

# Mind the Gap:

## Community members commute across London to St. John's Wood

Meher Sareen | Reporter

For many students, their morning routines consist of a cup of coffee to wake them up, followed by a brisk walk through St. John's Wood. For others, their mornings involve watching the sun rise while crossing the River Thames or listening to buskers at tube stations miles away from the school. Although their journeys may be more complex, many community members have become well-accustomed to London's ins and outs during their commutes to school each morning.



### Chloe Charles ('27)



South Kensington Station

Chloe Charles ('27) awakes to the sound of her alarm at 6:10 a.m. each morning and begins her journey to school with a walk to her local bus station in Battersea.

From there, Charles takes the 49 Bus across Albert Bridge to South Kensington Tube Station, rides the Piccadilly Line to Green Park Station and switches to the Jubilee Line, arriving at St. John's Wood Station after three stops.

Although she is fond of her neighborhood, Charles said she finds herself frustrated at times with her commute being just short of an hour long.

"I love Battersea but it's tricky to get to school sometimes because it's so far away," Charles said.

To add variety to her journey, Charles said she occasionally walks across Albert

Bridge instead of taking the bus.

"It's nice to look at the view of the River Thames because there is always the sunrise," Charles said.

Although her journey may be long, Charles said she has gradually come to enjoy exploring London every morning before school.

"I personally love the Tube," Charles said. "It's such an adventure to get to school in the morning. Even though sometimes it's packed, you get to see some great people."

Moreover, Charles said she has come to be familiar with the communities she passes along her journey.

"In Green Park, sometimes there are buskers that are singing or playing musical instruments," Charles said. "It's a great community, and their music is so welcoming in the morning ... it wakes me up."

Photos courtesy of Chloe Charles



Albert Bridge

### Harpenden

### Gabby Sims ('27)



Netflix and Commute

Gabby Sims ('27) begins each day with a commute from Harpenden to St. John's Wood.

Sims said she enjoys living far from the school due to its contrast from St. John's Wood.

"It's out of London, so it doesn't feel like London at all," Sims said. "It's very towny. It's kind of all one section. There's the High Street, which is the main road, and from there, there are branches of houses going off."

Since she starts her day as early as 6 a.m., Sims said she is appreciative of being driven to school.

"Usually my mom, who works at the school, will drive me and my sister all the way to school, which takes about an hour and a half," Sims said.

Alternatively, Sims is occasionally driven to Stanmore Station, which is at the end of

the Jubilee Line. After parking there, she and her family take the Jubilee Line to the school, which totals 30 minutes of driving and 30 minutes on the tube.

With time, Sims said she has found ways to make the most out of the long journey by doing homework and watching television shows.

"You kind of get used to it, and it's a good time to do work," Sims said. "I'll usually do any unfinished work or stuff that I think will take a lot longer. I can also use my computer, so I get through a lot of Netflix shows."

In addition, Sims said she enjoys living far from school due to the contrasts in communities.

"There's no mix between school and home, so I don't have to see people from school," Sims said. "It's a very separate community."

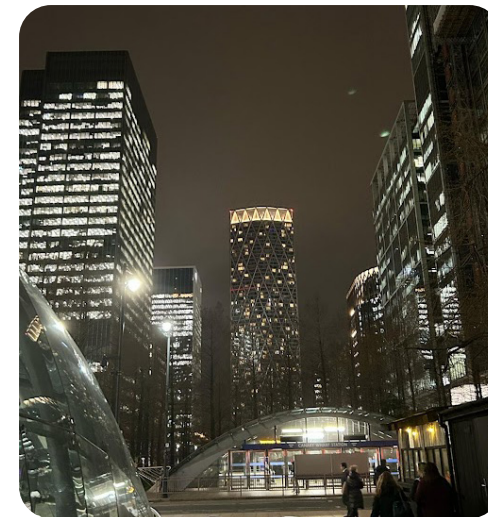
Photos courtesy of Gabby Sims



Harpenden



### Edward O'Dwyer ('24)



Canary Wharf

Having lived in Canary Wharf for nearly a decade, Edward O'Dwyer ('24) said he has learned to face the realities of living in a business-heavy neighborhood.

"It's very different in the sense that, you know, Canary Wharf is just filled with skyscrapers and investment bankers doing their thing," O'Dwyer said. "You'll often see like lights in office buildings on until 3 a.m."

When comparing St. John's Wood to Canary Wharf, O'Dwyer said the greatest distinction is architecture.

"It's a very different environment, but it's also very nice," O'Dwyer said. "It's very modern and the restaurants there are nice."

O'Dwyer said he enjoys making use of Canary Wharf's wide array of high-quality

restaurants.

Furthermore, O'Dwyer said he often uses his 50-minute long commute on the Jubilee Line from Canary Wharf to listen to music or finish his homework.

"I just listen to music most of the time and I also just watch videos on the Tube," O'Dwyer said. "If I do have an English reading, I might do that on the Tube because it's pretty convenient timewise."

Though it may be noisy, O'Dwyer said his journey is not unpleasant as he does not switch lines.

"The Tube is obviously loud," O'Dwyer said. "I'm sure everyone knows the stretch between Baker Street and St. John's Wood is especially loud, but it's pretty comfortable because I don't have to change."

Photos courtesy of Edward O'Dwyer



Thames at Night

### Tottenham

### World Language and Cultures Teacher Udai AbuTeaf

Photo courtesy of Udai AbuTeaf



Biking at ASL

Since joining the school in 2020, World Language and Cultures Teacher Udai AbuTeaf has commuted to school every morning from Tottenham on his bike. Waking up between 5-5:30 a.m., AbuTeaf said he cycles for 45 minutes from his home to St. John's Wood.

"This has been my lifestyle," AbuTeaf said. "I have been using my bicycle as my main commute. I don't have a car here, and at the same time, I don't have a driving license."

AbuTeaf said he often tests out new routes and paths on his journey to test his geographical knowledge of London.

"It's really interesting when I take, kind of like, a side lane or a side street that I ha-

ven't been to before," AbuTeaf said. "Then I can figure out [how] to get to the point that I need and have that kind of mental map in my head."

AbuTeaf said he also loves exploring parts of the city he is unfamiliar with.

"Navigating London and seeing the different neighborhoods is really beautiful," AbuTeaf said.

In addition, AbuTeaf said he enjoys getting to know the "sense of feeling" for each neighborhood he bikes through on his morning commute.

When comparing his neighborhood to St. John's Wood, AbuTeaf said he notices major differences in the two areas' de-

mographics and socioeconomic standings amongst their residents.

"[Tottenham is] a very, like, kind of working-class kind of neighborhood," AbuTeaf said. "Also, here in St. John's Wood, my impression is like, there are more white people, but in Tottenham, it's mostly predominantly people of color."

Ultimately, AbuTeaf said biking is not only his primary mode of transportation but also a hobby that brings joy to his everyday life.

"I recommended it a lot to everyone," AbuTeaf said. "It's a good way to be outside in the universe and at the same time to exercise and arrive to work and have full energy."

**Gabby Sims**  
Harpenden  
"I like going on walks in the parks around me and enjoying the green space."

**Chloe Charles**  
Battersea  
"I like to go to the park [Battersea Park]. There are tennis courts ... I like playing tennis."

**What do you recommend in your neighborhood?**

**Udai AbuTeaf**  
Tottenham  
"I go and socialize and watch a movie or go to cultural events that are happening in my neighborhood."

**Edward O'Dwyer**  
Canary Wharf  
"I like to go and get, like, pizzas and bring them to my apartment from time to time."

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