

AIGLON

THE MAGAZINE



ISSUE 15 WINTER/SPRING 2021

School: Home from home: celebrating Houseparents and their students

Mountain: How Aiglonians push past their limits to follow their dreams

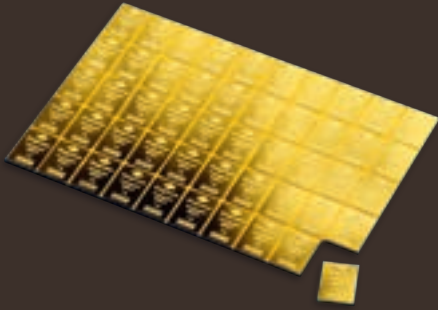
Ideas: Why, in 2020, activism has gone global

People: Land of opportunity: how Aiglonians are leading a farming revolution

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WINTER / SPRING 2021

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The record-breaking student who is showing no signs of slowing down.



Valerie Scullion
Director of Admissions
and Marketing

Send your comments to
communications@aiglon.ch

EDITOR'S LETTER

WELCOME TO ISSUE 15

Spirit, confidence and energy: Aiglonians are well set for a bright new year

This year has been memorable in so many ways. The resilience shown by our community in recent times has been both remarkable and humbling, but for Aiglonians it's nothing new – we are used to going above and beyond our limit, as we explore on page 16.

2020 will be remembered as a time of challenge and turbulence, however Aiglonians have the spirit, confidence and energy to navigate difficult terrain and be at the forefront of serving their communities and impacting change. On page 28, we see how Aiglonians are lending their voice and their time to help make our world a better place. If you are working on a project to build back better, however big or small, please do get in touch. We'd love to hear from you.

On page 32, we speak to members of our community setting the agenda for the future of the planet via the food on our plates, and finally, on page 22, we celebrate one of our school's most special relationships: that between student and Houseparents. It's a bond that has proven vital in this challenging year, and hearing your memories on this subject has warmed our hearts.

Here's to a wonderful 2021, and I look forward to meeting you in person again soon.

Letters

Stories to share? Feedback? Suggestions? We love to hear your thoughts. Get in touch and join the Aiglon conversation.



A family affair

My whole family love reading the great features in Aiglon magazine, and the copies are always passed around between us with great enthusiasm. It's a fantastic way to stay in touch.

There is a definite hierarchy within the family, though, one that every multi-sibling unit will relate to.

I'm the eldest – married in 2014 and have since been living in Pretoria, South Africa, following my graduation from Bentley University in 2011. I'm proud to be heading up a new division of textiles under the existing group that was established in 1883 by our great-grandfather.

My 'next' brother is Hassaan (Delaware, 2008), who works between London, Geneva and Dubai, but calls Geneva home. He graduated from Bentley University in Massachusetts in 2012, finished his MBA in 2014 and achieved his PhD in Finance in Geneva in 2018 (with a focus on central banking). He's since been working in real estate and financial services between Geneva and London.

As the youngest, Mateen (Delaware, 2011) lays claims to having the most responsibility of the three of us. Since graduating from Northeastern University in 2016, he has assumed major responsibilities in the family business and works alongside

our father, for much of the year in China, further up the textiles supply chain.

Wherever we are in the world, however, the magazine helps maintain our connection, so please keep up all the good work!

Adnan Joosub
(Delaware, 2007)

Lisiane Lefèvre

It is my sad duty to share with our community news of the death of Lisiane Lefèvre, one of Aiglon's longest serving members of staff.

Nobody who met Lisiane could be left thinking that they had not encountered an unusually colourful character. Instantly engaging and almost as instantly surprising, Lisiane had a gift for dismantling the staid conventions of Anglo-Saxon familiarisation, launching with bravado into passionate and good-natured dialogues laced with humour. Creativity and spontaneity were qualities she esteemed highly in her students, but not at the expense of hard work, and she would not hold back if she felt her charges had misplaced their academic priorities or failed to prepare adequately for a theatrical rehearsal.

Her irrepressible badinage wove in and out of both real life and the staging of shows, where ultimately the imagined characters paled into the



penumbra in the face of Lisiane's own sparkling, mercurial aura.

As a long and distinctive chapter of life closes, I believe we can be grateful that many generations of Aiglon students can reflect on the diverse parade of shaping characters they encountered in their school lives, and in that assembly Lisiane will figure for many as one of the most memorable.

Richard McDonald,
Executive Director

(See *Tributes*, p44)

Join the conversation!

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ON THE COVER

A photo of Lisa Munneke (La Casa, Year 7) taken on an expedition near Les Chaux during an early snow in the autumn term.

What else can we do for our children?

Help make the world more sustainable?
And our portfolio too?





For some of life's questions, you're not alone.
Together we can find an answer.



AROUND THE MOUNTAIN

DOMAINE DE TRÉCORD

— *Bacchanalians rejoice! As Aiglonians have always known, Ollon produces some of the finest wines in the area.*

Words Sarah Woodward **Photography** Joe McGorty

W

ANT TO KNOW WHICH WINE should accompany your favourite dish? Ask an expert. And if you're in the Villars area, one of those experts is likely to be Harald Cropt, winemaker

at the Domaine de Trécord vineyard in Ollon.

The fifth generation of vigneron in his family, Harald is the first to have trained professionally, studying at the Haute Ecole de Viticulture et Oenologie at Changins, just north of Geneva. He and his wife Daniela set up the Domaine de Trécord in 2007 and today are joined by their three children, Louise, Lina and Edi.

“My family, like others locally, always grew vines to make wine for their own consumption – but we left production to the local cooperative. I wanted to take control of the whole process; not just the agriculture but the vinification, bottling and storing. That way we can do justice to the terroir, bringing out the finesse of grapes such as the local Chasselas, which I'd recommend every time. We locals can drink it all night – it's a great apéritif.”

And terroir – that elusive combination of soil, aspect and climate that defines a vineyard – is what makes Chasselas, he says, “the king of vines” in the Vaud region.



Vine to wine
Harald Cropt is a fifth-generation vigneron, but the first in the family to have trained at the Haute Ecole de Viticulture et Oenologie at Changins, Geneva.



Cropt loves to show visitors around the mosaic of small plots of vines that surround the village of Ollon, picking out the different parcels of land which produce varying qualities in the wines. “Our own vineyards are on the heights above the village. The vines benefit from plenty of sun and the warm foehn winds coming up from the Rhône Valley, yet they are sheltered between the woods of Confrêne and Glaivaz. “This is white wine territory, but we also now grow some red grapes, such as Gamay and Pinot Noir. I like to offer our customers variety in the white as well; wines that are a little more floral or aromatic, such as the Doral. It’s a very special place.”

In a normal year, thousands of visitors descend on Ollon in September for the Balades dans le vignoble, a weekend of fun, live music, wine tasting and good food. “There is a little train to shuttle visitors between the 13 different caves. Each of us offers our own speciality – ham cooked in honey, roast chicken or charcuterie.” Domaine de Trécord is a particularly popular stop for its wood-fired pizzas. This year the event is on hold, but Cropt and his family are looking forward hopefully to a weekend in September 2021, when all the cellars in the Chablais Vaudois region traditionally open their doors to the public.

And, in the meantime, he is as busy as ever. “More people are drinking at home, discovering our wines. And there is always something to keep me busy in the vineyard – there is nowhere I would rather work.” **A**



Insider

VISIT

Arrange intimate wine-tasting sessions and vineyard tours for small groups by emailing Harald Cropt at info@treCORD.ch or calling +41 79 209 10 03.

SEE

Open-cellar days are a great way to see behind the scenes at vineyards in the region, so keep an eye out for planned events in 2021.

TREAT

Personalised labels on your favourite bottle of wine are a great way to mark a special occasion, either for yourself or as a gift to that someone special.

FEST

Join next year’s Balades dans le vignoble – due to take place on the weekend of 11-12 September – for a celebration of local wines and produce.

BUY

Feeling nostalgic – and thirsty? Never fear! Aiglonois can enjoy their favourite Domaine de Trécord wines from their own homes by ordering at www.treCORD.ch

ANNOTATED

THE MINIBUS

Forget getting from A to B – the minibus is Aiglon’s heart on wheels.

Illustrations James Olstein Photography Joe McGorty



The fleet

The school currently runs eight minibuses, all branded in the distinctive Aiglon colours and logo. The fleet comprises two Mercedes Vitos, two VW T5s, two VW T6s and two Ford Transits. New artwork – a schematic of the mountains – was introduced last year.

Changing roles

More than 40 registered drivers from across the school take charge of the buses, on trips including courtesy journeys, sports and activities events, airport transfers and student recycling projects.

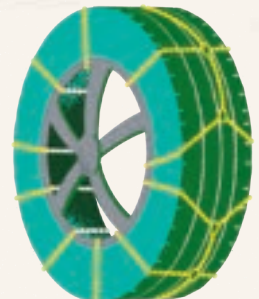


Safety first

The very latest GPS systems are fitted into every vehicle, ensuring the safe and effective transfer of students, staff and visitors. The fleet is continually modernised for safety and comfort, and online booking is used to manage journeys.

Ready for anything

All minibuses in the fleet are four-wheel drive to ensure they can cope with the challenging conditions in the mountains. Additionally, they are all equipped with winter tyres and snow chains for more demanding situations.



HERE'S LOOKING AT YOU

PLAYING TO THE CROWD

— *Musician Michele Adamson credits her years at Aiglon for providing the foundations for a stellar career.*

Words Helena Pozniak

01

MILES ON THE CLOCK

Minibuses travel around the globe for the World Ski Championships, such as L'Aquila in Italy (but don't mention the breakdown on the motorway).

02

BUMS ON SEATS

Even the smallest minibus can carry eight people – that's enough for a four-part harmony if everyone knows the words to the latest chart-topper.

03

CAREFUL!

Driving the minibus down narrow Swiss country roads has become an ongoing 'fun challenge' for the Aiglon staff who drive the bus regularly.

04

FIND THAT BUS!

Park the bus near Champéry. Summit the Dents du Midi. First back to the bus wins!

05

EVERYONE LOVES A LUGGAGE RACK

Skis, mountain bikes, gazebos.... You name it – at some point, it will have been loaded on to a minibus luggage rack.



BY HER OWN ADMISSION, **Michele Adamson** (Chantecler, 1995), musician and performer, is a good talker. "I do have the gift of the gab," she says. But it wasn't enough to get her off the hook at school. And 15 years on, she still remembers some lessons learned the hard way.

"I was de-prefectised. I was caught in a car coming back from the village – I'd got a lift because it was raining. I think I broke my Houseparents' hearts. I tried to talk my way out of it, but I learned there are boundaries and consequences. It was a great lesson."

Michele remembers blossoming at Aiglon. "You couldn't wake up, throw open the curtains and be in a bad mood – not with that glittering mountain view. It felt like fairyland." She learned jazz and performed "silly" skits and cabarets. "I really miss the group activities. I have such fond memories of us making fools of ourselves, making people laugh. Being in a band gives me some of that group feeling."

Today she's a psytrance (psychedelic trance) singer with the band Shpongle, and a solo

performer – a self-styled "electro-witch". She's played London and New York venues, toured Japan and Australia, and performed in Israel's desert, Chicago's amphitheatre and Brazil's carnival. "I joined a band in 2001 and it just exploded from there.

"It's funny, if I could tailor-make the education I'd need for this life I've chosen, I would pick those two years at Aiglon. Teachers nurtured my musical talent, they made me feel seen. The music and drama there were like a springboard, and the mountain helped launch me; it felt incredibly safe."

And while she moaned, as teens do, about expedition, she is forever grateful for the chance to lug heavy tents on hikes with friends. Even now, the smell of wild garlic sends her back to a time sleeping in fields. "We thought we stank at the time, but I walk past it now and think it's just heaven. It's hard to be self-aware at that age, but there we were, with close friends, in an incredible environment. I learned to problem solve on the fly. These are the perspectives that shape your life. Looking back now, I'd make myself go out even more, rather than laze around eating Swiss chocolate."

While the pandemic kept her in Hampshire in the UK, Michele is itching to get back on the road. "The whole music scene is changing, and we'll have to rely more on our resourcefulness." But she's at her most relaxed in front of a live crowd. "Last year in São Paulo, people sang my lyrics and I felt at home. We pulled up in our float outside a sofa shop and an assistant jumped up on a display bed and started bouncing and singing along. That joy is priceless." 🎧

“

It was like a springboard. The mountain helped launch me; it felt incredibly safe

Landing pad
Mr Gerhardt and Go practice their skills with the Chablais Heli Club at Bex airfield, just a 20 minute drive down the mountain from Aiglon.



TOGETHER

ALL EYES ON THE SKY

Under the careful eye of helicopter club adviser Mr Gerhardt, Go Kojima (Belvedere, Year 12) has his sights set high.

Words Helena Pozniak Photography Joe McGorty

G

O KOJIMA (BELVEDERE, YEAR 12) has set his sights on an Aiglon first – being the first student to ever graduate with a helicopter licence. It’s a high bar to aim for, but with the help of

Mr John Gerhardt (Alpina, 2003) and the helicopter club that is part of Aiglon’s extracurricular offering, Go reckons it’s within reach.

Over the next two years, he hopes to complete the nine gruelling theory exams and at least 40 hours of flying time that a licence requires. “Learning to fly a helicopter takes time, but the pay-off is massive,” says Mr Gerhardt. “It’s all about developing complementary skills: three-dimensional awareness, which aids coordination; meteorology, which is good for geography; and he’s learning about the physics of airframes. It’s no easy feat, though, and I salute his efforts.”

Hours of theory are offset by the thrill of flying over the lower Rhône valley above the local aerodrome of Bex, alongside a qualified instructor. “This has really changed my school life,” says Go, originally from Japan. “It’s so exciting. I am really impressed by the teamwork required in aviation. It’s like the workings of a watch.”



“

Learning to hover is harder than it looks. We don't use a simulator – you have to do it in real life, and it's the scariest thing

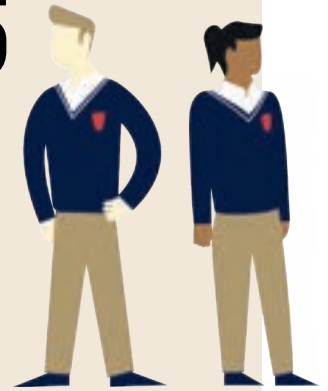
For now, Go is grappling with one of the trickiest skills: being able to hover successfully, which is harder, he says, than it looks. “We don't use a simulator – you have to do it in real life, and it's the scariest thing.” But, according to his teacher, flying a helicopter becomes like riding a bike. “When I started learning 15 years ago, hovering seemed the most difficult thing ever,” says Mr Gerhardt, who works at Aiglon as a senior computer services technician. “But one of the hardest things to get right is actually the emergency landing – when the engine cuts out. You fall out of the sky and can drop quite quickly. But if you practise enough, your reactions eventually become spontaneous.”

Seventeen-year-old Go reminds Mr Gerhardt of his younger self. It was a helicopter flight at the age of 16 that stoked a lifelong passion – “I took off from Bristol airport alongside an (Airbus) A320, and that started something in me” – and he sees that same spark in Go. “A lot of pupils have a rose-tinted view of what helicopters are about. There's a lot of work and theory. But Go didn't need any motivation; that flame was already lit.”

All students in the club have a chance to fly once, as well as go on an aerodrome visit, but, to take it further, they must commit to many hours of theory. In the coming two years, Go aims to get the pilot's licence that will, he hopes, be a step on the way to becoming a professional pilot. “Graduating with his licence would be an incredible and unique achievement,” says Mr Gerhardt. For once, the sky isn't the limit. 🚁

News

The latest news from the Aiglon community and beyond. To find out more, visit www.aiglon.ch/latest-news



Campus masterplan

The campus masterplan continues its progress, with developments to the Junior School playground, the Cloud Cafe and Alpina. The next major stage, due to begin in 2021, is a new Belvedere boarding house, with the existing building redeveloped as a classroom and learning complex.

Impact report

Aiglon's new Impact Report, a collection of stories highlighting the impact of philanthropy at Aiglon, with extra updates on the school, campus and community, is available online on our website. Alternatively, you can contact alumni@aiglon.ch for your copy.

New faces

We're delighted to welcome alumna Alex Demishin (Alpina, 2016) to his new post as Alumni Relations and Events Officer. And Aiglon's Board of Governors welcomes several new faces, including Princess Alia Al-Senussi, Professor David Gann CBE, Dr Caroline Harper CBE OBE and Guy Tritton.

Record enrollments

Aiglon began the 2020-21 academic year with record enrollments: both in terms of total (390) and new (140) students. We also have 13 alumni children that have joined the school, another record worth celebrating! Finally, we're delighted to welcome 21 new teaching staff.

Exam results

Last summer saw some incredible exam results: the average IB diploma score was 37.8 - the highest ever. Twenty-six students (35 per cent of IB candidates) achieved more than 40 points, with one perfect 45 and three students scoring 44 points. Ninety-five per cent of students took the full IB diploma, with 99 per cent passing.

LA BAITA? IT'S ALL ABOUT BREAKFAST

— Bertie Fullerton (*La Baita, Year 8*) says his House is a special place to be, and not just because of pancakes on Mondays!

Interview Becky Allen Photography Joe McGorty

T

HE FIRST THING THAT struck me when I walked into La Baita was just how big it is – I remember thinking there was loads of space. I've never

lived anywhere this big. That means even when it's noisy downstairs, there's always somewhere quiet to read. That's usually my bunk. I like the bottom bunk because, when I was younger, I once slept on a top bed that had no railings and woke up on the floor with a bleeding nose!

One of the things that makes La Baita special is how close we are. All the boys from the junior school know each other because – unlike the senior school where boys are divided between Houses – we're all in one House, which brings us all together.

Not that I have loads of time spare time to spend with people in the House, as I'm always in a hurry – particularly in the mornings. When I wake up, I lie in bed for 20 minutes and then realise I'm meant to be downstairs, so I have to get dressed in a rush and eat my breakfast. I have the same thing every day – chocolate milk and bread or yoghurt – unless it's Monday. On Monday, breakfast is great because we have mini pancakes with honey, maple syrup, sugar or jam.

Then it's time for meditation. It's either outside in the playground or inside in the maths classroom, depending on the weather. When I came to Aiglon last year I'd never done anything like it before, but it calms me down before class and, at other times when things get a bit hectic, I'll try to meditate.



On breakfast

"I have the same thing every day – chocolate milk and bread or yoghurt – unless it's Monday. On Monday, we have mini pancakes with honey, maple syrup, sugar or jam."



Last year, a group of us were playing table foosball after dinner and one player spun the handle so hard the goalie's head broke off and went into the back of the net. It's a memory that's never faded!

When we get back from school, La Baita's just a great place to be. Compared with home, in La Baita there are lots more people and so much more to do. There's a great atmosphere – people playing games or practising music, for example. We have dinner together, then we might play pool or football.

I remember last year when a big group of us were playing table foosball and one player spun the handle so hard that the ball broke the goalie's head off and it went straight in the back of the net! That's a memory that's never faded.

I also manage to get plenty of work done – maths is my favourite and I'm always battling with one particular boy to get the most marks – and I like to find a bit of peace and quiet to read my Kindle. I like fantasy or sci-fi books – at the moment I'm reading the *Wax and Wayne* series. I get through a lot of books. It usually only takes me a day or two to read one, so the Kindle's a lot easier than having to go to the library every day. And reading helps explain why I'm usually in a rush in the mornings. Because I'm either reading – or lying there wondering why I read so late last night! 📖

Diary

The pick of global Aiglon events happening between January and December 2021.



2021

Term dates

Updated term dates for 2021 and 2022 have been published. Friday 18 June 2021 marks the end of this academic year, while the 2021/22 autumn term will start on the weekend of 28 August 2021, with the winter holiday running from Friday 17 December 2021 to Saturday 8 January 2022. For full details, see aiglon.ch/news/term-dates/

28/29 MAY

2021 Graduation

A landmark day in the life of the school – and of our Year 13s in particular – the Class of 2021 will celebrate their big day at the end of May. Save the date, and don't forget to book your accommodation now for what will undoubtedly be a popular time of year.

18-19 JUNE

2020 Graduation

Despite many setbacks due to the pandemic, we are determined to see our Class of 2020 through to celebrate their graduation. To this end, our new date for the Class of 2020 Graduation is set for 18-19 June 2021. This will include both a ceremony and reception for the graduates and their families.

2021

Alumni virtual and career events

The pandemic has had a silver-lining... Aiglon's Development and Alumni Relations Office and the College and Careers Department have been working together to offer a series of unique and informative alumni panels – all hosted online – that allow recent graduates, other alumni and current students to meet together and share experiences. It's been a really helpful initiative – one that allows the school to strengthen the value of its global network despite the many travel restrictions. The planned events will cover a range of topics, suitable for alumni at various stages of their careers, and will include topics such as "So you think you want to study business?" and "University interview tips". For more information, and for details of when the events are taking place and how to access them, please contact the Development and Alumni Relations Office via alumni@aiglon.ch

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

A UNIQUE HARMONY

— Sometimes being “like no other” isn’t enough, says Executive Director Richard McDonald.

Photography Joe McGorty



I ATTENDED A RATHER UNUSUAL boarding school. Founded in 1553 by King Edward VI of England, it was set up to provide an education for poor street boys in London. A few years ago the school adopted as its strapline: “A school like no other”. While this was no doubt a very well-founded claim, I must admit that I felt disappointed. On reflection, it was because I had already heard the “like no other” label used liberally in a range of contexts, to the extent that it had become rather banal and “like any other” slogan.

I have previously been struck down by another bout of logo lassitude: “Our unique product, our unique approach, our unique school...”. The common factor was the understandable quest to set oneself apart. “Like no other” has caught on and spread with viral rapidity since the declaration of the 2020 pandemic, and words such as “unprecedented” and “unimaginable” have become common currency. But what do we mean by “unique” or “like no other”?

Uniqueness is a function of combinations and constellations. Aiglon is not the only not-for-profit private school, nor the only international boarding school high in the Swiss Alps. It is not the only school in the world with: an explicit holistic educational philosophy; dedicated and talented students and staff; a challenging outdoor programme that includes skiing and other winter sports; a richly diverse population of students from more than 60 countries; a loyal, connected global alumni body; and top-tier academic results and placements. It is not the only school that every year offers a number of fully funded scholarships, thanks to philanthropic donations, and it is not the only school that can pivot in a crisis to deliver a high-quality remote and hybrid learning experience. But it is probably the only school that fulfils all of these criteria.

Good schools have more in common than they have to differentiate them, and we should be genuinely glad of that. The more great schools that

A unique view
Aiglon's Executive Director, Richard McDonald.

exist to shape positive and responsible citizens in the world, the better. It is also a reason why we should always seek cooperation over competition. When the quest for uniqueness and distinction comes at a cost – human, environmental or moral – we must question whether our striving is towards a common good or is isolationist and self-serving.

We are justified, of course, to celebrate the constellation of elements and characteristics that make us unique. Our individuality – as people, communities or nations – can enervate us with a sense of purpose and distinct identity. Harmony, however, requires an interplay in which each individual part finds its place in a greater whole. And it is my firm conviction that an education should lead us towards a respectful, responsible harmony, not fragmentation and supremacy.

Aiglon is a rather unusual boarding school and, yes, it is like no other. But let us not think that uniqueness is our purpose. It is our face, our fingerprint, our DNA, but our purpose must be more widely applied if we are to fashion a world in which hope outshines fear. To be a school (mostly) like any other does not sound very flattering; but should we really be disappointed if there were more schools like us? **A**

We know our children's future is being rewritten. What will change in years to come? We cannot say, nor can we be sure that traditional ideas will do for today and do for tomorrow. Is sustainable investing the solution for them?



**For some of life's questions, you're not alone.
Together we can find an answer.**

GOING BEYOND THE LIMIT

Aiglonians often talk about reaching their limits – and then finding a new way forward. But just how do you get to, through and beyond your wildest dreams?

Words Sarah Woodward **Photography** Joe McGorty

As the height of the bar increases, so does my aim. I'm still reaching higher, going beyond yesterday's limit and striving for the next one.

Limits are what we make them.

WILLIAM APELGREN
New to Aiglon this year, Will has jumped into as much of Aiglon life as he possibly can, including cinematography, expeditions and his big love, basketball – even when he broke his foot, he was at every basketball practice shooting hoops from a chair.



The day lockdown hit, **Vanessa Kouri** (Le Cerf, Year 11) vowed that isolation wouldn't get in the way of her dedication to ballet. But as time went on, she found it harder and harder to keep up her practice, alone in front of a screen.

Vanessa started dancing at the age of three and kept it up at Aiglon, arranging her own lessons and practicing up to four hours a day. But then came lockdown. "One of the things I enjoy most about dancing is doing it with other people," she says. "But all our performances got cancelled, so I couldn't use them as a goal. I was having to dance in a space I created in my house, which restricted my movement. I kept it up all through summer, even though it was hard. And then, because I was practising on hard floors, I got a knee injury. That was so hard to accept."

Her injury could have been the last straw. But Vanessa didn't let it get in her way. She devoured the videos and photos on social media posted by famous dancers around the world, sharing their experiences of lockdown, and used them to motivate herself. "It was incredible seeing all these people sharing what they were doing, and I learned a lot from them," she says. "Plus, I had to work very hard to recover from the injury and do a lot of extra exercises and

physical therapy – and that's made me stronger and even more determined. When you hit a wall, you have to remember why you're doing what you're doing. And think about all that work you put in: you don't want that to go to waste."

She's not alone. Aiglonians often talk about reaching their limits and then, sometimes on their own and sometimes with the help of their teachers, they find a new way forward.

Going beyond your limit is something that **Christian Sarfelt** (Alpina, Year 11), who describes himself as the kind of boy who wants to know how things work, knows all about. Although he auditioned for an on-stage role in the Junior School play, it was his technical prowess that was spotted by **Mr Ashley Norton**, Aiglon's Audiovisual and Sound Technician. His challenge to Christian? Take on the AV and lights for the show instead.

"Christian was only 14 and had never used the software before," says Mr Norton. "I showed him the basics and gave him lots of encouragement, but he put the whole show together himself. By the time of the dress rehearsal, he was so capable I had forgotten all about him. And during the show, he had to follow the script for cues at specific lines for over an hour. He showed remarkable concentration."

It was far from his comfort zone, admits Christian. "We had a big video screen in the middle of the stage that I had to project on to. I learned Q-Lab (the industry-standard sound, video and lighting control for macOS) but you normally use it for audio. Mr Norton showed me how to put up the videos and then I just got on with it. I was pretty nervous before the shows – but I've learned it usually ends well."

Mr Norton admits he was nervous too. "The video was an integral part of the performance and there were 50 to 60 people relying on Christian. It was such a joy for me at the end of the show when everyone was as thrilled as I was. Few students want to do the tech in a big show because of the weight on their shoulders, but Christian, well, he just bowls me over every time."

"I get upset when people in charge of aspects of education say almost proudly that they are no good at maths," says **Mr Tom Higgins**, Head of Mathematics. "You would never admit to being no good at reading or writing." However, teaching maths has given Mr Higgins time to think about how to encourage students forward. His approach? To create a structure within which students can push themselves. "For those children who find maths more difficult, I ensure they feel success in what they can do, →

VANESSA KOURI
Since joining Aiglon in 2020,
Vanessa has worked hard to
establish a routine for
practising her ballet,
despite picking up an injury
during the summer.

When you hit a wall, you have to remember why you're doing what you're doing



and embrace their mistakes as far as possible. Of course, each and every child has his or her limits, but the important point is that we need to recognise that they differ.”

And for some of Mr Higgins’ pupils, those limits are stellar. Last year he had three students studying for the IB Diploma in Further Maths, a level of qualification so demanding that in 2019 there were only 260 students across the world enrolled in the programme – 90 per cent of them in south-east Asia.

“It is just as challenging for the teacher as the student,” says Mr Higgins, “but the integration of these three Further Maths students is inspiring. There were two boys who were joined by a girl new to the school, and the conversations they have around the mathematical problems are amazing. I just sit back and feed off their way of thinking – that is until they challenge me to a new way of approaching a tricky problem.”

He does not need to raise their aspirations – they do so themselves. But just like all students, they do need encouragement and support. “One got 70 per cent on a calculus test, not the 90 per cent they were used to. We discussed it at a parents’ meeting, they went away and worked at their already very good calculus over the winter, and quickly got back to top marks.” Mr Higgins knows that overcoming such hurdles helps maintain interest.

“It is not just about scores and qualifications. Some students feel that they need to get as much curriculum as

possible under their belt as quickly as they can, but I try to encourage them instead to take their time, to go deeper into the level of mathematics they are already at.”

To keep up the challenge, five years ago Mr Higgins set up the inter-house mathematics competition. “It’s based on open-ended problem solving and there are two questions on the go at any one time between the teams. It has turned into a bit of a game show. The stigma of being a maths geek has definitely gone down, but it is still nice for those students who are good at maths to receive recognition. In fact, the winners seem to get a bit of street cred!”

It’s not just students, either: Aiglon’s staff are sometimes required to model the willingness to push beyond their own apparent limits, in some cases, to the extreme. **Geneviève Kohli**, Aiglon’s Travel Secretary, has signed up to run the notoriously arduous Marathon des Sables, now due to take place in April 2021. “I have dreamed about the Marathon des Sables for 35 years, well before I took up long-distance running. Running is

like life – there are highs and lows. Sometimes it feels

like the end of the world and you cannot go any

further, but I remind myself that it will get

better – your mind is much more

important than your body at that point.

And suddenly everything’s cool again.

“When I’m running, I’m

connected only to my body and

mind, not the rest of the world.

For me, you can never arrive

at your limit. Because you

have to believe there is no

limit in sight.” **A**

A portrait of Geneviève Kohli, a woman with long, wavy, dark brown hair, smiling warmly. She is wearing a white blazer over a black top. The portrait is centered on the page, with a large, curved, light-colored text overlay that reads: "I felt I had to do all I could – and more – to teach younger children about the beauty of their culture and to not be ashamed".

I felt I had to do all I could – and more – to teach younger children about the beauty of their culture and to not be ashamed

RACHEL CHEUNG

Having experienced “normalised racism” in her younger years, Rachel set up the Asian Hispanic Empowerment Organisation to help children around the world appreciate their own cultures.

CHRISTIAN SARFELT

Despite not being mathematical, Christian likes the way computers work, useful background for the software challenges he faced when taking on the lighting and sound at school productions.



I like to know how things work. Once I'd got into the technical side of theatre, I knew I had to grab the opportunity with both hands and make use all the skills and knowledge I had

A look, a hug, a word of encouragement.
Creating a home from home.
Discipline and love in equal measure.
Aiglon's Houseparents are there to share
in the good times, and put you back
on the right path in the bad times.

But what makes the relationship work?
What makes a good Houseparent,
and just how do they make this vital
connection a success? We asked
Aiglonians to tell us about what this
special bond meant to them.

Words Megan Welford **Illustrations** Klawe Rzeczy

TEAM ALPINA
Houseparents Nick and
Sophie Teal (1999-2006)
were "so proud" of their
XXL family, including
Carlos de Haya
(Class of 2003).





Nick and Sophie turned me into someone more responsible. They were a good team – he was stricter, she was sweeter. And when I went to university and no-one was asking about my grades or if I was OK, I missed them

CARLOS DE HAYA

CARLOS DE HAYA

Alpina, 2003

When I first left home to come to Aiglon I was 14 and the rebel type. I was arguing with my dad – who was in the military – a lot and I think my parents hoped Aiglon would help. My Houseparent, Nick Teal, was also ex-military, and at first it was a big clash. I did a lot of laps and tree planting – I planted most of the trees on the road up to the John Corlette Building! I was really messy, and I had to room with really tidy people. It didn't help that my English was appalling.

But, slowly, Nick and Sophie turned me into someone more responsible. They were a good team – he was stricter, she was sweeter. Nick would point out that if I wasn't doing laps, I could be out bowling with my friends. I am an only child, but at Aiglon I had brothers, and that helped me see things differently, too.

I got tidier, and then I could choose who to room with. My grades got better and I loved sports and High Ex. My name stopped being on the board with 'Please come and see me' written underneath. In my final year, I was co-House captain.

I missed Sophie and Nick most when I went to university and no-one was asking, 'Why aren't you in class?' Or 'What's up with those grades?'. No-one was asking, 'Are you OK?'

SOPHIE AND NICK TEAL

Alpina Houseparents, 1999-2006

Nick and I became Houseparents when our twin girls, Chloe and Manuela, were three. We said to ourselves, now we have an XXL family – two girls and 50 boys! We really did treat the boys as if they were our own children.

For that, we knew a homely environment was really important, but Alpina was somewhat grey, not far from the sanatorium it had once been. We got the boys to help us paint it cream; they were resistant, but we got to know each other that way. We always had flowers in the entrance and photos of the boys on the wall – we wanted everyone to feel that the moment they pushed the door open, they were home.

We created unusual House expeditions that focused on teamwork, and planned activities that encouraged leadership skills. We held a Winter Ball where they had to bring a girl – we wanted them to learn social skills and dancing. It was sweet seeing the older boys helping the younger ones tie their bow ties. We cooked 250 curry meals together once a year for charity. Everyone always came home from expedition to a warm House and a piece of cake.

The best thing was seeing the growth in the boys. One parent said, 'We gave you a rogue, and you've given us back a gentleman'. Even now, we love seeing our 'adopted sons' – we're so proud of them.

KAREN TOSETTI

Exeter, 1978

I was really looking forward to going to Aiglon, so I wasn't prepared for the homesickness. I'd come from Australia, so I couldn't have been further from home, and my parents were in Rome. At first, I'd go to Roger, our Houseparent, every day and ask to speak to them. This was in the days before phones and laptops, so the Houseparents really were your connection to the outside world. I would be in floods of tears. Roger was very gentle and sympathetic, but also firm. He told me: 'You're going to have to get to grips with it.' And soon, I did. I made friends, I was busy, I was skiing. The following year, I was House captain.

Roger was always supportive, making it possible for me to create the decorations for the end-of-term dances, for example. And he and Jennie really were surrogate parents. I remember going to Venice with my boyfriend and Roger looking me square in the eye and saying: 'Don't do anything you don't want to.' In true daughter style, I rolled my eyes! They were dealing with the fallouts and break-ups of 60 daughters.

But it was a happy House. Forty years on, we're still in touch – I saw their kids last year – and when I think of Roger, I see him standing by the front door, waving hello or goodbye, and smiling.

ROGER MANSFIELD

Exeter Houseparent, 1976-83

I had come from running a residential, outdoor centre in Scotland, but being Houseparents at Aiglon was totally different for my wife, Jennie, and me. We were looking after 63 girls, aged between 10 and 19, so that was quite a handful! And it was 24 hours a day, six days a week (we had Tuesdays off). If the phone rang in the night, you answered it. If someone was ill, you looked after them.

The girls looked after each other too, though. To some of the older ones, the younger ones were the sisters they'd never had, and the younger ones looked up to the older ones. I trusted the senior girls, and they trusted me. At the start of the

year I'd set out how life was going to be: this was our House, we would live together, respect each other, not upset each other, and make the most of the opportunities we had at Aiglon. And, mostly, that worked.

The best thing was seeing nervous, homesick students like Karen become confident young women, then seeing them go off to university, out into the world. You don't really know the influence you've had on that. Being a Houseparent is an act of faith. →

TEAM EXETER

Karen Tosetti (Class of 1978) is still in touch with her Houseparent, Roger Mansfield (1976-83), 40 years later.





TEAM DELAWARE
Houseparent Duncan Maxwell (1977-84) and Ali Afkhami (Class of 1985) bonded over a love of rock music and independence.

ALI AFKHAMI*Delaware, 1985*

My family had to leave Iran during the revolution, when my parents were also getting divorced. When I arrived at Aiglon a year or so later, aged 13, what I needed was consistency, and Duncan, our Houseparent, gave me that. He was an anchor for me. I'm an independent type, so I wasn't going to him all the time, but I knew that I could.

I was quite naughty – I ran a lot of laps, I never once went to Villars at the weekend. I still run – it's a kind of meditation for me now. In my senior year, Duncan and I bonded over rock music – between the two of us, we were a walking Rolling Stones almanac – and we both played guitar. He even wrote a song about me, in the country style he liked, about how I didn't listen! Years later, when I worked in the music business, I got him a drumskin signed by all the Rolling Stones.

Duncan's an adventurer. He would write us 30-page letters about that summer's travels in Africa or wherever he was. I think we were both independent spirits. But he didn't suffer fools lightly – with 50 boys he had his work cut out – and you knew not to push your luck with him. But he was accepting and nurturing. He helped me be myself. I love and respect him like a father.

DUNCAN MAXWELL*Delaware Houseparent, 1977-84*

I had been a student at Aiglon and then a science teacher, so I knew the school. Aiglon is special, from the focus on the outdoors, and the international student body, to the close relationship between staff and students.

Back then, the Delaware boys were known for being loud and macho, and you did have to get used to the crashing and banging. I pushed them to do better academically – we even won the academic prize at least once. I believe I built up pride in our House.

As a staff member, I was young, my tail was wagging, and I got involved in everything – teaching, sports, High Ex. But my deepest relationships were the ones I had in my House. Those formed at the dinner table, solving the world's problems and complaining, passing on the tribal wisdom and hearing the word on the street.

Still, because I was young, there was a learning curve, I went in thinking I would be respected and feared; that no-one would break my trust. Well, I had that knocked out of my head pretty quickly. You have to establish respect. If you say you'll do something, you have to do it. And it takes two years before it's truly your house. But, once you're settled, you couldn't get a more rewarding job. 🇦



We bonded over rock music – he even wrote a song about how I didn't listen! Years later, when I worked in the music business, I got him a drumskin signed by all the Rolling Stones

ALI AFKHAMI



WE ARE ALL ACTIVISTS NOW

In a year of change, we talk to Aiglonian campaigners about their work, and why being part of a global network is key to making real change.

Words Victoria James Photography Nastassia Kantorowicz Torres (Exeter, 1999)

The people have spoken. Online petitions; Twitter campaigns; taking to the streets for and against a myriad causes. In 2020, shock and anger quickly turn to a desire to do something – anything – to help set the world to rights.

But how do we begin to make a difference? And how do we join our voices with others to achieve real change? Service is at the heart of Aiglon life, so it is not surprising that so many of our community have made a deep commitment to the cause – from climate change and wildlife justice to refugee welfare and nuclear disarmament. Their experiences hold lessons about how we, too, can take action in a world in which we're now all activists.

First, is the simple realisation that, yes, we can play a part. “We so often feel disempowered – convinced we can't do anything to change the situation even if we want to,” says **Tanya Ogilvie-White** (Exeter, 1987), whose day job as a senior fellow at Australian National University sees her working

on nuclear arms control, while producing heartbreaking ‘artist’ paintings in her down-time to raise awareness of the bushfires and the global climate crisis they have come to represent.

“Getting people to believe in their own power, individually and collectively, is the ultimate key to successful activism.

It doesn't matter how young or old you are, where you are from or what your background is, if you are well informed and have a strong sense of purpose, you can be influential – and you can effect change.”

Indeed, the most immediate and impactful changes are to our own lifestyles, which is where **Francesca Jobson** (Exeter, 2019) decided to start. “I set out to lower my carbon footprint and contribute as little as I can to the consumption our capitalist system encourages us to relish,” she says. “That includes things such as buying local and seasonal plant-based produce, using public transport and my bike rather than cars or planes, and only buying what I need – and then ideally only second-hand.” →

Photographer Nastassia Kantorowicz Torres (Exeter, 1999) whose images can be seen on these pages, has spent the past few years documenting activism and activists.

Left: Women dressed as 'Marianne' as part of the Act XVI of the Yellow Jacket protests (Lille, France. March 2019)

This page: The Women's March for gender equality and resistance to the newly inaugurated US president Donald Trump (New York, January 2017).





This page: Protesters perform during a march for the lives of Colombia's social and environmental leaders (Bogotá, Colombia, July 2019).

Right: International Women and Gender Rights Day demonstrators in Place de la République (Paris, France, March 2019).

But solo actions only go so far. Outreach extends activism. While still at Aiglon, Francesca (now studying Geography at the University of Manchester in the UK) encouraged the school to support student participation in climate activism – for which she received Aiglon's first Environmental Award.

And she recalls one bold choice in particular. "I asked to go on the climate strike in Lausanne instead of hopping on a plane for a school trip to Amsterdam," she says. Not everyone was supportive, but Aiglon gave permission – and Francesca describes attending as the best decision she could have made. "Being alongside 15,000 other individuals who care as much as I do was an incredible experience. Being part of a regional, national or global network is key because we all need to be in on it together." Francesca is now a regular attendee of climate strikes, and uses Instagram as a platform to share hopeful messaging on environmental issues.

The power of visual imagery to move and inspire is something that Tanya recognises, having been moved by the devastating Australian bushfires to create her 'Extinction' series of artworks depicting threatened wildlife. "It's raw 'artivism': creating art in the heat of the moment; emotional art to soothe my broken heart; political art to push for change," she says.

Bogotá-based **Nastassia Kantorowicz Torres** (Exeter, 1999), who studied Documentary and Visual Journalism at New York's International Center of Photography, also works through the power of visual art. Using photography and mixed media to denounce, and highlight solutions for, social injustices and human and environmental rights, her emphasis is very much on collaboration.

"It is not enough to document only a few hours of life as photojournalism does, sometimes not even asking the participant if they want to be photographed, not listening to what they have to say, just grabbing that image of a person living in a shack, victimising the victim, and then leaving," Nastassia says.

Her hope is that her images document the harsh reality, yet also show the audience that solutions do exist, that there is hope. "But even the most powerful images alone cannot create change. It's a collaboration of articles, lawyers, NGOs, citizens, scientists – everyone's efforts joined for a cause – that can spark change."

Collaboration is also central to the efforts of two of the Aiglon community whose work doesn't take place on the streets but within the complex web of national and international relationships. **Olivia Swaak-Goldman**, mother of **Felix Swaak** (Alpina, Year 12), is executive director of the independent not-for-profit foundation Wildlife Justice Commission (WJC), which was created in 2015 to fill a gap in approaches to protecting endangered species. "Many organisations are working on biodiversity loss, approaching it from a conservation perspective," says Olivia. "But it's also the fourth-largest transnational organised crime, whereby serious criminals are devastating endangered species such as rhinos and orangutans for profit, and no-one's been looking at it from a criminal and law-enforcement perspective." The WJC produces evidence bundles that are then passed to governments for prosecution. "We make it easy for governments to bring these cases, and harder for them not to. It's difficult for them to explain why they're not prosecuting when they have a 5,000-page case file."



To deliver action, the WJC also links with judges, investigative journalists and diplomats. “But I don’t really think of us as activists,” says Olivia. “My career has been about how you develop political will, how you get governments to enforce the laws and obligations that they have agreed to. The failure to apply intelligence analysis, and lack of co-ordination within governments are real challenges, and internationally there’s very little cooperation. Yet crime is transnational, so we act as a bridge.”

That’s a position familiar to **Jef Groby** (Belvedere, 1969), who spent more than three decades working for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in progressively senior roles in logistics management, principally in sub-Saharan Africa. He traces the origins of this career back to Aiglon – and his history teacher, **Mr Neville Ollerenshaw**, in particular – as well as his university, Middlebury College in Vermont, where he realised that “listening to white men talk about Africa’s history was like putting round pegs in square holes, so I decided to go and see for myself”. After volunteering in Cameroon and Tanzania, he joined UNHCR in 1980.

“UNHCR’s modus operandi is working through partners, whether other UN agencies, international, national and local NGOs, and government partners,” says Jef. “There’s room for everyone in this universe.” Indeed, the involvement of a range of stakeholders isn’t just a preference – it’s essential to the continuity of any efforts undertaken. “UNHCR will eventually withdraw from a programme,” he says. “But the needs will remain and will transfer on to the shoulders of governments and local agencies.”

Yet even a supra-national body like UNHCR, working at the invitation of governments, is ultimately reliant on the support of individuals – the UN depends on the generosity of its member states, and the political will to support its agencies is influenced by whether national electorates see their work as valuable. That recognition isn’t always there. “The security and wellbeing of refugees ultimately has a role in defining the security and wellbeing of those who are most fortunate,” says Jef. “It’s a shame the important facts – why people become refugees on the one hand, and why people who are not directly concerned should care on the other – have become dissociated.”

Which brings us full circle to the role of activism and the power of individual voices raised collectively. “Governments and corporations will not change the way they work until enough demand comes from consumers and from society,” says Francesca, and Nastassia agrees. “Being part of a global network is a privilege I am grateful for,” she says. “It can be used to get the message across borders. To reach an even wider audience, to spread the word further, to gather more signatures for a petition – and to join forces across the world. We need to take action together, as these issues concern all of us.” **A**

See Nastassia’s work at nkantorowicztorres.com and Tanya’s activism at scorchingskiesart.com. Francesca’s environmental Instagram is [@reroot](https://www.instagram.com/reroot). Visit wildlifejustice.org to learn about the work of the WJC.

If you’re involved in a campaign for change, we’d love to hear about it. Email communications@aiglon.ch

LAND OF OPPORTUNITY

From tackling food shortages to revolutionising financing, farming is undergoing a revolution – and Aiglonians are leading the charge.

Words Sarah Woodward Illustration Vicki Turner

Telling hardened Australian sheep farmers in the ‘fine-wool capital of the world’ that they should focus their efforts on crop farming is what’s known as a tough sell. Yet **Christopher Bluett** (Clairmont, 1964) has done just that – increasing yields and helping to make his region of south-west of Australia one of the most reliable sources of grain production in the country.

Christopher is just one of the Aiglonians currently part of a global farming revolution. Originally from the UK, he found himself on a new continent after meeting a girl at the Royal Agricultural College in England. “The western district of Victoria we moved to is as close to English farming as you can get on the other side of the world. By Australian standards it is classed as a high rainfall zone; it’s outside of the wheat belt due to waterlogging, and the landscape is traditionally pastoral, with sheep rearing as the main agriculture.”

But as an expert in the science of soil management and crop production, Christopher saw that the volcanic soil had huge potential for crops – provided the drainage issues could be overcome. “I got a job at the Victoria Department of Agriculture and was pretty much allowed to trial whatever I liked.

“There was plenty of opposition to my ideas, but I partnered with local farmers who were keen to diversify. We introduced new crop varieties and pioneered a raised-bed system, similar to those used in growing vegetables but over huge paddocks. From the outset we had impressive results, with dramatically increased yields, starting with wheat and going on to barley, which no-one had grown here successfully before, and later oilseeds and pulses. Today, during periods of drought elsewhere, south-west Australia makes a massive contribution to the country’s overall grain production.”

The raised-bed approach allowed Bluett to introduce local growers to a whole new method of farming, where the wheels of agricultural machinery run on narrow bands in the paddocks, typically less than 15 per cent of the growing area. This approach dramatically improves the soil structure and, as a result, the water-holding capacity of the soil.

“The overall health of the soil belongs not just to this generation but the next. Farming has become so high tech these days that it is an attractive opportunity to the younger science and technology graduates, including lots of women. As Chairman of the Australia Controlled Traffic Farming Association (ACTFA) I get to meet a lot of them, and I am really excited by the way they are rising to the challenge of climate change in agriculture.”

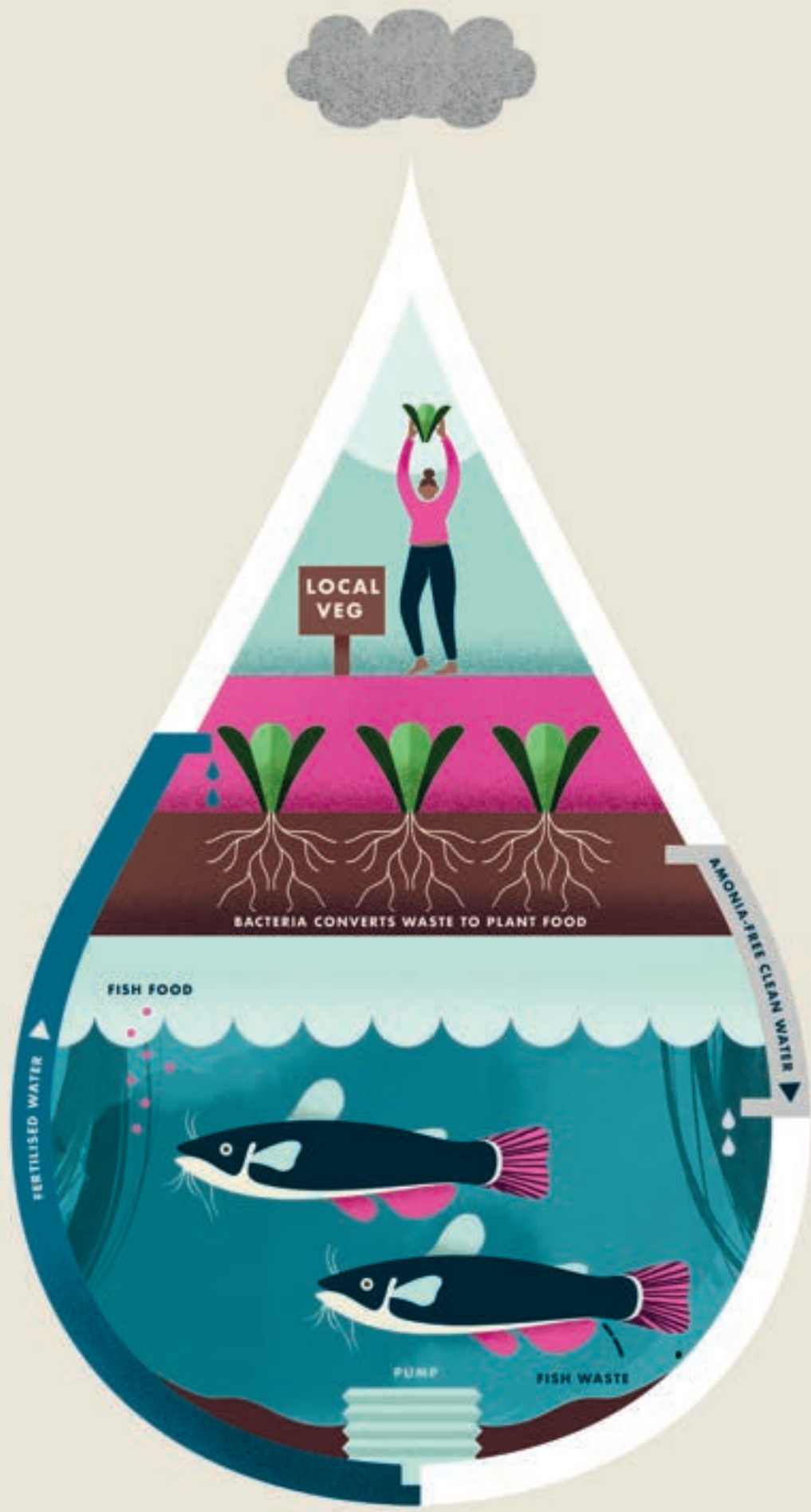
Bluett has been hard at work spreading the word of his new ideas on agriculture for decades, while another Aiglonian, **Jake Mortimer** (Alpina, 2015), is just starting out. Jake grew up on the family rose farm on the shores of Lake Naivasha in Kenya, where he enjoyed fishing in the lake’s pristine waters. “Over the years, I watched as more and more fish were taken from the lake by illegal poaching. The final straw was the opening of a fish processing plant. It really saddened me to see this beautiful area being destroyed by industrial exploitation.”

The rose farm was established in the 1970s by his grandfather. “Coming from the Netherlands, he knew about growing plants without soil – hydroponics – and very soon realised this was the best way to grow roses in Kenya. My family have used hydroponics ever since. We achieve greater efficiency, use much less water and the roses really benefit.” But when Jake came back to the farm after finishing at Aiglon, he was determined to introduce fish back into the mix.

“Hydroponics and aquaponics go hand in hand. I knew we had a local market for tilapia and catfish, and found we could grow spinach, lettuces, cabbages and beans – all locally consumed foods – using an aquaponic system, with the fish providing the fertiliser. And then I got a client for a successful experiment growing passionfruit and tomatoes.”

Jake wasn’t finished with his education, though, and returned to study at the same university in the UK – the Royal Agricultural College – attended by Christopher Bluett a few decades earlier.

“I wanted to learn more about traditional agricultural systems so that I could compare them with hydroponics and aquaponics. With the world’s population forecast to increase by 70 per cent by 2050, alongside projected increased agricultural →





CHRISTOPHER BLUETT
Owner of HRZ Ag Consulting in Victoria (Aus) and Chairman of the Australian Controlled Traffic Farming Association.



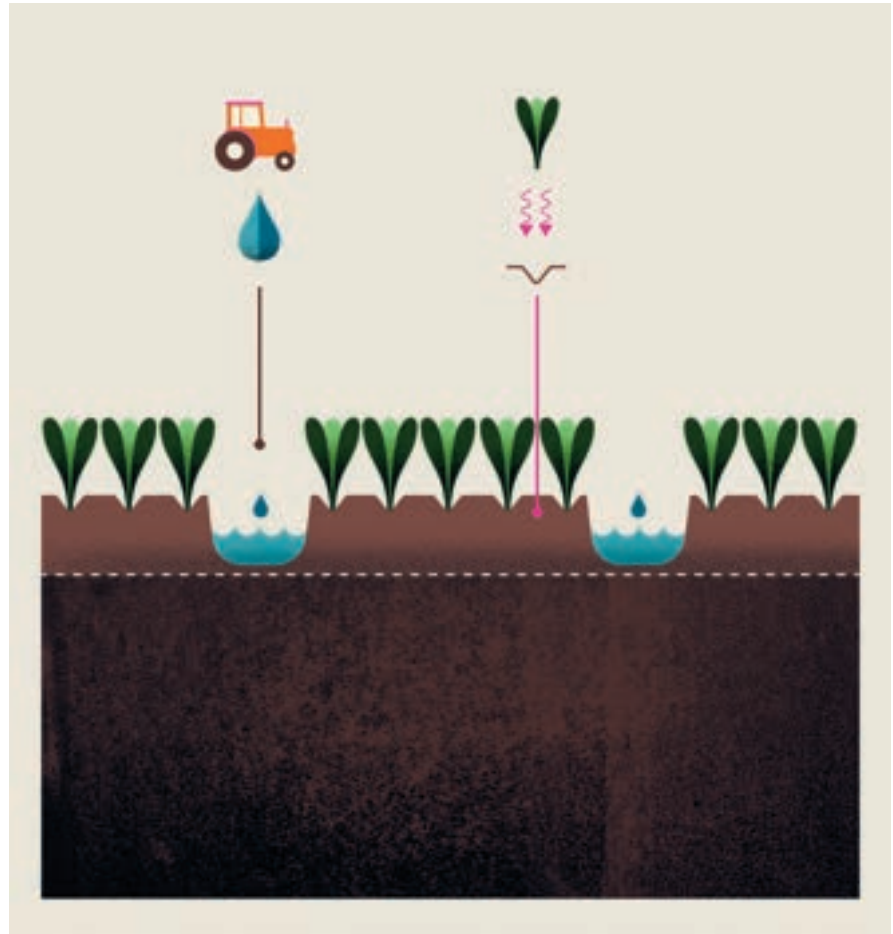
JAKE MORTIMER
Hoping to set up his own aquaponics business soon, potentially called Piscis Herba – Latin for fish and herbs.



FION DE VLETTER
Independent economist, consultant and author based in Mozambique, specialising in migration and development.



PAMELA HUIZENGA-ALEXANDER
Owner of CoLab Farms, producing local, sustainably grown produce with organic methods in South Florida, US.



Representation of the aquaponic and hydroponic systems (previous page) and the raised-bed farming approach (above).

output of only 25 per cent, we need to find ways to improve how we farm across the world.”

Sad to leave behind his Kenyan aquaponics system, Jake set up a new one in his garden shed. “I wanted to test various vegetables and different types of fish, such as growing wasabi using diamondback sturgeon. Then, I was awarded a scholarship of £2,000 from the Douglas Bamford Trust which allowed me to run the system on sun and wind power.”

Jake has just graduated, so he has moved his system to a farm in Essex in the east of England. “We will be able to produce the same output as one acre of traditional farming but on a tenth of the land, using that saved land to increase environmental diversity and sequester carbon from the atmosphere.”

Changing how agriculture is organised and funded is crucial if the current revolution in farming is to be effective – something **Fion de Vletter** (Delaware, 1969) has been working on for decades in Mozambique. Fion first arrived there in 1989 to work on a World Bank

microfinance project. “Traditionally, microfinance has been applied to enterprises in urban areas. For agriculture and rural finance, the issue has always been access to funds, as well as cost, because of the risks associated with farming – from weather and disease to pests and unpredictable markets.”

And that matters because Fion believes that, far from being their first choice, migration remains a last resort for many young Mozambiquans. “Most development agencies assume rural youth do not want to pursue farming. But that is not true in Mozambique. Given the difficulty of paying for secondary education, which requires a move to the city, the censuses show that many younger people are staying in their villages.”

Fion is optimistic that the younger generation’s familiarity with digital technology, especially the move towards mobile banking, will help him in his ongoing work to promote bottom-of-the-



Representation of the farm-to-table process (above) and the monitoring of crops remotely using satellite imagery (below right).

pyramid farmer loans. “Digital technology is transforming attitudes to lending risk. One of the problems has always been the lack of collateral, as all land is state-owned. The crop is the asset and, historically, this required loan officers to go in person and inspect the farm. Now, with satellite imagery and cellphones, lenders can see how crops are developing remotely, without the costs of monitoring in person.”

Another encouraging development has been the introduction of Solidarity Groups, in which the loan is made to a group of farmers, who take collective responsibility if one of their members should default.

“I was in a village recently and saw some people carrying a door. It turned out that they had taken it from someone’s house, with their agreement, to sell and pay for their part of the loan!” With credit to agriculture still at only 3.5 per cent of lending in the country, Fion knows there is a long way to go. “But it is happening. It takes a long time to change both agricultural and lending habits, but we are on an exponential curve.”

Someone on her own rapid curve is Florida-based **Pamela Huizenga-Alexander** (Clairmont, 1986), who was, until recently, a jewellery designer with a passion for gardening on the side. But that all changed with an edible landscape she planted around her house last year.

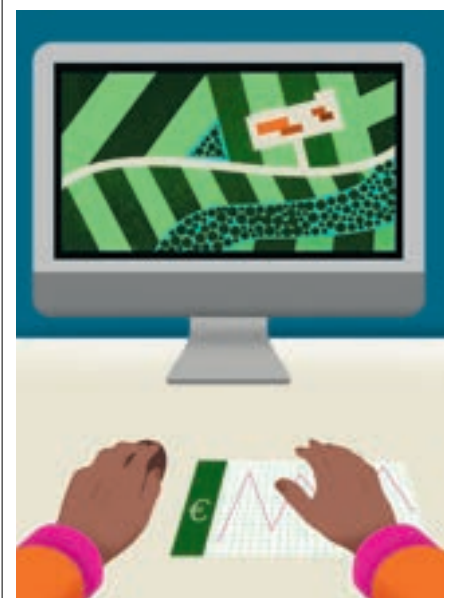
“I turned a big space into an organic garden and hired Alison, a beekeeper-cum-master gardener, to help me enjoy it. Then a friend told me about a very cool five-acre farm nearby with greenhouses and vertical towers. Alison and I visited it – and ended up buying it. We found we could grow amazing food here: heirloom tomatoes are the highlight but we also grow Asian greens and Mediterranean vegetables to supply to restaurants.”

Those cool five acres were Colab Farms in Florida’s Indiantown – which have now been joined by Colab Farms East and Ground Floor Farm in nearby Stuart. “The second farm was another five-acre

plot, a magnificent spot, surrounded by old mango and papaya trees, where they were growing high-end salads. The last is a small urban farm-to-table restaurant where I used to eat while I was waiting to pick my daughter up from school. I told them I loved their produce and wanted to get involved – I ended up buying the space!”

Pamela’s ethos is all about local eating, something that has served her particularly well during the pandemic. “Huge monoculture is simply not sustainable. People talk about farm-to-table but that can still mean shipping fresh produce over large distances. Our focus is on supplying the county. We are only small in terms of land area, but we grow a huge range of produce. And the size of our operation meant that when lockdown came in, we could shift very quickly from supplying wholesale to restaurants to selling direct to consumers online.”

Pamela has big plans for the future, including helping those who have lost their jobs. “I want to find ways to get good, locally grown produce to the people who need it. As we come out of this, I hope we are going to see more emphasis on eating well. With my background in jewellery design, I get lots of jokes made about growing the gems of the garden, but I can tell you I get just as much pleasure out of handling my beautiful organic produce as I do from precious stones. It is controversial to describe yourself as a farmer rather than a farm owner, but I am passionately involved with my farms – and I would far rather be described as a farmer than a jewellery designer! 🌱



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COMMUNITY

Class notes

Share your news via alumni@aiglon.ch, and stay in touch with the Aiglon community at aiglonlife.ch

Clearing the air

It's something of an Aiglon affair for James Molnar (Alpina, 1994, shown below), Rob Silberbauer (Alpina, 1998) and Filip Rideau (Delaware, 1997) who are now working together selling NASA-developed Airocide air purifier across the world.

Rob, Director of Distribution for Florida-based Sani Air Systems, and James reconnected at the 70th reunion and have launched one of their products in Qatar with the help of Filip. They're also in discussions with other alumni to help in other regions.

Sani Air represents Airocide air products in various regions, introducing the same technology used to purify the air in the International Space Station into both industry and homes.



Living the Thai life

I was so pleased to run into my good friend Omar Kaluti (Alpina, 2010) at the 70th reunion. He was about to move to Bangkok, and spoke of palm trees and good weather. So when the European winter arrived, I decided that living in Thailand was not such a bad idea. I am now working in the health insurance industry, have adopted a street dog and opened a bakery for dogs (@pupcakesbysamui). All visitors will be most welcome!

Maiga Winzenried (Clairmont, 2009)



Not just a Phase

Phase was brought to life during the challenging times of the global pandemic, in an attempt to transform the medical-looking mask into elegant, stylish pieces – we now have more than 80 products in our line, including Phase Sanitizers and Phase Accessories.

Providing employment to local men and women in Kenya has given Phase purpose to keep expanding; we donate 10 per cent of all company profits to local charities and donate masks monthly, to help our wider community stay safe.

Follow on Instagram [phase_mask](#) and visit [phasebrands.com](#)

Atri Jasani (Le Cerf, 2020)
and **Sabri Jasani** (Le Cerf, 2017)

The farming life

I have just moved to Massachusetts from Florida so our youngest can attend art high school. We have a wonderful blended family of seven children ranging from 14 to 32! If there are any alum in Massachusetts, get in touch! The Covid pandemic convinced us that we could do much of our work remotely so we joined the New England world.

I am still designing jewellery and have recently become involved with farming in South Florida (see p35). We focus on organic, local produce to sell to our community and local restaurants. We are also building our own farm restaurant and event area and market.

We send the Aiglon community lots of love and hope everyone is staying safe out there!

Pamela Huizenga Alexander
(née Goldsby) (Clairmont, 1986)

Travel bug

After Aiglon and college, I moved to NYC, then 45 years ago I moved to Houston, Texas. Either because of, or in spite of, the Aiglon experience, I got the international bug. My career was spent designing international programmes for United States and foreign national employees.

Travel took me all around the world. Eventually I went independent and consulted for another 25 years. I have returned to Aiglon once since graduation but I think of the school often. I try to stay in touch with Chris Gallagher (1964), George Winternitz (1963), Nigel Thorpe (1972), Denny Lane (1957) and others.

Bob Shealor (Clairmont, 1963)

Boston calling

I finished my MBA at INSEAD in July and will continue my studies for a year at MIT in Boston. Happy to reconnect on either continent or virtually via Aiglon Life or email: mburgunder@wesleyan.edu

Mateusz Burgunder
(Alpina, 2011)

Back to Japan

I decided to return to my home country, Japan, and study Economics on the PEARL programme at Keio University, an all-English degree limited to 100 students globally. It provides the community and learning environment I am used to, and will allow me to deepen my knowledge of my country's economy, social and cultural aspects – while eating Japanese food!

Nanoa Yoshioka
(Clairmont, 2020)

Wedding bells

I'm thrilled to announce my marriage to Keziah. We met in California in 2014; I was at Stanford University while Keziah was studying at the University of California, Berkeley. What struck us as a pleasant surprise was that we are both from Makueni, Kenya (our homes are just 25km apart) yet we had not known of, each other before. We both enjoy mountain biking, a sport I learned and perfected at Aiglon, and we make it a point to bike in each country we go to, including Kenya, Tanzania, Ivory Coast, Italy and the United States... so far!

David Kimondiu
(Belvedere, 2013)
SEBA CZ Scholar 1



Found Me – and found them!

Good news – I directed a short film that premiered at the Toronto international Film Festival (TIFF)! The film *Found Me* was produced by fellow Aiglon alumni Neel Gupta (Belvedere, 2011) and Ariel Ho Kjaer (Clairmont, 2011). It was one of only 30 short films at TIFF before heading to the Sitges Intl Film Festival in Spain.

David Findlay (Belvedere, 2010)

A reinvigorating experience

Ah, how I miss Aiglon. But the beauty of the school is that the second you find yourself missing it most, someone reappears from that time to reinvigorate you with the Aiglon experience. When David (above) reached out to me about making the short film *Found Me*, I couldn't have been happier. The Aiglon bond is strong. It doesn't hurt that he's a phenomenal director, too. Working with David and the entire production team, we brought the idea to life – an experience I'll forever value.

Neel Gupta (Belvedere, 2011)

Expressing your soul

When David first told me about the idea it was at an early stage, still percolating in his head, but I couldn't help but notice how fervently, emotionally connected he was to the endeavour. His enthusiasm was uncommonly contagious and somehow still warms my blood. *Found Me* is an example of the exemplary art of expressing one's soul.

Ariel Ho Kjaer (Clairmont, 2011)

Stronger with music

As a singer-songwriter and founder of Stronger With Music, my efforts are geared towards raising awareness of the rise in domestic violence through my single *Used*, supporting the work of the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women. The *Used* music video launched during Signal For Help awareness week with the Canadian Women's Foundation. Signal For Help is a hand gesture made global as a distress signal for victims of domestic violence.

We work with music therapists and a neuroscientist to run music therapy programs, educational seminars, plenaries, songwriting services and live performances.

Piera Van de Wiel (Exeter, 2012)

A life of zigs and zags

I'm now retired and looking back on a life of zigs and zags inspired by adventures during my too-brief year at Aiglon. From accountant, ski teacher and writer (*Skiing is Only a Game* is still available on Amazon!) to sports and business coach. We have finally downsized from our house in Leamington Spa, UK, to a smaller house in the same town. Our son, Harry, lives nearby and is a prolific composer of music for film trailers including *Avengers: End Game*, *Mary Poppins Returns* and *Pirates of the Caribbean*. I have two grandchildren, Pippa, aged three, and James, just three months. I often catch up with Nigel Thorp (Belvedere, 1972) and have enjoyed the Aiglon alumni lunch get-togethers organised by Richard Bloor (Belvedere, 1964) and Ted Coulson (1966).

Peter Lightfoot (1963)



NEXT GENERATION



Name: Luis Jiménez de Laiglesia

House: Delaware

Graduated: Class of 2014

What's on: I've recently graduated from IE University in Madrid with a Law and Business degree and I'm now launching my second startup.

What's hot: I'm trying to stay active and in the outdoors as much as possible. When I'm in Madrid, I love meeting up with the Aiglon alumni for a seven-a-side football game and post-match beers.

What's next: I'm focused on giving less fortunate people access to better healthcare through [elsa.care](#). I hope that we can achieve this in the coming years.

What's Aiglon: To this day, I have trouble defining how great an experience Aiglon was and how lucky I am to have met the people I've met.

Still driven

My wife and I are living in Geneva where I am quite busy developing Driven, a more civilised ride-hailing company ([driven-now.com](#)). I keep bumping into fellow alumni like Bahjat Talhouni (Delaware, 1992) and Fawzi Al Khazaal (Exeter, 1992), although the current situation makes meeting people a bit more complicated.

Mohab Kamel (Delaware, 1990)



Tributes to teachers

I had supper with John Harris (Belvedere, 1983) in August and managed to get a photo to share with the community. John was full of Aiglon reminiscences and paid fulsome tribute to his A-level teachers: Teddy and Emily Torrans for English; Ian Stevenson for Economics; and Tim Stunt for History. The latter, he said, taught him to essay plan before writing – a skill he had never learned before and which allowed him to do well at A-levels and university. John wanted to travel the Camino del Plato from Seville to Santiago in March by bike, but obviously Covid put an end to the adventure. So, instead, he spent three months holed up in London.

Richard Greenway (Staff 1995-2012)





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Powerful network

The pandemic has brought about many changes for all of us. For me, rather than going to university, I decided to take a gap year. Even though it was late in the process, the Aiglon Alumni Office had my back.

With their support, I was lucky enough to be offered many opportunities in Switzerland. Thanks goes to Mr Ching who helped me through the application process and introduced me to alumni who could offer positions. It was my first time connecting with the alumni community, and their generosity has made me realise the power of our network. After some thorough consideration, I chose to take an internship in Zug.

I think the company is a perfect fit for me, as the firm focuses on investing in sustainable energy. I will be working in the investment team, researching and analysing markets and firms involved with sustainable energy. It sounds to me like an Econ IA, but harder. I start in December and the sense of anticipation is growing.

Shinan Chen (Exeter, 2020)



Join the run

Living in a village in one of the least densely populated provinces of the Netherlands, the lockdown didn't actually have a severe impact on us as a family, but I know were lucky. Others suffered, notably my Aiglon school friend Chiara Paglieri (Clairmont, 1996) who has four chronic autoimmune diseases. With her in mind, next Spring I will be running the route that takes Aiglonians back to where it all began, from Geneva to Chesières, in two stages (Geneva to Montreaux and Montreaux to Chesières), raising awareness for chronic autoimmune diseases. Email Kimhay78@gmail.com if you would like to get involved.

Kim Hay (Exeter, 1996)



New direction

In the year since the fantastic reunion, my life has seen a change or two. My wife of 15 years and I realised that we were both due for some fundamental personal development, and the ensuing existential crisis brought me into contact with a mental coach, who helped me find a new sense of equilibrium and direction in my life. The results were so impressive that I asked her to teach me her trade methods, and I have since become a mental coach myself. With the relaxation of Covid restrictions, the clients started coming, and my coaching practice is off to a fair start! Sending you all the best from Gouda.

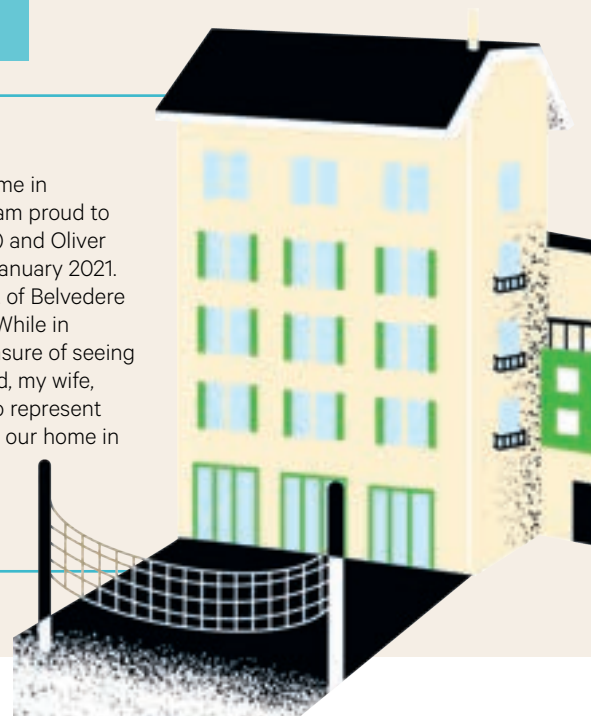
Tony Philips (Alpina, 1984)



Proud new joiners

After spending extended time in Switzerland this summer, I am proud to share that Spencer (Year 9) and Oliver (Year 7) will join Aiglon in January 2021. Spencer is proud to be part of Belvedere and Oliver to join La Baita. While in Villars, we also had the pleasure of seeing Mrs Parsons. Looking ahead, my wife, Elizabeth, and I are eager to represent the Aiglon community from our home in Coral Gables, Florida.

Conrad von Peterffy
(Belvedere, 1993)



Tributes



Khaled Darhouse
(Belvedere, 1983)

We're very sorry to have to report the passing of esteemed Aiglon alumnus Dr Khaled Darhouse. Khaled was an obstetrician and gynaecologist specialising in reproductive medicine and assisted conception, and was associated with King Abdulaziz University Hospital in Jeddah. He had valiantly battled cancer for 12 months and is survived by his widow Janina Maisel-Darhouse and daughters Zoe and Zeeba.

Tribute by Erik Friedl
(Alpina, 1969)



Evelyn Boyd
(Staff, 1980-90)

We are sad to report the passing of Mrs Evelyn Boyd in her hometown of Edinburgh, Scotland, after a series of strokes, at the age of 92. She was in charge of the library at Aiglon throughout the 1980s, and will doubtless also be remembered by students in the Special English Section, where she also taught.

Tribute by Patrick Roberts
(Staff, 1965-87)



Yoshiaki Yamamoto
(Alpina, 1978)

We're very sorry to report that Yoshiaki Yamamoto died in a motorcycle accident in June. His son, Nichi, informed the Aiglon community and recalled his love for family and motorcycles. Alumni posted tributes on the Aiglon Angels page to a man who was exceedingly kind, and a friend to all.

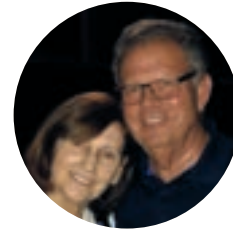
Tribute by Erik Friedl
(Alpina, 1969)



Charles Ainley (Clairmont, 1966)

We're sorry to report that Charlie Ainley, songwriter and vocalist behind Charlie & the Wide Boys, has died, aged 72. After first building a following in their native Cornwall, the band would become well known on the London pub rock circuit as a fiercely independent, good-time rock and roll band with a reputation for hell-raising second to none. Originally signed by Anchor Records in 1974, they reformed recently as an acoustic trio, and Charlie never stopped writing or performing.

Tribute by Erik Friedl
(Alpina, 1969)



John Boogaart (1958)

John Robert Boogaart passed away peacefully in Florida after a brief battle with Covid-19. After Aiglon and Michigan State University, he worked with his father, Richard, and the Rockefeller family through their company, International Basic Economy Corporation, to establish supermarkets in Italy, Venezuela and Argentina. In early 1967, he moved to Florida to help his now-retired father establish several supermarkets across the area. A dedicated family man, he had a love of Freemasonry, tennis, basketball, travelling with his wife Adelina, and the family business of international supermarkets.



Jeremy Nichols
(Headmaster, 2007)

With regret, we report that Aiglon's former Headmaster, Jeremy Nichols, has died, after a long illness. A former Housemaster at Eton College and Headmaster of Stowe School in Buckinghamshire, UK, Jeremy was Interim Headmaster at Aiglon for the period from January to August 2007.



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THEN AND NOW

RECREATION

— Where Aiglonians demonstrate that while Aiglon may have changed over the decades... it hasn't changed quite as much as you might think.

Photography Joe McGorty



Switching up: 1967/2020

Look familiar? In 1967, Ian Baraclough and Hartney Yeager were captured on film by Patrick Roberts after a Confirmation service at the Aiglon Chapel. Fast forward more than 50 years, and Emilio Gonzalez Castillo (Alpina, Year 10) and Andrea Ghandour (Alpina, Year 10) take on the recreation – with Nikolay Demishin (Alpina, Year 13) just glimpsed in the doorway. "It must have been taken on the ground floor Alpina balcony, but we couldn't quite capture the reflection of the mountains in the glasses, which is my favourite bit!"

Do you have an image of your time at Aiglon you'd like us to recreate? Email your suggestions to communications@aiglon.ch

PERSONAL BEST

ONE-TRACK MIND

— *Already a record-breaking athlete, Ivan Kireev (Alpina, Year 13) wants to see just how far he can go.*

Words Lucy Jolin

Photography Joe McGorty



I

van Kireev (Alpina, Year 13) was already a veteran of the discipline, hard work and stamina required to succeed in sport at the age of just 10.

He started ballroom dancing when he was three years old, and achieved considerable success in his seven-year career. But, at 10, he decided he'd gone as far as he could on the dancefloor, and swapped the tango for the track. Now, he's got his sights set on the most iconic athletics event of them all – the 100 metres.

It's not surprising, as sport is part of Ivan's family heritage. His grandfather was a professional football player, his father is a professional ice hockey player and his uncle is a professional swimmer. "I play everything – football, basketball, ice hockey. Sport is something that's always been there. But when I was a child, I had heart problems – which are now cured – so there were some things I couldn't play for a time, like football."

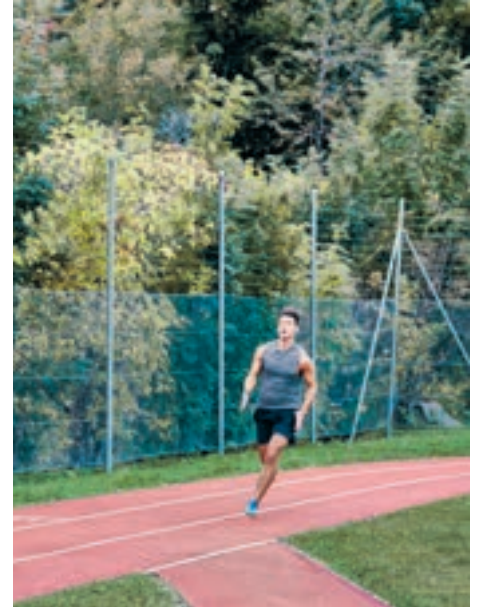
He started to focus on athletics four years ago – "I just tried everything!" – and immediately showed natural talent. High points so far have been breaking the Middle School record for the high jump (180cm) and, last summer, the school record for 100 metres

Ivan Kireev going through his paces at the Minerve running track near to campus in lower Villars.

(11.34 secs). "But this year, in training, I achieved 11 seconds. So, I can see that I'm improving."

In March, Ivan decided to get serious about is athletics training, and asked sports teacher **Mr Deon George** for help. "He put together a training programme for me, which was really helpful. He's been incredible, a real inspiration, and I credit him with starting me down this training road."

He wasn't deterred when the Covid-19 pandemic hit, either. "I didn't want to spend quarantine just sitting around becoming more unfit. So, I also spent time with a professional coach. I did three days a week training with him – it's important not to train every day because your muscles need a rest. I've also learned about the importance of diet and upper-body strength and being healthy overall. Of course, there is such a thing as natural talent and genetic advantage. But you also have to be incredibly determined and train hard. This was my first professional training experience and I loved it."



“

My heart races and I get butterflies in my stomach. But when I get started, it's the best feeling in the world

He loves the camaraderie that comes with being involved in sport: travelling to events, spending time with friends and making new ones. But he's also driven by a desire to win. "I've won a lot of times, but I've also lost a lot of times," he says. "But I hate to lose!" And he loves the adrenaline that kicks in as he comes off the starting blocks. "It's funny, because I hate that 10 seconds just before you start a race," he says. "My heart races and I get butterflies in my stomach. But when I get started, it's the best feeling in the world."

School, says Ivan, will always come first. Balancing training and work is a challenge but he's eager to see how far he can go in the hyper-competitive world of athletics. To that end, he's applying to Babson College in the United States, which has a renowned athletics programme and has already shown interest in him.

"I'm excited to train in the US. Everyone is really competitive and the coaching standard is incredible. It's a whole different world over there. People love sports: they live and breathe them. I just want to try my best and keep improving, every single time I train. I always want to be better than I am." **A**



MEET THE STUDENT

SEIZE
THE DAY

— *Champion ski racer Eugene Brotons Batista (Exeter, Year 13), is making the most of her Aiglon experience.*

Words Becky Allen

Photography Joe McGorty



E

ven for a champion ski racer, Eugene Brotons Batista's first year at Aiglon has been quite a ride. "I love being around the mountains," she says.

"In Barcelona, where I'm from, skiing is strictly a weekend activity. At Aiglon, being able to finish the school day and take to the slopes is amazing."

With so much great skiing on her new doorstep, she is loving the chance to return to fitness following a major injury that kept her away from the sport for a year. In Spain, she was number one in her age group for giant slalom and number two overall – until she tore a knee ligament in 2017. "I had surgery and five months' rehab, and it took me a year to get back on skis and racing," she recalls. "At Aiglon we get a lot of training so my skiing has improved, but I always want to be racing."

As a talker and a thinker, as well as a skier, Aiglon suits Eugene well. And she has relished the change from day school to boarding school. "I like the freedom to find out who I am, away from my parents' influence. At Aiglon, I've been able to develop my own identity," she explains. Eugene's intensely curious nature is reflected in her favourite subjects – Physics, Theory of Knowledge and English – for the opportunities they afford to chew over political issues like gender and class.

One of the highlights of her first year at Aiglon was a school Physics trip to CERN to hear first-hand from scientists pushing the boundaries of human knowledge. "Seeing the Large Hadron Collider was super cool, even though the physics was really complicated," she says. In fact, physics is pivotal to her closest friendships, forged over wide-ranging conversations. "We can talk about anything – there are no restrictions. It might be about human behaviour and interactions, but we also talk about the origins of the universe!"

Eugene says she wanted to be a prefect because "I think I can contribute to making Aiglon an even better place".

Aiglon is helping her discover the causes she wants to champion, and putting usual teenage concerns into perspective. "Some people care a lot about what you wear; that's not the kind of person I want to be," she says. "I'm passionate about social justice; I get enraged by inequality wherever I see it. So, together with a friend, I started a gender equality club, because we think Aiglon has the potential to take a stronger stance on gender equality issues."

Her desire to do – as well as to think and talk – explains Eugene's decision to stand for school prefect, a position she wants to use to create a new network of social justice clubs spanning race and LGBTQ+ issues, as well as gender equality. "There are things I want to change about the school, and this is something I think that I could contribute to making Aiglon an even better place." **A**



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