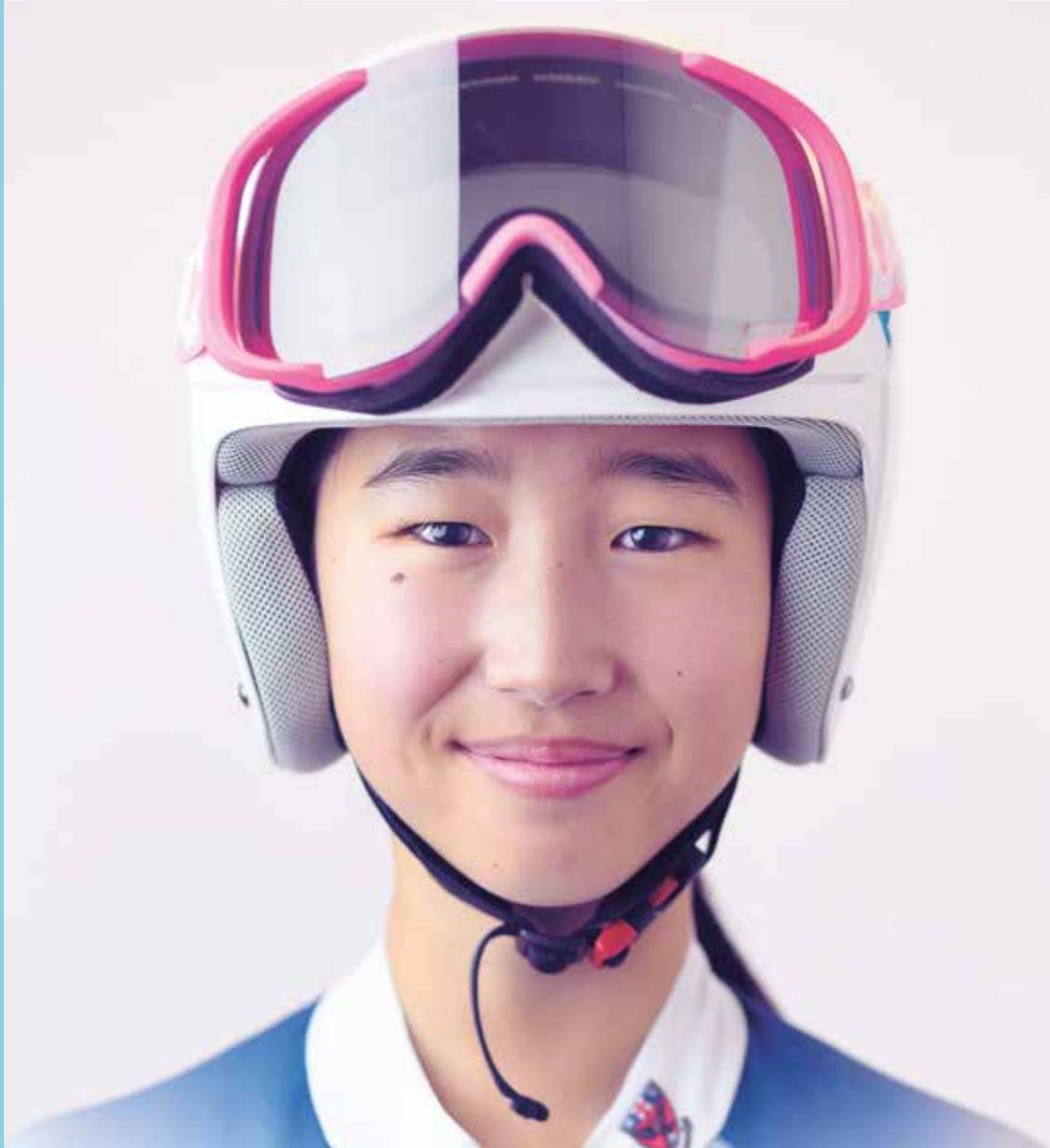


# AIGLON

THE MAGAZINE



ISSUE 9 WINTER/SPRING 2018

**School:** We find out what it takes to be a champion ski racer

**Mountain:** Wind. Rain. Snow. Grit. Expedition is all about the power to endure

**Ideas:** Good architecture is an expression of your values and way of life

**People:** Six Aiglonians share their enthusiasm for all things automotive

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## Contents

### Aiglonology

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

### A+

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

*The Aiglon Magazine* is published twice a year, in the winter and summer, and is sent free to Aiglonians. It is available to other readers on subscription. The opinions expressed in *The Aiglon Magazine* are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of Aiglon College.

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Cover: Aiglon ski racer Nanoha Yoshioka (Clairmont, Year 11)  
Photograph: Joe McGorty



## Features



### 06 La désalpe

Every autumn, the cattle return to the valley. We explore this Swiss tradition.



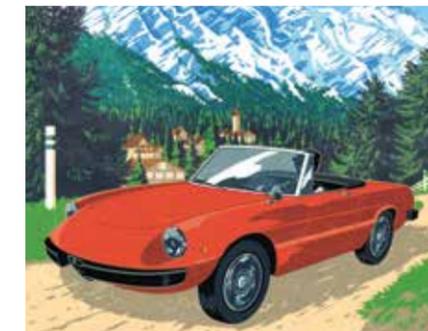
### 16 High ex

Want to test your limits and get out of your comfort zone? Try Aiglon's high ex.



### 22 Aiglon's ski racers

The evolution of the ski racing team and what it takes to be the best.



### 28 Super cars

From classic sports coupés to fantasy machines, Aiglonians talk automotives.



### 32 The Campus Masterplan

The vision behind Aiglon's plans for its new buildings and campus.



### 46 Why I love... reading

We get lost in books (and show off the new Centre for Enquiry).



## WELCOME TO ISSUE NINE

**WRITE TO YOU FROM A** snow-covered Aiglon with news of stellar results achieved by our students last term. Alongside an average IB score almost five points above the global average, the Class of 2017 won places at the world's best universities, including Oxford, Stanford and Tufts.

But because this is Aiglon, the challenge didn't end there! Thirty-eight students were awarded our highest honour, the Bouquetin, for all three terms of the academic year. Many more signed up to train hard on the mountain (we feature the highs and lows of ski training on page 22). And honouring our tradition of service, students and alumni supported refugees locally and globally, as HRH Princess Tatiana Blatnik (Exeter, 1998) discusses on page 9. Behind the scenes, we have been working to ensure that our campus can evolve to meet the needs of our students and our school, and on page 32 we discuss the impact the new Campus Masterplan will have on Aiglon life.

Finally, we bid farewell to two much-loved members of staff, Sallie O'Connor and Hugh Clarke, who retired in June. We wish them every success in their new lives – and wish you a very happy winter season.

**Valerie Scullion**  
 Director of Admissions and Advancement  
 Send your comments to [advancement@aiglon.ch](mailto:advancement@aiglon.ch).



## AIGLON IN PRINT

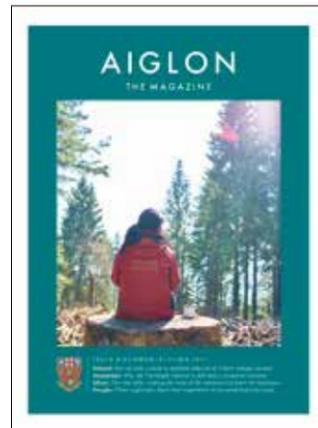
Just a word to thank you so much for the new issue of *The Aiglon Magazine* which I received and read with great interest.

I thought you might like to know that I mention Aiglon in my book [*In Search of Roger and Sallie*], in which I relate my 12-year quest to get to know my parents, whom I never really knew as a child. It is in French currently but I am working on an English translation.

As I write in the book: "*Aiglon était devenue un peu une famille dans laquelle je me sentais bien. Après six ans, j'étais un des plus anciens, et j'avais trouvé ma place dans cette institution où quelques personnes étaient devenues des parents de substitution (Mr and Mrs Knight, among others). J'ai du les quitter et j'en ai été très triste.*"

Also, a documentary is being planned by a film company in Los Angeles that provides documentaries to Netflix, among others. I am attaching a photo of me from my time as a student at Aiglon (above).

**François Grosjean**  
 (Clairmont, 1964)



## INSPIRED

Imagine this: I am reading the magazine, enjoying Richard McDonald's *View from the Mountain*, and flip the page to *Here's looking at you* about Joshua Yeldham. The name rings a bell and I immediately think 'Australian artist' but assume I have the wrong name.

On reading the first paragraph and looking at the painting in the article, I see it is the artist and – OMG – we have one of his works and I love it. I had no idea he went to Aiglon.

I have attached a picture (below) and maybe you can pass on the message to him that it is one of our precious artworks that we pulled from storage and have in the house.

Currently it resides in a safe spot, as it was hanging in a guest room that Oskar now has and we did not want it damaged by skis and other equipment sliding across the wall. What an amazing world we live in here in Villars!

**Yvette Tuffley**  
 (Parent of Oskar,  
 St Louis, Year 11)



## VIP GUEST

In September we were delighted to have a visit from former Belvedere Houseparent Terence O'Hara (1964-1969). Mr O'Hara has been a faithful pen pal and a valued adviser to *The Aiglon Magazine* staff. We have felt privileged to have his input over the past few years, and honoured that he came to visit the campus, Belvedere and us!

## AIGLON, AMHERST

I receive and read *The Aiglon Magazine* with huge pride, having attended in 1960-1961 during the tenure of the great Mr John Corlette.

The delivery of good students to the finest colleges and universities in the world, such as Amherst College (illustrated in the *Excellence on the Mountain* portion of Aiglon's most recent *Year in Review*), has a longer history than one might think. I am a 1971 graduate of Amherst, and am the first to admit that much of my academic success was rooted in the superb academic experience that was inherent in Aiglon. I expect nothing less in the future.

**Joseph N. Rizzo**  
 (Class of 1967)

## Join the conversation!

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 email: [advancement@aiglon.ch](mailto:advancement@aiglon.ch)  
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 Facebook: [www.facebook.com/aiglon](http://www.facebook.com/aiglon)  
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SCHOOL



MOUNTAIN



PEOPLE



MIND



BODY



SPIRIT

# NEWS



## Alumni Summer School Scholarship Fund

The first ever recipient of the Alumni Summer School Scholarship Fund, Maggie Fletcher, returned from Aiglon with new friends and memories to share with her mother, Anna Ambrose (Clairmont, 1986). —

## A new prospectus for Aiglon

Aiglon now has a new prospectus offering an overview of school life. If you would like a printed copy please email us at: [advancement@aiglon.ch](mailto:advancement@aiglon.ch) —

## Centre for Enquiry

This summer, the Library moved out of Clairmont and into a new home in the Parsons Building. The new Centre for Enquiry offers the perfect place to study or relax. It also has an interactive teaching space, 3D printers, green screen video production equipment and a robotics creative centre. See p46 for more. —

## Aiglon wins multiple awards!

At the 2017 CASE Awards, *The Aiglon Magazine* and our video ad both won Silver awards, while our Mind, Body and Spirit video was awarded a Grand Gold. —

## Aiglon out and about

The Admissions and Advancement team has had the opportunity to bring our community of alumni and parents together and introduce Aiglon to new families in the following cities – San Francisco, LA, Boston, Miami, Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Mumbai, Delhi, Mexico City, Tokyo and Tehran. —

## Board of governors

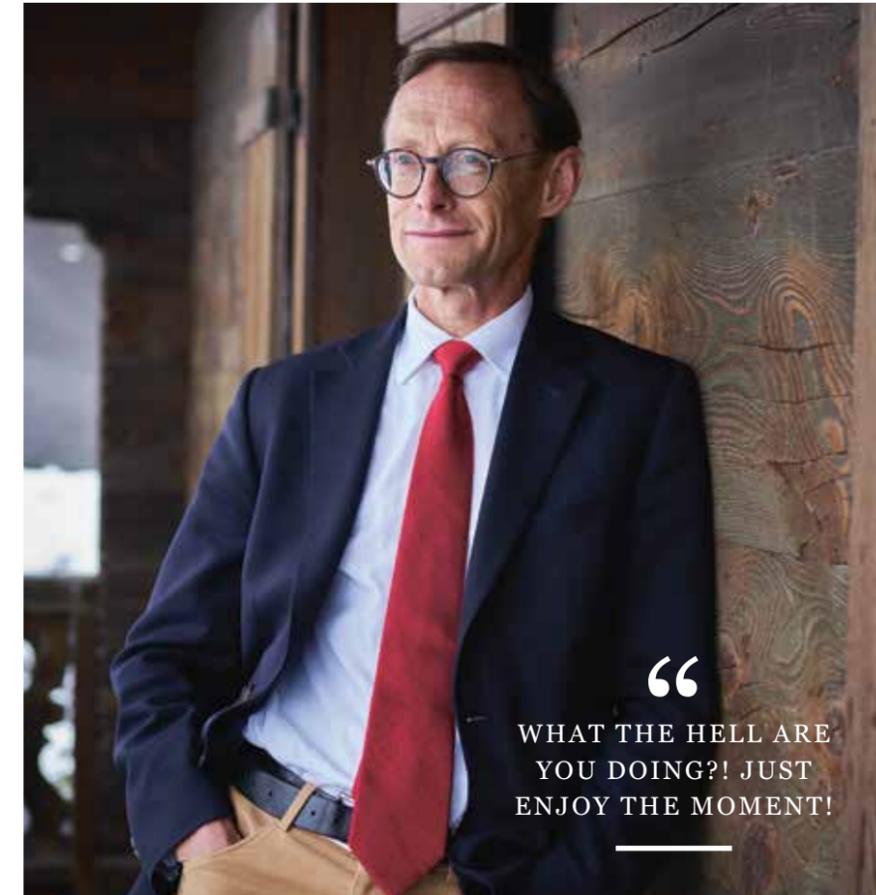
The board welcomed new members Elisabeth van de Grampel (Clairmont, 1980), Steven Sandler, Dr Nicholas Tate CBE and Professor Sir Tejinder Virdee FRS, and welcomed the return of Ingrid Christophersen MBE. —

Illustration by Ruby Taylor



View from the mountain

# The art of capture



fleeting illusion of fresh air in an alpine idyll could not be in starker contrast. Both answers satisfy superficially, but neither creates a warm glow of merit or virtue. Embarking on a recent sightseeing trip to the Dolomites and Venice served to sharpen this self-scrutiny. Confronted with the spectacular mountains or the unique maze of palazzi and waterways, I found myself reaching for my iPhone with the unrestrained, repetitive impulsivity of an addict: hardly had I spotted the next view, then I was stopping in my tracks to take that next stellar picture and capturing the priceless scene. And of course these were not just *snapshots*; they were *compositions*. (We all know we are in the top 10 per cent when it comes to taking great photos). All the while, my addict's alter ego was screaming: "What the hell are you doing?! Just enjoy the moment; live the intensity of here and now!"

No, no, no. I had to capture and imprison these images in a form that I could recall anytime, anywhere; and I had, above all, to be able to *share* them. Just looking didn't seem enough.

Have I always been like this? Actually no: this is a behaviour that has been shaped by the extraordinary possibilities of evolving technology. In the years Before iPhone (BiP), I still sent postcards, as attaching a photo to an e-mail was likely to stall the internet connection. After iPhone (AiP), I elbow my way through a thicket of selfie-sticks on the Rialto Bridge to get that unique shot of the gondolier (the one without a grinning self-portrait blotting out all but a token straw boating hat).

If I find any comfort, it is that the human condition always throws in our path things that we love to hate and hate to love. After all, by the time we get to iPhone 20, we will surely have reset the clock and have to find new labels to date our gadgets – and our gods.

Today I bought two postcards, with stamps. I plan to *share* them some time this week. I shall patiently wait for a postcard of my friend's new shower curtain to appear in my letterbox (the real one, rusting at the top of the garden path). It may take some time. 🕒

“  
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING?! JUST ENJOY THE MOMENT!”



Richard McDonald  
HEAD MASTER

HAVE LIVED IN AND AROUND Chesières-Villars for more than 23 years. Why do I still wake up on a beautiful day and want to take a photograph of the view? And then why do I capture the same view, day after day, year after year? I could argue that every season and every sky has its nuance, but I've been using that excuse for too long. Let me examine my motives.

I might put forward two answers. The first is the impulse to capture the instant and make it accessible in perpetuity, and to share it. The second is that it's so easy: I reach into my pocket and pull out my modern-day miracle, my iPhone. Within seconds I've shared it with family or friends, perhaps somebody grappling with rush-hour traffic in some fume-shrouded megapolis. For them, the



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When autumn arrives,  
the cattle must return  
to the valley.

# LA DÉSALPE



Words: SANDRA HAURANT  
Photography: JOE MCGORTY



**T**HEY HAVE SPENT THEIR summer at altitude, grazing on the rich green grass that grows on the very same slopes skiers power down in the winter. But when autumn arrives, the cows know that things are about to change. “They know exactly what is happening,” says farmer Mikail Delessert, whose herd can be seen at Les Chaux in the summer. “They know it is time to come down.”

Mikail spends roughly half the year at altitude with his herd, rising at 3am each day to begin milking and making cheese on the mountainside. For the rest of the year, the cows spend several months in the cowsheds, protected from the elements. Cheese production is put on hold and milk is sold for industrial use.

Traditionally, this time of transition between alpine and valley life is a moment for celebration. “Friends and family come to join us up on the mountain in September to help us bring the cows down to the farm,” says Mikail. “There are usually around 10 or 15 of us walking down with 50 to 60 cows. The cows know where they are going and they often start off at a run, but the older cows take the lead and the others follow on at their rhythm.”



**Opposite —** Return to the valley: cows walk towards Villars.  
**This page, clockwise from left —** Farmer Mikail Delessert with his son; cows graze in the fields near Gryon; cows wear decorative bells, collars and flowers to make their descent; a member of the local farming community.



The cows are happy to swap a grazing area of some 200 hectares at an altitude of 1,800 metres for around 40 hectares lower down, says Mikail. “There is less and less grass up on the mountainside and they know they will have more to eat at lower altitude,” he says. Often, several farms bring their herds down on the same day, and each year the commune holds a party to welcome the farmers down and mark the change in the season. And as the cows slowly descend, the farming community celebrates the first dusting of snow and a return of the cows to the valley. 🐄

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Here's looking at you

# Tatiana Blatnik

— (Exeter, 1998)

Words:  
MEGAN WELFORD



**S**ERVICE TO OTHERS HAS always been a part of her life, says **HRH Princess Tatiana Blatnik** (Exeter, 1998) – and it all began at Aiglon. “I was a charity rep at Aiglon,” she says, “not only because it was part of the curriculum, but because I enjoyed it. I particularly remember helping out with Albanian refugee children and at residential care homes. It has really shaped who I am today.”

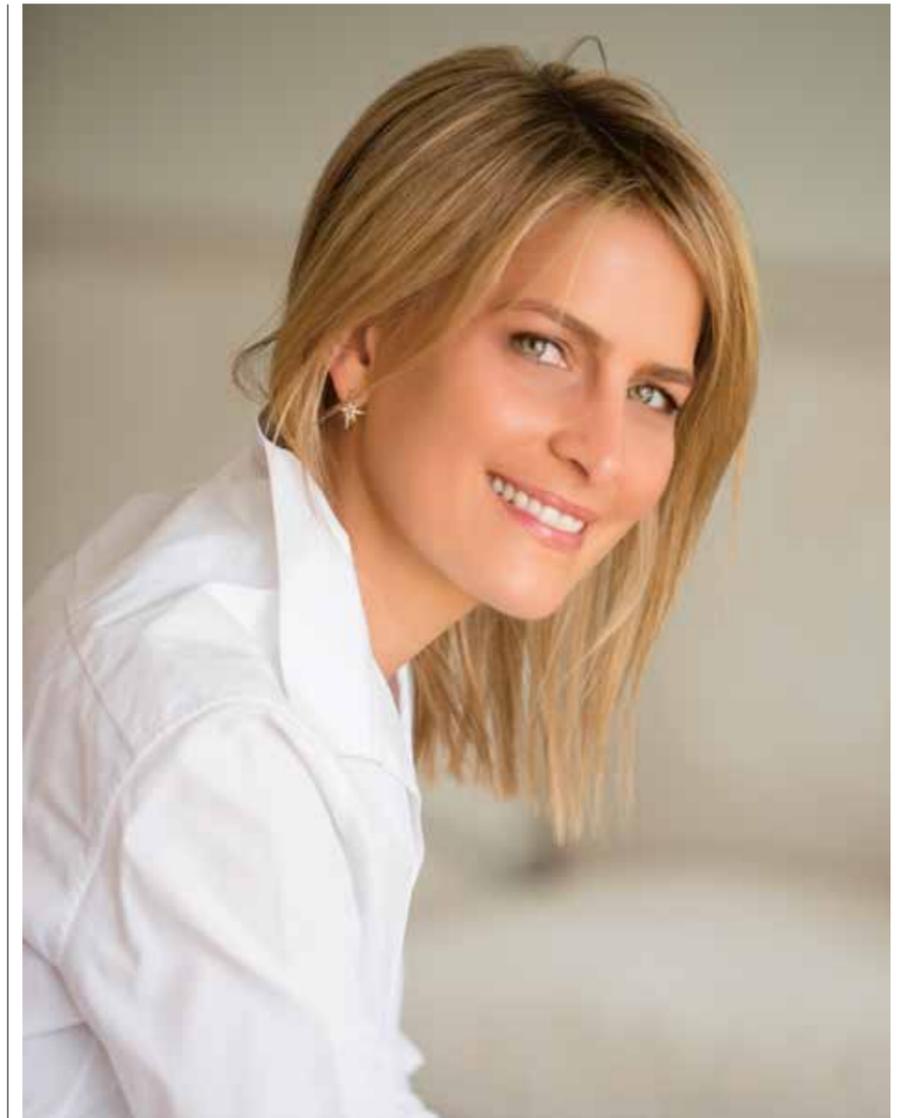
Born in Venezuela, Tatiana came to Aiglon aged 11, before graduating from Georgetown with a degree in sociology. She married Prince Nikolaos of Greece in 2010 and moved to Athens in 2013, where she continues to help others through her work with refugee children and the cookery book she has written in aid of local non-profit, Boroume (‘We Can’ in Greek), an organisation that fights food waste.

## SILENCE IS GOLDEN

Although she has lived all over the world in the intervening years, Tatiana says that her time at Aiglon made a lifelong impact. “The self-discipline I learned helped me through and I began to appreciate how to study, how to be quiet and focus.

“At the time I didn’t understand morning meditation – the idea that silence is golden – but now when things get chaotic, I keep some quiet time for myself.”

Aiglon also taught her how important collaboration can be – something she puts into practice today as co-founder of TRIA ETC, which works to revitalise Greece’s artisan sector by collaborating with Greek producers, and ELPIDA Youth, an organisation that supports children diagnosed with cancer by taking a holistic approach to their healthcare. “I formed



“  
AT THE TIME I  
WOULD HAVE PAID  
NOT TO GO ON  
AN EXPEDITION  
– NOW, I PAY TO GO!”

great friendships from my time at Aiglon, going on expedition with a group of girlfriends and revelling in the challenge of it, the challenge of working as a team,” she says. “Being able to work in a team is something still important to me in my work today – being able to join forces with different individuals and organisations; that sense of collaboration.”

But ultimately, Tatiana says, “Aiglon taught us the link between mind, body and spirit. What I loved was the education we received outside of the classroom, where we weren’t even aware of what was being instilled. There was a focus on your soul and spirit – that holistic approach to health and wellness and a love of nature. At the time I would have paid not to go on an expedition, but now I pay to go!”

# A life in words

— Lara Kellett-Smith, English teacher

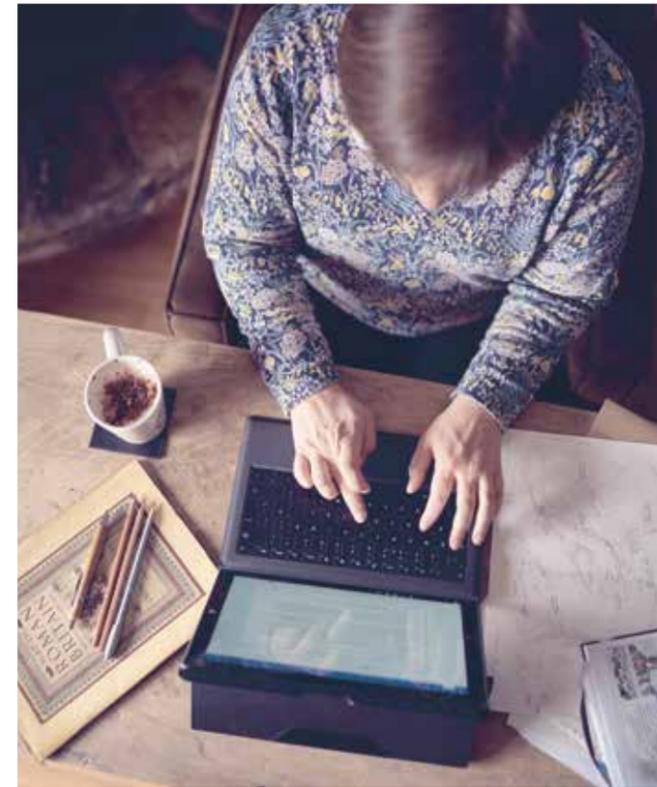
Words: MEGAN WELFORD  
Photography: JOE MCGORTY



IT WAS WHILE READING IN HER favourite chair some seven years ago that **Ms Lara Kellett-Smith** decided to become a writer. “I constantly had stories in my head,” she says. “But I thought that to be a writer you had to be a member of a special species, like Enid Blyton or JK Rowling.”

Or at least she did – until that one landmark day that would have such a fundamental impact on her life. “I suddenly realised: ‘I’m sick of reading everyone else’s books! I want to write mine!’” So she got up, went to her computer and started writing. Over the next two years, mainly in the school holidays, she wrote a book, *Alfie Knight and the Geek Legends*, aimed at eight-to-12 year-olds. Aimed, in fact, at the Aiglon class she was teaching at the time.

“They were mostly boys, lively and diverse,” she remembers. “About a third had English as a second or third language. It’s quite hard to find books for them, because, for their language level, the stories tend to be too babyish. So I had a boy hero and an adventure, and I made sure that the words I used were ones they would understand.”



“  
TO GET TO SCHOOL  
YOU HAD TO TAKE  
A BOAT AND THEN  
A BUS. I’D TAKE  
MY SINDY DOLLS  
ON IMAGINARY  
ADVENTURES

She self-published the book to good feedback, including from the boys in her class. “One boy never said anything about it,” she says, “but when I asked if he’d read it, he said, ‘Yes! Three times!’”

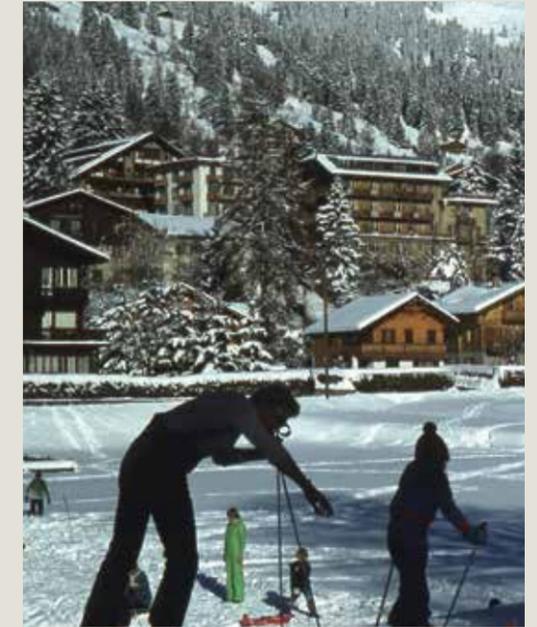
She is now writing the second book of her young adult trilogy, which is set in a mountain fantasy world, rather similar to the one she sees out of her classroom window. However, Ms Kellett-Smith is also inspired by another landscape – she grew up on a remote island in the Summer Isles, off the west coast of Scotland.

“To get to school you had to take a boat and then a bus. So I didn’t have neighbours. Instead, I’d take my Sindy dolls on imaginary adventures, mainly to Switzerland, because of *Heidi*, the novel by Johanna Spyri about a little girl growing up in the Swiss Alps.” With a Norwegian grandmother, she says the world she has created is part Norway, part Switzerland, and her dialogue is influenced by listening to her students talk.

And as she draws on her teaching to write, so Ms Kellett-Smith’s writing inspires her teaching. “Things like story structure, adding elements to capture interest – it’s not just adjectives and adverbs any more. I feel like I really understand what I’m teaching. And I love it!”

**A writer’s room —**  
Ms Lara Kellett-Smith’s novels for children are inspired by her childhood on the Summer Isles and by listening to the dialogue of her students.

JANUARY – JULY 2018



## Diary



### 2 February 2018 Parsons Building

We will be celebrating the naming of the new Parsons Building at 16.30. Formerly Exeter House, the newly named building honours former Head Master Philip Parsons and his wife Bibi for their years of service.

### 23 March 2018 Prize Giving

Parents are invited to join us for Prize Giving at 10am at the Junior School and 11.30 at the Senior School, followed by parent-teacher meetings starting at 13.30.

### 27-29 April 2018 Annual Golf Weekend

Alumni and parents are invited to our annual Golf Weekend at the Domaine de Barbossi, kindly hosted by the Safa family.

### 31 May 2018 Aiglon in London

Join us in the East Room of the Tate Modern gallery on the South Bank to meet fellow Aiglonians of all generations. For more, visit [aiglonlife.ch](http://aiglonlife.ch).

### 23 June 2018 Graduation

Graduation will take place on Saturday 23 June, so reserve your accommodation now!

### 29 June-1 July 2018 Return to Villars!

Would you like to celebrate your class reunion on the mountain? We dedicate the first weekend in July to hosting alumni. Last year, it was the Classes of 1987 and 2007, and we’d love you to be next! Please contact Seth Barker at [alumni@aiglon.ch](mailto:alumni@aiglon.ch).

Staff room

# More than just a numbers game



From left — Deputy Bursar (Operations) Andrew Croft; Bursar Patricia Bremner Gadotti; and Deputy Bursar (Finance) Monique Sprüngli.

One of the great joys of her role, says Mrs Bremner Gadotti, is working in a not-for-profit environment. “As a steward of the finances, it is wonderful to work in a place where you know all the resources are being reinvested in the environment in which we are working. It’s not about anyone’s pension, retirement plan or shareholders. It’s about the students.”

Fees for Swiss boarding schools are higher than those elsewhere, but that’s merely a reflection of the higher costs of the system in which the school operates, she points out. And, she says, the not-for-profit ethos helps to focus her mind when she’s allocating resources. “You make sure that you are prioritising the areas which need them. I think it’s reassuring to the parents to know the fees they pay are going into providing the education for their child. It’s a wholesome approach to education.”

These fees cover the essentials of Aiglon life, but Mrs Bremner Gadotti says donations and fundraising enable “the icing on the cake. We’ve got a very generous parent and alumni body who have enabled some great projects to be achieved, and the fundraising team do a fantastic job.”

Donations and fundraising bring an increased depth to student activities. The Sports Centre was almost entirely funded through donations, says Mrs Bremner Gadotti, and fundraising for the Assembly and Arts Building has begun.

The bursar also provides a vital link between different school advisory groups. Mrs Bremner Gadotti is clerk to the Board and is also a member of the School Council. This is a non-hierarchical body with representation from all sides of the school, which meets regularly to look at both day-to-day operational issues and to discuss the bigger picture.

“Working alongside the Board, we look at the future size and shape of the school, share our knowledge, wisdom and experience, and look at how we can move Aiglon forward together,” says Patricia. “It’s a whole team effort.”

**T**HINK OF A BURSAR AND YOU might think of someone responsible only for finance (possibly housed in a dusty, ledger-filled attic office). But as Aiglon bursar, **Mrs Patricia Bremner Gadotti**’s role encompasses far more than simply the accounts.

“Everything that isn’t teaching falls within the bursar’s remit,” she explains. “That includes finances, but it’s also just as much about keeping on top of all the other business aspects, such as services, operations and support functions.”

Mrs Bremner Gadotti is ably assisted by two deputies and other department heads who are responsible for specific functions – finance management, campus maintenance and development, the school shop, catering, IT services and Summer School programmes, to name but a few.

In fact, she says, it’s vital to the health of the school to have one person ultimately responsible for these non-teaching aspects. “It enables the teachers to get on with teaching and focus on the students. The Head Master’s role is student facing, whereas mine isn’t, so it means all aspects of school life are properly cared for.”

Words: LUCY JOLIN  
Photography: JOE MCGORTY



“IT IS WONDERFUL TO WORK IN A PLACE WHERE YOU KNOW ALL RESOURCES ARE BEING REINVESTED. IT’S NOT ABOUT SHAREHOLDERS, IT’S ABOUT THE STUDENTS”

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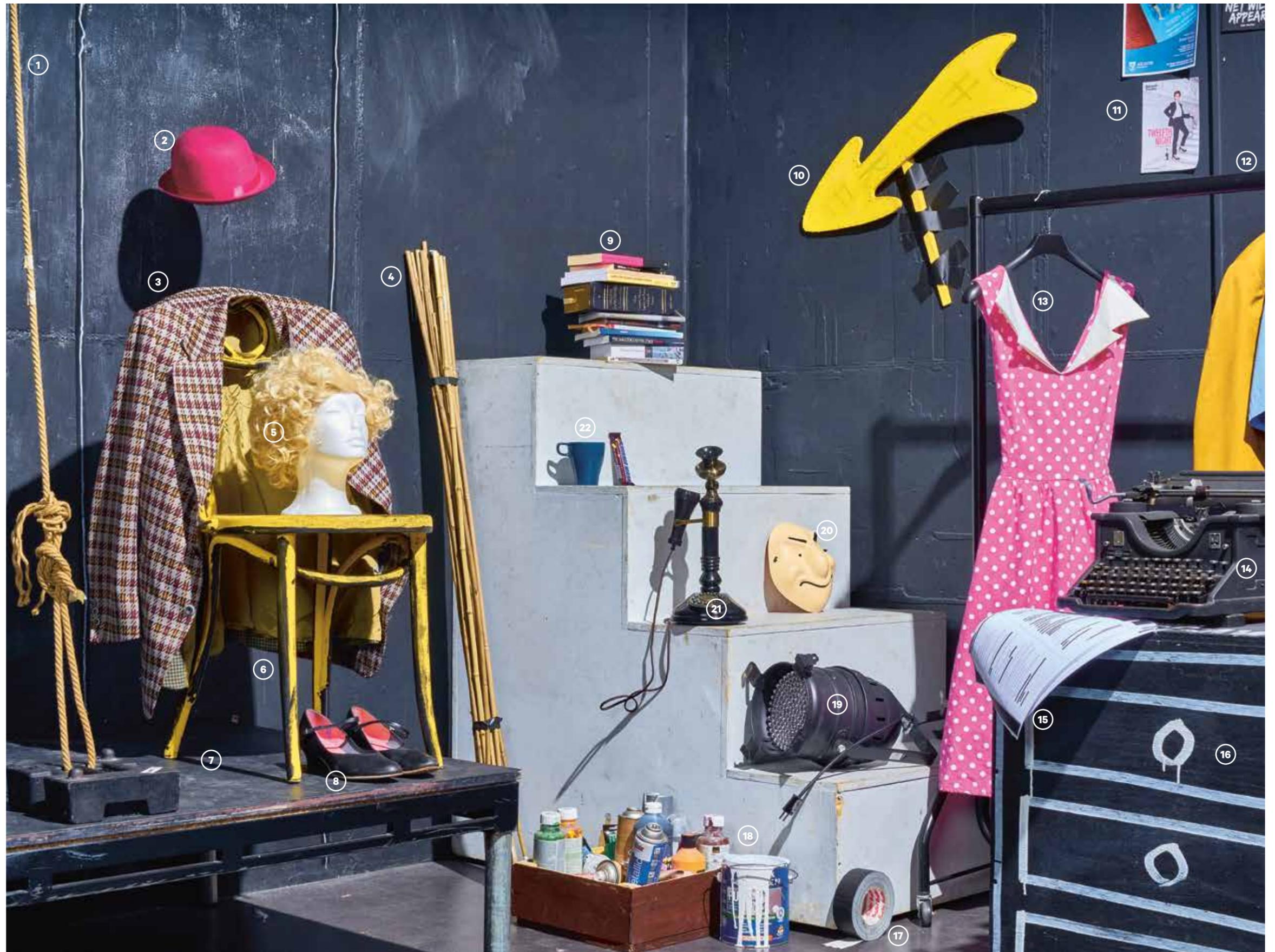
Darren Wise



Photography:  
JOE MCGORTY

# Drama

- 1 Curtain weight
- 2 Costume: bowler hat
- 3 Costume: jacket
- 4 Sticks
- 5 Wig from *Guys & Dolls*
- 6 Prop: chair
- 7 Stage
- 8 Tap shoes
- 9 Drama texts
- 10 Prop: arrow
- 11 Posters
- 12 Clothes rail
- 13 Costume: dress
- 14 Prop: typewriter
- 15 Script
- 16 Prop: box
- 17 Gaffer tape
- 18 Paint and spray paint
- 19 Light
- 20 Mask
- 21 Prop: telephone
- 22 Coffee and chocolate

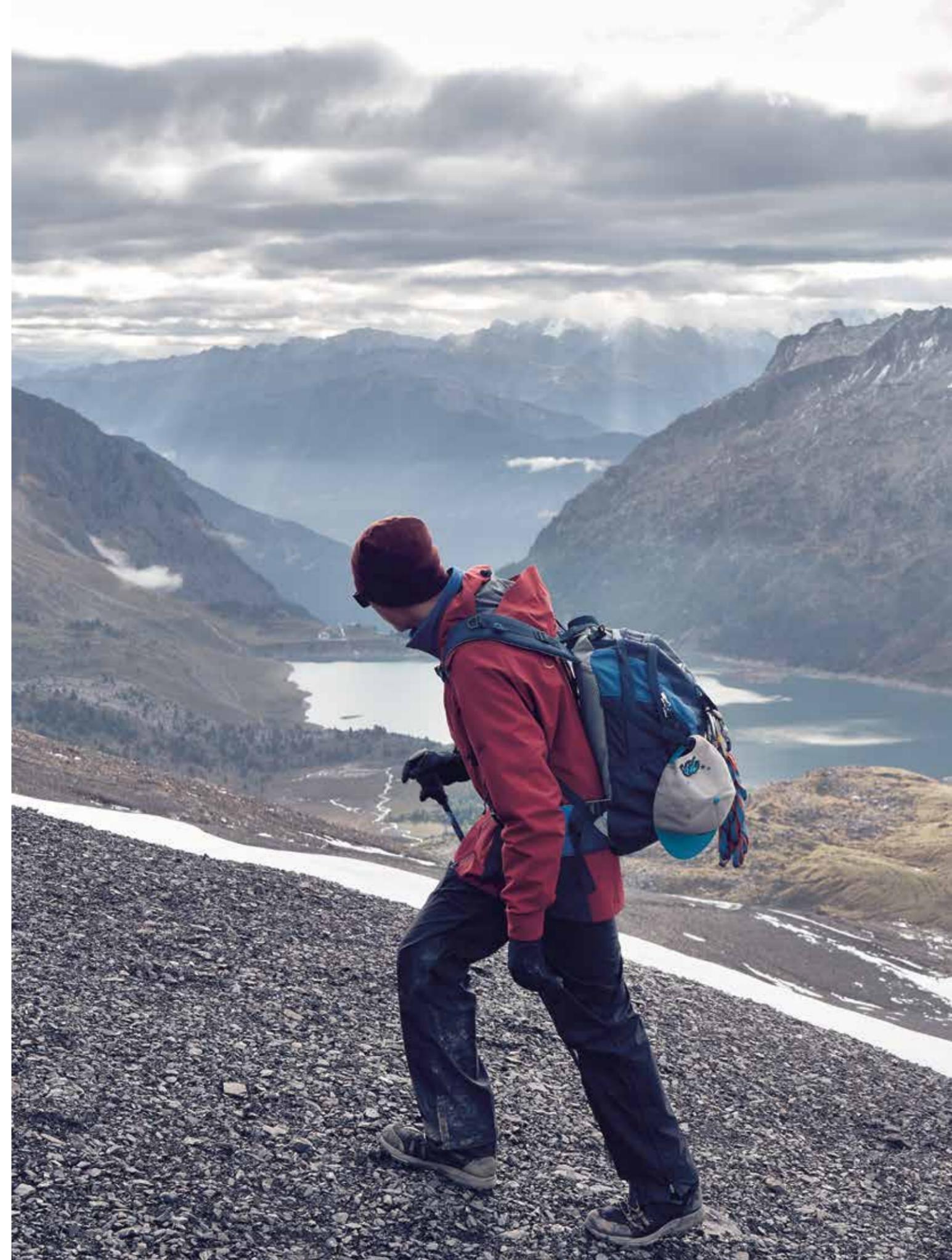


# HIGH—EX

Expedition is the ultimate Aiglon experience. We accompanied students up the mountain to find out just what it takes to complete a high ex.



Words: MEGAN WELFORD Photography: JOE MCGORTY





Clockwise from top left — A view of the Dents du Midi; students looking down at Lac de Salanfe; embracing the view while having a break.



There is a moment on every expedition when you realise it is going to demand your total commitment. For **Ivan Kireev** (Alpina, Year 10), that moment came last September, half way up one of the most challenging summits in the area. “There’s a bit where you need 100 per cent concentration,” he says. “You look down and you’re very high up and you have to feel confident. But that’s part of high ex – you are challenging yourself but your teachers and your classmates are supporting you, so you feel you can do it.”

### THE PREPARATION

Ivan, alongside his classmates, was taking part in an expedition on the Haute Cime, the highest peak of the Dents du Midi – a route up the mountain from La Barme, above Champéry, at 1,250 metres, with the aim of summiting Haute Cime at 3,257 metres.

The expedition is not for the faint-hearted or the ill-prepared, and the trip was preceded by preparation and training. The first priority was, of course, safety – as **Mrs Sarah Chapman**, Expeditioner, explains. “We monitor the weather right up until we leave. We’ll contact local guides to hear about the conditions up on the mountain and on some expeditions we’ll even go up ourselves the day before,” she says. “This time we knew the snow level was at 2,000 metres, which meant the hut we’d be staying at would be just below it. We knew the temperatures were dropping during the night, but we’d make it to the Col de Susanfe, and there would be a possibility of the summit.”

The day before the expedition, students and staff met to discuss the trip; and on the day itself, the group did a thorough kit check. “Sometimes the girls try to carry too much – speakers, too much wash kit,” says Mrs Chapman. “We’re quite strict about what they can take.”

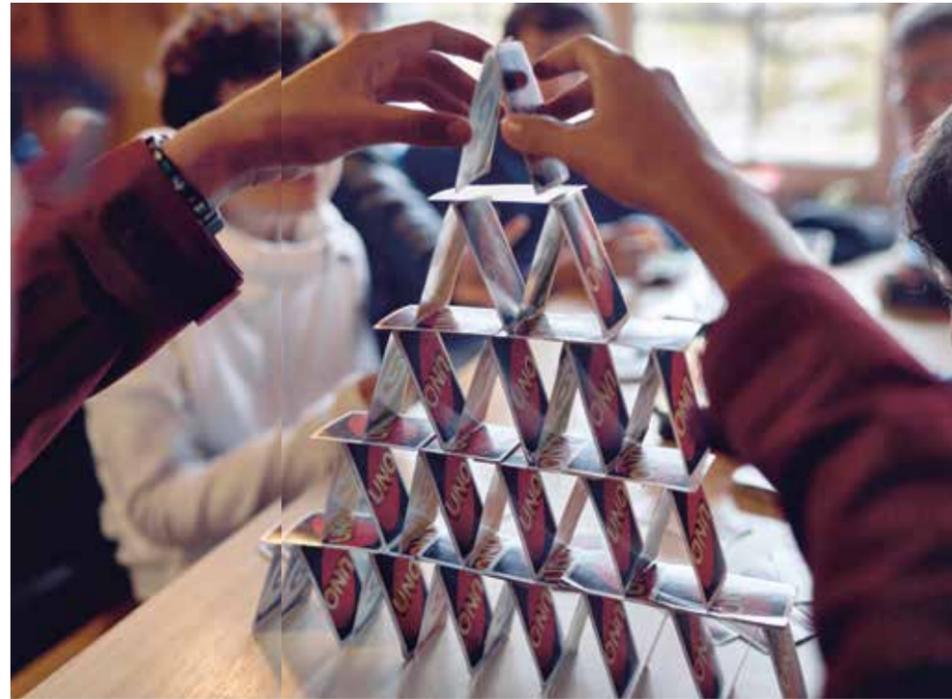
Then there was the psychological preparation, as **Olivia Gan** (Exeter, Year 10) explains. “I wasn’t sure whether or not to go, because I was a bit scared,” she says. “But my friends told me if I didn’t go, I would regret it.” **Rio Kitano** (Le Cerf, Year 12) says she also had mixed feelings. “I wanted to get the same feeling I had last time I went,” she says. “I felt so proud to have made it, but, because I’d already done it, I knew how hard it would be.”

### GETTING THERE

The group drove up to the car park at La Barme, above Champéry, at about 1,250 metres. “We were talking about pop songs,” remembers Olivia. “We were talking A LOT!” “The excitement was building on the minibus,” agrees **Emilio Martinez Rubio** (St Louis, Year 11). “I was nervous because I look across at Les Dents du Midi every day but I’d never climbed a mountain before. There was suspense – would we make it to the top? And there was bonding. There were a few new students and we got to know each other. I felt more comfortable after that.”

“At the car park we checked the kit again,” says Mrs Chapman. “We bring spare waterproofs because students →





Clockwise from top left — Following the signs to get to the hut; warming up in the hut over a drink; evening games; signage along the way; ready to go, outside the hut.

do occasionally forget them! Not this time though. We gave out sandwiches for the next day and lots of energy bars.”

On this trip, not having waterproofs would have been a disaster. “We started off in the rain and thick fog – and it got worse,” says Olivia. “It was pouring down. You could squeeze the water out of your gloves and it was freezing. But no one was complaining. If they felt down they were keeping it to themselves. I looked at my wet gloves, but I was determined to enjoy myself.”

**UP THE MOUNTAIN**

“The walk starts with a gentle path zig-zagging through the woods,” Mrs Chapman says. “Then you come out above the tree line and there’s a little farm. It gets steep and you get to a rock band, a gorge. It looks like a sheer wall, with no way up or through. It’s a moment where students realise the expedition will demand commitment. There are metal hand lines and the students clip themselves on with carabinas.” After the rock band, the path becomes undulating and gradual. “It’s rocky and barren, like being

“

You look down and you’re high up, you have to feel confident. But it’s part of high ex – you are challenging yourself but everyone is supporting you so you feel you can do it

on the moon,” says Mrs Chapman. Olivia adds: “We were on a creepy road, like out of *The Hobbit*, made of just flat grass and mud. Suddenly the teacher asks, ‘Did you see the flags?’ And we saw the flags and the hut was there!”

The feeling of relief on reaching the hut, says Olivia, was palpable. “I took off my gloves and my fingertips were blue!” she says. “We put on slippers and dry clothes, drank tea and played cards and Scrabble.” The boys played Uno until dinner. “The food at La Cabane de Susanfe is very good,” Mrs Chapman says. “The students were amazed to get a three-course meal!” Vegetable soup with homemade bread and a chicken curry with rice was served, followed by dessert. “I ate three plates of everything,” says Ivan.

During dinner, the fog suddenly lifted, revealing spectacular views. “The whole side of the mountain was pink!” Rio says. “The mountains were shining. Even though it was cold we stayed out until the sun went down.” “With the mountains all around you, you think of how small you are,” reflects Emilio. “Usually you’re so busy at school you’re consumed by it, but here it’s nature that’s more important.”

After dinner, there was a little more card-playing, but everyone was tired and students headed off to a dormitory with two long rows of beds on each side, one above the other. “There were about 40 people sleeping in there,” says Emilio, “including people we didn’t know, so you had to be respectful and quiet.” And despite Olivia’s friend’s snoring, everyone slept well.

**THE NEXT MORNING**

After an early breakfast of bread, jam and tea, the girls set off into the fog. “It got steeper and steeper,” says Olivia. “The teachers showed us how to dig out an area with your foot and then step on to that. We used ski poles for balance but sometimes had to use our hands. At one point, the sunshine was coming through the clouds and I turned

round and there was this amazing view back down the mountains to a lake – it was like a scene from the Bible! There was a strong wind cutting my face and my skin was burning, but it was worth it.”

At the Col de Susanfe, Mrs Chapman and guide Louise went ahead to recce the conditions. “Unfortunately the summit was still in fog,” Mrs Chapman says. “It was icy underfoot and we would have needed to put the girls on a rope and use crampons to go on. We took the decision that it was too dangerous, and that it wasn’t the time to be learning to use crampons.”

The boys set off in sunshine but as they reached the Col, dark clouds rolled in and the same decision was taken. “I was a bit angry at first,” says Emilio. “I wanted to go on, but I understood. You can’t control the weather, and we had already achieved a lot.”

“Students who’ve not been up ask about the summit,” says Mrs Chapman. “But once you’ve been up, you know it’s about the journey, about being there, not about getting to the top.”

**COMING DOWN**

Coming down the mountain is often more challenging than going up, so both groups had to remain focused. “We decided to do a tour rather than go straight down,” says Mrs Chapman. “The path we took has a lot of interest – it’s shingly and slate at the top, there are bits you have to crouch like a cat to move along, there are rocky steps down the side of a waterfall down to the Salanfe dam.” “We wore harnesses on the rocky steps,” says Rio. “You can slip at any time. It was scary, but I enjoyed it.”

“Coming down was harder because my legs were tired,” says Emilio. “I thought I was in good shape but it’s a lot of walking. The teachers kept us in good spirits, making jokes, and we all encouraged each other.” “I felt like I was on a survival channel,” says Olivia. “Like Bear Grylls.”

The boys stopped at a hut by the dam for hot chocolate, sandwiches and a rest. “It started snowing when we were at the hut,” says Emilio. The girls were luckier with the weather. “It was sunny so we took off our waterproofs and fleeces,” remembers Olivia. “We were singing Adele, *Someone Like You*, at the tops of our voices.” Still, after eight hours walking, the sight of the minibus was a welcome one.

**HOME, SAFE**

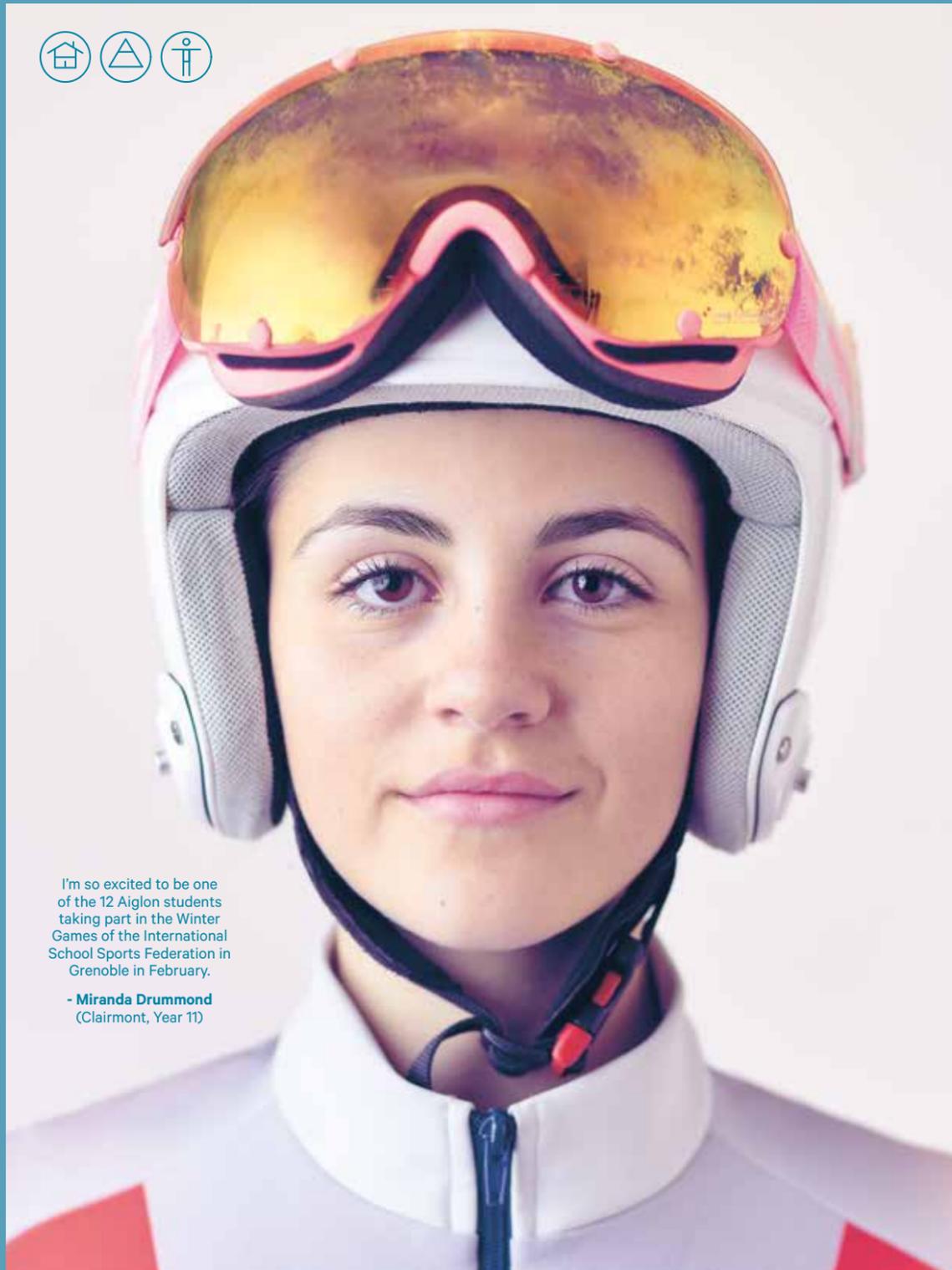
“Most of them slept on the minibus,” says Mrs Chapman. “It was certainly very quiet!” “When we got back, I crawled into bed and slept for two hours before dinner,” says Ivan. “I had a hot shower,” says Rio. “I felt really proud, because even though we didn’t make it to the summit, we did a good job. We were faster than the teachers thought we would be, and we saw beautiful views. I felt great.”

“I want to teach the students to enjoy and love the mountains, to appreciate the freedom and beauty and fresh air. A classroom is controlled, but nature is uncontrollable and that’s difficult because we have to manage students’ expectations about getting to the top,” says Mrs Chapman. “Our students are so used to succeeding, I think it’s an important lesson to learn that sometimes you have to work hard, and you won’t always reach the top.”



This wisdom has repercussions in other areas of life. “I feel like I got a sense of how much I can achieve,” says Emilio. Rio agrees: “I learned that if you feel you can’t do any more, well, you can. I kept going, and I’m really proud of that.”

# A I G L O N ' S



I'm so excited to be one of the 12 Aiglon students taking part in the Winter Games of the International School Sports Federation in Grenoble in February.

- **Miranda Drummond**  
(Clairmont, Year 11)

Words by William Ham Bevan. Photography by Joe McGorty

Aiglon has a long history of strong ski racers.

# S K I R A C E R S



Out of season, I'll do at least 15 hours dry-land training, including gym. I start work on my endurance and often go trail running. It's essential to keep practising to improve our level and technique all year round.

- **Roberto Brera** (Alpina, Year 11)

But what does it take to be the best?



Few schools in the world can match Aiglon's calibre in ski racing, or the number of its alumni who have achieved success in national and international competition. However, the toughest challenge facing students who hope to join this elite is that technique and ability are not enough. They must also be prepared to stick to a punishing physical training regime – and it's a year-round commitment.

**Roberto Brera** (Alpina, Year 11) says: "Out of the ski season, I do dry-land training for 15 hours a week or more. This includes gym, where we do muscle reinforcement, co-ordination, balance exercises and flexibility, plus lots of stretching, which is important."

"I start work on my endurance as well, and often go trail running. During summer, it's essential to keep practising to improve our level and technique. This year I should do at least 50 days of glacier skiing."

Training up on the hill is every bit as onerous, and setbacks sometimes occur. **Nanoha Yoshioka** (Clairmont, Year 11) says: "At least three times a week, I go up to do three to four hours of ski training – either giant slalom or slalom. However, when I pulled a knee ligament a while ago, I wasn't allowed to ski for a month."

Aiglon ski race team manager **Mr David Mansfield** (Belvedere, 1982) believes the physical demands of ski racing have changed significantly since he was a student at the school. "The requirements have increased," he says. "The snow is harder than it was in the old days, and that requires more strength. Not just in the legs, but in the back, neck, shoulders – the whole lot."

In tandem with this, Mr Mansfield has seen the sport become "a lot more professional at a younger age". Meeting this challenge, and maintaining Aiglon's position as the school of choice for talented young racers, has meant investing in new equipment and ensuring that a structured development pathway is in place.

He says: "What we're trying to do now is keep up with developments in the sport, and provide something for young people who are interested in going as far as they can with skiing. For example, we now have a squad of students who have been selected to concentrate on racing, and they have their own programme."

"Already in the autumn term, they were on the snow in Zermatt every other weekend. We also got in one of the top mental coaches who works with the Swiss team. He came and gave a presentation on what it takes. We want to provide a structure that can set them up so they can go further in the future, beyond Aiglon – maybe in a national team."

I go up to do three to four hours of ski training at least three times a week – either GS or slalom. I want to push myself, take each race seriously and become one of the best at the school.

- **Nanoha Yoshioka** (Clairmont, Year 11)

There's a lot of physical training during term time, but we also have to keep up the training during the holidays, even when there are lots of other potential distractions!

- **Jameson Sandler** (Alpina, Year 10)

Those who achieve this goal will be following in the tracks of some distinguished Aiglonians. **Bill Koch** (Belvedere, 1973) won a silver medal at the 1976 Winter Olympics at Innsbruck – not in any alpine discipline, but in cross-country skiing. His achievement in the 30km made him the first American to reach the Olympic podium in any cross-country event (ski de fond).

On arrival in Villars, Bill was not unduly bothered to discover he was the only student with an interest in ski de fond. He says: "I grew up in a town where I was the only cross-country skier, and I was the only one to ski to school and back every day. So I was the black sheep even before I came to Aiglon."

Training was a problem, but two figures at the school helped him to develop his talent. "There was **Mr Derek Berry** (1962-1974), who was director of the mountaineering and outdoor programme," says Bill. "The other was a very kind local person who was associated with the school, **Mr Jacques Stump**. He was the one who helped me to get to races in Switzerland, and he actually got me into the Swiss Junior Championships."

Mr Stump went on to become a teacher at Aiglon, as his daughter **Line Stump** (Exeter and Clairmont, 1976), who attended Aiglon with her siblings **Jacky** and **Alain**, recalls. "When my dad saw how talented Bill was, he asked permission to train him – in fact, he asked the school for special leave so he could attend all Bill's races," she says. (Indeed, Mr Stump went on to found the École de Ski Moderne – now the Villars Ski School.)

Bill would train by skiing up the regular alpine pistes, sometimes coming back down on the ski lifts ("I might have done that just to be tongue-in-cheek: if I'm going to do something backwards I might as well do the whole thing backwards!"). However, the demands of the school timetable in the early 1970s meant he had to take more serious measures to fit in enough endurance training.

He says: "I would get up really early in the morning, sneak out of the dorm and do my training before the cold showers. Another way was to get in trouble and do the punishment run. Most people hated that run, but for me it was a chance to do some training."

**Nikolai Hentsch** (Belvedere, 2001) twice represented Brazil at the Winter Olympics. He competed in the giant slalom at the 2002 Salt Lake games, adding the downhill and super-G at Turin four years later. At the 2006 games, he notched up a 30th place in the giant slalom and was chosen to carry his nation's flag in the closing ceremony. Throughout this time, his personal coach was a familiar figure: Mr Mansfield. →

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The requirements have increased:  
the whole sport requires more  
strength and more professionalism  
at a younger age

He says: "Going to Aiglon was a great opportunity to ski every day, which was my passion. And when I got there, my roommate was Brazilian and was a very good snowboarder. He told me, 'There's a Brazilian skiing and snowboarding federation, and you'd clearly be a massive asset. Let me introduce you to its president.'"

Nikolai realised that this represented a golden opportunity. "My father is Swiss and my mother is Brazilian. I grew up in Verbier and had been skiing since the age of four – I was always racing. But I was never going to make it in the Swiss system. To do that, you have to dedicate yourself to skiing alone. That was never on the cards for me. I wasn't good enough, and my parents didn't want me to drop my academic progression."

He was accepted by the Brazilian Ski Federation, granting him the FIS licence to start racing internationally. This made his final two years at Aiglon somewhat hectic. "I took ski time on the hill with Mr Mansfield and the team very, very seriously, because I knew there was a prospect of going to the Olympics a few years later. I started with a nutritionist and a weight trainer. At Aiglon, I basically started the long two-year preparation process of trying to qualify for the Olympics – which I did!"

After success in the traditional alpine disciplines while at Aiglon, **Liz Stevenson** (Clairmont, 2008) made the switch to freestyle, and now represents Great Britain in ski cross. She finished 19th in the 2015 World Cup rankings and 34th in the most recent season. Her time at Aiglon was one of change in the racing programme – undertaken, ironically for Liz, to attract students back from freestyle.

She says: "When I was in the Lower Sixth, we asked the Head Master if we could change some things with the racing team. We wanted to entice people to come and join us, rather than going off and doing freestyle. We asked if we could have different jackets from the other students, with a racing-team emblem. We also requested team gym sessions, and special dispensation to have lunch up the hill when we were training."

The requests were granted, and Liz believes the changes played a big role in motivating younger students to get involved in racing. Shortly afterwards, she encountered one of the most important milestones in her own development. "When I was 17, Mr Mansfield took me to an FIS race for the first time," she says. "It was a total disaster for everyone who competed, but it was a great learning experience. It just opened our eyes to the fact that there was a pathway to go internationally."

"Then, in my Upper Sixth year, we went to the British National Championships and I came second in the adult downhill. That was a fairly big deal. I thought, 'I'm going to take a gap year, and I might as well try for national selection' – which I then achieved."

Today's students access training aids that would have sounded like science fiction to their predecessors. Among the most useful is an online platform called Sprongo. When racers are off the hill, they can log on to a computer in their own time and play back film footage of their ski performances. It allows the students and coaching staff to analyse technique in minute detail, and pinpoint any areas of weakness that need to be addressed.

Mr Mansfield says: "We try to film everybody each week. We then upload the videos so that the students can log in and watch them. We can add comments next to each clip, and we can see how many times they view it, so we know who's looking at the videos and who's not."

"This technology makes our race programme all the more serious and professional, and I think it's in keeping with Aiglon and what we're trying to do."

The hard work paid off for Roberto Brera in the 2016/17 season. After winning the under-16 slalom and giant slalom at the British Schoolboys' International Races in Wengen, he skied into third place in slalom at the Interschool Ski Championships in Pila, Italy. It's all invaluable experience for the coming years, when the intensity of training will be ratcheted up even further.

"I'll have to make big jumps in my technique," he says. "Next year we'll start FIS competition and slowly I hope I will build up my points. I really want to go as far as I can with it."

Now recovered from her injury, Nanoha Yoshioka has enjoyed returning to competition. She says: "I don't plan to do any ski races after I graduate, so I want to do as much as I can during Aiglon life. I want to push myself, take each race seriously and become one of the best at the school."

And that's because competitive skiing at Aiglon is about more than simply producing Olympians-in-waiting. It teaches discipline, rewards determination and fosters intense camaraderie as well as friendly rivalry. But ultimately, it's also a great deal of fun.

According to Mr Mansfield: "It's a fantastic thing to do, with all of the opportunity to travel, the people you meet and all the wonderful experiences you have. What I would hope is that the students get as much enjoyment out of it as I did." 

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At Aiglon, I basically started the long, two-year preparation process of trying to qualify for the Olympics – which I did!



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# SUPER CARS

Aiglonians share their enthusiasm for all things automotive and the cars that have inspired them, from classic sports models to highly tuned fantasy machines.



Words: WILLIAM HAM BEVAN

Illustrations: RUI RICARDO - FOLIO ART

## SIMON KIDSTON

Simon Kidston (Alpina, 1985) spent a decade running the European operations of Brooks' auction house (now Bonhams) – but in 2006 he decided to focus on his first love, and founded the Geneva-based consultancy Kidston SA, specialising in brokering private sales of the world's rarest and most valuable motor cars.

Fast cars are in Simon Kidston's blood. His uncle, Commander Glen Kidston, was one of the original 'Bentley Boys' who cut a swathe through motor racing in the 1920s, and his father competed at gentleman-driver level. His own early attempts to enter the motoring world, however, were temporarily foiled. "My father gave me a small amount of money to buy a first car," he recalls. "I figured that, by reading the second-hand car magazines, I could buy a very, very second-hand Aston Martin, more glamorous than the Renault 5 my father had in mind. I ended up investing the money in a Wimbledon nightclub, thanks to an introduction by fellow Alpina boys, the Doyle brothers, which lasted about two weeks."

In 1996, Simon acquired his pride and joy, a Lamborghini Miura – a model he had lusted after since seeing it on screen in *The Italian Job*. "My love for the Miura actually started from being driven to school over the Grand Saint Bernard Pass every term. When I saw the film, I thought, 'Wow, that's the same road, but a rather sexier car.' I was hooked."

A slight frustration in his line of work is rarely being able to own cars he handles for clients. Simon recalls one in particular. "It was a psychedelic-liveried Porsche 917K," he says, "an all-conquering racing car from the early 70s. It's a 240mph coupé with 600 horsepower behind the driver's shoulders and about 2mm of fibreglass in front of his feet, which tends to concentrate the mind. That's the one that got away."

And although he has taken his Miura as far afield as California and Kuwait, the drive he describes with the greatest fondness is somewhat closer to home. "The memory of blasting up the hill from Ollon to Villars in my little red Alfa Spider, all 120 horsepower of it, still makes the hairs stand up on the back of my neck. That and wheel-clamping PP's car when I got to Aiglon..."

## SIR JACKIE STEWART OBE

Ranking among the greatest Formula One racing drivers of all time, Sir Jackie Stewart OBE won the World Drivers' Championship three times, and was an outspoken advocate for better safety standards on track and public roads. Both his sons attended Aiglon College. Paul (Alpina, 1984) followed his father into motorsport, and Mark (Belvedere, 1986) is a documentary film-maker.

With its 800cc engine and single windscreen wiper, Sir Jackie's first vehicle was a far cry from the machines that powered his famous Formula One victories in the 60s and 70s. "I was serving an apprenticeship in my parents' garage," he says. "I saved up all my tips and bought a brand new Austin A30. I had that car before I even had a driving licence."

The other cars that stand out in his recollection are somewhat more powerful. "A highlight was my first racing car – a little Cooper, in which I won the British and European Championships in Formula Three. And we won the World Championship in a Matra with a Ford engine in 1969. That was a very special car, beautifully built – Matra were a French company who were in the missile business."

Today, Sir Jackie is more likely to take the back seat, taking care of business while on the move in Britain and Switzerland. "I drive very little," he says. "I've had a driver for about 40 years. My garage is not what people would expect of a world champion. I have a Lexus hybrid, a long-wheelbase Range Rover and a Ford Cougar."

However, Ford's new supercar – a 50th anniversary tribute to the classic GT40 – has proved an irresistible temptation. "I'm going to buy the new GT," he says. "There's a brand new one coming up, so I've decided to be a young boy again." →

The memory of blasting up the hill from Ollon to Villars in my little red Alfa Spider, all 120 horsepower of it, still makes the hairs stand up on the back of my neck.

- Simon Kidston (Alpina, 1985)

## TALAL AL SAUD AND SULTAN AL SAUD

Talal (Belvedere, 1998) and his brother Sultan (Belvedere, 2006) are the driving force behind Team Galag – one of the best-known crews to compete in Gumball 3000, the annual international rally. In 2013, they won the ‘Spirit of Gumball’ award at the 15th anniversary event.

In May 2016, Aiglon students witnessed an unusual sight: a fully street-legal Batmobile straight out of the *Arkham Knight* video game. The Al Saud brothers were on their way from the Bucharest finish line of the 2016 event when they realised they were in the neighbourhood. Sultan says: “We were driving through Switzerland, and my brother said, ‘Shall we have lunch in Villars?’ As a joke, I said we should park it in Belvedere car park, and we contacted the school to see if we could. We didn’t realise how many people would come out to see!”

The custom-made Batmobile is the second they have commissioned, and boasts performance and looks. Constructed almost entirely from carbon fibre, it’s based on a Lamborghini Gallardo chassis and powered by a 5.2-litre V10. “It was built by a gentleman in Sweden who was lead engineer for [performance-car constructor] Koenigsegg,” says Talal. “With our projects, we’ve always had the problem of ending up with cars that underperformed. This is probably the only one that’s over-engineered.”

Most recently, the brothers started their own rally. The first Snow Tour saw an eclectic selection of cars travel through Sweden to drive on a frozen lake. Sultan says: “We thought, why don’t we do a road trip with friends, and create a rally around it? It’s not Gumball, but in Stockholm we had 150 to 200 people waiting outside our hotel to see the cars. For me, the cars are simply a means to create these unique experiences.”

## ALFONSO DE ORLÉANS-BORBÓN

Alfonso (Delaware, 1986) made his debut as a racing driver at the 24 Hours of Le Mans in 1994, finishing fourth in the GT2 class and 10th overall. Five years later, he founded the motorsport team, Racing Engineering, which has enjoyed consistent success in Spanish Formula Three and GP2.

Unlike many figures in elite motorsport, Alfonso de Orléans-Borbón has driven trucks as well as racing cars. When he first started competing for Repsol, funding was so tight that he gained his heavy-goods vehicle licence to drive the team truck to each race. This proved invaluable when he founded Racing Engineering in 1999.

“The first year that we did Formula Three, we had no budget,” he says. “I was truck driver, team manager, technical director and extra mechanic when needed. We got one hotel room for the two drivers, and we all slept in the trucks to save money.”

The approach paid off, and the team won the teams’ championship in Spanish Formula Three for six years running, with drivers including a young Sebastian Vettel.

“

I had to put elastic bands on my legs, because when you pressed the brakes, all the blood would rush to your legs

Success in World Series by Nissan and GP2 have followed; the 2015 and 2016 seasons both ended with Racing Engineering in second place.

Alfonso credits his first 24 Hours of Le Mans with supplying the spark for his career, and the Ferrari 348 GT from that race still takes pole position in his affections. “It was absolutely brilliant to drive – it was as sturdy as a tank. It had a normal stick gearbox from a road car. You saw other people modifying the 348 and trying to make it special, and they didn’t last the race. We were the only Ferrari that finished.”

Equally memorable for a different set of reasons is the Porsche 962 in which he won the 1,000km of Monza. “They had to take the mirrors off because it would shake too much during acceleration,” he says. “I had to put elastic bands on my legs, because when you pressed the brakes, all the blood would rush to your legs and you would literally faint. It was an animal.”

## FREDERICA AND SIMON KIRKPATRICK

Frederica and Simon are the parents of Larissa (Le Cerf, 2016) and Alexandra (Le Cerf, 2017). They compete in regularity rallies all over the world in Flighy, their 1928 Type 37A Grand Prix Bugatti, and have taken part in 14 editions of the prestigious Mille Miglia event.

“To have a shared passion is the ultimate in a marriage, apart from your children!” says Frederica Kirkpatrick. “It gives us both something to work for all the time.”

That may be a tall order, as their partnership – with Frederica driving and Simon navigating – has already been extraordinarily successful. For six years, they have been the top-placed British team in the Mille Miglia, an event for pre-1957 cars that takes in some of Italy’s most spectacular driving terrain. “That’s the feather in the cap,” she says. “It’s highly contested, especially by the Italians and the Argentinians, who tend to be the ones who keep winning it.”

The Kirkpatricks’ car collection includes Jaunty, another Bugatti, which once permitted them to build a family motoring holiday around a trip to compete at the Prescott Speed Hill Climb in Gloucestershire. “They’re both two-seaters with no luggage space, so the girls had to pack all their clothes in a Swiss Army rucksack, including shoes.”

Fortunately, their daughters have inherited their enthusiasm for classic cars – partly thanks to a Morris Minor called Beaky Colander. Frederica says: “We bought her for the girls to learn to drive in, and so they would learn to double-declutch. That’s something you don’t get to do in a modern car!”

We were driving through Switzerland, and my brother said, ‘Shall we have lunch in Villars?’ As a joke, I said we should park it in Belvedere car park, and we contacted the school to see if we could. We didn’t realise how many people would come out to see!

- Sultan Al Saud (Belvedere, 2006)





# THE Campus Masterplan

Architecture, as Norman Foster famously wrote, is an expression of values – which is why Aiglon’s new Campus Masterplan starts and finishes with the guiding principles.



Writer: LUCY JOLIN  
Illustration: DURISCH + NOLLI

“**W**hat we do is not haphazard, or done because other people do it or somebody said it ought to be done that way,” wrote Aiglon’s founder, John Corlette. “Everything we do has been thought out with reference to our basic aim and developed from our principles.” What was true in 1973 is as true today: so it is no surprise to hear that the guiding principles – the balanced development of mind, body and spirit – sit at the very heart of Aiglon’s building blueprint for the future, the Campus Masterplan.

**ASSEMBLY AND ARTS**  
The images on these pages are of the architect’s initial proposal for the new Assembly and Arts Building, which will be located at the heart of the campus on the old orchard field next to the John Corlette Building. To find out more about how you can support the new building, please visit: [aiglon.ch/support-us](http://aiglon.ch/support-us)

The Masterplan, developed by leading architect Camilla Finlay, lays out how the school will meet both its unique challenges and opportunities. It is the result of many conversations and consultations with staff, the School Council and the Board.

But rather than simply mapping out the next, say, five years, the plan is ‘rolling’, continually responding to the school’s changing needs while always staying true to the guiding principles, as Head Master, Mr Richard McDonald explains. “Perhaps the Masterplan’s most significant single accomplishment in recent years is the creation of our Sports Centre, which speaks strongly to ‘body’ in the triptych of ‘mind, body and spirit’,” he says. “But our next ambitious piece, the Assembly and Arts Building, will be a hub for creativity, and will bridge all three elements of mind, body and spirit.” →



“

It's really important that new buildings do not stand alone: that they are not a shop window with nothing behind them



The Assembly and Arts Building is designed to dramatically improve the spaces in which Aiglonians can meet as a whole school, whether for meditation, examinations, performances or whole-school celebrations such as graduation and alumni reunions. Designed by award-winning architectural practice Durisch + Nolli, the proposed building will sit within the distinctive alpine style of Villars while providing Aiglon with a stunning new focal point.

**A BUILDING FOR THE ALPS**

The building's designers drew inspiration from the celebrated 19th century polymath and alpine enthusiast John Ruskin, who declared that a great building should

“act well, and do the things it was intended to do in the best way... speak well, and say the things it was intended to say in the best words... and look well, and please us by its presence, whatever it has to do or say”.

“Architecture is a service and to build something useful for society is our greatest achievement,” explains Aldo Nolli. “Something that is environmentally sustaining, aesthetically pleasant and stimulating for human activity and living. Our focus with this building is on serving Aiglon, delivering high quality spaces for learning,

performance and gathering which serve the daily life of the community of the College.”

Mr McDonald adds that while doing all that, the new design also has to reflect Aiglon's values. “The performing arts require a level of intellectual engagement, a level of physicality, and an engagement with our true identity and our deep intent,” he says.

“For us, it's really important that new buildings do not stand alone: that they are not a shop window with nothing behind the windows. We are very mindful of the need to present well on both the inside and the outside.”

The Assembly and Arts Building will certainly present well – a spectacular feature on the mountainside, it will make a very explicit statement around the value of bringing the community together regularly, creating periods of time for reflection and stillness within a hectic school day.

However, the Masterplan is not only about the new and imposing – small, quiet changes can also yield great results. These are what Camilla calls “quick wins”, such as introducing a new entrance to the School Restaurant (formerly central dining), taking the pressure off the entrance to Belvedere and moving the staff common room into the heart of the campus, allowing it to be more centrally located.

**A STRONG COMMUNITY**

Coming together as a community – of teachers, students, alumni and professionals dedicated to the school – is a core part of the Aiglon philosophy, whether it be for meditations, for celebrations, for performances or for reunions. The new venue will be large enough for a variety of different gatherings.

“

We have set a benchmark of excellence in our new buildings, which helps us to reflect on how we can improve some of our older buildings



“The amazing new buildings are important, of course,” Camilla says. “The Sports Centre is a landmark building, and the Assembly and Arts Building will be the same, exceptional in terms of quality and in what it delivers for education and student life here. But other projects need to run parallel to those. We have to remember that students spend relatively few years at school. A project like the Assembly and Arts Building is conceived one year, but may not be delivered for a number of years. As a school, you're working on two levels: incremental improvement as well as transformational, larger projects.”

**A FUTURE-PROOFED PLAN**

There are other considerations to bear in mind, too. The Masterplan must allow for not just functionality but modern teaching and quality of life: spaces must lift and inspire the people who live and work within them, while reflecting current teaching and learning approaches.

The new Centre for Enquiry, says Mr McDonald, demonstrates this concept perfectly. Once the library was moved into a newly refurbished and expanded

space, it was deliberately renamed: no longer a 'library' – a description of its contents – but now a 'Centre for Enquiry', a description of the behaviours in that space.

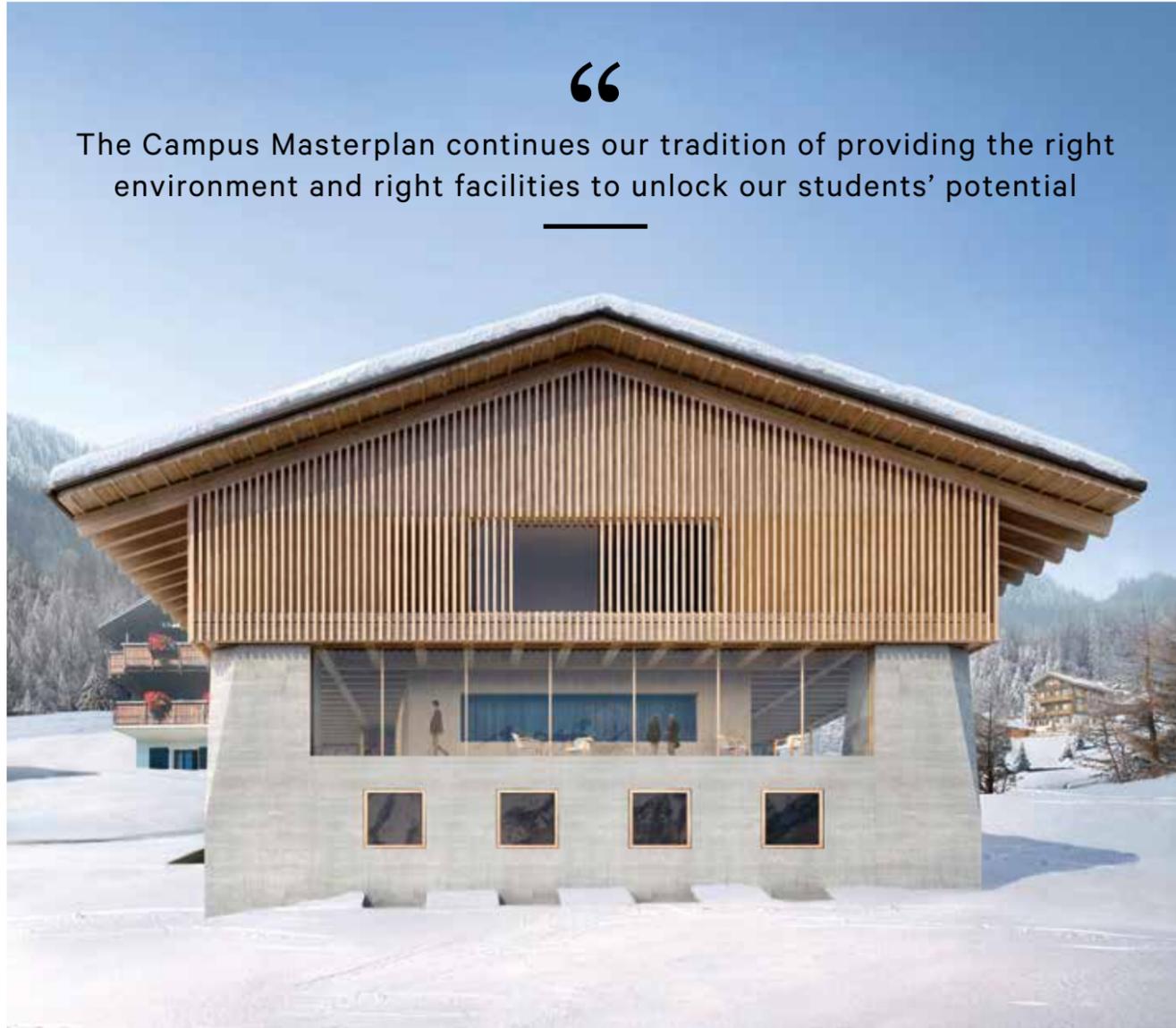
Preserving, as well as improving, is also key – not least because, as Camilla points out, the school's unique setting and character is, for many Aiglonians, one of its most important aspects. “We have set a benchmark of excellence in our new buildings, which helps us to reflect on how we can improve some of our older buildings. One of the things that comes out of the Masterplan is the fact that so many people love the unique setting and this eclectic group of buildings, many of them alpine in character, that sit within the landscape – and that is something we wish to preserve.”

Of course, the Masterplan would not be achievable without the help of the school's supporters. Andrew Bednarski, Capital Campaign Manager at Aiglon, is helping to share the Masterplan vision with the alumni, parents and friends whose support is needed to bring the plans to life. As well as inspiring and informing the community about the Masterplan's scale and importance, he has been discussing with →

**SOUNDSCAPE**  
In addition to providing a focus for community gatherings, and a chance to showcase the depth of talent in the College, the new buildings will update the facilities for music and drama programmes for all students, as well as exhibition and reception space.

“

The Campus Masterplan continues our tradition of providing the right environment and right facilities to unlock our students' potential



Aiglonians how they can get involved to make it a reality. “I have been talking with members of our community at reunions and one-on-one,” he says. “In fact, I’ve just returned from the USA, where I was able to meet with alumni, current students and their parents in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Miami, New York – and Greenwich, Connecticut!”

Aiglon is a not-for-profit school, which means that the entirety of school fees goes towards operational costs. It’s something that, as Andrew points out, the school is justly proud of, and means that the support of Aiglonians is key. “While our pedagogy remains rooted in the important principles established by John Corlette in the mid-20th century, our campus has had to grow and adapt over the years. Despite the need for new facilities, we’ve worked very hard to maintain our unique, alpine-village character. The Campus Masterplan continues our tradition of providing the right environment and right

**UNDER ONE ROOF**  
Spread over five floors, the new Assembly and Arts Building will include drama classrooms, guitar rooms, drum rooms, a black box studio, a recital hall, recording studio, digital music suite, practice rooms, green room and back stage area, an exhibition gallery and assembly and performance spaces.

facilities to unlock our students' potential – and we rely on the support of our alumni, parents and friends to help us maintain and improve our world-class facilities.”

And perhaps that’s not so surprising, because, like so many activities at Aiglon, the Masterplan is a collective endeavour: both in the planning and the realisation. “We have been able to make fantastic progress on the plan already,” says Mr McDonald. “We have a great debt of gratitude to people who participated with gifts of all sizes to make the new Sports Centre possible. The same will be true for the Assembly and Arts Building.

“We will unquestionably need to reach out to people to help us achieve this,” he continues. “We won’t be able to achieve it with our resources alone. We want people to share the excitement and the vision, and feel that they are active participants in building the school of the future.”



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



# CLASS NOTES

Share your news and get in touch with the Aiglon community at [alumni@aiglon.ch](mailto:alumni@aiglon.ch)



## TEDx IN LUGANO

Charlotte de Brabandt (Exeter, 2005) was thrilled to host a unique TEDx event in Lugano on the theme of 'Professions of the Future'. The event focused on the changing landscape of how we work and think in a world increasingly defined by our technology. And participants were given a clear goal: to share the big ideas that will improve and innovate the future of work.



## INTERVIEWING THE PRESIDENT

Next time you're told that interning is a waste of time, spare a thought for **Akram Safa** (Belvedere, 2017) – probably one of the luckiest interns of all time. Akram was on a two-week placement at the French political magazine *Valeurs Actuelles*. He had had two features published, one on North Korea and one on a football match played to commemorate French veterans – already no mean feat for a 'newbie'. But towards the end of his work experience, he was told that *Valeurs Actuelles* (along with *Le Figaro* and *Paris Match*) had been selected to meet the Lebanese president, Michel Aoun, in Beirut, prior to the Lebanese state visit to Paris. Not one to miss an opportunity, Akram jumped on a plane to conduct an hour-long interview with the president. Focusing on what President Aoun was expecting from his visit to France and what the two countries are planning for the future, Akram says that it was "an experience which I will never forget. I learnt, as I did throughout my Aiglon career, that one grows outside of one's comfort zone."

## HELLO LONDON!

"I am currently doing a year-long General Course program at the London School of Economics and Political Science. I am taking courses from the Philosophy, Government and Economics department which count towards my core undergraduate degree in Finance and Economics from Babson College. Naturally, I look forward to connecting with my classmates and other Aiglon alumni in the U.K."

**Shalom Kinyua**  
(Exeter, 2015)



Illustrations by Ruby Taylor



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**passions,**  
nous en avons fait  
**notre métier.**



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#### TRAGIC FIRES IN CALIFORNIA

"In the aftermath of the tragic fires in California Wine Country, there has been an incredible community that has come together to provide shelter and aid to all that have lost so much. Through my winery, my employees and our personal giving we are helping in our small way to help the recovery and rebuilding efforts. I remember my time at Aiglon, where we were taught to act with thoughtful purpose in our global community, and we continue to give aid to those in need."

**Tom Meadowcroft**  
(Alpina, 1978)

#### SEA SHEPHERDING

Seven years ago, **Helen Normand** (Exeter, 2010) made the move from Switzerland to Los Angeles for a big adventure. Today she works for Sea Shepherd Conservation Society (SSCS), an international non-profit, marine wildlife conservation organisation. Sea Shepherd uses innovative direct-action tactics to investigate, document and, when necessary, take action to expose and confront illegal activities on the high seas. By safeguarding the biodiversity of our delicately balanced ocean ecosystems, Sea Shepherd works to ensure their survival for future generations. Currently Outreach Coordinator, Helen supports volunteers across North America to coordinate outreach, education and fundraising in local communities. "It is an organisation that actually gets things done, and I am so proud to be a part of it," Helen says. "I plan to continue working for this wonderful organisation for a long time, and look forward to seeing where it takes me."



#### GRENADIER POLO

On a damp and blustery afternoon in early September, **Colonel Howard Flood** (Delaware, 1973) participated in the 8th Annual Grenadier Polo Day Challenge at the Guards Polo Club in aid of the Colonel's Fund, Grenadier Guards. The 'Past Grenadiers' were able to take the day, winning matches against both the Welsh Guards and present Grenadier Guards team. Howard hopes to keep building support for the sport of polo among his fellow Aiglonians!

#### ORGANIC CARE

"I have founded a natural and organic skincare line based out of Montreal. Étymologie is founded on the principles of sourcing the best, high-performance natural and organic ingredients from around the world to create exquisite skincare formulas – backed by science. The line is designed to meet the essential needs of all skin types; a good effective cleanse, hydration and antioxidant protection. Many of the oils in our products come from suppliers committed to environmental conservation and fair trade – most oils are certified organic and their production creates jobs for local people, employs many women and gives them and their families a better quality of life. Our products are proudly PETA-certified vegan and cruelty-free."

**Raquela Cheesmond**  
(Clairmont, 2009)

#### FIRST ALUMNI CAREERS PANEL

Aiglon was thrilled to welcome global media expert **Lucy Jay-Kennedy** (Clairmont, 1999) and trader **Omar Kalouti** (Alpina, 2010) to talk at the first-ever alumni career panel.

Set up as a Wednesday evening culture, students listened attentively and interacted with the speakers as they discussed their experiences of starting their careers. The panel was timely: Year 11 and Year 13 are considering their own future options, so the two alumni were able to share relevant advice and answer questions.

Lucy said: "I was inspired by the facilities Aiglon provides today, and it was fun to kick-start the evening with a dinner with some of the students. I recognise the Aiglon ethos which has been instilled in them. Such bright



futures ahead! I was delighted to learn that so many scholarships are provided. Aiglon is forming tomorrow's leaders, and bringing this inclusive spirit is essential!"

Omar said: "Thank you for organising the first alumni panel and inviting us. It was an honour to participate, and

I very much enjoyed engaging with the students and staff. You should all be proud of what you have achieved over the past five years. With the greater number of scholarships, new facilities and dedicated admissions team, it is a real joy to see just how Aiglon has developed."

# Class of 2006

This issue, the Class of 2006 share their updates and news from around the world.

**Leyla Allahverdieva** (Exeter, 2006) leads the EU sales and tech at one of the world's largest travel wholesale companies. This year, she was part of the Forbes U30 summit and the first ever Women@Forbes U30 – and says she was honoured to be part of such an empowering movement for women. Leyla still enjoys travelling and discovering the world's mysteries, people and cultures and in the past year has visited more than 20 countries.

**Emilie Tierchant** (Clairmont, 2006) lives in Paris and is striving to improve the sustainability of motorways. She still loves dinghy catamarans, windsurfing, kitesurfing and J80. Emilie has also taken up rock climbing and slacklining.

**Alexandre Pfyffer von Altshofen** (Belvedere, 2006) runs a private equity firm and ran the NYC Marathon in November for Unicef. He lives between Boston and New York, and would like to meet up with any fellow Aiglons on the East Coast.

**Adam Dierker** (Alpina, 2006), is married to Melissa and has three sons: Hunter (15) who attends the Army and Navy Academy, Augustus (5) who has started kindergarten, and Friedrich (2), a healthy and happy toddler. Now a captain in the US Marine Corps, Adam is assigned to a unit in Southern California. The family recently took a road trip through Yosemite National Park, King's Canyon and Sequoia National Park, and Southern California wine country continues to be a favourite. They will cherish the good weather for a little while longer until next summer when they move to Adam's next duty station.

**Ichi Vazquez** (Clairmont, 2006) has just started at Barry University School of Law in Orlando, inspired by her work for a legal aid non-profit. She lives with her partner, Kevin Vagovic, in Daytona Beach – if you'd like to say hello, you can reach her via the Alumni Office.



**Kaja Larsen** (Clairmont, 2006) is Brand Director at National Geographic.



**Reza Larizadeh** (Alpina, 2006) moved to Iran to help his family in the oil, gas and petrochemical sector, to provide consulting services to friends and international companies looking to expand into the Iranian market. But in the process, he has discovered his heritage and roots, as he didn't grow up in the country. On a separate note, he and Waleed Albinali (Delaware, 2006) conquered Mount Kilimanjaro at the end of March, bringing them nostalgic moments from their expedition days at Aiglon. Reza also supported Aiglon's admissions team on their recent trip to Tehran.



**Tomoya Kaji** (Delaware, 2006) got married to Rena in October. Milan Srenger, Thiago Camargo, Sultan Al-Saud, Reza Larizadeh, Waleed Al-Binali and Albert Amon, many of whom Tomoya has known since Junior School, were all in attendance, and Waleed's emotional speech went down really well.

**Usman Ellahi** (Belvedere, 2006) is making the most of life, expanding his family business and hoping to achieve his aim of flying a fighter plane before the end of 2018!

**Emma Venables** (née Ramsay, Le Cerf, 2006) lives in London and has just married the man of her dreams in Buckinghamshire. She works as an account director for a London PR agency, and is looking forward to new adventures with her new husband!

**Edward Smith** (Delaware, 2006) married Katherine Wiles last summer (and is now happily Edward Smith-Wiles). Based in London, Edward is marketing director of the Excalibur Group and runs (with Katherine) premium private tutoring business, Wentworth Tutors.



## Tributes



**Laurence Rudder** (Class of 1954)

**From the editor:**

It is so sad when one of the original boys from Aiglon leaves us – it feels like a bit of Aiglon has passed as well. I was going through the archives the other day and found the original school register which started on 7 August 1949. The scan of the second page [above] lists Laurence as a student – he was the 41st student enrolled in our school.

**Frederick Woolworth** (Class of 1973)

We are sad to report the death of Fred 'Jake' Woolworth in June 2017. We believe he had been living in Paris, France, where he had spent a lot of time working in the music business. Fred was passionate about animals and believed humans greatly underestimate them.

We send our sincere condolences to the family and especially to Fred's sister Georgina (Exeter, 1976), known to one and all as 'Gigi'.

**Shashi Batra** (Delaware, 1983)

We were sad to learn of the death of Shashi Batra, at the tragically early age of 51, on 21 May 2017. Shashi was a former president of premium lingerie manufacturer Victoria's Secret before founding Credo Beauty, the natural beauty specialists with stores across America. As well as a "beauty-retail visionary", he is remembered as a kind, dear soul with a huge grin and lots of energy.

**Jeffrey J. Parks**, (Belvedere, 1974)

Jeff was killed in a traffic accident on 31 October 2017 while on a cycling trip in Vietnam. He had recently celebrated his 60th birthday. He worked for Southland Corporation before starting his business, Bear Arms Guns & Accessories, in Scottsdale, Arizona, where he met and married the love of his life, Jayne. Jeff's motto was: "If you like everything you try, you're not trying enough!" Jeff leaves behind Jayne, his wife of more than 30 years, their three children Jessica, Jake and Juli and his sister Wendy (Clairmont, 1974).



# Ice breakers

Cousins Jack and Marc say that playing ice hockey has benefits on – and off – the ice.



Words: KATE HILPERN  
Photography: JOE MCGORTY

“When my team is losing a game and I can see that my rival goalie is much stronger than me, it tends to spur me on and I have my very best ice hockey moments,” says **Marc Chu** (Delaware, Year 11). “This one time, I was helping out on the other team because they didn’t have a goalie at all and although everyone had been totally convinced they’d lose, I managed to defend every single attack and win them the game. When that kind of thing happens, it feels great and that’s one of the things I love best about ice hockey – the speed at which things can change.”

Marc’s love of ice hockey began when he was nine. “I was living in my home country of China and there was great excitement about a new ice rink in Shanghai.

“My cousin and I loved being on the ice from the moment we set foot on it and once we’d mastered skating, there were really only two choices to take it forward – figure skating or ice hockey.”

Both Marc and his cousin, **Jack Gong** (La Baita, Year 8), are now at Aiglon and have really enjoyed playing together this year. Jack explains that although he loves being on the ice, it wasn’t always smooth sailing. “I remember struggling quite a lot when I was little. But I loved the fun and the speed of it



Above, from left to right — Bogdan Polzovskiy (Belvedere, Year 9), Euan Grassie (Delaware, Year 11), Jack Gong (La Baita, Year 8), Igor Shatilov (Belvedere, Year 9), Logan Leger (Delaware, Year 12), Liam Leger (La Baita, Year 8).

and I remember watching Marc and others his age playing ice hockey and wanting to be just like them. Within a couple of years, I was training five times a week and most of my friends were ice hockey players.”

Nonetheless, Jack’s admiration for his cousin helps motivate him to get better and better on the ice. “He’s such a great goalie that sometimes even the coaches can’t get the puck past him!”

Jack’s passion for the sport comes from not only the speed involved, but the camaraderie. “When you score, your teammates really celebrate. There’s such co-operation.”

Even when things don’t go as planned, Jack says there are positives. “When you lose, you always learn something from it and that’s how you get better, step by step. In fact, I’m on quite a steep learning curve at the moment because the Villars coaches teach differently than I’m used to and that means I am learning new things.”

## MAINTAINING CONDITION

Ice hockey is hard work, he says. “You have to keep really strong and fit – running laps, doing push-ups. At one time, I trained in Canada and they made it really clear that you have to keep training and you really can’t quit. Once you quit, you’re finished.”

Jack has no trouble pinpointing his favourite ever ice hockey moment. “We were playing a match in Beijing and the other team was really strong, beating us by a long way. But then we scored four goals in the last five minutes and won on penalty shoot-outs. It was awesome.”

For Marc – who, like Jack, is currently training and playing matches up to three times a week – there are some surprising benefits to the game. “Our coach speaks French and because learning French is compulsory here, it’s like we get a free French lesson thrown in!” he laughs.

The academic side of Aiglon is hard work, says Marc. “And so you’d think a sport like ice hockey could just add to your stress. But although it might sound weird, the pressure you build up from sitting in the classroom and studying hard gets released immediately when I’m out playing on the ice. There’s nothing quite like it.”



You have to keep training and you really can’t quit. Once you quit, you’re finished

Below The 1970 Aiglon ice hockey team, led by Mr John Dennett.



## HOCKEY MAKES A COMEBACK!

The Aiglon ice hockey team first became affiliated with the Villars hockey club during the mid-60s. Fielding a team that included **Tony Jashanmal** (Alpina, 1965), they won at the ADISR Championships in 1964 and 1965.

Today, the team welcomes everyone from beginners to top players, and has students drawn from five nationalities.

**Jack Wright** (St Louis, Year 13) is a member of the Villars first team, competing at the highest level while keeping up his other school commitments. **Logan Leger** (Delaware, Year 12), another member of the team, also coaches the youngest players.

The team say it is a win win situation: not only do they have the opportunity to continue to play a sport they are passionate about, they also get to engage with members of the local community. No surprise, then, that Aiglon’s ice hockey players are going from strength to strength!

# Reading

Wilfie Wise

— (La Baita, Year 8)



Words: KATE HILPERN  
Photography: JOE MCGORTY

I get completely lost in books, especially fantasy and comical books. What's not to love about Harry Potter or Tom Gates? Once at break time, I was so involved in a story that I suddenly realised everyone had got up and left and I wound up being late for my homework session. I had to make up an excuse!

There's no shortage of places to read at Aiglon, but my personal favourites are the library and, during nicer weather, one of the outside benches. It's not just that the library is generally quiet – although I do like that. It's also the focused vibe and being surrounded by seemingly infinite books. In fact, I've started helping out in the library myself from time to time. Meanwhile, the outside bench on a sunny day is another great place to be. The noise soon disappears into the background when you get stuck into a narrative and I like the feeling of the wind blowing gently in my face.

I've always loved stories. Some of my earliest memories are of my mum reading to me at bedtime. I remember finding it comforting to hear the same books again and again. In particular, I couldn't get enough of *The Snail and the Whale* and *The Gruffalo*, both by Julia Donaldson. But I didn't really love reading myself until I read *The BFG* a



“Background noise soon disappears when you get stuck into a story”



few years later. It had such a wow factor and I quite literally couldn't get enough of books from that day on.

It's not that I don't like more physical activities – football and skiing are great. But there's something about reading that takes you into another world. Even if I've had a really rubbish day, I can get into my bed and open my book for the half-hour reading slot we're allowed and everything feels good. I think Aiglon really gets that about reading – which is why they embed it into school life.

While I do have genres I'm naturally drawn to, I also like being taken out of my comfort zone. In fact, I have recently started getting into autobiographies.

I'm open to other people's ideas too. At a recent book fair, I couldn't find anything that appealed to me until a librarian handed me something I wouldn't usually buy. 'You'll like this,' she said – and she was right. I also like the way we're asked to do a quiz on each book we borrow from the school library – it makes you really think about what you bring away from each book.

If I'm feeling underwhelmed by a story by the time I've got five pages in, I'll put the book down and get another one. But mostly I'm lucky that doesn't happen. I just hope the pleasure that reading gives me stays with me for life. **A**

**Above —** This year, the library was relocated from the bottom floor of Clairmont to the Parsons Building and renamed the Centre for Enquiry, in recognition of the activities that are undertaken in the space – and the very many different media available there.



# IT department

*Tried turning it off and on again? Still not working? Time to call in the experts.*



Words:  
PAMELA EVANS  
Photography:  
JOE MCGORTY

**F**ew people witness the most satisfying moments in Aiglon's IT department: that handful of occasions when the team work through the night to sort out a critical situation and get the system working again.

"I love those quiet moments of accomplishment in the early morning," says **André Jordaan**, Director of Computer Services. "You hear the birds get busy, you see those first glimmers of sunlight. While the world sleeps, you've achieved something. You've been on an adventure. Then, come morning meditation, it's business as usual."

Meeting these unpredictable and complex challenges is all in a day's work for André and his team, who look after the complex digital infrastructure that serves Aiglon's organic, analogue community. And the department's remit reflects the increasingly large role which technology plays in our lives.

Classical devices such as desktop computers, laptops, smartphones and tablets jostle for space alongside data loggers, robotics and virtual reality facilities. The department's responsibilities touch every aspect of Aiglon life, from vital security systems to AV to the recording studio. "We joke that we look after anything with a power cord and a button," André says.

The average Aiglon user currently has more than three connected devices, André points out, and both staff and students communicate in, and increasingly inhabit, this virtual landscape. Success comes when the department's work is invisible to the user. "Technology should be a perfect lens through which, for example, teachers can enlighten and students can observe – or vice versa," he says.



Above, from left — Jean-Pierre Novelli (Computer Services Technician); Frédéric Pousaz (IT and AV Technician); Chris Wilks (IT Technician); John Gerhardt (Senior Computer Services Technician); André Jordaan (Director of Computer Services); and Ashley Norton (AV & Sound Technician).

“

**We joke that we look after anything with a power cord and a button**

This requires constant love and attention: updates, tweaks to established systems, trialling and implementing new ones, troubleshooting and so on. "Sometimes a good old-school, low-tech fix does the job, like sticking a Post-it note up instead of sending an email!" says André. "Otherwise, we try not to reinvent the wheel but build on what we have. And if it works, do not try to fix it – that's usually our best starting point."

"I think we've got a very nice team here," he says. "Our working hours are spent immersed in the joys, challenges and headaches that any top-flight company faces pushing forward with a commitment to best practice. And we have the added bonus of the Dents-du-Midi looming large, should we need a reality check!"



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