
a beautiful thing"*



**KAREL FISHER (ALPINA 1965)
AND TONY JASHANMAL (ALPINA 1965)**

*"We rally around when
someone is in need"*



**LUGI IRAUZQUI (DELAWARE, 1982) AND AIGLON FRIENDS AT THE WEDDING
OF RITA HERRING (EXETER, 1984) IN SAN MIGUEL DE ALLENDE, MEXICO**

THEY WERE TWO BOYS FROM VERY different worlds. **Tony Jashanmal** (Alpina, 1965) was from Bombay, his family and their business spanning the Middle East. **Karel Fisher** (Alpina, 1965) was born and brought up in Hawaii, where his father was a sugar industry executive and his mother an entrepreneur and journalist. But when they arrived at Aiglon, they became fast friends.

In those days, there were no direct flights back to their homes: it took days for them to get back. So, they spent many summer holidays in Europe together, hitchhiking and entertaining each other with Tony's guitar and Karel's ukulele. After graduation, they travelled together on the Orient Express to Istanbul and then to the Middle East and beyond. Half a century later, much has changed, but their friendship is still flourishing. They still meet and travel together, but this time with wives and children, too.

"There must have been something about our temperaments which made us friends from very early on," says Tony. "We had similarities: we loved hiking and expeditions; we understood each other's habits." Karel agrees. "That's the great thing about Aiglon: people from the opposite ends of the world meet and find common interests. We have common ground, but we don't agree on everything. That's no fun! We have always had good arguments about philosophy, economics and the different ways that people live. It is a beautiful thing, our friendship."

And now, science is recognising the many benefits of such friendships, too. Research has found that those with high quality friendships have fewer heart attacks and fewer strokes. "People live longer if they have these friendships," says Professor William Chopik, social-personality psychologist at Michigan State University, who has extensively studied the benefits of long-term friendship, particularly in later life.

"And friendships become more and more important over time, which we don't see with other relationships. We found that with every successive year, friendships were larger predictors of happiness. Friends are special. They're different from family. You choose to spend time together. You're not bound by blood or major feelings of obligation."

Friendships like these, which endure way beyond school days, are something precious, and Aiglon alumni know them well. There is something about the school experience, they say, which binds them together: invisible threads that span the globe. "I have carried my Aiglon friendships throughout my life: they are among my closest friends," says **Kanna Kitamura** (Clairmont, 1990).

What makes these bonds so strong? The shared experience of living together at such a formative time is very powerful, says Kanna. She had never even seen the school before she arrived there. "My parents dropped me off at JFK and they said: 'OK, see you later!' So, I arrived by myself in Geneva and I met **Cathy Colella** (Clairmont, 1988), who is now Cat Graham. She made me feel really welcome. A group of us had arrived early and, during that week at Clairmont, we all bonded. We didn't have anyone to rely on but each other. I am still in touch with all my roommates today. They are very much still a part of my life."

Kanna can trust her Aiglon friends, she says, because they know who she really is. "If I was trying to be something I'm not, my friends would call me out on it. They would say: 'That's absolutely not true; you've always been like this since you were a child!' They will be very objective and honest with me. It is wonderful knowing that there are people out there who really know what I'm like, from a mental, emotional and personal perspective."

That bond is often strengthened by the inevitable trials and tribulations of growing up. **Zeina Dakak** (Clairmont, 1994) remembers being in trouble and not being allowed to attend classes: her friends wrote little notes of support to her, tied them around pebbles and threw them through her window. And Kanna has treasured memories of midnight feasts in the kitchen at Clairmont.

"We'd all gather and make pasta in the middle of the night! Sometimes, when people were going through tough times, we all gathered together. We got to know each other from a human perspective, and that has been incredibly important to me in my life. Today's ideas around diversity and inclusion are not something that is foreign to me, because I grew up with so many dear and close friends from so many different cultures."

There is something, too, about the school's unique philosophy that breeds strong friendships. **Ali Daud** (Belvedere, 1984) is part of a close-knit friendship group which meets up for shared holidays two or three times a year. The core group expands and contracts depending on who can come: sometimes it includes spouses and children, too. "It was the experiences, the values and the ups and downs of growing up in the same environment at that age which has created this bond," he says. "That's what has stayed with me."

Luigi (Luis) Irauzqui (Delaware, 1982) is another member of the group, and says that a common topic of discussion is just how lucky they all were to have had the opportunities they had at Aiglon. "It almost feels like we were selected. There were people from around the world, for all these different reasons. →

The Shah of Iran had been deposed, so there were a lot of Iranian children. The same thing happened when there were problems in Canada, or problems in parts of Africa and we would have African children.

“We made friendships because we had a lot in common. We had similar interests, similar parents, and now we still move in the same circles. It doesn’t matter how much time we are apart, we just fall back into the way we were at school; we just pick up where we left off.

“The only trouble is that I am not in any of the photographs – and there’s a good reason for that: I was taking all of them! It’s the same thing with all our weddings: I’m never in the photographs because I’m always behind the camera.”

Long after graduation, Aiglon alumni are still living the school’s principles, being there for each other in the good times and the bad, supporting each other and seeking to give back. Zeina speaks movingly of the incredible support she had from her friend group when her beloved father, Robert Dakak, passed away earlier this year. “It was from people all over the globe. They were truly by my side at this difficult time. It was my father who made the decision to send me to Aiglon, and it is one I will be grateful for, all my life. I don’t know if I would have had those solid foundations if I had been to another school.”

But like any worthwhile thing in life, keeping friendships going requires effort. As we get older, our priorities change: there are new jobs, new relationships and new homes to keep us more than busy. Social media has made keeping in touch easier – “I love the way that people will say hi from Kuala Lumpur one minute and from Miami the next,” says Zeina – but Tony and Karel managed to do it long before the advent of the Facebook age. Sometimes they would surprise each other with calls in the middle of the night, depending on wherever they happened to be in the world. They wrote letters, and, says Tony, “occasionally a postcard would arrive!” They were early adopters of email – Karel still has his original AOL address – and whenever they could, they met up.

“One day, I stayed with Karel and his wife in San Francisco,” remembers Tony. “On Monday morning, Karel was off to work and I was going to the airport. I thanked him for the lovely weekend, and he said: ‘No, it’s I who have to thank you.’ I said: ‘Why? For eating all your food and drinking your best wine?’ He said: ‘Thank you for keeping our friendship going. If it hadn’t been for your frequent visits, it would have died.’ And that would have been a pity. I was lucky. I travel a lot for work and not everybody is in that position. I could make time.”

Nowadays, of course, it’s hard to imagine a time before WhatsApp and Facebook groups – though Ali still has his black book of phone numbers. “I think we must have managed somehow!” New platforms have allowed new networks to flourish, and meet-ups have become far easier to organise. But it doesn’t matter, says Zeina, if you don’t see people regularly.

“You can go years without seeing someone. But then you meet and have coffee, and it’s like you were back together again in school. They just get you. There is no having to prove anything. They understand you. If you decide to jump back in after 20 years, nobody’s going to scold you, because you will always have that connection.”

It’s the same for Kanna. “We are all far away from each other, but it never feels like it’s long since we’ve seen each other,” she says. “It always feels like yesterday. When we were at Aiglon we would live far from each other: in Africa or New York or Asia or Europe. Time and space did not matter at that time. And they still don’t matter.”

Luigi says the bond is made from the very earliest days. “When you are at boarding school, you’re forced to gravitate towards people.” He sought out like-minded souls with similar interests. “We forced ourselves to do sport and extra-curricular activities; I loved skiing in particular. I have great memories of expedition, losing our tent ‘on purpose’ and, ultimately, having to sleep in a bus shelter! Delaware had a reputation as the house for bad boys, and I guess we bonded because we were naughty!

“It is a wonderful thing, this group of friends,” he adds. “I can’t quite put my finger on what makes it so special. I think it’s because we are like an extended family. We care for each other. We rally around when someone is in need. That’s what I want from my friendships – to be there in the bad times as well as the good times. We have nurtured these friendships for 40 years: that’s why they are so strong.”

In today’s fast-moving world, where someone can become your ‘friend’ with a single click, real, enduring friendships are more valuable than ever. Cherish them, advises Ali, and make the effort to keep them going: you won’t regret it. “It’s very difficult to make the same kind of friendships later in life that you make at that formative stage,” he says. “Don’t take friendship for granted. There will be times when life will try to drift you in a different direction, and the friendships may seem less important. But don’t let them fall by the wayside.” Zeina agrees. “When I arrived at Aiglon I was an only child. When I graduated, I left with countless brothers and sisters. I left with a new family.” **A**

"I left Aiglon with
a new family"



**AKUSHIKA THOMPSON (CLAIRMONT, 1994), ZEINA DAKAK (CLAIRMONT, 1994),
MARINA BUSSE (CLAIRMONT, 1993) AND RACHEL CAREY (CLAIRMONT, 1992)**



The secret life of the slope



Words: SARAH WOODWARD

The sun sets on another fabulous day on the piste – but for one team, work is just beginning. Because getting the slopes ready for the next day doesn't happen by magic: it's a combination of technology, hard work – and a little imagination.

M

IDNIGHT ON THE SLOPES. IN THE distance you can hear the low hum of après-ski rest and recuperation. But up close can be heard skiing's real soundtrack: the grind of machinery, crunching snow and the occasional discussion. Rarely heard by most skiers, it is here where piste-groomer Oscar Bonzon is in his element.

"I am at my most 'tranquille' in the cold of night," says Oscar, whose hard work starts as soon as the last skier leaves the slope. "The responsibility of the job – making sure that skiers have the perfect conditions in the morning – is heavy, but I love it. To be able to say I did that for them is magnificent."

A farmer by summer, each winter Oscar heads up two team of 22 'pisteurs' in the Télé-Villars-Gryon ski area, where he has worked for more than 20 years. His season

starts with the first snows, but these days they can be a long time coming. "The last decade it has become more and more difficult due to the increase in temperature. I want it to be between -5° and 8°C early in the season to create a perfect snow base, but that is rare these days."

Not that most skiers notice, thanks to the battery of snow cannons Oscar has at his command. "We start off the season with four to five days of snow production, though conditions have to be just right. If the temperature is too high, we lose too much water. Through the season, snow production is fully automated, with the cannons set to go off as soon as the temperature reaches a certain level. It is quite technical, as the canons produce much denser snow than natural snow flakes, and we have to get the mix right."

In fact, these days, Oscar spends as much time in front of his screen as on the slopes. "I used to be out on the pistes to look at conditions every morning and evening, but now I can do it all online with cameras. I have 10 piste grooming machines which go out as soon as the last skiers have left the slopes, whether it is snowing or not. The teams are often out there working until two in the morning, with a separate back up team for during the day. We need to be able to respond to changing natural conditions, but also make use of the new technology to produce perfect pistes, whatever the weather." →

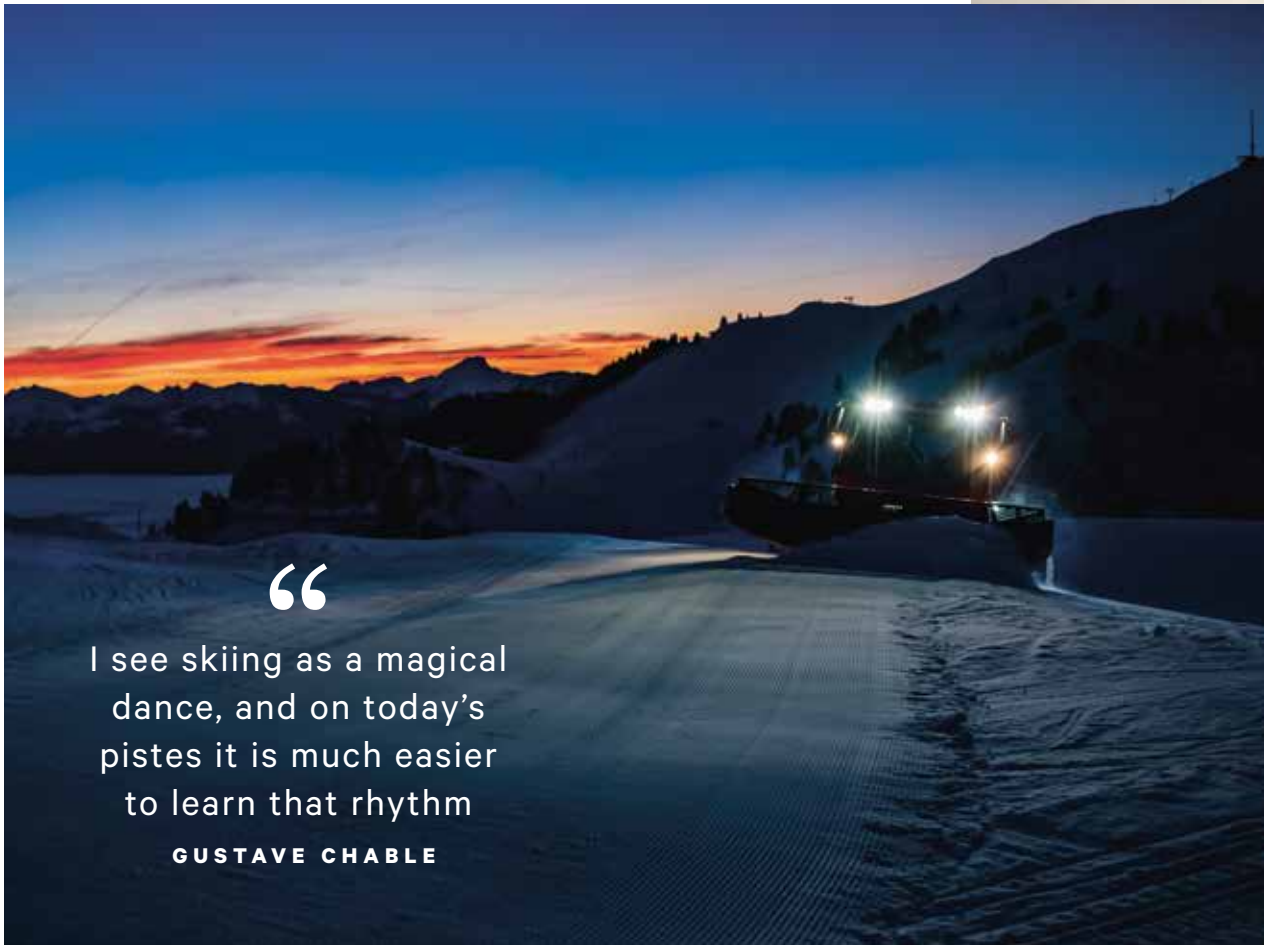


A snowcat is shown working on a snowy slope at night. The machine is illuminated by its own headlights, casting a bright glow on the snow. The background is dark, with the silhouette of a mountain range visible under a night sky. The snowcat is positioned in the lower center of the frame, moving towards the right. The snow is covered in tracks and appears to be in the process of being groomed or prepared for a run.

“

I am at my most ‘tranquille’
in the cold of the night.
The responsibility is
heavy, but I love it

OSCAR BONZON



“

I see skiing as a magical dance, and on today's pistes it is much easier to learn that rhythm

GUSTAVE CHABLE

Gustave Chable, instructor at the Ecole Suisse de Ski Villars, still remembers how, in the 1960s, slopes were flattened by a man skiing down, dragging a roller behind him, and shovel-carrying pisteurs dug holes at regular intervals to test the depth of the snow, moving snow by hand to cover bare patches behind bumps. “Today the piste machines are equipped with GPS to measure the thickness of the snow cover, and the team move snow around with the machines to ensure even cover,” he says.

The result is pistes which Gustave describes as regular, easy to access – and beautiful to ski on. “These days people expect the pistes to be perfect, whatever the weather. And they really are magnificent, but that brings its own problems.”

He points out that it is much easier to learn to ski today than when he started out. “Give me three days and I can teach almost anyone to go down a run safely, enjoying themselves. I see skiing as a magical dance,

and on today's pistes it is much easier to learn that rhythm.

“But precisely because the pistes are so well-groomed, there is a tendency for inexperienced skiers, especially the young, to go faster than they are capable of. The first thing I teach them is to pay attention to others around you, then later how to overtake safely. There are rules of ‘comportment’ on the slopes. And above all, from the very youngest age, the skier needs to know how to stop!”

David Mansfield (Belvedere, 1982), manager of Aiglon's ski team, agrees. “I teach our racers to be responsible and aware so they stay safe. The hardness of today's pistes means that we encounter different sorts of challenges, and impacts are a real threat.” But David also points out that the improved efficiency of the lift systems has its own consequences. “I remember when the lifts carried 500 people per hour; today it is 2,500. You get to the top quicker, you



come down faster, and there are more people on the slopes. The result is that not only are the pistes put to a much harder test, but that inevitably there is more potential for collisions.”

One of David’s charges, junior ski racer **Alex Ogden** (Alpina, Year 10), likes the going as solid as possible. “When the snow is really packed I get a greater response from my skis and, of course, I go faster.” With a motto of “go for it or go home”, Alex recently suffered a stress fracture of his L5 vertebra, but he hasn’t let that get to him. “If you want to win, you are also going to crash sometimes – that’s skiing,” he says. “But without all the work the pisteurs put in, I wouldn’t be able to get the fast times.” This is a lesson Alex learnt when he competed in the Aiglon College Cup Races on the Bretaye slopes in 2017. “The temperature that day was 20°C, yet I got my fastest time on my third run in the U12 Giant Slalom. It shows just how well the pistes held up.” Alex’s reward was a gold medal.

With sponsorship from HEAD, Alex has already ordered his four sets of new skis for the coming season and he is looking forward to testing them out on the slopes. “I like to get the first lift up, when the slopes are at their best, and be back down by lunch, having skied five hours. For testing, you need a piste with a lot of variation in it, preferably one where you go quickly from flat to steep.

At Villars, the Grand Chamossaire is very flat and good for getting the feel of the skis. Then you can ski on to Bretaye for more pitch to try out the skis on the hard.”

Alex also appreciates the work put in on the slopes to increase the fun. “It’s great when the pisteurs have built a jump or set out a whole roped-off area for us to practise Super G. I’ve learnt to ski through any bumps, though they did seem a lot bigger when I was smaller!” And indeed, making sure the skiers enjoy themselves safely is one of Oscar’s key concerns. “We have widened the pistes for the families and young skiers to reduce the chance of skiers crashing into each other. And when there has been a dump of powder, we make sure there are tracks for those skiing in the off-piste areas to get back to the marked piste without having to pole too much.”

David wants his ski team to appreciate the effort behind their enjoyment. “Sometimes we go out when it has just snowed, and

the racers ask, ‘Why is the piste like this?’ I tell them that they might have to be a bit more careful in the conditions, but the pisteurs have been out since the crack of dawn getting it ready for them. We are very lucky at Villars – the team behind piste-grooming really want to do a good job for us, making sure we have beautiful slopes every morning. Ninety-nine per cent of the time they are like billiard tables. I often think, ‘Wow! How did they put back the mess from the evening before?’”

David works closely with Oscar’s team when ski races are approaching. “We want the surface rock-hard so that all competitors can benefit from the same conditions, and sometimes I will ask them to send extra water through the snow cannons to harden the surface up. Man-made snow can weigh more than 400kg a cubic metre, compared to 100-150kg for the natural stuff, so naturally it produces a firmer surface. But the actual weather conditions remain the biggest factor in how the slope turns out.”

Still, the pressure will be on Oscar in the lead-up to the 2020 Youth Olympics, when Villars will host the ski cross, boardercross and ski mountaineering events, while the downhill skiing will take place at Les Diablerets. “We have been preparing for the Youth Olympics for three years,” Oscar says. “You need 40,000 cubic metres of snow for a race and we have put in more snow cannons. We always try to create enough snow to be able to redistribute it around the pistes. But I will still be praying for cold nights next January.”

At least he won’t be worrying about course design – the ski cross course at Villars is renowned. Gustave describes the hair-raising discipline as a magnificent test, appreciated by people all over the world, and one which has put the ski domain even more on the map.

“Through Magicpass, the more-affordable annual season ticket that covers most stations in Vaud and Vallais, more and more local people are able to ski across the area. Coming skiing is expensive, but so is maintaining the lifts and grooming the pistes. And the really good thing is that now people can go and ski across the region, they end up coming back to Villars because the pistes are so great!” 🍎

CAVIN
artgraphic



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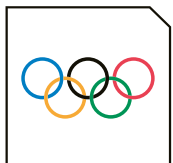


FSC



Protect our planet

LAUSANNE
2020

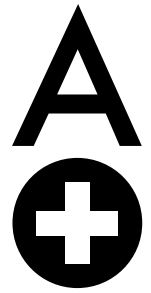


YOUTH
OLYMPIC
GAMES

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OFFICIAL PROVIDER



- 41 Class notes
- 44 Personal best
- 46 Behind the scenes
- 48 Why I love...

CLASS NOTES

Share your news and get in touch with the Aiglon community at alumni@aiglon.ch



OUR SECOND MOTHER

Before the 70th anniversary reunion, a small group of us were able to have a quiet and delightful meal with Bibi Parsons. It is always so good to see her; she is a second mother to so many of us – so loved and no doubt a reason so many of us attended the Aiglon Reunion! It was so good to see her in great spirits and fabulous to be able to be with her.

Robin Mycock (Alpina, 1969)



FÊTE DES VIGNERONS

I recently played an important role as part of the Executive Direction for the Fête des Vignerons – the traditional winegrowers' festival – and had the pleasure of welcoming Head Master Mr McDonald and Faisal Bin Sultan. The festival has been organised by the Confrérie des Vignerons (Brotherhood of Winegrowers) in Vevey since 1797, and it was another fabulous success!

Bart Kistemaker (Alpina, 2001)

TAKE TO THE SKIES

Having travelled from Australia to attend the Aiglon 70th anniversary reunion in late June, **Chris Simmons** (Belvedere, 1967) and **Robin Mycock** (Alpina, 1969) decided to visit Meiringen in central Switzerland in the hope of seeing the Swiss Air Force (SAF) in full flight at the local airbase. Chris is a keen aviator; Robin came along for the fast jet experience! After driving down from Zurich and enjoying a pleasant meal in Meiringen township in the evening, the next morning the SAF duly obliged by launching both F18 Hornet and F5 aircraft on various sorties during the day from the airbase adjacent to the friends' hotel. What a wonderful start to their Aiglon reunion experience!



VIOLIN LOVERS

The Menuhin Competition is the world's leading violin competition for people under 22 years old, and I am a proud member of its Board of Directors. Next year the competition will be in Richmond VA. It is my intention to host an event in Richmond during the final weekend, for friends who love classical music and those who would be interested in becoming potential sponsors. It would be a pleasure for me to extend an invitation to any Aiglon alumni living in Richmond or nearby. If you'd like more information, please contact alumni@aiglon.ch

Anna Cecilie Holst (née Seyersted) (Clairmont, 1973)

Next Gen!



Name: Amin Hassanali

House: Alpina

Graduated: Class of 2019

What's on: I'm currently doing an internship in the commercial arm of Mootral, a pharmaceutical startup.

What's hot: In early 2019, current Aiglon student Camilia Fateh and I co-founded our passion project, Dix Rêves, a non-profit clothing brand that empowers women and children through youth education in the arts.

What's next: In January 2020, I start my undergraduate studies at Babson College in Massachusetts.

What's Aiglon: Aiglon creates multifaceted students that can not only cope with, but also make the best out of, any situation.

ART IN MADRID

Since graduating from Boston University, my focus has been on my career as an oil painter in Madrid, while also working on various creative projects, such as the Quinoa Experience, a pop-up event production company. I have an upcoming show in a Los Angeles gallery as well as various events including my work in Madrid (andreikokolokoulak.com).

Andrei Okolokoulak (Belvedere, 2014)



BACK TO THE CHAPEL

I'm thrilled to share the great news of the christening of my daughter, Clara, at the Aiglon Chapel. Two other Aiglonians were there: Clara's godmother **Joy Dibrov** (née Hauville, Clairmont, 1998) and **Dmitri Dogaev** (Belvedere, 2000). It was lovely to go back to the chapel and meant a lot to add a new milestone on our Aiglon story. We hope the chapel continues to be used regularly as it is part of so many alumni Aiglon stories.

Muriel Cunningham
(Clairmont, 2000)



CREATIVE DRIVE

Inspired by a recent film-shoot with Dutch Nieuwsuur television, I've been reflecting on my inner need to continue working creatively, even at the age when others have long since had to retire. It's simply because my work is so therapeutic, such a great source of fulfilment and happiness. We artists don't know what "retirement" means – staying active really is good for us!

Fellow Aiglonians are welcome to check out my blog at: www.normanperryman.blogspot.com.

Norman Perryman (Staff 1966-73)



TIME TO RECONNECT

I graduated recently with a dual concentration (Finance & Economics) business degree from Babson College in the US. The honours thesis was my capstone project, which I began during my year abroad at LSE in the UK and completed in my senior year.

I chose to research mobile health as a means of advancing key national health goals in Kenya due to the ubiquitous nature of the handsets, and the accessibility of using this technology in lower- and middle-income countries.

The findings serve as a stepping stone in mapping out the role that various forms of technological innovations can play in solving the challenges characteristic of developing economies.

I am now in Nairobi, having opted to take some time off to unwind and pursue personal interests and it is wonderful to reconnect with the Aiglon community as I map out my future one day at a time.

Ruth Shalom Kinyua (Exeter, 2015)

Tributes



**Rachel Trott
(School Matron, 1964-70)**

Having trained at St Thomas's in London, Ms Trott set the standards of school nursing for Aiglon, dispensing TLC and pills from Room 2 in Belvedere. She returned to England in 1970 but came back to the mountain as often as she could because, in her heart, she never really left. She died at the grand old age of 91.

*Tribute by Tony Hyde
(Staff 2000-09)*



**Piotr Wozniak
(Alpina, 1999)**

Piotr, who died in a boating accident on a lake where he loved to spend his holidays, was the best friend one could ever ask for. A group of Aiglonians were at his funeral, still in total disbelief.

I was asked to give a speech at the church mass in Warsaw; it was the hardest thing I've ever done, saying a final goodbye to my best friend. There were many speeches that night – even the group who had composed music for his movies performed a song. It was a beautiful song Piotr had chosen for his upcoming film.

Together, we all spoke of what a great man he was, and how much we all loved him. Lots of tears were shed that night, as the whole country mourned watching the mass from TV screens.

Piotr was a good person, constantly helping so many people in need. He was fun, extraordinary and successful at everything he put his mind to.

He was a husband, a son, a brother and an incredible friend.

We will all miss him dearly.
Uros Ignjacevic (Alpina, 1998)



**Kaveh Jahromi
(Belvedere, 1981)**

It was in 1975 when Sasha Nikolic, Micheal Lennox, Kaveh and I were roommates in Belvedere, all of us just young kids finding living away from home for the first time. Kaveh was a pretty quiet person and got along with all of us. I moved to Alpina the year after, but all stayed good friends through to graduation. Rest in peace my friend; I surely have good memories with you.

*Tribute by Putra Syahrin
(Alpina, 1980)*





Words: LUCY JOLIN
Photography: IAN G. C. WHITE

Take the high ground

Ski mountaineering is tough and niche – and that’s exactly the way internationals Konstantinos Arkadis and Slava Gudzenko like it.

The mountaineers — Konstantinos Arkadis (far right) and Slava Gudzenko (in picture, right, with Konstantinos) enjoy ski mountaineering on the slopes around Aiglon.

As Greece’s junior champion water-skier, **Konstantinos Arkadis** (St Louis, Year 12) is no stranger to sporting success. But look for him these days, and the chances are you’ll find him up a mountain rather than on the water.

As a ski mountaineer, Konstantinos currently puts himself through a gruelling six-times-a-week training schedule that includes at least 500m of ascent per day, hour-long runs and interval training. He has a sponsor, a coach (Greece’s national marathon champion, Dimitris Theodorakakos) and says: “Now, my life is running and ski mountaineering.”

But it hasn’t always been this way. Although his English teacher and ski mountaineering coach **Mr Ivor Ligertwood** knew he could excel, Konstantinos was initially reluctant.



“

There’s no noise or technology, just you and the mountain

“But Mr Ligertwood changed my whole perspective about activities. When I was trying to ditch training, he kept on at me and said I should come. And he was still kind to me, even when I was ditching!”

Ski mountaineering is a niche sport for a good reason: it’s tough. “It’s like mountain running, but with skis,” explains Mr Ligertwood. “You put your skins on your skis, you run up the mountain, then you ski down.” And it demands mental as well as physical toughness. “You have to have the heart and lungs to run up hills, be a very good skier and be able to transition. But a lot is about the mental side – being able to keep going and to shut out those voices telling you to stop.”

Mr Ligertwood has been training those Aiglon pupils who show an aptitude for the sport since 2008, and the school has had a regular showing at the World Championships every year since.

Both Konstantinos and his fellow ski mountaineer, **Slava Gudzenko** (Delaware, Year 13), competed for their respective countries, Greece and Russia, last year.

Slava says the sport has changed him. “Ski mountaineering helps to develop perseverance, because a lot of the time you have to keep your eye on what is coming your way. It cultivates mental toughness, as well. You have to train when you’re tired and you’d rather do something else. But it all pays off in the end.”

Ski mountaineering’s very toughness brings participants together. Konstantinos says he’s found a camaraderie and a challenge in ski mountaineering like no other activity. “My favourite moment so far has been my first race back in Greece – a country not famous for mountains! So, suddenly seeing 30 guys ski mountaineering on one mountain – and being so friendly and kind to me – was an inspiration.”

Mr Ligertwood says that both Konstantinos and Slava are inspiring role models themselves. “These two boys have gone on to the international stage at the World Championship, up against full-time athletes. There was a lot of pressure on them, but their attitude and their commitment were incredible. While they didn’t place, they did incredibly well.”

Both are determined to carry on ski mountaineering – and move into other extreme sports. Konstantinos has his sights set on the World Cup, and intends to move into trail running marathons and ultrarunning, while Slava is also hoping to participate in more competitions. The lure of the mountain, he says, is irresistible.

“In other sports you compete against people. But in ski mountaineering, you compete against the mountain. You are pushing against gradient, gravity, weather and altitude. There’s no noise or technology. It’s just you and the mountain.” **A**



Words: MEGAN WELFORD
Photography: JOE MCGORTY

Passing the test

Exams Officer Valerie Iuliani Renda thrives on pressure – just as well when it comes to the adrenaline-fuelled exam period when her team is at its busiest.



The period between March and the end of May is an adrenaline-fuelled time at Aiglon. Even if you're not in Year 13, with your future firmly in focus, or a Year 11 with GCSEs looming, the exam period certainly concentrates the mind. Luckily, one woman thrives in that environment. While others' senses may become heightened, exams officer **Ms Valerie Iuliani Renda** is calmly making sure everyone is in the right place at the right time, with the right exam paper in front of them.

"I walk miles in exam period," she says, "and sometimes I'm actually running between the exam rooms, perhaps because a student hasn't arrived and I need to find them, for example. Once, a student was about to sit an Italian paper that was a higher level than they should have, but we spotted it just in time. The stress is quite high, and then I might get a call saying an inspector's waiting for me in the office, and it skyrockets!"

Still, she admits, she likes the running around. "This is the period of the year that I prefer. The day-to-day challenge of getting things spot-on, making sure it runs smoothly, managing it all in your head – it's very satisfying."



“

I walk miles in exam period – sometimes I’m actually running

She does, however, rely on yoga to keep things in perspective. And, having grown up in Villars, she loves walks in the mountains. “The mountains are a good energy for me, they help to clear out the stress. I’m a kid of the village and, to a certain extent, an Aiglon kid too. My mum was in the housekeeping team at Aiglon! I love the family atmosphere here, and the internationalism.”

And she relies on her fellow Studies team members. “I work closely with the PA to the Director of learning – **Ms Marine Gaillard** – and with **Ms Ginny Cunliffe**, who’s the MIS data coordinator. There’s also **Mr Esmond Tweedie**, who’s the IB co-ordinator, and **Mr Matthew Scott**, who’s PA to the deputy head. We all help each other out at our busiest times.



The Studies office, in Parson’s building, is a haven where students can come in exam time to ask questions such as exactly where they should be and when – Ms Luliani Renda has the whole timetable printed and up on the wall behind her desk. “We work on a database, and the students have an app with the exam timetable on their phone, but it helps me to be able to see it clearly.”

Ms Luliani Renda’s other favourite time of year is results day in July. “The team gathers together around a screen at the allocated time and we press ‘refresh’ every few seconds until the results arrive. The adrenaline is pumping and we go through the students one by one, then hopefully we have the moment of celebration. It’s a wonderful feeling.” 📣

Testing times — Ms Luliani Renda says she walks miles in the exam period, but admits it’s one of her favourite times of the year.

Public speaking

Nikolay Demishin
— (Alpina, Year 12)



Words: NIKOLAY DEMISHIN
Photography: JOE MCGORTY

From the birth of ideas to the final delivery, I just love everything about public speaking. I find it fascinating how the same subject can be presented or seen differently, from completely opposing views and perspectives, depending on which bit you choose to shine a light on. That's why I always keep my audience in mind – probably the most important element of public speaking – because you want to make connections and for your message to be heard.

Public performance challenges me too, and encourages me to develop my skills further. As well as all the effort that goes into preparation, I also need to stay sharp during the performance itself. I work hard on my body language and I'm always keen to get feedback to analyse my performance and improve for next time.

I particularly love that way public speaking allows me to be in the thick of things, to be heard, to try to lead others, and to influence their thoughts and feelings. That is why I find our meditations so astonishing – one person has the attention of the whole school for 10-15 minutes and can talk about any subject.



“

It is the art of
storytelling, crafting
content that can
engage and persuade

Giving a meditation is one of my goals at Aiglon before graduation. I believe it is a special event that cannot be compared to anything else.

Fortunately, I don't have stage fright and I am sure it is because I enjoy performing. I have been very lucky to have had such a varied experience of performance at Aiglon – from stage events, such as school musicals and comedies, to presentations as a member of the Round Square committee and floor speeches in debates. It isn't just some lines that are learnt by heart – it is

the art of storytelling, crafting content that can engage and persuade an audience and delivering it well.

Public speaking is a very special type of communication, because you have only one unique chance to deliver your idea directly to the audience; your ability and charisma will determine whether your audience are simply listeners or participants, involved in the process, sharing or arguing your message during your speech and even after. That is a true challenge and I really love it. **A**



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