



AYLESBURY
GRAMMAR SCHOOL
Founded 1598

AGSNEWSLETTER

AUTUMN TERM 2021



NATIONAL FINALS!....Congratulations to our Junior Cross-Country team who finished in a magnificent 6th place at the National Finals (Newquay), having come 2nd in the Regional Finals in November – A fantastic achievement!

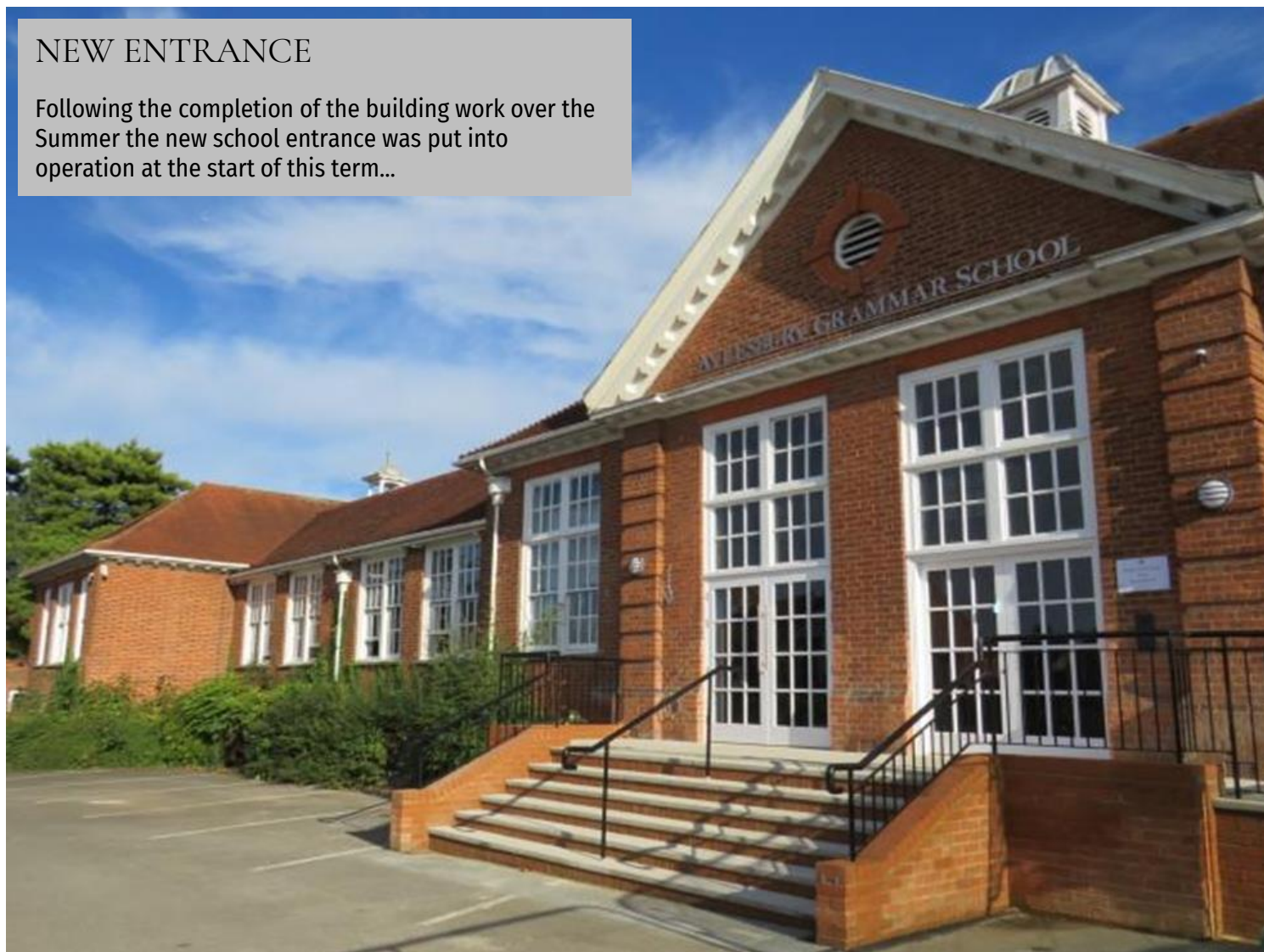
Welcome to the Autumn Term edition of the AGS Newsletter. Another busy term comes to a close, still in the shadow of Covid-19 and all our students (and parents) and staff have once again shown great resilience and humility throughout.

Despite the ongoing uncertainties and inevitable disruption there have been a whole host of fantastic activities and events this term, many of which you will read about in the coming pages. Sadly we cannot include absolutely everything, but I hope you enjoy reading about those presented here.

Mr G Dallas - Editor

NEW ENTRANCE

Following the completion of the building work over the Summer the new school entrance was put into operation at the start of this term...



Medical Society (MedSoc)

Our AGS Medical Society has been meeting on an alternate weekly basis this term for Years 10/11 and Years 12/13 due to high demand across the school. We have had numerous speakers, ex AGS alumni and current AGS students, deliver talks relating to their experience of getting into and studying med school to inspire the next generation further. There were great questions asked and, overall, informative sessions to push students to explore more outside the curriculum.

In preparation for our Year 13s upcoming interview period for medicine and dentistry, AGS and AHS MedSoc joined together to enable students to tackle tricky interview questions and hear different perspectives to benefit them when the interview offers start rolling in. Furthermore, ex AGS alumni hosted mock interview sessions with our boys online to emulate their interviews this year – a valuable experience for students in these different times.

Dr V McNamara



Swimming Successes

Congratulations to our Caretaker, Martin Giddings. After 30 years of looking after our swimming pool, he has won a well-deserved award from Pool Mark. We are the only school in the country to have been awarded this accreditation so a huge well done & thank you to Martin!



SENIORS



INTERS



The Secondary Schools Team Relay Championships is the longest running championship series organised by the English Schools Swimming Association (ESSA). It is open to secondary school aged swimmers from across England, including state, public and home-schooled students. Teams compete in 4x50m Freestyle and Medley relays.

The Championships is run as a national final with competing schools determined by the fastest times achieved in a qualifying round organised by the ESSA divisions.

JUNIORS



Following those regional events earlier this term, our Senior and Inters teams moved on to the National Finals. The Juniors gave it their all in the regional gala but sadly did not quite make the cut – A great experience for the squad though and I'm sure they'll come back stronger for another attempt next year.

At the National Finals there were some fantastic performances on the day. The Seniors managed 12th place in the Medley relay and the Inters were placed 19th in the Medley relay and 20th in the Freestyle relay. A really strong showing from both squads – Well done to all!



Remembrance Day 2021



On the eleventh hour on the eleventh day of the eleventh month, the entire school community came together to remember all those who have given their lives to protect our freedom. As ever, our students demonstrated exceptional respect during our service. The Headmaster read the names of all past AGS students who lost their lives during military conflicts and the AGS trumpeters were on hand at the top of our languages block to provide a poignant rendition of *'The Last Post & Reveille'* either side of a reflective two-minutes of silent remembrance.

Latin American Society



Latin American Society quickly became a popular addition to our clubs and societies offer when it appeared in September.

In their first term, the group have been very busy indeed immersing themselves in Latin American culture:

Making piñatas (pictured)

Playing "La Lotería Mexicana" (the Mexican Lottery)

Designing masks for the "Día de los Muertos" (Day of the Dead)

Preparing traditional "Yerba Mate" (Argentinian herbal tea)

Listening to and rewriting "Despacito"

Mr R O'Driscoll



Challenge Partners

Challenge Partners Quality Assurance Report - November 2021

We are really pleased to share with you the report from the Challenge Partners Quality Assurance Review.

Thank you to everyone involved in the review and to the School Community for providing the review team with such a positive view of this great School. The full report can be found here:

https://mcusercontent.com/6c41889440cda9fc445f64cce/files/23812a65-2599-1230-c342-ef08e6341635/Final_QAR_Report_Nov_2021_Aylesbury_Grammar_School.pdf

Some highlights:

- Staff are highly aspirational and hugely invested in the school. Relationships are very strong, and students and staff feel listened to and valued. Students told reviewers how much they enjoy school, and they feel extremely well supported by the staff. One student said: 'We can always rely on them'
- The school is very inclusive. Everybody gets on well together. There is a real acceptance and celebration of the increasingly diverse school community
- Students are proud of their school. Attendance is high, reflecting their thirst to succeed. The culture for learning is excellent. Learning explorations and student discussions show that they are making very strong progress through the curriculum
- The positive, disciplined climate for learning is the bedrock of the school's success. The warm and respectful relationships between teachers and students and between students themselves are testament to the hard work and team spirit of all the staff who have developed an excellent learning environment
- A constant and relentless drive on professional development is central to the school's continuing upward trajectory. A menu of training opportunities is provided to meet the needs and aspirations of all staff members, resulting in a highly skilled and ambitious workforce who relish the opportunities they are offered to take on leadership roles
- Students are eager learners and therefore their behaviour in class is exemplary
- Students expect to be challenged. They are ambitious for their futures and aim for the very highest grades. Sixth form students gain the grades they need for their next steps, with most going onto university or degree apprenticeships

AGS History

With the founding of AGS dating back to 1598 clearly a great deal has happened since then! Staff and students come and go and all of us who inhabit these buildings, classrooms and walk the corridors now are simply the current custodians of this great institution we call Aylesbury Grammar School.

For those who would like to find out exactly how we have arrived at this point, we try to highlight some of the interesting periods and moments in our nearly 425 year existence, how the school functions and to this day interacts with the local area and community.

If you would like to see some of what has been unearthed and rediscovered do please head over to our History page on the school website where you will hopefully find some interesting stories and articles from the wider AGS timeline. And, if you ever have a question with a historical context you would like to know the answer to, please get in touch – we always love a challenge!

Mr G Dallas

gdallas@ags.bucks.sch.uk

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AGS HISTORY PAGE: **<https://www.ags.bucks.sch.uk/about-us/history/>**

WALTON ROAD GETS A NEW SCHOOL (1907): **<https://www.ags.bucks.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/HISTORICAL-SCHOOL-EVENTS-AGS-SITE-OPENS.pdf>**

THE BIRTH OF THE HOUSE SYSTEM (1920): **<https://www.ags.bucks.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/AGS-History-The-birth-of-the-House-system-1920.pdf>**

Mr PALMER BRODIE & THE BRODIE HOUSE TROPHY (1938): **<https://www.ags.bucks.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/HISTORICAL-SCHOOL-EVENTS-MR-BRODIE-AND-THE-BRODIE-TROPHY.pdf>**

THE GREAT FIRE (1953): **<https://www.ags.bucks.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/V2-HISTORICAL-SCHOOL-EVENTS-FIRE-OF-1953.pdf>**

Cross-country National Finals



On the 4th of December, 6 of the Year 7 and 8s (Sam Dewhirst, Edward Johnson, Zachary Cleary, Ollie Usher, Jed Okai and myself) competed in the ESAA national cross country cup finals down in Newquay. The team competed among the 25 best schools across England at cross country. To get to this stage each school had to go through both qualifications and regionals which our team excelled at, coming 2nd in both!

The National cross-country finals in Newquay were very challenging and everybody put 100% into representing the school and running as best as they could. The hills were tough and the weather was freezing and blustery but our team still managed to pull through and we managed to come 6th! Which means we are 6th across the whole of the country (for our age group). This is an amazing achievement and we are all very grateful for the opportunity.

P.S thank you Mr Duggan and Mr Gibbs for organising it all and making it possible for us to compete.

Raphie London – Paterson 8



Safeguarding Review - November 2021

As part of our ongoing review of our practice, we invited a review of our culture for Safeguarding by an external consultant. Ralph Batten is a former Local Authority advisor and Ofsted Inspector. He conducted a thorough review of our systems, processes and impact. This is Mr Batten's second visit after his first review in 2019.

I am pleased to say that Mr Batten was extremely complimentary and as part of his day on 11 November, found our Remembrance Service to be a particular high point and a wonderful example of the respect and values of the School.

The full report can be found here: https://mcusercontent.com/6c41889440cda9fc445f64cce/files/a3668518-8b8c-200f-6ab3-b5141cfba036/FINAL_Aylesbury_Grammar_School_Safeguarding_Review_Audit_tool_2021.pdf

Mr M Sturgeon

House Art 2021



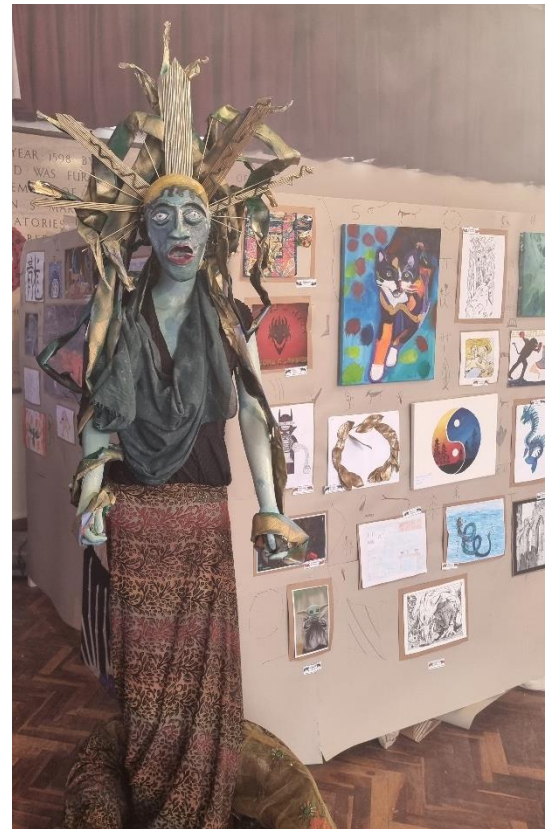
GREEN IS THE COLOUR!...This December we were treated to a bumper House Art competition expertly organised by our Art Department.

A huge well done to all students who submitted pieces, hundreds in total, and congratulations to Hampden House who scooped up first place!

HOUSE ART RESULTS:

- 1st **HAMPDEN**
- 2nd **PATERSON**
- 3rd **PHILLIPS**
- 4th **RIDLEY**
- 5th **LEE**
- 6th **DENSON**





Winter Concert



Following a near two-year hiatus due to the global pandemic, musicians from AGS and AHS came together for a fantastic Winter concert on Tuesday 7 December.

An enthusiastic audience of fully masked parents and friends of the school were treated to sets from; Choir, Orchestra, Jazz Band and the Brass, Guitars and Percussion ensembles respectively.

A huge well done and thank you to all involved!





AGS Development

The Aylesburian Annual Fund needs your participation and support...

Donations to our School are our lifeblood. They enable us meet critical needs and to enrich the learning and teaching at AGS. They help to make us the School we are today.

Contributions can be nominal, regular, or one-off donations, but given our precarious financial position, absolutely anything makes a huge difference to each and every one of the students and staff at AGS.



This year our focus turns to our extremely well used Student Support provision. We need to relocate and extend the space to another part of the School, freeing up much needed space in the Sixth Form Centre. It is an area frequently accessed by students needing a quiet and calm place away from the noisy school environment and it provides a crucial decompression and de-escalation area for some students, as well as supporting students with specific educational needs.

The value of education and strength of character required of the next generation has never been greater. With an evolving social and cultural landscape, young men have never been more challenged when finding their place in the world.

We are a hugely ambitious school, not only for our current students and staff, but also past and future students. This is reflected in our academic achievements but more so in the quality of students who walk out of our doors at the end of their education with us.

The struggle to know how to behave in society and questions around sense of identity brings into sharp focus the value of education. AGS provides the freedom to explore these issues and support our students to develop, in equal measure. Despite all of this, it may surprise you to learn that we are very poorly funded. We receive just £5,415 per year to educate your son (and significantly less for a Sixth Form student). You might say our Finance Team are doing a good job in managing our budget prudently, whilst still producing such incredible results, but it is not an easy feat, and it is not sustainable without incremental funding to maintain and improve our School for our future.

This is where our **Aylesburian Annual Fund** comes into play, **it feeds specific projects** which make a direct and immediate impact on our School community and future-proofs AGS for generations to come. Projects are varied and are determined by just how out of date the facilities are. In the past, they have included the refurbishment of our Maths department, IT Rooms, and more recently the complete refurbishment of Art, DT and Engineering. Capital projects have included a new Science Centre, new Library and new Sixth Form Centre. The Fund also supports our Financial Assistance provision which helps families who are unable to finance certain School activities.

We hope you can see the benefits of this fund and how the projects they facilitate are an integral part of our fantastic heritage. We really hope that you choose to be part of these legacy projects in some way.

We have been nurturing character since 1598 and will continue to do so for many years to come, inspiring and enabling our students to flourish throughout their lives.

Thank you so much to the parents who have signed up to support our Aylesbury Annual Fund this year so far and if you haven't yet, please consider supporting us if you can.

Alison Cox - Development Director

How to give...

- Contact the Development Director, Alison Cox acox@ags.bucks.sch.uk Head up your email with TAAF and Just say 'YES' - she will then contact you.
- Go to <https://www.ags.bucks.sch.uk/support-us/the-aylesburian-annual-fund/>
- Scan below to set up a regular donation on our community site (scroll down to donate now)



- Or simply log onto your ParentPay account where there is the opportunity to donate

...Thank you!

Local Geology

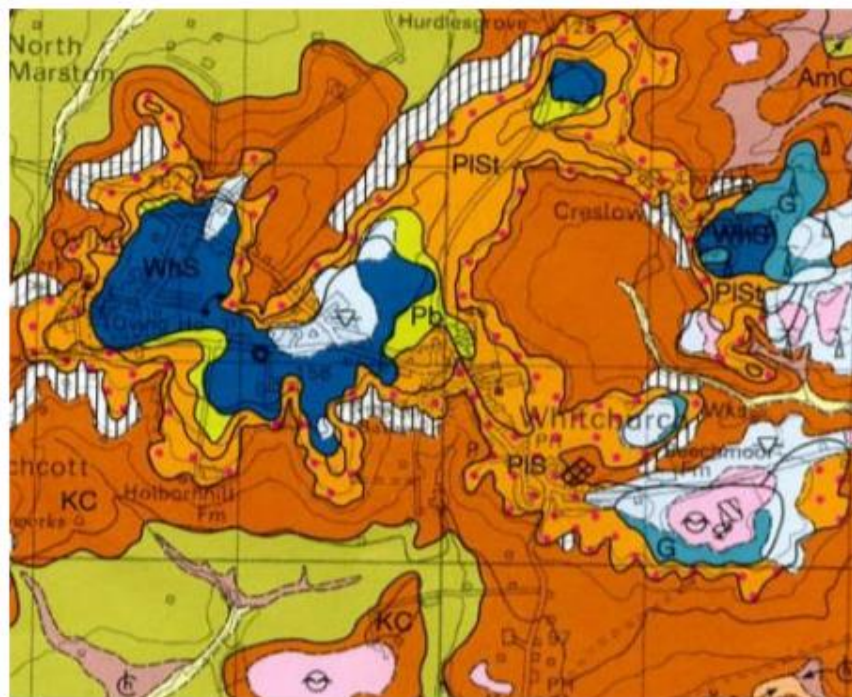
Mr Jones (Head of Geology) continues his series of local places of Geological interest, to assist in any of your wintery walks over this festive period...

Whitchurch

Location: Aylesbury HP22 4JU

Coordinates: 51.880002, -0.836332

The rocks that lie beneath Whitchurch belong to two eras. The first under tropical seas and the second under ice! The first era is the Jurassic and the rocks are called the Portland and the Purbeck beds. These rocks are limestones and sandstones which were laid down under a tropical climate. The oldest are the Portland Beds and these underlie the southern part of the village – exactly underneath the line of the A413 and the land just either side of the road. There is more of this rock eastwards from the road – it stretches out beneath St John's church and almost out to Beechmoor Farm



Key:

Pink colour patches = glacial sands

Pale blue patches = Till (glacial deposit)

WhS = Whitchurch Sandstone

Pb = Purbeck

PIS/PISt = Portland Sand/Stone

KC = Kimmeridge Clay

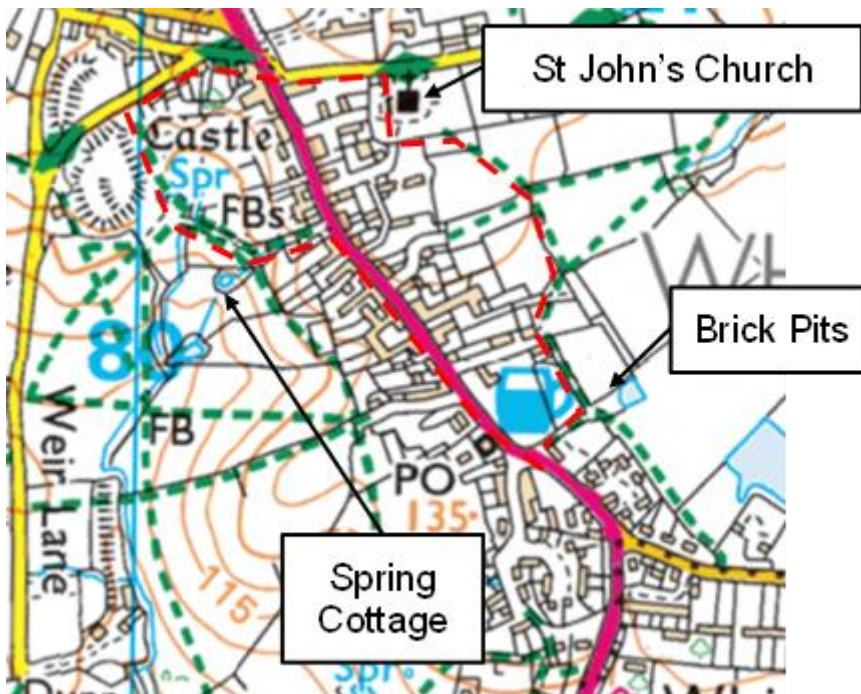
Limestone

The Portland beds were laid down in a warm, shallow tropical sea about 150 million years ago. Evidence for this is the limestone itself and also fossils such as ammonites

The Purbeck beds are to be found at the northern end of the village – at the roundabout and Market Hill and the Castle end. These rocks were laid down in nearshore and freshwater environments around 145 million years ago during a time when sea-level was falling and the area was about to emerge as land. The Whitchurch Sands lie over the Purbeck and are found northwest of the village, from just NW of the Castle to Oving. These deep red sandstones were laid down in rivers that criss-crossed the newly formed land 140 million years ago and you can see them in building stones in surrounding villages.

Glacial Till

Till is a clay with many sizes and types of pebbles and it is deposited beneath the moving ice. The ice plucks up rocks and pulverises them leaving behind a mix of clay to boulder size fragments on the frozen ground it passes over. Till is present to the SE of the village, around Beechmoor Farm, and either side of the Whitchurch to Oving road. This is where sands and gravels are found too – possibly formed from outwash from the retreating ice.



The route:

Takes 1 hour (without stops) c. 2 miles leisurely pace; flat ground; 3 stiles to cross.

Depending where you park, or what your preference is, this walk can start at any point.

St John's Church

A church has been on this site since the 10th century and this church dates from the 13th to 15th century. It is built from Portland Limestone – mostly the local kind, but spot the newer repairs which are made from Portland stone from Dorset.

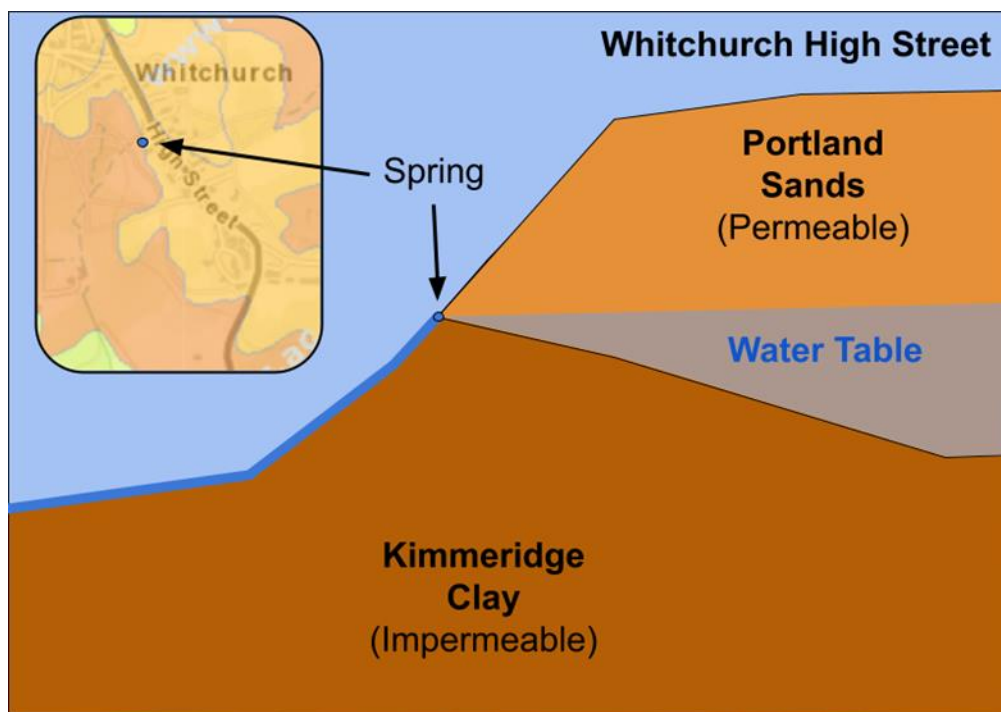


The Old Brick Pits

This is the location of an important industry throughout the Victorian period to recent times. The clay extraction here ceased in 1928 and it is now left for wildlife. On the high street in Whitchurch you will notice The Deerstalkers Antique Shop. Note the herringbone brickwork on this building. Brick-making and extracting the clay for bricks, was a big industry until recently. Now almost all the clay pits in the County, including the one in Whitchurch, are closed down. This building makes an attractive use of this local commodity and this one shop was originally three cottages.

Spring Cottage

This cottage is aptly named as it is next to Whittle Hole Spring. This was an important water source for the village. There are several springs around Whitchurch and their presence was no doubt a strong influence as to why the village was set up here, water being so essential to settlement. The spring marks the junction of the permeable Portland rocks with the Kimmeridge Clay underneath. Rainwater seeps into the Portland limestone and sandstones until it hits the impermeable clay. It will then run along the boundary until the impermeable horizon reaches a hillside or slope where the water will emerge as a spring.



In fact, taking a walk to the west of Whitchurch reveals a number of springs in this area. On the Ordnance Survey map below you can see a number of springs which have been circled. Joining these springs together highlights the boundary between the permeable sandstone and the impermeable clay below.

Mr M Jones

Ways To Connect



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@AGSCommunities
@AGSLearner @AGSHouses
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And so a very hectic, but fulfilling term has come to a close. We have been extremely grateful and proud of our school community once again for coming together as one and navigating the ongoing anxieties and restrictions concerning Covid-19 with such maturity and understanding. Everyone deserves a rest and a recharge, and we look forward to seeing everyone again in early 2022. Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!...





AYLESBURY
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Founded 1598

Nurturing Character since 1598

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