

# Abingdon

News

The Newsletter of Abingdon School

January 2007

No 13



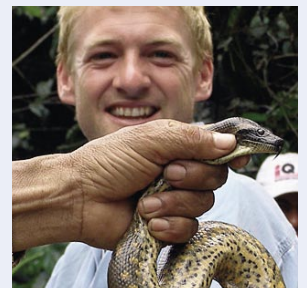
## Royal Visit



Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal visited Abingdon School on Friday 15 September to turn the first turf of the foundations for the School's new £8 million sports complex and to unveil a plaque commemorating the past 750 years. Her Royal Highness, who spent nearly an hour and a half at the School, met representatives of the whole School community during her visit.

## Out With a Bang!

The end of twelve months of 750th anniversary celebrations was marked with a Grande Finale concert in the Amey Theatre, followed by a huge firework display on Upper Field organised by the School's ceramicist, Andy Glass. A large crowd of boarders, parents and neighbours watched the display, which strong winds and driving rain had earlier put in doubt.



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## News

### Abingdon in the West End

The ambitious plan to take over London's Lyric Theatre in Shaftesbury Avenue on 3 December to provide a showcase for Abingdon's dramatic talent – past, present and future – was a triumphant success. The show consisted of a string of extracts from School drama productions including *Ines de Castro* and *Sweeny Todd* from the past, *Covered in Love* and a comedy skit from *FxP2* from the present and as for the future, the audience saw an extract from *The Taming of the Shrew*, which will be performed later this term. The evening reached a thrilling climax with a complicated magic trick involving the Headmaster, several swords and a large box.



### Deepest Peru

During the summer holidays, seventeen members of this year's World Challenge expedition went to Peru, travelling from the city of Lima to Iquitos via the Amazon rain forest and the Cordillera Blanca mountain range. Close encounters with tarantulas, anacondas, crocodiles and piranhas were among some of the adventures they met on their way. During the visit the group redecorated an infant school and a medical centre in La Jaica.



### Robert Harris



Bestselling author, Robert Harris, offered an intriguing look at one of Rome's greatest orators, Cicero, and drew interesting parallels between the politics of today and those of the Ancient World when he came to the School on 4 October to talk about his latest book, *Imperium*.

### Sandy Nairne

An exhibition of the work of portrait painter William Boxall, OA 1817, accompanied a talk by the Director of the National Portrait Gallery, Sandy Nairne, on 27 November. Sandy, whose brother James is Head of Art, spoke about styles in portraiture over the last 150 years.



Sandy and James Nairne

## Charity Walk

The School's biennial sponsored walk on 20 September raised more than £23,00 for three charities: Helen and Douglas House, which offer end of life and respite care to children and young people; the charity *Agape*, that works with young people in Moldova, the poorest country in Europe, and Landmine Disability Support, based in Cambodia, a charity that offers support to landmine victims and their families.

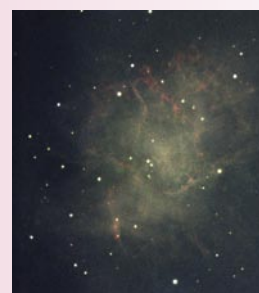


## Farewell Parade

The Army section of the School CCF paraded through the streets of Abingdon with the Royal Gloucester, Berkshire and Wiltshire Light Infantry when the Regiment took its farewell of the town on 12 October. The RGBWLI will become part of the new regiment, The Rifles, when it is formed in February.



## Remote Control



This photograph of the Crab Nebula, M1 – 6,300 light years away from Earth and first observed by Chinese and Arab astronomers

in 1054 AD – was taken by the Lower 6 physics set, P2, on 10 November when they took control of the Faulkes telescope in Hawaii. The two-metre telescope, together with its data, is made accessible to schools, colleges and museums via the internet.

## School Photograph



The biennial School photograph was organised with military precision last term. More than a thousand boys and staff from Abingdon and Josca's, were martialled into ranks to be captured on film for posterity.

## Community Christmas Party



Residents of Lady Eleanor Court, Old Station House and Cygnet Court, together with members of both the Older and Bolder Club and the congregations of St Helen's and St Michael's churches, were invited to tea by boys from the Middle and Upper School who had been visiting them in their homes during the term.

## Arts

### An Evening of Animation

Award-winning animator, Geoff Dunbar, gave a fascinating lecture at the School on 17 November, tracing the development of his own passion for animation by showing extracts from films that had influenced him. Geoff has been working in partnership with Sir Paul McCartney since 1981 when he directed *Rupert the Frog*. A copy of *High in the Clouds*, written by Geoff Dunbar in collaboration with Philip Agargh and Paul McCartney and signed by all three, was raffled to raise money for the AFU's project to help landmine victims in Cambodia.



### Christmas Gala Concert



The Grande Finale Christmas Concert on 7 December was sold out weeks in advance. On the night, a capacity audience heard fine performances from the Brass Band, who played a wonderful rendition of *White Christmas*, the Big Band, whose repertoire included some brilliant jazz improvisations by a variety of soloists and the First Orchestra, which accompanied Davis Ridley (violin) and Henry Scarlett (viola) in Mozart's *Symphony no.40 in G minor*.

### Unicorn Concert

Having recently returned from their tour of China, the School's chamber orchestra performed in a special concert at the historic Unicorn Theatre on 29 September. The theatre was built in 1952 in one of the rare surviving parts of Abingdon Abbey and, with a capacity of just eighty-eight, it proved to be an attractively intimate venue in which to enjoy some of Abingdon's finest musicians.



### The Magic Flute



In recognition of the 250th anniversary of the birth of Mozart, the School staged two impressive performances of *The Magic Flute* in the Amey Theatre on 30 November and 1 December. Guy Cutting, Tim West and Tom Bennett played Tamini, Papageno and Sarastro with the female roles being taken by girls from St Helen's.

### Art Exhibition

The Charles Maude Room was transformed into an exhibition space for a week during November to display the work of the artist Paul Hobbs. Paul's work, which is visually varied and thought provoking, was used as a focus for class discussions during the week.



## Rugby

A successful rugby season last term saw the School win 62% of its 145 matches. There were good wins for the 1st XV against Bedford, Magdalen College School, Pangbourne and Marlborough, and for the Senior Colts who, although they lost to Bedford, not only beat Magdalen College School, Pangbourne and Marlborough but also the Oratory, Bedford Modern, St Edward's and Radley.

### 1st XV Results:

Oratory	L	3	-	9
St Paul's	L	8	-	13
Kingham Hill	W	52	-	0
Bedford	W	12	-	10
MCS	W	17	-	12
Stowe	L	16	-	25
Pangbourne	W	18	-	8
Bedford Modern	L	3	-	7
RGS High Wycombe	L	5	-	12
St Edward's	L	3	-	26
Radley	L	3	-	12
Marlborough	W	10	-	0



## Boat Club

The Boat Club achieved its best-ever results at the Head of the Charles Regatta in Boston over the October half term. The second crew came 37th overall whilst the first crew finished 11th. They were competing against 80 crews drawn from top US and British schools as well as from US university 'Freshmen' crews. Rated among the school crews, Abingdon finished 4th.



## Sailing



After his win at the end of season championships at Grafham Water, Guy Stephen now holds 1st place in the GB U15 rankings for his class, and has been selected for the national transitional youth squad. Both Guy and fellow Abingdon sailor Tom Altmann were selected for a team that came 12th in competition against top university and Great Britain sailing teams.

## Cross Country

Abingdon's ten-strong Cross Country team beat 1,200 fellow competitors to win the Prince's Trust 10K Run held at Windsor on 15 October. At the Blenheim Palace 10K Run in September, Philip Hatzis finished second out of a field of more than 1,300 runners.



# The Royal Visit, 15 September 2006

The first week of term was spent in a flurry of preparation. Three days before the Princess Royal's visit the stone carver, Alec Peever, arrived to fix a commemorative plaque to the east wall of the Library. Carved out of Welsh slate and gilded with gold leaf, the heraldic symbols on the plaque represent people and institutions that have played a significant part in the School's history.



At 10.20, several minutes earlier than expected, the royal helicopter touched down on Upper Field.



The Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire, Hugo Brunner, greeted The Princess Royal on her arrival.



As a souvenir of her visit, Her Royal Highness was presented with two 750th anniversary commemorative mugs by Jared Kangwana, one of the Heads of School.



Over coffee in the Charles Maude Room, the Princess met parents, OAs, teachers and support staff and boys, senior and junior boys.



The Headmaster having declared a half holiday in honour of the Princess's visit, Head of School, William Stockdale, called for three cheers for Her Royal Highness.



At 11.40, the Head Governors, Richard [Name], visited who went on part of their 450th

# The Royal Visit

After inspecting a Guard of Honour formed by the School's Combined Cadet Force ...



... Her Royal Highness was escorted up to Waste Court, the site of the new sports complex, where she was introduced to members of the grounds and maintenance staff and to representatives from the School's sports teams.



The Princess Royal was invited to turn the first turf for the foundations.



Throughout her visit, The Princess Royal was introduced to members of the School community. Here she meets Adam Jenkins and some of the new 1st Year boys who were involved in team building activities on Waste Court Field.



At 11.30 the School assembled to watch Her Royal Highness unveil the plaque commemorating our 750th anniversary.



The royal party returned to the School at 1pm for the final departure from Abingdon.



Master and the Chairman of the ... Dick, bade farewell to their royal ... n to visit the town of Abingdon as anniversary celebrations.

# The Abingdon School Society - TASS

The Abingdon School Society (TASS) is the parent body that supports the School's aim of educating boys in as full a sense as possible. It raises money to support Other Half activities and all parents are automatically members. TASS is made up of various sub-divisions, in particular the Friends of Abingdon School Boat Club, Touchliners (the parents' support group for rugby at Abingdon) and the Griffen Ball committee.

The Music Society is also a very active and worthwhile committee and here Alyson Mason gives you an insight into what being a member entails.

## The Music Society

'Far too erudite for me' and 'I'd be completely out of my depth' were my first reactions when I learnt that Abingdon had a Music Society. Somehow, though, I found myself sitting around a table in a Music Technology room on the evening of the first day of term a little while ago. I think Mr Stinton must have had something to do with it!

Those initial reactions were completely erroneous. The active members of the Music Society comprise Mr Stinton and a convivial little band of parents who meet once a term. Whilst we do spend some time discussing matters such as music bursaries for pupils, we also sort out more mundane things like the rota for serving drinks at school concerts. A significant issue recently was whether plastic cups or glasses should be used; we trust that those of you who have experienced the pleasure of imbibing from glasses approve of the change.

What can be guaranteed through active membership of the Music Society is a sprinkling of lightheartedness running through these evenings (and a glass of wine, if you are so inclined), along with the satisfaction of supporting what, I feel sure we all agree, is an extremely hardworking and successful department. Please give us a try!

## Open Day success



Open Day, held in September, proved to be a good fundraising event with well over £1,200 (raised by TASS members serving lunch and refreshments) going to the TASS coffers.

## Second-hand Uniform Shop

Opening hours 12.15 – 1.15

Saturday	13 January
Wednesday	17 January
Saturday	3 February
Wednesday	7 February
Saturday	24 February
Wednesday	28 February
Saturday	17 March
Wednesday	21 March

## Dates for the Diary

Parents' evenings for this term: (please remember that complimentary refreshments, including a hot meal and drinks, are served by members of TASS – ideal for those attending straight from work).

5th year – Tues 30 January  
3rd year – Mon 19 February  
2nd year – Tues 27 February

**16 January** – TASS Executive Committee meeting 7.45 for 8pm in the Christ's Hospital Room, Mercer's Court. All welcome!

**20 January** – Burns Night celebration in the elegant chambers of Oxford Town Hall with champagne, haggis, bagpipes, tatties and neaps, songs and merry dancing.

**20 January** – Open Day 9.30 – 12.30

**20 January** – Rowers Tea at the Boat House for parents and boys involved in rowing.

**17 March** – Boat Club dinner in the Dining Room 7.30

Forthcoming event in May – date pending – TASS Quiz night for parents.

## Get Quizzical!

You've got to be in it to win it so if you haven't already done so now is the time to fill in the fun TASS Christmas Quiz that accompanied the Headmaster's mailing in December.

There's no charge to enter and the winner of the most correct answers will receive £50. If there is a tie then the winner will be picked at random. All entries should be sent to the Headmaster's office by Saturday 20 January 2007.

Good luck!

## Drop a note



Such has been the success of the Abingdon Christmas card that we have decided to print some official Abingdon School notelets (please see picture above). These will be available in the Spring and we will provide more details in the next newsletter.



## Twickenham

The Josca's Colts 'A' rugby squad eagerly awaited their opportunity to step onto Twickenham's hallowed turf on December 12th, when they appeared at the Oxford and Cambridge Varsity match. They received a few welcome tips and encouragement from a man who also had great expectations of the big day, Kevin Brennan, the Oxford University Rugby Captain, who is to be the Abingdon School Director of Rugby from September 2007.



## Nativity Play

The Josca's Pre-prep Department proudly performed *Jesus' Christmas Party* ending the 50th Anniversary Celebrations with a flourish. All the boys from Year R, 1 and 2 were involved, with musical ensembles supporting the colourful actors.

## Chess Club



The newly formed chess club hosted their first fixture last term against St Hugh's.

## Concert Platform



The Concert Platform takes place once a month and is open to all performers.

## Josca's Development Forges Ahead



The excitement of anticipation is growing as the two major developments of a classroom block and sports hall take on a clear physical shape at the back of the school. The roofs are almost on and the builders will soon be moving onto the internal finishing. We are very confident that all our new facilities will be in full use at the start of the academic year in 2007. In order to offer the whole community an opportunity to help with and take a share in the development, an appeal to help out with the internal fittings and equipment will be launched in the Spring Term. For further information about the Appeal please contact [hm@joscas.org.uk](mailto:hm@joscas.org.uk).

## WH Richardson OA 1847

Much of the success of the 750th anniversary celebrations can be attributed to WH Richardson who died in 1909. Without him our knowledge of the School from 1563 to 1900 would have disappeared in much the same way as the history of the early centuries has done. Richardson compiled a draft register of the School which he donated to the Bodleian Library along with other manuscripts. He also collected and donated to the School numerous photographs and books, which all make a priceless contribution to our knowledge of the past.



1895, WH Richardson, back row second from right, with the OA cricket team on Upper Field

## A Pott by Any Other Name



For some years now the identity of one of the portraits in the Dining Hall has been the subject of dispute: was it Edmund Harper, acting Headmaster from 1868–1870, or perhaps Edgar Summers, Headmaster 1870–1883, or could it have been Alfred Pott, Archdeacon of Berkshire and Chairman of the Governing Body 1866–1902 whose family were known to have donated a portrait to the School in 1908?

A chance visit to the church of St. Agatha, Brightwell-cum-Sotwell, uncovered this photograph of one of their vicars, the Revd. Alfred Pott and the case appears to have been solved!



Photograph of Revd. Alfred Pott in Brightwell-cum-Sotwell

## New Light on Early Abingdon

*The History of the Church of Abingdon*, a new edition and translation by Professor John Hudson of the University of St Andrews, will be published by OUP in January. To celebrate this event, a half-day conference has been organised for Saturday 19 May. The event, to be held in the Abbey buildings, will bring together a distinguished group of researchers who have all been involved in recent studies of the Abbey.

Tickets: £5  
Abingdon School Box Office  
01235 849063 Mon–Fri 9am–1pm  
term-time only  
arts.sec@abingdon.org.uk

Programme:

- 14.00 Roger Thomas  
(English Heritage)  
Welcome and introduction
- 14.10 Dr Helena Hamerow  
(Institute of Archaeology,  
Oxford)  
The Archaeology of the  
Abingdon area:  
5th-7th centuries AD.
- 14.40 Tim Allen  
(Oxford Archaeology)  
Abingdon and its Abbey  
– recent archaeological  
investigations

15.30 Tea

16.00 Dr John Blair  
(The Queen's College,  
Oxford)  
Abingdon Abbey in the  
Anglo-Saxon Thames Valley

16.45 Professor John Hudson  
(University of St Andrews)  
*The History of the Church of  
Abingdon*

17.30 Reception and book launch

## Professional Development Awards

The 2006 recipients were: Tom Darton (1996), Peter Dominey (1984), Daniel Higazi (1997), William Horwitz (2003), Tom Richards (1997), and Lucy Eden (1982).

If you would like an application form for the 2007 awards please contact the office.

## OA Club Dates for your diary

The 2007 President's Dinner will be held at the School on Saturday 7 July 2007 in celebration of Abingdon's 751st Anniversary! It is intended to invite participation by profession and/or interests. Details are available from the OA Club Administrator.

## City Lunch

If you would like to make sure that you are on the email list for the next City Lunch, please contact Matthias Bader at [matthias.bader@hawkpoint.com](mailto:matthias.bader@hawkpoint.com)

## OA Committee

The OA Committee this year is as follows:

**Chairman:** John Bunce (1962)

**President:** David Brice (1961)

**Past President:** Julius Green (1982)

**President Elect:** Jonathan Gold (1988)

**Treasurer:** Paul Thompson (1974)

**Editor of *The Griffen*:** Emma Curran

**Elected members:**

Will Allan (2003)

Sebastian Allen (2001)

Noel Crosse (1972)

Simon Evans (2002)

Tom Gater (2004)

Nigel Hammond (1957)

Simon Hills (1976)

Siddharth Kapoor (2005)

Terence Libby (1961)

Adrian Mutton (1992)

Peter Rutland (1996)

Richard Stone (1992)

Thomas Winwood (2006)

## OAs at the Lyric Theatre

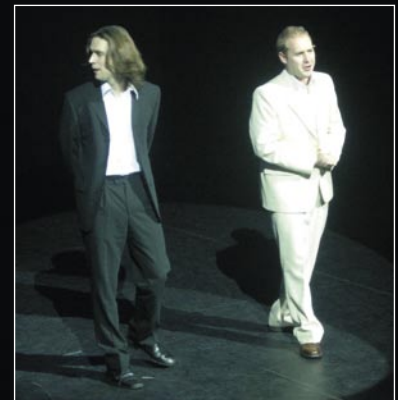


David Mitchell on screen at The Lyric

The finale of our 750th anniversary celebrations took place at the Lyric Theatre on Sunday 3 December and brought with it a wonderful turnout of OAs, both in the audience and on stage. This evening of theatre and performance in London's West End was hosted by OAs Jonathan Donahoe (2001) (known as Magree whilst at School) and Daniel Benoliel (2000) and featured the best of Abingdon's talent in music, comedy, drama, and magic. We were treated to some filmed interviews with OAs Tom Kempinski (1956), Nick Rawlinson (1982) and David Mitchell (1992) as well as live performances from Abingdonians past and present.

OAs performing on the night included: 1982: Julius Green, Nick Rawlinson; 1989: Ralf Collie; 2002: Simon Evans, Conrad Mason; 2004: Mike Chilcott, Jon Donnelly, James Mugnaioni, Alex Nash, George Potter; 2005: Tom Swarbrick; 2006: Francis Gater, Ben Lawson, Jo Swarbrick, Ed Wilson.

The evening proved to be a resounding success and a fitting conclusion to our anniversary year. Special thanks go to Julius Green (1982) whose production of *Cabaret* is running at the Lyric Theatre, Shaftesbury Avenue until April 2007.



Comperes Jonathan Donahoe and Daniel Benoliel

## Sixties OAs Day at Shuttleworth Collection 1 October 2006

Although the weather was somewhat wet it was good to see the OAs who attended the lunch and flying day at Old Warden. Two 'new boys' attending for the first time were Dr Roger Parks and Tony Venn, and we were pleased to see Mike Hedges, Brian Rosevear and James Willis back after a gap of about 15 years. The different format of lunch and an activity stretching over most of the day gave us more time to chat and catch up with old friends.

Those who attended include 1959: Matt Womar; 1960: Anthony Dillabough, Randell Moll, Richard Watts, Peter Willis; 1961: Richard Bampton, Roger Bampton, David Brice, Roger Havelock, Jerry Hurd, Terence Libby, David Riddick; 1962: John Bunce, Mike Hedges, Anthony Leathem, Brian Rosevear, Chris Scott, Peter Sheard, Tony Venn, James Willis; 1963: Trevor Pegram, Roger Parks; 1964: Richard Leathem, Michael Livingston, Bruce Mackay; 1965:

John Mellor; 1966: Martyn Holloway, David Letley, Mike Spencer, and Paul Williams. Former School Bursar (1995-2005) Rory Jackson was also present at the event and our guests were Former Common Room Gerald Phizackerley and his wife Annette.

Randell Moll has kindly volunteered to organise next year's event, which will probably revert to the more traditional dinner. He will be contacting people soon.

# Old Abingdonians

## The OA and the Fra Angelicos

Two previously unidentified paintings, missing panels from an altarpiece commissioned by Cosimo de Medici in the 1430s, will



be auctioned in March having been identified by Michael Liversidge (OA 1966) as the work of the Renaissance master Fra Angelico. The paintings, expected to raise over £1 million, were bought for £200 more than 20 years ago by the owner who recognized their quality but not their provenance. Michael, former dean of the arts faculty at the University of Bristol, was asked by the owner before her death to investigate them and soon realised their importance, which was confirmed by the National Gallery and the Metropolitan Museum in New York.

## Triple Firsts!

In 2003, when we last published this photograph in the Abingdon News, we were congratulating John Herford, Matthew Gardner and Michael Hardy on gaining places to read Music at Oxford and Cambridge.



Now, three years later, we are congratulating all three of them on graduating with Firsts.



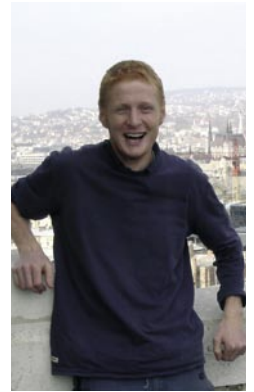
Martin Landray in Bampton, Whit Monday 2006

## Martin Landray

Last year, Martin Landray (OA 1987) celebrated his twentieth year with the Bampton Morris Dancers, one of the oldest Morris teams in the country. For his day job, Martin is Reader in Epidemiology at the University of Oxford and an Honorary Consultant Physician at the John Radcliffe. He is responsible for organising large-scale international therapeutic trials and observational epidemiological studies, particularly in the areas of cardiovascular and chronic kidney disease. After leaving Abingdon, Martin read medicine at the University of Birmingham and went on to specialise in clinical pharmacology.

## Ben Wells

Ben Wells (OA 2001) has been awarded the 2006 Beacon Young Philanthropist of the Year award for his social entrepreneurial work with the marginalised Roma



communities of Romania. Beacons awards are annual prizes given to individuals who have made exceptional contributions to charitable causes or to organizations that benefit the public.



## Radio 3 Listeners' Prize for Jonny Greenwood

Jonny Greenwood (OA 1990) has won the Listeners' Prize in the 2006 British Composers Awards, held at London's Hayward Gallery in association with Radio 3. The prize, which is awarded for orchestral composition, is the only category voted for by the public and was awarded to Jonny for his piece *Popcorn Superhet Receiver*.

Jonny, lead guitarist in indie rock band Radiohead, who all met at Abingdon, became composer-in-residence at Radio 3 in 2004. His other classical pieces include *Smear* and *Piano for Children*.