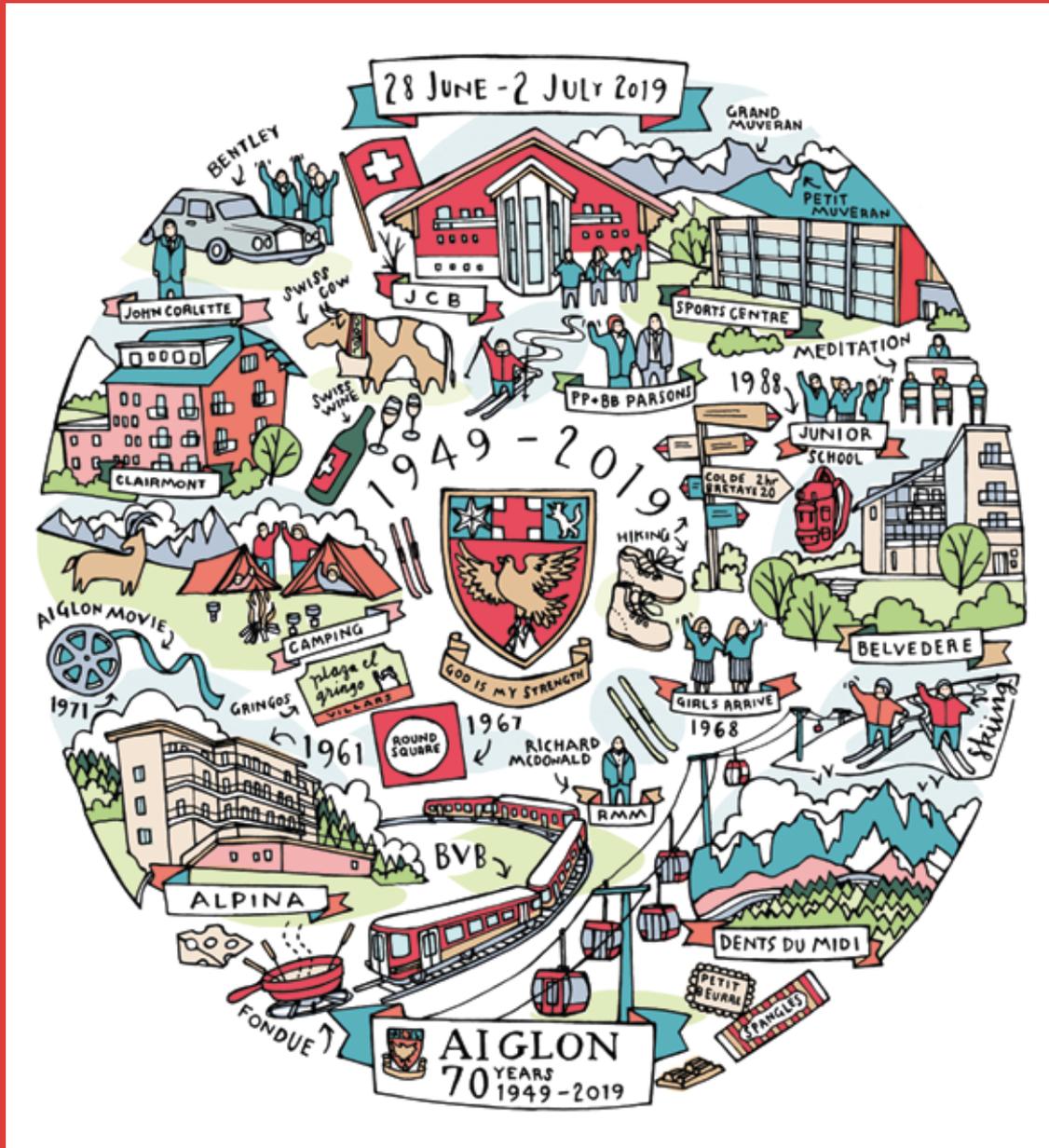


# AIGLON

THE MAGAZINE



ISSUE 11 WINTER/SPRING 2019

**School:** Dedication, creativity and a touch of magic: the role of the houseparent

**Mountain:** Unpredictable. Transient. Magnificent. The allure of snow

**Ideas:** How to succeed as a creative in the 21st century

**People:** In 1971, a documentary filmmaker caught Aiglon's unique spirit on film

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**AIGLON**  
ISSUE 11  
WINTER/SPRING 2019



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*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: A celebration of Aiglon's 70th anniversary.  
Illustration: Olivia Whitworth



## Features



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## WELCOME TO ISSUE 11

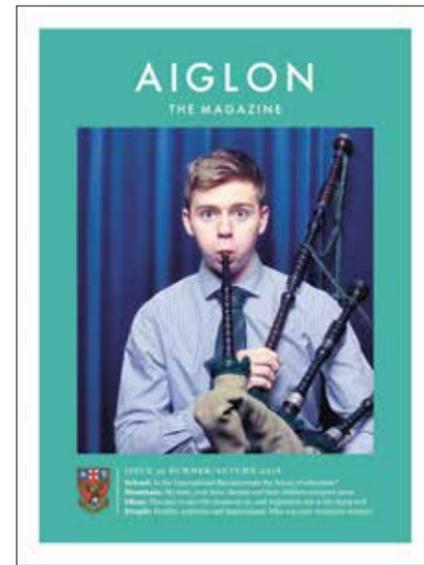
I AM DELIGHTED TO ANNOUNCE that our school magazine has won a CASE Gold Award. Competing against 43 of the world's leading independent schools, the judges said that the magazine "read like *National Geographic*" and that it "delivers the magazine you would expect [from Aiglon]: a modern and classic design beautifully presented. It is a coffee-table piece." Coming first was fantastic, but what makes us really happy is receiving praise from you! Thank you for taking the time to write to us with encouragement, memories and suggestions. We love receiving your letters, and value your feedback.

Next year, Aiglon will celebrate its 70th anniversary. More than 300 of you have already registered to return to the mountains, but places are limited so don't delay your sign-up! Please see your invitation (enclosed) for more details.

Finally, I would like to thank all the alumni and former staff who, over the years, have beautifully documented life at Aiglon. In this issue, our story on snow features images from the Parsons' archive, and others that we have scanned, often without knowing the original source. Let us know if you recognise the pictures or anyone in them.

Enjoy this issue and I look forward to reading your emails and letters.

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



## GOLD AWARD!

I thought the Mountain Mentors feature came out very well – the photos you selected were superb. There are a couple of misspellings of names in the 1964 football team photo (Roland Karakashian and Charles Ainley) but we'll give you a pass on that one! And congratulations on winning the CASE Circle of Excellence Gold Award! The magazine has come a long way. Outstanding work.

**Erik Friedl**  
 (Alpina, 1969)

## MOUNTAIN EYE

As a former unofficial school photographer I used to wonder why Aiglon hired a professional photographer for the magazine shots. The last issue fully justifies the decision. The photos all have life and character and really tell their own story before you even start reading the words. Congratulations to the team – and especially to the photographer – for a great magazine.

**Mr George Logie**  
 (Maths teacher 2001-present)



## PRAISE

Aiglon Magazine's 10th edition was the best yet. Well done to you and the team. I loved *The Generation Game* and *Mountain Mentors* sections particularly.

**Louie Snyder**  
 (Delaware, 1969)

## TAKING A STAND

The *Aiglon Magazine* is a great read and very well structured. I have noticed that there are articles linked to current topics such as the threat to the environment. It shows Aiglon is in touch with current affairs, which is wonderful and refreshing.

The evolution and status of women in the workplace is often in the news at the moment – is this a topic you might write about at some point? If so, I am sure many Aiglon alumni could contribute as remarkable entrepreneurs in different fields – from financial services directors to successful lawyers and beyond. I have no doubt it would make an interesting and inspiring read.

**Muriel Cunningham, née Cantryn**  
 (Clairmont, 2000)

### Editor's note

*A great suggestion, and one we will be considering for a future issue of the magazine. We are always pleased to hear your suggestions for issues we should cover, so please do keep them coming!*

## A MESSAGE FROM BIBI!

I would like to congratulate you on another very interesting edition of the *Aiglon Magazine* with the new Guardian, Gregor Grassie, and his beloved bagpipes, on the cover. The Italian runner Arlotta Tarino (featured in *Here's looking at you*) is an amazing chap. In *Mountain Mentors* you mentioned many of us oldies – of course, starting with John Corlette, JC! I recognised quite a few of the old boys in the photographs. Let us hope many alumni will turn up for the reunion next year!

**Mrs Brigitte Parsons (Bibi)**  
 (Former staff 1962-1999)

Join Mrs Parsons at our 70th Anniversary next summer! For more information, visit [www.aiglonlife.ch/70th](http://www.aiglonlife.ch/70th)

### Join the conversation!

[www.aiglonlife.ch](http://www.aiglonlife.ch)  
 email: [advancement@aiglon.ch](mailto:advancement@aiglon.ch)  
 write to: Aiglon Magazine, Aiglon College,  
 Avenue Centrale 61,  
 1885 Chesières, Switzerland  
 Facebook: [www.facebook.com/aiglon](https://www.facebook.com/aiglon)  
 Twitter: @aigloncollege

# NEWS



## IB and iGCSE triumphs!

Aiglon has once again enjoyed exceptional success in public examinations in 2018. Sixty-nine of 72 students completed the full IB Diploma Programme. Six students achieved a score of 40 or more out of a possible 45, and one student achieved the rare perfect score of 45 (only 0.2% achieved this globally). As a whole, the class achieved an average IB Diploma score of 33.5 points, significantly above the global average.

"We were thrilled to see so many students achieving fine exam results," said Deputy Head (Curriculum) Mrs Nicola Sparrow. "And, of course, it was a particularly proud moment to see one of our students reach the magical score of 45!"

Results at iGCSE level were also strong, with 56% of all grades at A\*/A or equivalent and 83% A\*-B. Many students excelled, with one earning 11 A\* grades and two achieving 9 A\* and one A grade. —

## First prize in Chinese competition

Cristina Danita (Le Cerf, Year 13) has won first place in a notoriously challenging Chinese language competition, beating students from secondary schools across Switzerland.

The 'Chinese Bridge' international Chinese proficiency competition, held in Bern, is an opportunity for non-Chinese students to demonstrate their language ability and share their understanding of Chinese culture and experiences of the language.

Cristina received her prize from Geng Wenbing, the Chinese ambassador, and was congratulated back at school for exploring Aiglon's internationalism while following the guiding principles of diversity and challenge! —

## Summer school success

Aiglon's summer school continues to thrive, offering students from around the world the chance to experience Aiglon life. This year, more than 200 students took part, between them representing 35 countries. We introduced two new courses, Leadership (for older students) and Maths and Science Investigator (for all ages), alongside our ever-popular SAT course, which prepares older students for entrance to US universities within a warm and adventurous summer school environment. But, perhaps best of all, this year we were pleased to be joined by eight alumni children! —



SCHOOL



MOUNTAIN



PEOPLE



MIND



BODY



SPIRIT

Illustration by Ruby Taylor





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## In praise of imperfection



“  
PERCEPTIONS OF  
SUCCESS AND FAILURE  
SHAPE SELF-ESTEEM



**Richard McDonald**  
HEAD MASTER

IN THE SUMMER OF 1985 I FOUND myself with a friend on a sun-bleached municipal golf course in Los Angeles. We scuffed and scurried our way to the third hole, where I carved my shot to within improbable putting range. My playing partner skimmed the top of the ball and we watched it bobble along the ground, until it disappeared from sight. In the hole. We were both weak at the knees with incredulity, hilarity and a sense of guilty injustice. My friend had, with no practice at all, secured a distinctly imperfect ace.

Humans have a strange relationship with targets, whether they be on a golf course, in a boardroom or in a school. We have contrived an almost limitless array of them, both material and abstract. Some targets are physical, some intellectual, some financial, some spiritual. Many are trivial, and bear little obvious relevance to survival of the species; others may seem more purposeful and altruistic. In so doing, we have massively multiplied the opportunities to experience success – and failure.

There are few environments where success and failure are more intimately and ambivalently woven together than in schools. Until relatively recent times, it was the norm to praise and reward success – and either condemn, punish or, at best, forgive and ignore failure. From praising

success, society began to demand and expect success. It needed to be measured and demonstrated in tangible ways. School exam grades and university placements became easy metrics to quantify and attribute success. Perfection was possible, if you strived hard enough for it.

This metric-driven perfection has proved a very poor indicator of happiness and harmony. From those with perfect scores, more perfection – unfailingly and unconditionally – is required. And it has too often come at a very high emotional price.

We live in an era of increasingly vocalised individual and societal malaise, particularly amongst younger generations. Inhibitions around the expression of mental or emotional fragility are evaporating in the western world, even if this remains an area of uncomfortable taboo in many cultural contexts. Public media are cultivating looks, lifestyles and aspirations that are feeding an unspoken brand of perfectionism. Levels of distress experienced by young people when they feel they don't fit, or their grades fall short of their own (or their family's) expectations, can be acute. These anxieties are sharpened by a range of physical and emotional factors that define our identity as well as our sense of self and worth.

Perceptions of success and failure shape self-esteem. If we want to guard against the toxic effect generated by the fear of failure, we must promote unconditional self-acceptance. Learning and growth happen when the self is safely anchored; at that point, if we fall short of an aspiration we can hold an honest inner monologue or external dialogue that gives us the confidence to improve and try again – or not. At its worst, perfectionism can lead to a constant and disabling sense of always falling short of a target, and one that may have been unrealistic in the first place.

I am still an occasional golfer, with little opportunity to practice. Yet every time I line up my shot on a short hole I am still aiming for a hole-in-one. That is called aspiration. And every time the ball does not go in the hole, or finishes in a tree or a lake, I shrug and think “Next hole, perhaps”. That is called unconditional self-acceptance.

If we strive for anything, and if we value a healthy balance in our lives, let us try to develop and partner these two habits of life, in even measure. 🎯

# Mountain mix-up?

*For more than 150 years, map makers and local people argued that the Petit Muveran – which looks just like a tooth – must have lost its name to the Dent Favre. Now, Aiglon Magazine can reveal the truth. Sort of.*



**The Petit Muveran**  
In the shadow of the Grand Muveran, the Petit Muveran stands at 2,810m. Its summit borders Vaud and Valais – and it definitely looks like an incisor.

**The Dent Favre**  
At 2,917m, the Dent Favre sits between the Dent de Morcles and the Grand Muveran. Despite its title – ‘dent’, or tooth in English – the Dent Favre is, oddly, not at all tooth-like.

Words: SANDRA HAURANT  
Photography: JEAN-PIERRE NOVELLI  
(TECHNICIAN, IT DEPARTMENT)



**T**HEY ARE AS FAMILIAR A SIGHT to Aiglonians as the orange tents used for expedition. But while the appearance and names of the peaks that surround Aiglon might be some of the first things new students learn, until recently, those very names were in dispute.

The peaks in question are the Dent Favre and the Petit Muveran – and the argument rests on the idea that the names were once inadvertently switched by a careless cartographer. The issue came to prominence again last year, when former conservationist in the canton of Vaud,

Jean-Pierre Reitz, told the Swiss newspaper *24 Heures* that he was sure that at some point the names of the two peaks must have been swapped. In short, the mountain we know as the Dent Favre is actually the Petit Muveran – and the Petit Muveran should really be called the Dent Favre.

In fact, Mr Reitz is only the most recent in a long line – going back 150 years – to declare that the mountains have been misnamed. Indeed, in 2013, Olivier Epars, local Green Party politician, even asked the State Council to consider the issue.

So why are so many mountaineers and local people convinced by the story? It all comes down to the fact that the Petit Muveran looks like a tooth, whereas the Dent Favre looks like a small version of the Grand Muveran.

Yet despite the level of support, no ancient map has been found that can prove the theory. Mr Epars was told by Nuria Gorrite, the Vaudoise State Council president: “According to the evidence available to the State Council, this cartographical inversion appears to be a myth.”

“  
FIVE YEARS AGO,  
A LOCAL GREEN  
PARTY POLITICIAN  
EVEN ASKED THE  
STATE COUNCIL TO  
CONSIDER THE ISSUE

And indeed, local guide, Pierre Delaloye, believes that while the names of these particular peaks are correct, “there are certainly other mountains where this seems to have happened. There is a similar theory that the Dent d’Hérens and the Dent Blanche in the Valais have exchanged names after a mapping error, the former being far whiter than the latter.”

Which means that new Aiglonians who have just mastered the names of the peaks can rest easy: for now, at least, the Dent Favre and Petit Muveran can stay as they are. **A**

I am

#

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Here's looking at you

AIGLONOLGY

# Raquela Cheesmond

(Clairmont, 2009)



Words: SARAH WOODWARD  
Photography: MONIQUE WESTON



**Sustainable skincare —**  
Raquela's work with Dr Luigi Rigano to develop natural UV filters for plant-based sunscreens has led to the founding of her brand, Étymologie.



**R**AQUELA CHEESMOND (Clairmont, 2009) says science and business are in her blood. Her father first got her interested in microbiology, but it was her studies at Aiglon, McGill University and under the world-renowned cosmetic scientist Dr Luigi Rigano in Milan that set her on the path to success.

Working with Dr Rigano got her thinking about better ways to create and market cosmetics, and led Raquela to found the sustainable skincare company, Étymologie, based in Canada.

The company is driven by the same values Raquela grew up with at Aiglon. Going on expedition every weekend made her curious about nature – and how natural ingredients could be used to perform simple tasks. “We were taught that we are stewards of the environment,” she says. “That message is imprinted deep within me.”

Indeed, even while still at school, Raquela worked hard to put her commitment to the natural world into practice. And although her interests initially pointed her towards biomedical research, she says spending time at Aiglon showed her that, when it comes to

health, environmental awareness has to be more fundamental than simply recycling. “Health and lifestyle – and skincare – can benefit hugely from using healthier, more effective natural ingredients to achieve goals, and Étymologie is the culmination of this learning,” she says.

Raquela develops the majority of Étymologie's 100% natural and fairly sourced formulas in the lab herself, and says ultimately she's aiming to grow the company's Canadian roots into a more global customer base. And she credits her time at Aiglon for her discipline and determination. “I know many people from Aiglon who have gone out there and started their own businesses. We keep in touch to see if we can collaborate, cross-promote or just generally help each other out. The school's approach encourages creativity as well as academic success. Now it's great to be able to share that creativity with other entrepreneurs.”

*This Christmas, Étymologie will donate 20% of every alumni purchase to Aiglon's scholarship programme. Visit [www.etyologie.ca](http://www.etyologie.ca), using the code AIGLON.*

# Fit for purpose

— Deon George and Valeriia Chemerisova (Exeter, Year 12)

Words: SARAH WOODWARD  
Photography: JOE MCGORTY



**M**R DEON GEORGE IS ON A mission. The former pro basketball player wants everyone to catch the exercise bug, which he has had for as long as he can remember. “I have this mantra: ‘Don’t be a stranger, come to the gym’, and I try to spread the word as much as I can.”

As Manager of Aiglon’s Sports Centre, his passion is to motivate more students to exercise in their free time. But some, like **Valeriia Chemerisova** (Exeter, Year 12), find their own way there. “In my first year I didn’t realise my passion for sports, and fitness in general,” says Valeriia.

“Then, when I moved to the senior school, I discovered I could go to the Sports Centre when I liked. One evening, I just got on to the treadmill and started running. I loved the running but I also love the environment – it’s just a really nice place to hang out.”



Soon she was going every day, something Mr George quickly noticed. “I look out for the students coming on a regular basis and talk to them, help them fix their personal goals.

“Valeriia is dedicated to taking care of her fitness and improving her skills – that impresses me,” he says, “but we talk about a lot more than sport.”

Mr George is also keenly aware of the need to gauge the students’ emotional state. “If they’re coming to the centre every night, I want to know why. Is it just because they enjoy it – or are they stressed out?”

“I feel the energy of the students and try to help them direct it. And it’s good for them to get their head out of their books occasionally.”

That’s certainly one of the attractions for Valeriia. “I really am striving for

**Working out —** Valeriia Chemerisova says working with Mr George in the gym has made her stronger and healthier, mentally as well as physically.

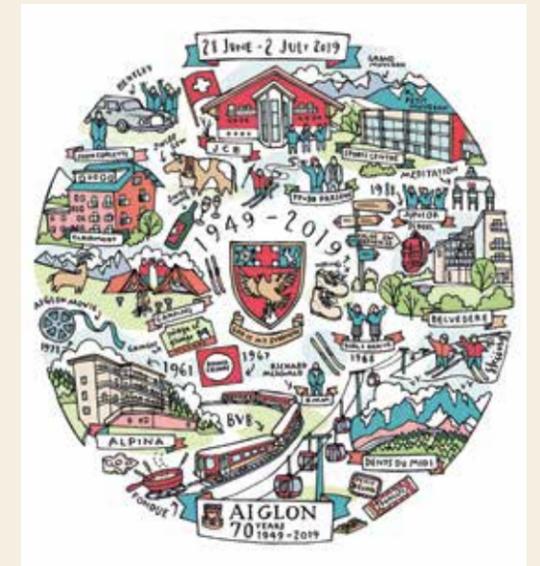
“**THE CENTRE IS A CHANCE TO TALK. IF THEY ARE COMING EVERY NIGHT IS IT FOR FUN, OR ARE THEY STRESSED OUT?**”

academic success. I work hard and my time at the gym helps me relax and unwind. I feel stronger and healthier than I did three years ago, mentally as well as physically.”

It’s an enthusiasm she is keen to share. “My parents and friends come from Russia and were not that into fitness, but now they see how much I love it, they are trying it too.”

Valeriia still goes to the Sports Centre almost every day, and Mr George sometimes asks her to show visitors how to use the equipment. “I get annoyed with everyone coming to the gym at the start of the summer term just to look good on the beach and then forgetting about it for the rest of the year,” she says. “The gym is just as great in winter when it’s too cold outside to run – though I do love running through the beautiful scenery whenever I can!”

JANUARY – JULY 2019



The big event: Aiglon’s 70th anniversary celebrations

## Diary

Illustration: OLIVIA WHITWORTH



**28 June-2 July 2019**  
**Aiglon is 70!**  
Aiglon welcomes you to a series of events at the end of June – please see the invitation enclosed for more details!

know a family who would like to meet a school representative, please contact us.

**January-May 2019**  
**Global Aiglon**  
The Admissions team will be hosting events in Dubai, Indonesia, China Singapore, Turkey, Kenya, Japan and Hong Kong. Join us!

**4 May 2019**  
**Vancouver**  
Save the date!

**24-26 May 2019**  
**Domaine de Barbossi**  
Join us for a fabulous programme of activities and raise money for our Scholarship programme at this annual weekend hosted by current parent Mr Iskandar Safa and son Akram (Belvedere, 2017).

**27 April 2019**  
**San Francisco**  
Oyster bake in Bodega Bay? Or hiking the coast? We welcome your thoughts for this alumni event in the Spring.

**1 June 2019**  
**Graduation**  
Don’t forget to book your accommodation now!

**28 April 2019**  
**Save the Date: LA**  
Details of our event will follow, but if you

For more information, feedback or to share your ideas, please contact [advancement@aiglon.ch](mailto:advancement@aiglon.ch).

# NEW AIGLON WINTER CAMPS

## EXPERIENCE LIFE ON THE MOUNTAIN

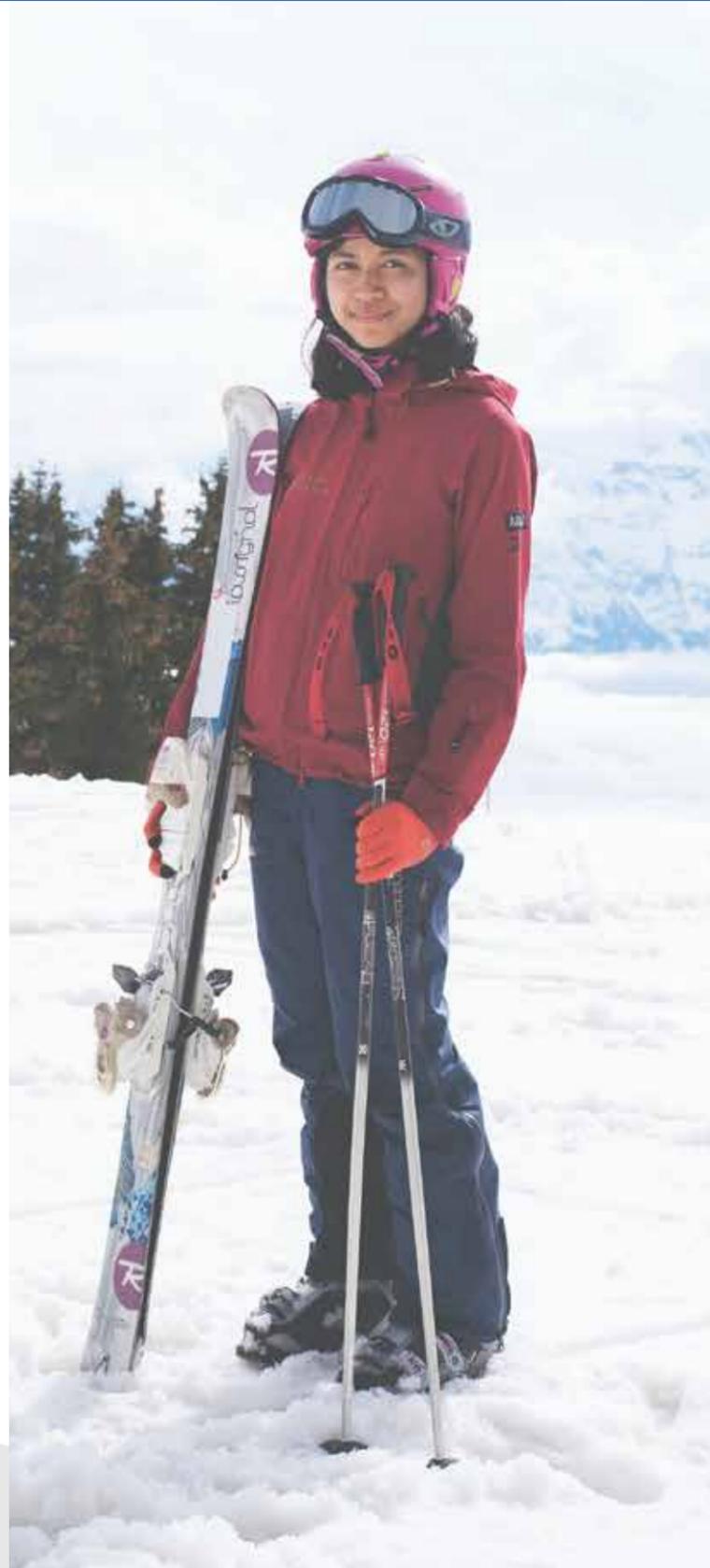
Aiglon is pleased to offer a new and unique winter camp programme beginning in 2019 that enables students aged 7-13 to join Aiglon's Junior School for a week (or longer).

The programme is designed both to give students a perspective of boarding and academic life at Aiglon as well as the opportunity to develop their skiing ability with daily lessons on the slopes.

To learn more and to register, please visit: [www.aiglon.ch/wintercamps](http://www.aiglon.ch/wintercamps) or email [enterprise@aiglon.ch](mailto:enterprise@aiglon.ch)



**AIGLON**  
Switzerland



## Staff room

# Student welfare



Words: MEGAN WELFORD  
Photography: JOE MCGORTY



**A** CREAKY STAIR COULD DRIVE a lesser person to distraction, but not Wellbeing Coordinator, **Ms Ruth FitzGerald**. Offered a move to a modern office, Ms FitzGerald declined because, she says, she likes the wooden stairs up to her two cosy office rooms in La Calèche – the creaks let her know when her next appointment has arrived.

“Students come to me about a whole spectrum of issues,” she says, “the same problems experienced by young people the world over: self-esteem, self-confidence, body image, pressure to succeed, friendship

or family issues. But the difference at Aiglon is that there is an incredible amount of support – between the students, from the houseparents and from the teachers.”

Ms FitzGerald works closely with **Mr Chris Chalcraft**, Deputy Head (Student Life), and **Mrs Marie-Claude Ally**, the Health Centre Manager. They ensure that every student is fully supported. “I have worked in many caring environments but this level of wraparound care is something Aiglon does very well.”

Accessing support is straightforward. Students can make appointments for one-to-one meetings or just drop in for a quick chat about whatever is on their mind. Ms FitzGerald also goes into the houses and runs workshops on subjects such as developing emotional intelligence or coping with exam stress, and contributes to PSHE classes, basing her approach on

Ms FitzGerald with some of her student ambassadors — from left to right, Alexander Neytchev (Alpina, Year 11), Francesca Jobson (Exeter, Year 13) and Sophie Ang (La Casa, Year 8).



a combination of humanistic, positive and cross-cultural psychology. “This approach looks at a person as someone who has all the resources to solve their own problems,” she explains. “It’s about helping them find those tools to realise their individual potential. I also incorporate Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, which is about how you talk to yourself internally and whether you help or hinder yourself.”

She supports initiatives from the student wellbeing group, which has 20 ambassadors across the school. “They’re currently working on a four-minute film, interviewing students on what they love about Aiglon.” And she might bring in external speakers, or even masseurs, to contribute to general wellbeing.

Her role, she says, is to “support and foster wellbeing at Aiglon across the board, individually and culturally”. She is aided by Aiglon values, which she describes as “real”. “In many organisations, values are something you put on a piece of paper, but here the guiding principles really do underpin everything in a positive way.

“A student might come and say, ‘I want to talk about something I’ve done that I know I shouldn’t have and I feel bad about it.’ This ability to reflect on our own behaviour is supported by our guiding principles – it’s respecting others, and ourselves, enough to want to act well.”



Photography:  
JOE MCGORTY

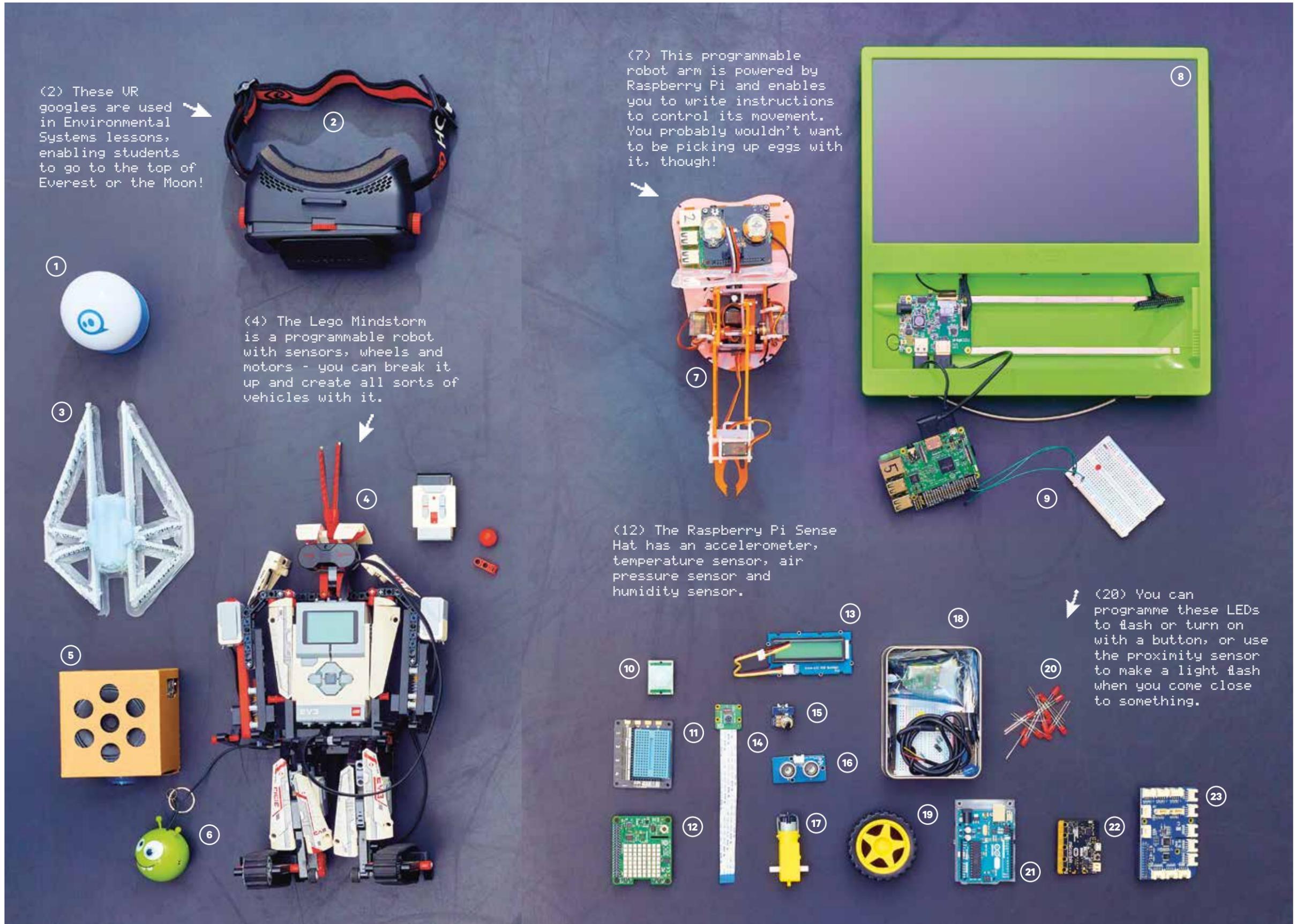
# Maker Space

*From robots to research, Aiglon's students push creative boundaries with cutting-edge technology.*



Mr Darren Wise is Director, ICT Integration for Learning.

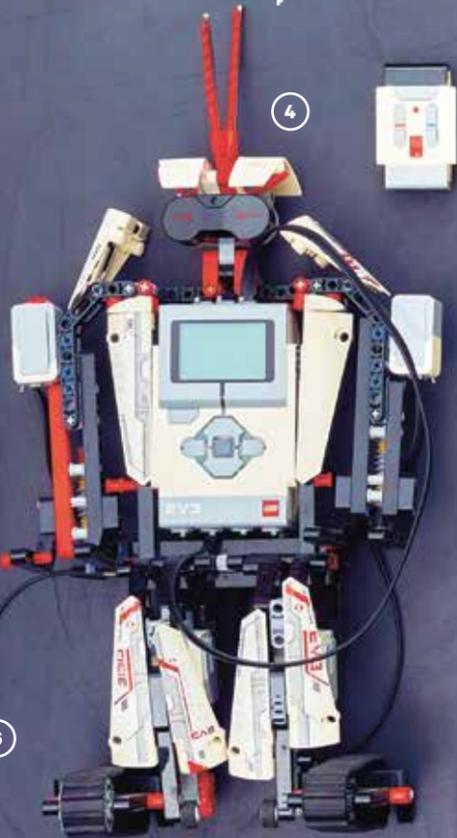
- 1 Sphero
- 2 VR goggles
- 3 3D printed object
- 4 Lego Mindstorm
- 5 Google Home, made with Raspberry Pi
- 6 Fred the USB speaker
- 7 Programmable robot arm
- 8 Pi-Top monitor
- 9 Raspberry Pi and breadboard
- 10 PIR motion sensor
- 11 Explorer hat
- 12 Raspberry Pi sense hat
- 13 LED display
- 14 Pi camera
- 15 Switch
- 16 Proximity sensor
- 17 Motor
- 18 Breadboard, temperature probe wheel
- 19 Wheel
- 20 LED (red)
- 21 Arduino Developer Board Uno SMD Rev3
- 22 MicroBit
- 23 GrovePi+ sensor board



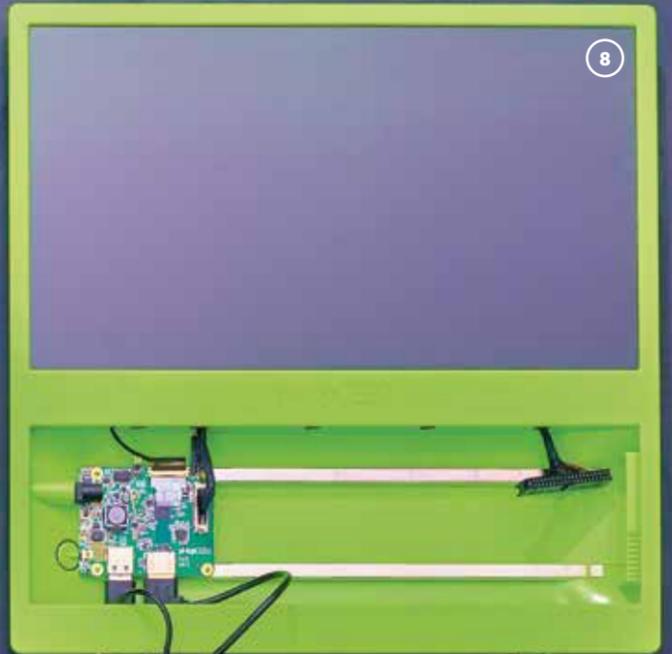
(2) These VR goggles are used in Environmental Systems lessons, enabling students to go to the top of Everest or the Moon!



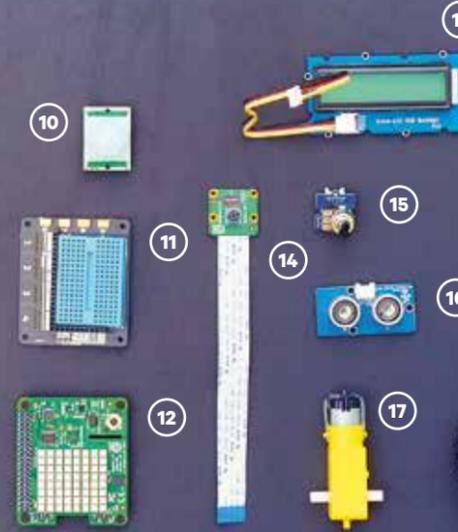
(4) The Lego Mindstorm is a programmable robot with sensors, wheels and motors - you can break it up and create all sorts of vehicles with it.



(7) This programmable robot arm is powered by Raspberry Pi and enables you to write instructions to control its movement. You probably wouldn't want to be picking up eggs with it, though!



(12) The Raspberry Pi Sense Hat has an accelerometer, temperature sensor, air pressure sensor and humidity sensor.



(20) You can programme these LEDs to flash or turn on with a button, or use the proximity sensor to make a light flash when you come close to something.





# A I G L O N : THE MOVIE

The year is 1971 and a new promotional movie is about to capture Aiglon's unique spirit on film – forever.

Words: WILLIAM HAM BEVAN



**A**s the camera pans across an idyllic Swiss mountainscape, birdsong suddenly gives way to the roar of a six-cylinder engine. An oxblood-red Jaguar saloon shoots past and the scene cuts to its driver, a dapper figure in aviator sunglasses, expertly throwing the car around the hairpin bends. It could pass for the start of a Seventies spy thriller, but then the narration, delivered by BBC radio presenter Jack de Manio, begins: “**John Corlette** had a dream – an English college for boys and girls in the Swiss Alps, where the air is brisk and clean. And he built his dream.”

The opening sequence of the Aiglon College film was one of the few parts that rookie director **Erik Friedl** (Alpina, 1969) had fully visualised when he returned to school in the summer of 1971 and presented his ideas to Mr John Corlette (JC). “He loved it, so we were up and running,” he recalls. “It was a dramatic intro and it set up the film around his personality. But the visuals preceded any script. I didn’t have a single word of narration until I’d completed the rough-cut of the film. I had no established structure except for what was in my mind – it was gut instinct.”

Erik was just two years out of Aiglon, and on vacation from his journalism degree at Texas A&M University. Not wishing to spend another summer working at a Connecticut YMCA camp, he had written to **Miss Joyce Lowe**, Mr Corlette’s personal assistant, with the idea of filming a mountain expedition. A telegram quickly followed with her response: ‘INTERESTED IN MAKING

*Reel to reel — Aiglon's 1971 promotional movie was the brainchild of Mr John Corlette, brilliantly executed by then budding filmmaker Erik Friedl (Alpina, 1969).*

COMPLETE NEW COLOUR FILM OF SCHOOL STOP 16MM, 15 TO 20 MINUTES STOP NOT JUST EXPEDITION ONLY STOP’.

The new movie would be used to promote Aiglon around the world, replacing one that had been made in black and white by the alpine photographer Otto Karminski more than a decade before. It was agreed that the film would be as naturalistic as possible, simply chronicling the day-to-day life of the school. “JC made it clear he didn’t want the pace of the film to be too rushed,” says Erik. “Above all, he wanted the viewer to be able to savour the pristine alpine surroundings.”

**Aura Reinhardt** (Clairmont and Exeter, 1972) was one of the core group of students enlisted to appear in the film. She says: “There was no staging, and no fakeness. It was as simple and honest as can be, because that’s what JC and Joyce Lowe were looking for. And people didn’t shy away or not want their picture taken. It was a small school in those days and everybody knew that this was going on.”

**Mr Norman Perryman** (staff, 1966-73), then heading up the art department, soon got used to the appearance of Erik and his camera. He says: “Erik moved all over the campus and occasionally got me to pose with my class. You see me [in the film] as this very serious-looking man, pointing things out to the students. At one point we’re outside doing paintings, and you can also see them working on small murals on various buildings.” →

“  
I was this wet-behind-the-ears 20-year-old, but I had to keep it together because I was supposed to be directing the whole thing



**Valentine Walsh** (Clairmont, 1971) was filmed as part of the school choir and also appears in what is probably the most fondly recalled scene – a sequence showing the older students letting their hair down at a raclette dinner. “Erik didn’t direct us at all,” she says. “He just filmed us and we were as natural as we could be. That famous scene in the chalet, for example, was great fun, but that was just the way we were at the time. We did go out to dinner quite a lot and we did drink a bit of wine.”

Only a couple of sequences required a little cinematic artifice. Some footage of skiing was deemed essential in a film about Aiglon College, but the spring snow had long since receded up the mountain. There was talk of bringing Erik back in the winter, but **Mrs Bibi Parsons**, wife of future Head Master **Mr Philip Parsons**, came up with a better solution.

“She saw an ad in a local paper, announcing that the following Sunday would be the last day the ski lifts of Argentière [in the Chamonix Valley] would be open,” Erik recalls. “JC realised it would save him money by not having me come back in the winter, so France stood in for Switzerland and Mr Berry organised a war party of 10 stalwart Aiglonians to try out their spring skiing legs.”

Another of the most visually inspiring sections of the film followed a weekend expedition to the top of the Dents du Midi – which, according to Aura, harboured a secret of its own. “We had an absolute ball, hiking, climbing and running about on the snow,” she says. “But actually, Erik, too busy with his camera, didn’t make it to the top.”

“I was exhausted, schlepping the equipment up the mountain,” he confirms. “There’s a line at the very end of the expedition sequence when Jack de Manio intones, ‘At last – the top’, and there are two fellows standing on a summit. But what you see is not the top at all. We had to cut the film creatively because I never made it!”

**Auteur in action**  
Today the film is as watchable as it was in 1971, as Aura Reinhardt points out: “Erik really knew how to capture the elegance and majesty of the mountains, and the spiritual feeling of being in the Alps – which is so much of the story at Aiglon.”

Both **Richard Newton** (Delaware, 1971) and **Peter Scholl** (Delaware, 1972) have cause to remember the filming at Geneva Airport. A couple of years earlier, Richard had helped start a magazine called *Iskra* at Aiglon. This had become an illicit money-spinner for the students, thanks to the income from local companies that were persuaded to advertise in the publication.

“I thought I’d do the same thing with the movie, and went to Swissair to ask if they’d like to advertise in it. They said they couldn’t do that, but would give us travel vouchers if we’d feature the airline in the movie,” he says.

“So we went to Geneva Airport and Erik gave me a second camera so we could film at the same time. Unknown to me, it had a safety lock, but, fortunately, we got some good pictures.”

Peter was also assisting at the airport shoot and found that gaining security clearance and flight-side access was no problem. He says: “I remember I was allowed to stand on the conveyor belt that took the luggage behind the check-in desks, while it was moving. And I remember walking out on to the airfield. Nowadays that would be impossible.”

As for the Swissair vouchers, Richard soon found a willing buyer in school bursar **Mr Michael Lindt**. “He immediately said, yes, I’ll buy them for 80 cents in the dollar and gave us cash – a very significant amount, compared with our five-franc weekly allowance. And this in a school where you were punished for being caught with extra money!”

When filming wrapped up, Erik flew to London to work on post-production. A script was supplied by Barry Long, one of the in-house copywriters at Aiglon’s public relations company, Neilson McCarthy. Among its board members was Jack de Manio – one of the most colourful



figures in British broadcasting, who had just ended his 13-year stint at BBC Radio’s flagship current affairs programme, *Today*. He agreed to narrate the film, and his lilting, easygoing delivery proved ideal.

“On the first day of recording, he came to pick me up in his chauffeured Rolls-Royce,” says Erik. “I was this wet-behind-the-ears 20-year-old, but I had to keep it together because I was supposed to be directing the whole thing. Afterwards, he showed me the true meaning of a pub crawl, as we worked our way back to West London. He was a wonderful raconteur and a delight to work with.”

Erik also received an impromptu editing masterclass from the famous director Norman Jewison. The father of three children who became Aiglon students, Norman was then completing *Fiddler on the Roof* at Pinewood Studios, and a meeting was arranged by Miss Lowe. Erik says: “He had his car pick me up and take me there several times to meet him. I was editing with a black-and-white working print and it was amazing to see this on the big screen. Norman’s advice proved invaluable; he suggested that I shouldn’t hesitate to toss away the rules of editing once I knew them, and to surprise the audience whenever possible.”

When the finished print was delivered to Mr Corlette, the final bill approached \$5,500 – somewhat more than the \$1,500 estimate that had been mooted in response to the original telegram. This was not considered a problem. Erik had delivered the first commission in his successful career as a documentary filmmaker.

“I’m forever grateful to Mr Corlette and Miss Lowe for giving me that opportunity,” he says. “It felt a little like returning to Aiglon to do a postgraduate degree, but my only task was to capture on film those elements that made Aiglon the unique institution it remains today: JC’s guiding philosophy, the idyllic alpine setting and the

**Aiglon on film** — The movie was designed to depict Aiglon as accurately as possible, but when it came to the skiing shots there was a problem: it was spring in Villars. The result was a hurried trip to Chamonix, with students trying out their spring skiing legs.

life-shaping influence of the teaching staff. It was indeed a summer to remember.”

A generous grant from former students has recently funded a full restoration of the original 16mm print, and the film is now available to view online. Richard says: “It’s a real pleasure to rediscover something nearly 50 years later, and to realise how much people and the world have changed. Today, everything is documented, so change is recorded as thousands of micro-changes. The film reminds me of a different era, a much simpler time, and I’m struck at how ‘at ease’ everyone is.”

This chimes with Valentine Walsh’s recollections. “It was a wonderful time. The pressures of exams were off and we just had that sense of freedom. I adored the school and it was the best time of my life in terms of growing up.”

“It’s very moving for me to look back to that atmosphere,” says Mr Perryman. “I’m 85 and one of the few remaining faculty members from that time – the students of those days are in their 50s and 60s. It’s a very touching experience.”

But the 1971 Aiglon movie is not just an interesting curio for those who were there; it’s a remarkably accomplished directorial debut that still stands out as a piece of creative filmmaking. “It’s very much alive today as a piece of film,” says Aura, who went on to star in Erik’s next work – a Swissair film to promote touring holidays in Switzerland.

“Erik had a tremendous eye, and he was very sophisticated for a young person with little filming experience but a lot of competence and innate skill. He really knew how to capture the elegance and majesty of the mountains, and the spiritual feeling of being in the Alps – which is so much of the story at Aiglon.”

To see the film, visit [www.aiglon.ch/aiglonthemovie](http://www.aiglon.ch/aiglonthemovie)



Words: BECKY ALLEN  
Photography: JOE MCGORTY

# In loco parentis

Creating a home away from home takes dedication, creativity... and just a touch of magic.



## La Baita Mr Hamilton

"The house is full of action, energy and lots of fun; students share their skills in a range of games. And nothing is better to finish the night than coming together to watch a movie with milk and cookies."

**La Baita** — Edward Willett (Year 5), Saul FitzGerald Hollywood (Year 8), Daniil Abramovich (Year 8), Stuart Hamilton (Head of Junior School, La Baita Houseparent), Shoki Kawada (Year 7) and Adrian Gorrano Piedra (Year 8).

**Mr Nigel Gaston and  
Natálie Čmejlová, Le Cerf**

Throughout her first year at Aiglon, **Natálie Čmejlová** (Le Cerf, 2013) worked hard to avoid **Mr Nigel Gaston**. He was Director of Music – and she was avoiding piano lessons. But when Mr Gaston and his wife **Jacqueline** became Le Cerf houseparents, she couldn't escape their notice. "I wasn't exactly the model student, I got laps all the time. But he was super patient with me, and the fact I calmed down is thanks to him," she says.

For eight years, the Gastons turned Le Cerf from a former hotel into a happy home from home. "It had a lovely, quirky, traditional feel. We kept the original fixtures and fittings, and built up little families within the house – smaller groups of girls of different ages. One word sums up the ethos of the house: family."

Cooking and eating together were key ingredients in Le Cerf family life, punctuated by special occasions: summer balls, graduation dinners and trips to major music events. "I managed to get tickets for the whole house to see Whitney Houston in concert," Mr Gaston says. "We saw Madonna, too, and Lana Del Ray."

Natálie's fondest memory is more prosaic – a trip to McDonald's (normally off-limits) on her last night at the house before leaving for university. "Mr Gaston drove me and a friend down to buy tons of junk food and the upper sixth ate it together over a glass of wine. There were candles and conversation – I cried during most of my last days at Aiglon because I didn't want to let it go."

Seeing students like Natálie – who is now in the penultimate year of medical school – blossom makes the long hours and hard work worthwhile, says Mr Gaston. "You eat, drink and sleep it. You're intricately involved in the life and trials of these young students."

"I've played trombone and conducted in the Royal Albert Hall, but nothing tops being a houseparent. It's a challenge but a privilege too, having the opportunity to make a difference to young people's lives. That's the joy – challenging them, guiding them, laughing with them, becoming life-long friends. It's the best job."



**Le Cerf alumni** — Clockwise, from left: Faye Alseif, Jennifer Kühn, Natálie Čmejlová, Anina Youroukova, Polina Stepanova, Valentina Ferraz-Cohen, Maria Ortiz-Rapalo and Vera Smirnova.



**Mrs Katherine Duckling and  
Victoria Steiner, Le Cerf**

**Victoria Steiner** (Le Cerf, Year 10) and **Mrs Katherine Duckling** both moved into Le Cerf in 2017, but being newbies hasn't phased either of them. "When I get back to school I'm always excited about what it's going to be like," says Victoria. "Who am I going to share a room with and how am I going to decorate the walls?"

As new houseparents, the change for Mrs Duckling and husband **Tom** has been immense. They moved halfway around the world from a school in the tropical heat of Brunei – and they've taken to Aiglon like ducks to water.

"For the first week we were terrified, thinking how insurmountable it all seemed. We're a young couple, used to having time alone, so we worried about having 40 teenagers around all the time," she admits. "Now we know the girls really well, and we have so much fun. We're lucky in having such fantastic girls, so it's like having an enormous family." This year, the Ducklings started a new tradition, based on the Hindu celebration Holi. "They've created this event called the World of Colour where we all throw powder paint and water balloons at each other," says Victoria.

Le Cerf has seven values – and laughing is one of the most important. "Being a teenage girl is challenging, so teaching them resilience and giving them the ability to laugh at themselves is really important," says Mrs Duckling. "We laugh a lot – and they laugh at us a lot too. I embarrass myself all the time and they see it doesn't matter."

Laughter helps too when things in sport or on stage don't go according to plan. "We have quite an academic group, but we don't win too much at sport. We don't mind if they win or lose – as long as everyone has a good time," says Mrs Duckling. "When we took part in the House Shout last year we didn't win, but all the judges said we looked like we were having the most fun on stage!"

As passionate educators, the Ducklings stress the importance of running the house by consent, showing the girls how to behave rather than just telling them. "It's really important that the houseparents model the behaviour you want," says Mrs Duckling. "It's important they see us working hard, going above and beyond but having a good time together. They all say they like to see that – that we're happy and working together towards a common goal." →

**Le Cerf** — Victoria Steiner (Year 10), Cristina Danita (Year 13), Mrs Katherine Duckling, and Linda Wu (Year 12).

**St Louis** — Ludwig Asberg Montgomery (Year 12), Egor Bochkarev (Year 12), Jason Chen (Year 13), Mr Martin Goff and Holly.

**Mr and Mrs Bill and Sallie O'Connor and Isaac Middelmann, Belvedere**

When **Isaac Middelmann** (Belvedere, 2006) arrived at Aiglon after a serious illness, he'd missed a year of school and spent almost 12 months in bed.

"I'd always loved school, so I was in a dark place, cynical and feeling let down," he remembers. "**Mr and Mrs O'Connor** welcomed me and accepted me as I was. They gave me time, space, and lots of support – but they pushed me too."

And that meant that when Isaac was down, his houseparents were there to pick him up. "Mr O'Connor would say: 'Let's do something, let's play squash, even if it's just for 10 minutes.' That really helped, because it was done in a loving, generous way, so I allowed myself to be pushed into activities I wouldn't otherwise have done," says Isaac.

Mr and Mrs O'Connor, now-retired houseparents of Belvedere, are ardent advocates of the power of sport to support, encourage and challenge young people. As a 14-year-old in a tough East London school in the UK, Mr O'Connor says a month-long outward-bound course in the Lake District changed his life.

Mrs O'Connor has a degree in Sports Science and English. "We brought the boys up through sport; it was a very conscious decision," she says. "With that comes discipline, team work, health, and self-esteem."

For Isaac, Belvedere, with its motto 'To serve, to strive and not to yield', was the best. "What was unique, and why I was so happy to be there, was our reputation on – and off – the sport's field. Mr O'Connor was really proud when we had the highest average mark reading and won the school sports' cup."

But Isaac's fondest memories are of Belvedere's end-of-term dinners, and the speeches Mr and Mrs O'Connor gave. "They were personal reflections on each of the leaving students, beautifully delivered and without notes," says Isaac.

"Having adults praise us in such genuine ways was a wonderful thing – and when we get together as classmates it's something we still talk about."

**St Louis Mr Goff**

"We had gone to the Refuge de Solalex by Skidoo. When we got home, one of the boys realised that he'd dropped his phone. So at 11pm, in the pitch dark, I went back with my headtorch. We found it!"



**Mr and Mrs Sue and Martin Goff and Senik Gevorkyan, St Louis**

Having buttons cut off your clothes isn't what most people remember from school, but St Louis is different – and so are houseparents **Sue and Martin Goff**.

"We have this thing called 'Family on Sunday'," explains **Senik Gevorkyan** (St Louis, Year 12). "After dinner we get together to learn a new skill: tying a tie, changing a car tyre, avoiding internet scams. Every week is something new; you never know what's coming."

Mrs Goff's favourite was replacing a shirt button. "They watched me with a mixed amount of interest – until I introduced a pair of scissors, cut a button off every boy's shirt and said: 'Sew it back on again.' And, bless them, they did. The boys love Sunday evenings!" she says.

St Louis is Aiglon's smallest house, and since it opened in 2016 the Goffs have made it a cosy, homely place. With children and grandchildren of their own – and 60 years' combined teaching experience – Mrs Goff opted to be a full-time houseparent. "It gives me the opportunity to be in the house all the time and look after the boys during the day."

It gives her time to bake, too. "Mrs Goff has made us cookies every day for the two years I've been here at St Louis. I love it," says Senik. "She has lots of great recipes – my favourite is the banana bread she makes. It's the best."

What St Louis might lack in size, it makes up for in the warmth of its welcome. When boys get back after lessons, they head straight for the kitchen, fix themselves a drink and snack, and flop down on the sofa. "It's just like they would do at home, which is exactly what we want," says Mrs Goff. "A lot of boys from other houses love to pop in at break time – they know I bake every day."

The highlight of the Goffs' year comes at graduation. The moment when students – particularly those who've needed extra emotional or academic support – walk across the stage remains special. "You just think, wow, they're my boys and don't they look gorgeous. Having been instrumental in making that happen makes you feel proud and humble. And it still makes me cry," says Mrs Goff.

"When we think back to our school days we all remember certain teachers, even more so when you live together 24/7. So I hope they'll remember us for the love and kindness we've shown them, all the great opportunities we've given them – and even the buttons I cut off their shirts!" **A**



Artist +  
Entrepreneur  
= 21st Century Creative



Words: LUCY JOLIN  
Prop styling: CHARLOTTE LOVE  
Photography: THOMAS BAKER

They say life has never been easier for creatives – all you need is your laptop and an up-to-date social media profile. But as leading Aiglonian musicians, filmmakers and directors attest, the 21st century is a tough gig.

**W**hen **Octave Lissner** (Delaware, 2009) left Aiglon, he was determined to make a career of his passion: music. He bought a computer and a programme called Logic, which enabled him to arrange and record songs in his bedroom. It was 2013: people were just starting to listen to music online, so he thought it would be worth uploading a new song, Silver Rain, to Soundcloud and YouTube. “Vittorio, who is now my producer, heard it and loved it,” he says. “And that’s how I got my first record deal to make my album, Wildflower.”

Getting into the creative industries has never seemed so attractive. There are multiple avenues for creatives to explore and exploit, and the numbers are mind-boggling: 65 million Netflix members in more than 50 countries watch more than 100 million hours of movies and TV shows every day. Ed Sheeran’s Shape of You has had almost two billion streams on Spotify. Felix Kjellberg, better known by his YouTube moniker PewDiePie, is the most-followed YouTuber of all time, currently at 71 million subscribers, earning him an estimated \$12m per year.

So how do you make it as a creative in the 21st century? First, a caveat: it’s rarely simple. While there is more opportunity than ever, there is also more competition, as independent filmmaker, animator and artist **Farzin Farzaneh** (Delaware, 1979) points out. “Twenty years ago, it was tough to get all the resources you needed – film equipment was heavy and expensive, you needed a crew and it all cost a lot of money – but because it was so difficult to pull it all together, there was less competition,” he says. “These days, because of the technology, it’s much simpler to make a film – but that means many more people are doing it.”

And although success might appear instant, delve further into the story of Octave’s big break – his single, Corners, is heading towards four million Spotify streams, and his second album is due out soon – and it turns out that his breakthrough was the result of a lifetime’s hard work. He studied music from an early age, switching from violin to classical guitar when he was 12. Throughout his time at Aiglon, he played in bands, constantly exploring new kinds of music. And he committed to following his musical career instead of completing a degree. “I had a lot →



**Octave Lissner**  
*(Delaware, 2009)*



**Farzin Farzaneh**  
*(Delaware, 1979)*



**Daniel Voll**  
*Parent of Ondine (Clairmont, Year 12) and Harper (Alpina, 2018)*



**Edoardo Ponti**  
*(Delaware, 1990)*



**Andrew Keresztes**  
*(Belvedere, 1982)*

“

I lived on pasta and made very little money for longer than I care to recall. I know very well what it is like to have less than \$200 in the bank

of anxiety,” he remembers. “I thought: ‘Am I messing up my life here?’ But there was something that always called me to it and made me stick by it.”

In fact, starting young is a common theme among creatives. Farzin’s mother was a painter and sculptor, and he found great joy in drawing as a child growing up in Iran. His father worked in the photography industry and brought home cameras for the young Farzin to play and experiment with. This passion continued throughout his schooldays.

And two others caught the bug early. Producer and writer **Daniel Voll** (parent of **Ondine** and **Harper**) says he was “always writing plays and short stories. That was a big part of my life as a kid and in high school it was something I continued to do.” And **Andrew Keresztes** (Belvedere, 1982), a film and TV composer who’s worked for everyone from Fox to Disney, became “obsessed” with the guitar at the age of 14.

But it’s not just about the technology, as award-winning director and screenwriter **Edoardo Ponti** (Delaware, 1990) points out. “Directors sometimes tell the story that they picked up a camera when they were six days old and started shooting films, and they lived, breathed, had breakfast, lunch and dinner with a camera in their hand – but I wasn’t that person at all. For me, inspiration never came from a camera but from people. It was always about understanding where they come from, how they are and what their journey is.”

Edoardo believes that gaining life experience is an essential part of a creative’s journey. “On my film course, everybody was so focused on having a camera in their hands – making films as opposed to what films are about, which is people and stories,” he remembers. Edoardo switched to English, History and Psychology to feed his desire for stories, before returning to film school as a graduate “armed with story-making tools”.

Daniel agrees. Starting as a journalist, he says, gave him a skillset that put him “in the real world, knowing real stories”. One of those stories inspired his break into TV as the writer of *Threat Matrix*, which ran for 70 episodes. He was also involved as showrunner on *Guantanamo*, a series about the lives of detainees at Guantánamo Bay. →

“It helps to be someone who has been in the world and crossed a lot of borders and boundaries. Because what we’re looking for right now is diversity. We want a diversity of talent that has an awareness of politics, story and verve.”

Passion and experience have always been important in the creative industries, but the major change over the last decade is that, today, creatives can get their own work in front of the public without the backing of major studios, TV networks or record labels. Being able to record songs at home for no money was a huge benefit for Octave, he says – while the internet also changed the music industry radically, it’s brought plenty of advantages.

But you still have to work at it, Daniel points out. “If you’re a writer, you will ultimately become a salesman at the same time. There is no employment office that says: ‘Writers apply here’.

“Don’t wait for someone to affirm you. Do the work yourself, collaboratively, with your friends. Get it out there. Use the entrepreneurial skills and connections that a place like Aiglon can give you. And leverage everyone you have in your life to get your work seen.”

Using those connections is crucial, agrees Andrew. He was working as a composer for commercials in Boston when a friend sent his showreel to bassist and composer Stanley Clarke, who had just finished the film score for *Boyz n the Hood*. Clarke liked the reel and told Andrew he should come out to LA.

“He hooked me up to the president of music for Warner, Doug Frank. I asked him how you get to work on a big film when you need experience on a big film to do it. He said: ‘That’s when you have to work on a sleeper’ – something that wasn’t destined to be big but somehow broke through. And then everyone will say: ‘Yes, him, he worked on that little movie that became big’. That introduced me to the way things work in LA.”

Andrew didn’t get any work as a result of the meeting, he points out, but that disappointment, too, is an essential part of being in the creative industries. “You have to be

passionate, love it and be dedicated to it, otherwise you won’t be able to last through the lean years. And there will be some lean years. I lived on pasta and made very little money for longer than I care to recall. I know very well what it is like to have less than \$200 in my bank account.”

After Edoardo’s first film, the drama *Between Strangers* about the tribulations of three Toronto women, he didn’t make another for five years. “If my first movie had been an unadulterated triumph, then I could have done anything I wanted after that,” he points out. “But though it was well received, it wasn’t the big success that I was hoping it was going to be.

“It was only when I switched to something more commercial [the comedy *Coming & Going*], that things got better for me. In the end, it’s so much about confidence. The tightrope artist has the confidence of walking on the tightrope because he or she knows they have a net underneath them. Even if they don’t have the net underneath them, they have the confidence to know how to fall. And I think, as artists, we need to have that confidence.”

And perhaps that’s why, whether you talk to a musician, a director, a writer, an artist or an animator, one message comes through more than any other. “You need to want to do it,” says Farzin. “Liking it is not enough. The fact that it is cool and other people are doing it is not enough. It should come from the heart. Stay true to yourself. Don’t pretend to be something else or emulate other people. I’ve tried that just to see what happens, and for me it’s never worked.”

“Only aim to be a creative if you have no Plan B,” says Edoardo. “If you’re not passionate about it to such an extent that there is no room for Plan B, that if you don’t do this you will perish – do something else. This is the creative life: it’s an entrepreneurial life. You generate your own work, you create your own opportunities. You don’t have a nine-to-five job, you don’t have a recurring salary. And you are always in this limbo – between despair and ecstasy.”



# SNOW



Words: MEGAN WELFORD

Unpredictable. Transient.  
Magnificent. Snow remains  
one of nature's most intriguing  
manifestations... and a lifelong  
passion for Aiglonians.





“  
Sliding is unnatural.  
It takes us out of our usual life  
and into something else

**T**hrow it, trek through it, hurtle down a mountain on it, watch it or taste it. For some, snow is the very essence of an outdoor life, the perfect environment for a life lived to the full; thrilling, life-affirming and romantic – even a business for some. For others it’s just a cold, wet nuisance. But whatever you feel about it and whatever you do with it, there’s no doubt snow is a fundamental part of the Aiglon experience.

“When I’m in the snow, on top of the mountain looking at the best view, where everything is white and the air is clean, it’s a feeling of purity,” says **Kai Ye**, whose son, **Ling**, is in Year 12. “Skiing is my number one passion. You ski down the mountain, and it doesn’t matter how big a boss you are, or how much property you own – you have to focus your mind on just one thing. And that is relaxing, it’s purifying. Rain gets you wet, it’s not comfortable, but when it’s snowing you can go outside and enjoy the snowflakes, like feathers floating in the air.”

Growing up in Shanghai, there was snow “but not much”, Kai says. His first real experience of the white stuff was in the mountains of Michigan when he was 22, and he didn’t really enjoy it. “I remember being really scared and exhausted after an hour of skiing. I went a few times after that but never really improved.

“Then, five years ago, a while before my son started at Aiglon, I came to Villars on holiday and had a great ski instructor who gave me some key elements, such as putting pressure on your boots so you get more control. I went straight from there to a ski shop in Villars and bought my first pair of skis.”

**Previous page —**  
Skinning up the  
Tour de Bavon  
on a ski touring  
expedition in  
January 2008.

“Eighty per cent of Aiglon is snow,” says **Saeed Zaree** (Belvedere, 1987), who is currently building a luxury apartment building called Alpina – what else? – between two ski slopes in Iran. “I was 10 when I first went to Aiglon, and in my second term I experienced the snow. In Tehran, it snows a bit but nothing like Switzerland. The first time I put on skis my feet hurt and I fell down all the time, but after a week I loved it – that feeling of being so free, with no boundaries, just gliding and enjoying yourself. We weren’t allowed to jump, so we’d run to get there before classes to do a few spreadeagles and helicopters before the teachers arrived!”

But it’s not just the skiing that is so appealing about snow, says Saeed. “The white clean-ness, the cold, wearing a pullover and lots of clothes, being warm inside and sitting watching the snow falling. During the winter it’s all you think about. We couldn’t wait to get our ski boots on: as soon as class was over we would run for the télécabines.

“If it had been snowing in the morning we’d run out at lunch and have snow fights between Belvedere and Exeter. You’d be shoving snow down the shirt of some guy and giving him face washes, or you were the guy getting a face wash but you were enjoying it too!”

Saeed’s friend and occasional business partner, **Yiannis Tavoularis** (Delaware, 1987), has favourite snow memories from expeditions. “When you’re 14 you complain about everything,” says Yiannis, who spends part of the year in Villars keeping up his ski-teaching credentials. “But afterwards you realise what an incredible opportunity it was. I have a memory of having

**From left —** A shot  
from Philip and Bibi  
Parsons’ archive;  
a 1972 descent of  
the Sanetsch Pass;  
another from the  
Parsons’ archive.

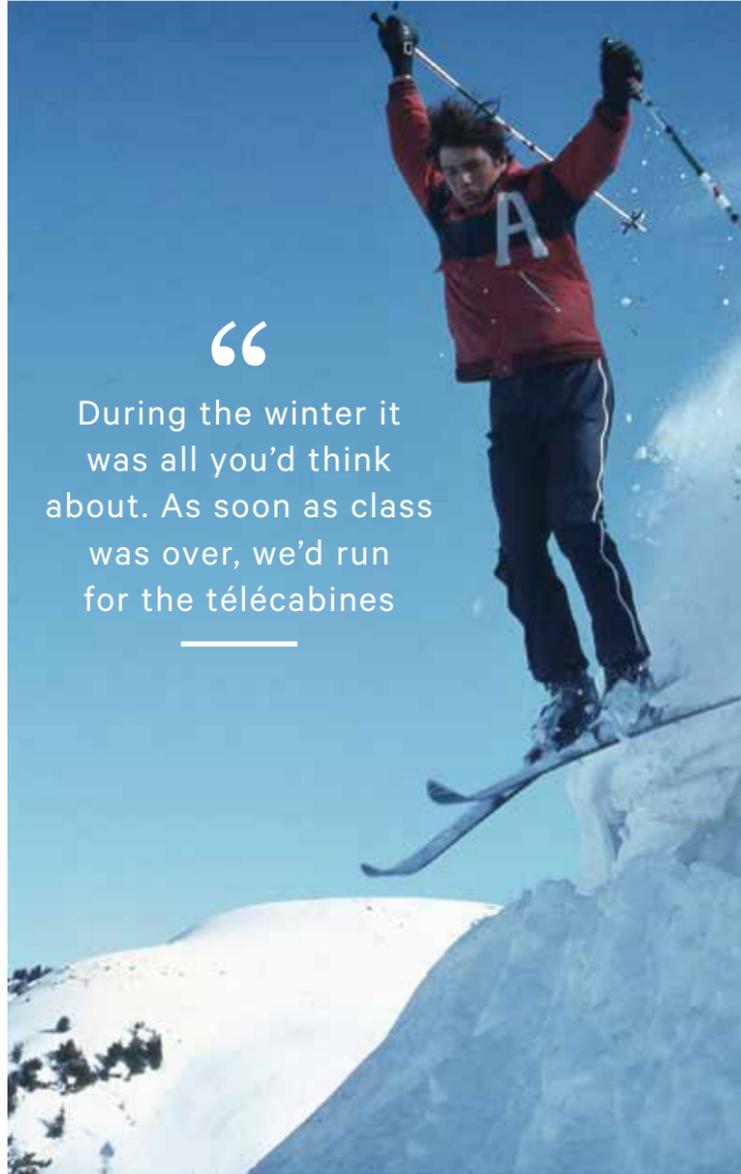
frostbite in my ear on Les Diablerets, and the pain! But also of coming through a snowy forest clearing and seeing a group of deer, very close. We were tired so we were very quiet, and they just stood still and stared at us – our jaws dropped. They were magical moments.”

Saeed, too, remembers the sheer pleasure of powder skiing on expedition. “The off-piste where no-one has been before, where the snow is not compacted but fresh, so it sprays up into your face as you ski down, is amazing. That feeling of weightlessness and freedom,” he says.

Snow is a weather condition, but it’s also subject to changes in culture. “When I was growing up in Valais [the Swiss canton] there wasn’t much to do,” says **Philippe Magistretti**, father of **Alessandra**, Year 13, and CEO of the Crans Montana ski company. “Snow meant a great day. You could sledge down the street – there were hardly any cars. A ski day used to have a routine: queue up at 8.30, ski until 12.30, have a hot dog and, if you’d been good, a Coca-Cola, ski again until 4pm, and then come home and do your homework.”

However, these days snow has competition. “Teenagers have PlayStations now,” says Philippe. “For a while, people thought young people were abandoning skiing. Now they’re coming back, but it’s also about snowboarding, competitions, slalom and cross-country trails. People want to sit in a nice restaurant and admire the view. In Austria, the slopes are a non-stop party, with a vodka ice-bus. It’s a ‘be up there’ experience. There used to just be huts – now there are nightclubs.”

But alongside the sheer pleasure of it all, around the world the ski industry is just starting to boom. As Beijing →



“  
During the winter it was all you'd think about. As soon as class was over, we'd run for the télécabines

prepares to host the Winter Olympics in 2022, the Chinese government is pushing winter sports, says Kai, and the rapidly expanding middle class is responding. “There are now 300 million middle-class people in China,” he explains. “When people get used to a higher quality of life, they travel – and they go skiing.”

At Kai's newly built indoor ski centre, Snow 51, in Shanghai, people can learn to ski in a simulator or on the dry ski slope, then try out their new skills in resorts in China, Japan and Europe. “Skiing is not part of our nature or our culture,” says Kai, “but it's going to explode.”

In Iran, there is a similar phenomenon. “Before the revolution [of 1979],” says Saeed, “we had a ski industry because the Shah of Iran had been to school at Le Rosey in Nyon and was a snow lover. But after the revolution it went dormant. About 15 years ago the pistes began to open up again because of a change in the attitude of the Iranian middle class, who are travelling and discovering sports. Iranian youngsters are under pressure in the cities

Above — An action shot courtesy of Philip and Bibi Parsons' archive.

– to wear the veil, for example – but up on the pistes they feel more free.”

After Philippe left Valais he went to London but, he says, he always missed the mountains. “The first day of January in London is like any other day of the year, but in the mountains 1 January and 1 August are different worlds. Here, you feel very close to the seasons.”

Philippe came home to revive a ski resort that is not only close to, but depends on, those seasons' increasingly fickle weather. “Over the past 15 years or so snow has become more unpredictable,” he says. “The quality, the altitude it falls at, the quantity, everything.”

Science has come up with an answer – artificial snow. “From a rational, product point of view artificial snow is fantastic,” says Philippe. “It allows us to ‘groom’ [prepare] the ski slopes independently of snowfall. It's basically just water released at high pressure so it expands – frost balls thrown in the air, compared with snowflakes, which are a geometrical arrangement. Mixed with real snow it's a perfect consistency: hard enough that you can grip it without sliding, durable enough to ski on it many times, soft enough that if you fall you don't hurt yourself.”

But, he says, there is a problem. “If there is no snow people don't feel like skiing! What makes people want to go up the mountain is the white trees, the romantic Christmas feel, the way there's no end to the white carpet.”

How we feel about snow is not rational. Neither is our love for whizzing down a mountain. “This feeling of sliding is not a natural one,” says Philippe. “We're built to run and walk but this is something different, and as humans we like this feeling. It takes us out of our usual life and into something else.”

*Do you know who took any of the shots featured here, or people in them? Please contact [advancement@aiglon.ch](mailto:advancement@aiglon.ch)*



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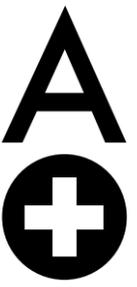
# LA RENARDE

Chalet apartment rentals by alumna  
Line Stump Magnin (Clairmont, 1976)



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# CLASS NOTES

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



## MAMMOTH SHOUT OUT!

**Jeff Easum** sends a shout-out to any Aiglonites spending their winter holidays in Mammoth, USA. We will be there from 27 Dec - 3 Jan. It would be great to do a few runs together! My number is +858-519-2644 and my email is jeffeasum@hotmail.com.

## CELEBRATE AIGLON'S 70TH

As this year commemorates the 50th anniversary of the first girls arrival at Aiglon College, of which I am one, I would like to invite all of you to "soar like an Aiglon Eagle back to the mountains in Villars" for the Aiglon 70th anniversary celebration weekend, running from Friday 28 June to Tuesday 2 July 2019.

"We're planning an enlightening morning meditation, followed by a boat trip on Lac Léman, a tour of Château de Chillon, a visit to Gruyère, an expedition at Solalex, a meal at Bretaye and a gala Saturday evening with cocktails, dinner and dancing," says Marcia Izant (Clairmont, 1971), Aiglon alumni 70th Anniversary Chair. Come and share your stories with fellow alumni.

If you would like to donate to the auction, please contact Marcia.izant@gmail.com

**Marcia Izant** (Clairmont, 1971)

## AFTER 20 YEARS, THEY ARE BACK!

A wonderful time was had by the Class of '98 as they returned to Villars for their 20-year reunion in September! An incredible 30 'old' students made the journey back to their beloved Aiglon to reconnect with each other.

A sunny Saturday barbecue was thoroughly enjoyed by all, while old stories were recounted and fond memories shared. A special visit from Mr and Mrs Clarke, Mr and Mrs Rhodes, Mr and Mrs Hann and Ms Mansfield made it all the more special.

**Flavia Hentsch** (Exeter, 1998)



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# Tributes



**Dave Swartz**  
(Class of 1965)

It is with great sorrow that I have to tell our Aiglon family of the passing of my brother, Dave. He was at Aiglon between 1962 and 1964 and was one of the crew of brothers with the Nelsons, Headleys, Holryods, Shealors, Dunns and Prieatches (I hope I haven't missed any others!). Dave died on 6 October surrounded by Gerry, his wife, daughters Suzy and Stephanie, and my brothers, Pete and John. We will all miss him terribly, though we will never forget the love in that room. We thank the Aiglon family for all the many kind thoughts we have received. Remember him as he and Hugh Oliver (Clairmont, 1967) raced around Clairmont in the Messerschmitt they recovered from a junk yard in Aigle!! Also for his skid marks in the Movie Grand Prix!!  
*Tribute by Bill Swartz (Alpina, 1966)*



**Trevor Wilson**  
(Staff 1975 - 1981)

We were sad to hear the news that Trevor Wilson passed away last October. Trevor and his wife Gillian were houseparents of Clairmont from 1975 to 1981, and Trevor taught economics. Their son, Lewis, was in Belvedere, where expeditions were his main delight!



**Philip Harford**  
(Class of 1965)

Philip sadly died in June from Parkinson's disease. He had a very happy time at Aiglon, and became an accomplished skier. After leaving Aiglon, he became a soldier in the 9th/12th Royal Lancers, teaching skiing and representing Great Britain. After the Army, he farmed in Gloucestershire and established a successful thoroughbred stud with his wife. He had an old ocean racer in which he often crossed the Channel, with as many friends on board as he could muster; foxhunting was also a passion. He leaves his wife Willa, son William and daughter Harriet.



**Marguerite Knoop**  
(Exeter, 1979)

I was very sad to learn of the passing of Marguerite Knoop. She had a brain hemorrhage in January of this year and was in a coma until her passing in June. In spite of a number of surgeries, she finally lost the battle. Marguerite was at Aiglon while I was there and was a wonderful person. I enjoyed reconnecting with her on Facebook about eight years ago and, as a result of one of our conversations, the Aiglon College Angels Facebook page was started. A great loss.  
*Tribute by Marc Borrelli (Class of 1980)*



**Anthony Rhodes**  
(Class of 1968)

Some of you will still remember Anthony Christopher Hoyle-Rhodes – aka 'Lord Shaftesbury' – stepping up to the mic on Belvedere stage and belting out early Kinks and Stones tunes, accompanied by the ever-popular Sixth Race. And it wasn't too uncommon a sight, circa '65, to find Rhodes and Nick Jago mounting their own British Invasion of Villars on their free afternoon, sporting the latest in Mod fashion and looking like they'd just stepped off an album cover. Anthony went on to work in the family business for some 30 years. He passed away on 28 June and is survived by daughter Marissa (in photo) and grandchildren Myla and Monty. No doubt Anthony is warming up the band right about now (Roland Karakashian on rhythm guitar and Richard Wethey on bass) for a rousing version of Get Off of My Cloud.  
*Tribute by Erik Friedl (Alpina, 1969)*



**Jeremy Beale**  
(Delaware, 1975)

We are sad to report that Jeremy Beale died in a cycling accident in November, "a brilliant guy who was dedicated to progressive causes". For a full tribute visit [www.aiglonlife.ch/tribute-jeremy-beale](http://www.aiglonlife.ch/tribute-jeremy-beale)



**Richard Stewart Walsh**  
(Belvedere, 1974)

Richard Stewart Walsh was born on 27 August 1956, on an American army base in Germany, to Patricia and Richard. He and his sister, 'Tina' Valentine Walsh, both attended Aiglon while their parents worked and lived in Geneva. Richard's passion was art, and as soon as he could rebel against the status quo, he enrolled in the radical Goddard College, where his immense talent found a platform, and he began his lifelong creative journey. It is very hard to find the words to define as wild a spirit and undefinable a character as Richard. His type was that which defied and thrived outside social norms. Richard could invite within us, the least expected of us, a suggested way of understanding the world. He took it upon himself to provide those around him with the skills and understanding necessary to use their hands and minds. He enabled and encouraged. He fit in no box or within no boundary, no label. A wordsmith, a carver of language, a craftsman of wit with 'a way with words', he left us all speechless or laughing. His lectures, the hours spent invested in careful planning, a meticulous mind dedicated to wild betterment... He was a cowboy, with a dance in his step and a glint in his eye. One of Richard's most treasured projects was nurturing a family during what he called his 'homesteading years'. With a progressive view of parenting, Richard felt home education was as valuable as his art, and dedicated immense energy to his family. Today he will be sorely missed by his wife, Dorothy, the love of his life, and his three children Findlay, Paisley and Olivia. Richard was diagnosed with stage 4 cancer in December 2017 and died in May 2018, but his family will tell you that he died young at heart and in spirit, dancing and singing till his end.  
*Tribute by Paisley Valentine Walsh, Richard's daughter.*



## SCHOLAR CONNECTS STRANGER TO ALUMNI LEGACY



Last summer, Nick Hoffman spent a week as a volunteer economics teacher at the Starehe Boys' Centre and School in Nairobi. Nick enjoyed meeting a particularly talented former pupil of Starehe named Patrick, who explained that he had left Starehe a year ago and was now enrolled at Aiglon College in Switzerland, completing the IB Diploma Programme on a scholarship arranged by family and friends of a former Aiglon pupil, who had tragically died descending Mount Kenya in September 2004.

Moved by this story, Nick did some research. He discovered that Aiglon was in Villars – the village in which he had learned to ski. He also discovered that Patrick's scholarship had been initially funded by AEA Investors (the alumnus who lost his life on Mount Kenya, Seba Calleri-Zavanelli, was an employee). Nick also realised that his cousin, Alex Hoffman, who worked at AEA, was Seba's friend and colleague. Nick wrote to Alex: "I thought you and your colleagues at AEA would like to know that I can think of no student I have ever met who is more deserving of the educational opportunities provided by a school like Aiglon – opportunities that would be entirely impossible without the generous financial support of Seba's family and friends. Incredibly smart, hard-working, generous and humble – he will go very far." This story of coincidences was related by Alex Hoffman to the Zavanelli family on what happened to be the eve of Seba's birthday. Seba's sister, Carlotta, writes, "It is very moving to read that, 14 years on, Seba's legacy is giving opportunities to children who may not have had them otherwise."



**Donations to The Seba CZ Scholarship Fund will be received with gratitude. Visit [www.aiglon.ch/SEBA](http://www.aiglon.ch/SEBA)**

Illustrations by Ruby Taylor

**A NEW HOME IN SOLANA BEACH**

We have just washed ashore in Solana Beach after 10 years in Mexico City. Mexico is a very beautiful and conflicted country, and we lived through both the good and the bad. I am very glad to be back in my home country, as is Andre (12)! The girls are less convinced but they are coming around. The beach helps a lot! It's been a very busy 18 months, with a job change, the sale of our family's home in NYC (after my father's passing in 2016) and our move here. The company I work for is a financial advisory startup for renewable energy developers. There are only seven of us and it's pretty challenging but fun, and I work from home so that's nice. My brother David ('76) has recently finished a solo 9,000km motorcycle trip from Lagos, Nigeria to Bujumbura, Burundi, just in time to start a new job in Kigali, Rwanda, also in renewable energy! If anyone who graduated in the '70s is in my neighbourhood, it'd be fun to catch up! My number is 858-519-2644 and my email is jeffeamsum@hotmail.com.

**Jeff Easum** (Delaware, 1974)

**NEW FRIENDS AND OLD, IN TOKYO**

We had a wonderful Sunday evening in Tokyo with 36 alumni, current students and family members gathered to reconnect with old friends and meet new members of the Aiglon community in Japan. If you are based in Japan, please contact us: we would love to invite you to our future events. Contact Aiglon Japan at (alumni@aiglon.ch)

**Sae Tanaka** (Le Cerf, 2015)



**FROM TRADES TO TECH**

After three years of working for a commodity trade house in Geneva, I have decided to move on to a new challenge. My intent is to become literate in various 'tech' fields over the coming year: I have my eye on various tracks (software engineering, data science, blockchain) but am likely to improvise as I delve deeper into that world. I'll be starting with a three-month intensive course in Tokyo, Japan!

**Omar Kalouti** (Alpina, 2010)

**2008 TIME MACHINE**

The Class of 2008 held a reunion on the Aiglon campus in June and it was a real success. We had a fantastic time, it was an amazing turnout and everyone was in a great mood! It was like going back in time for the weekend. It's great to see everyone progress in their lives and maturing but still being the same deep down! It made us all realize that we haven't changed that much and that no matter how long goes by without getting together, it is always as if we had seen each other yesterday. We decided we would like to organise more reunions, so we will hopefully plan another one soon. The Aiglon bond is always there, and when we get together it always feels like we're home.

**Gabriela Caso de los Cobos Tapia** (Exeter, 2008)



**BAFTA GOES TO LA**

Photo of filmmaker Erik Friedl (sporting an Aiglon cap) and producer Paul Heller at the BAFTALA Summer Garden Party at the British Residence on 19 August 2018 in Los Angeles, California

**Erik Friedl** (Alpina, 1969)



**From Bentley, with love**

*When Aiglonians discovered that Mr Corlette's storied 1960 Bentley had come on to the market, the memories lit up Facebook!*

July 1967 — JC showcasing one of his Bentleys to students. Left to right: Iain Barraclough, Michael Feeny (light jacket) and Mr Anthony Phillips on the right.



**Eric Friedl**  
Car collectors may be interested to know that Mr Corlette's storied 1960 Bentley has come on to the market, sold by the Real Car Company. A slice of Aiglon lore is alive and in very good shape indeed. Thanks to former art teacher, Martin Roberts, for letting us know.

especially considering Aiglon only had 135 students to choose from. The French and Italians each had an entire country! Guys

on that team – Reid Schoenfeld (Clairmont, 1966), Steve Moody (Alpina, 1967), Richard Treadway (Les Evêques, 1967), Chris (Powell) Harlow (1968) – and myself still ski together every year in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Derek Morton (Clairmont, 1968), who was also on the team, has come several times, as well as Todd Barbey (1967), John Headley (1963), Greg Nelson (1964), Dave Shaw (Clairmont, 1969) and Denny Lane (Delaware, 1957).

**Will Holyroyd (Clairmont, 1964)**  
Mr Mac convinced JC to pick up some weight-lifting equipment for him in the UK. Placed in the trunk, the weights hardly made a difference to the ride of the car and formed the basis of equipment for subsequent Weight Lifting Clubs in the basement room of Clairmont!

**Chas MacLean Cochand (Alpina, 1969)**  
When I arrived I was told 'The Boss' had bought a new Bentley, but on the drive out from England he noted a shimmy in the right front wheel at speeds over 80mph! The story was Rolls flew an engineer out, and he drove it back for a rebuild...

**Noel Thompson**  
I remember those weights and the club. The British Olympic team trained at Aiglon (high altitude) for the Mexico Olympics!

**Nick Devas**  
It is worth mentioning that this was not JC's first Bentley. When I arrived at Aiglon in 1961, he had a Bentley R Type (at least I think that's what it was), like this one – more sedate than his later one!

**Bill Swartz (Alpina, 1966)**  
I remember it well! He took a group of us to Aigle when the first snow kept us from biking. Great ride!

**Steve Groves (1963)**  
I went to dinner on Sports Day in that car. JC took me out as I was the only one left who was not invited.

**Patrick Roberts (Staff, 1965-87)**  
Beautiful car! But unfortunately I never had the pleasure of riding in it!

**Chef Patrick McDonnell (Alpina, 1968)**  
Remember going to Crans-Montana for the ADISR Ski Championships in it with Richard Treadway in 1967. Smooth!!!! On that particular trip, Aiglon actually won the overall ADISR Ski Racing Championship. We not only beat a dozen of the top Swiss schools (including Le Rosey), but we also beat the National French and Italian B teams. Those teams would filter into the Olympic A teams the following year. It was a huge achievement,

**Do you have memories of Mr Corlette's cars? We would love to hear from you! Send your memories to alumni@aiglon.ch**

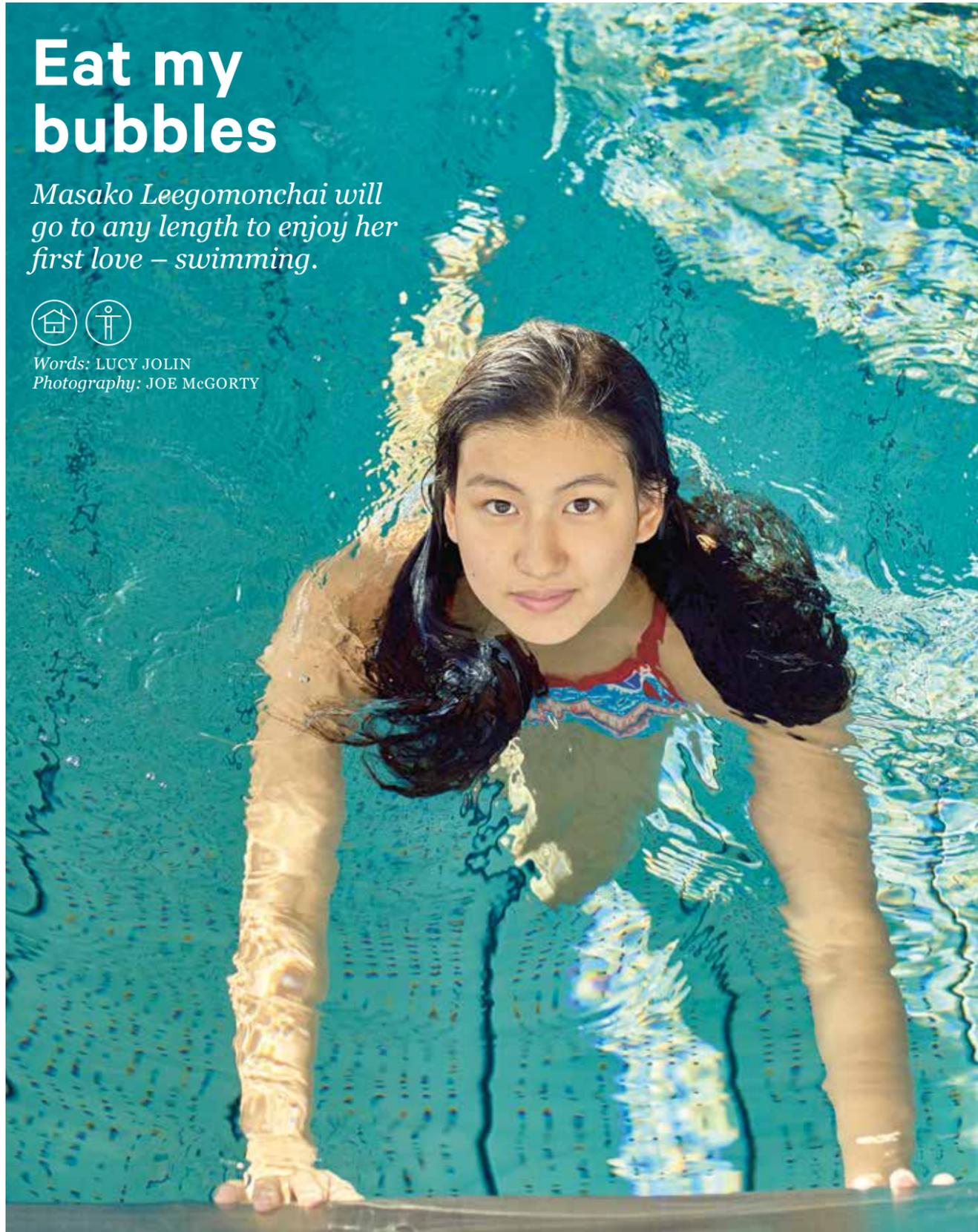
The Real Car Company has informed the College that the car has now been sold and will be heading to Singapore. They say: "The car was registered when new in the UK but shortly afterwards was displayed at the 1960 Geneva Motor Show. It seems that it was sold from there to a Mr Berner from Lausanne, and then to Mr Corlette in 1963."

# Eat my bubbles

*Masako Leegomonchai will go to any length to enjoy her first love – swimming.*



Words: LUCY JOLIN  
Photography: JOE MCGORTY



**W**atch a top swimming event and it seems intensely competitive: a high-octane, high-intensity environment where hundredths of a second can make all the difference. But the view from the pool is quite different, says competitive swimmer **Masako Leegomonchai** (Le Cerf, Year 12). For her, swimming isn't about competing with others – only herself.

"I look at my own times, not everybody else's," she says. "I don't compare myself with others. In team sports, you have to think about your relationships with other people and your team. But with swimming, the only thing you need to think about is what you are doing."

Masako loved sport as a young child, eagerly joining in with everything from golf to gymnastics. She started competitive swimming because all her friends did it. But when they lost interest, she carried on. "That's when I discovered my passion: I didn't want to quit, even though everyone else had."

At Aiglon, Masako has four two-hour evening training sessions a week with the Le Marsouins club at the Piscine de Perrosalle in Ollon. She fits in homework before and after her training – but she says that her houseparents always save her something tasty for dinner when she gets back.

Initially, Masako was worried that the move from Thailand to Switzerland would compromise her training schedule. But, she says, training smarter, not harder, has actually been good for her swimming.

"I found out that training a lot didn't mean that I was going to get better," she says. "It's about quality, and here the quality of training is better. I get to do more things, not only swimming, so my training is more balanced. I now go to the gym to develop my muscles and avoid injuries."



“

My goal is to get into the national team, develop my skills and meet some really good swimmers



**Pool time —**  
Masako has four two-hour training sessions a week.

train for a month beforehand. The previous year, she had come third overall, winning a place on the team, but had to forgo it as it clashed with school commitments.

Now, she's starting to work towards that dream again. "Now that I'm studying at Aiglon, the schedule corresponds to swimming competitions. So next year, if I get in the national team, then I will go to the Southeast Asian Games."

As ever, Masako's not concerned about the competition. "I just want to get into the national team and develop my skills, and meet some really good swimmers so we can talk about their goals."

"That's one of the things I love most about swimming – meeting up with different people I've seen at competitions before. You meet so many new people, in so many new places." **A**

She discovered this the hard way last year when she tore a muscle in her knee, leading to a dislocation. "I was just walking along when it happened," she remembers. "It was because I didn't develop my muscles enough – I only swam, so there were some muscles that were really weak. I never used them because they're not used in swimming. I had to rest for half a year. That was very tough."

But Masako's injury also led to one of the best moments of her swimming career so far: making it to the finals of the competition to decide Thailand's national swimming team, despite only being able to

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### Behind the scenes

## The school shop



Words: MEGAN WELFORD  
Photography: JOE MCGORTY

“They come in to see us feeling they are outsiders; they leave as one of our family: an Aiglonian.” And that, says manager **Mme Christine Ortet**, is the magical – almost mythical – power of the School Shop.

In fact, for those who start in September, the first School Shop experience takes place in the ‘craziness’ of the Sports Hall. It takes more than 300 hours to kit out all 100 new students, Mme Ortet says – two hours per student for uniform and at least an hour for the rest. Ten seamstresses are on hand to make any necessary alterations, and to attach the name labels required on every single item – 12,000 in all. “They used to sew them by hand and it would take three weeks,” says Mme Ortet. “Now, they use a heat-seal machine and, by the Sunday night, everything is altered and labelled, ready to be delivered to the houses.”

After the excitement of the first weekend, the shop returns to its usual home next to the lounge, and Mme Ortet is left alone in her domain. “Before, I was in the basement and could go for weeks without seeing anyone,” she says. “Now I’m in the heart of campus and next to the lounge, so I can have coffee with my colleagues!”

In fact, these days she is rarely alone for long, because students often come to help. “As part of the CAS (Creativity, Activity, Service) option I’ll usually have a couple of students helping me: they always have a lot to learn, but they’re fun and great to talk to. They help me choose new pens or woolly hats, or to do a display with water bottles in different colours. I’m a bit OCD about the organisation, though, and I like things to be lined up straight.”

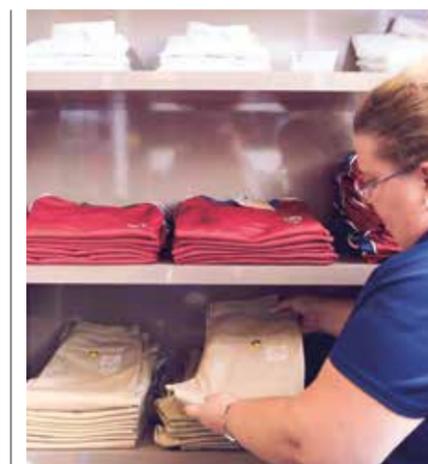


Over the counter – Christine Ortet keeps a jar of sweets on her counter, but students – and staff – have to remember their manners if they want some!

“  
The atmosphere in the shop follows the rhythm of the school year

The atmosphere in the shop follows the rhythm of the school year, she says. “In September, when students are buying new things for the year, it’s exciting. At exam time when they’re buying calculators and pens and pencils, it’s tense. In August, when I’m stocktaking and sorting bar code labels, I’m on my own. I have Heart Radio from the UK on full blast, hearing how the traffic is around Gloucester in England’s south-west.”

The shop has changed with the years – when Mme Ortet joined in 2006, she says there was no computer and all transactions were written by hand. “There used to be a stack of postcards that students would buy



to send home. But now it’s Chromebooks, laptops, FaceTime and Skype, and the shop sells earphones and USB sticks.”

Some things don’t change, though: politeness is always required. “I keep a jar of sweets on the counter,” says Mme Ortet. “But you need to say, ‘Good morning,’ ‘Please’ and ‘Thank you’, otherwise you’ll not get one – that goes for the staff too!”

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



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Words: SOFIJA BULATOVIC  
Photography: JOE MCGORTY

## Why I love being a student ambassador

**Sofija Bulatovic**  
*(Le Cerf, Year 11)*

I am passionate about telling other prospective students that they have come to the right place and that this is the school for them. Why? Because when I first came to Aiglon last year, I could not believe that such a place existed: somewhere you could study your favourite subjects, go skiing with your friends and then return to your warm and loving house – all in one day!

Today, I am a student ambassador: the first contact between a prospective student (and their parents). I am delighted every time the Admissions Office asks

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One of my favourite parts of the tour is showing Le Cerf, which has become a home for me, and the other girls my family

me if I want to give a campus tour for a prospective family – and I absolutely always say yes. Yet there is also the responsibility: the feeling and the experience that the new family has with the ambassador will help determine if they choose Aiglon.

From the moment I meet the family to the moment the tour finishes, I give my all to make sure that I am engaging, that I answer all their questions and that I have a positive attitude. I especially enjoy seeing the smiles on visitors' faces when they see our fabulous facilities, such as the art room, Sports Centre and the expedition department. I love speaking about our exciting expeditions programme and how much fun they will have when they're on expedition.

Another one of my favourite parts of the tour is showing my house. Le Cerf has truthfully become a home for me, and the other girls have become my family. I want other students who are considering Aiglon to know that their boarding house won't just be a place where they sleep: it will be a true home where they will not only make many friends but also many memories throughout the school years.

I cannot express how fond I am of meeting new families and telling them what an amazing place Aiglon is – it is one of my most cherished passions. And I love recognising the new students who end up coming to Aiglon after one of my tours. This motivates me to work even harder and further improve myself. So, if you're coming for a campus tour, be sure to ask for me as your guide! 📍



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