

Abingdon

News

The Newsletter of Abingdon School

January 2006

No 10



ABINGDON 750

Fit for the 21st Century!



Architect's drawing showing the distinctive 'wave' roof

Even as we prepare to celebrate our 750th anniversary, plans are going ahead for the School's future with an £8 million sports complex that will retain the existing sports hall, replace the current swimming pool and changing rooms and extend the facilities to include a second sports hall, for activities such as fencing and judo, new changing rooms and conditioning rooms, two squash courts and a variety of social amenities. Building should start in January 2007, in good time for our sportsmen to be ready for the Olympic Games in 2012!

On Top of the World



Spectacular scenery greeted a group of thirty-eight boys who took part in a World Challenge expedition to Morocco. One group joined a trek to Jebel Sahro on the edge of the Sahara Desert, another went to the Todra Gorge region where the canyon towers an impressive 300m on either side, whilst the third group reached the 3,305m summit of Jebel Siroua. The whole group were able to spend time in Marrakech where they included a visit to the *suuqs* in their itinerary.



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Abroad

Scenes from some of the recent foreign visits made by the School



More photographs from Morocco.



Members of the Classics Department on a visit to Crete, seen here with the Venetian fortress of Spinalonga in the background.



The Brass Band playing in the town square in Alkmaar, Holland.



The Carpathian Mountains in Romania provide an impressive backdrop to this party of Moldovan schoolchildren holidaying here with a sixth-form group from Abingdon.



Horse trekking in Spain during a geography trip to the Gredos Mountains last September.

Remembrance Day

The school community gathered outside Big School just before 11 o' clock on Remembrance Day to observe the two minutes silence. The CCF paraded the Union flag and the School's colours which were lowered as a mark of respect to all those who lost their lives in two world wars.



Christmas Tea Party

The highlight of this term's Community Service programme was the tea party on 6 December for 125 elderly residents of Abingdon. Boys of all ages worked together to organise the entertainments, which included a quiz and a raffle together with a musical interlude and the singing of carols.



Open Day

The School opened its doors to the public on Saturday 30 September for the main Open Day of the year, providing visitors with an opportunity to see the wide range of facilities available to boys.



Among the visitors were Terence Charley OA and Maxwell Laybourne OA, who both left School in 1933.



Music IT Suite



Ceramics Studio



Workshop

Arts

Pericles

The end-of-term Senior School production in the Amey Theatre gave audiences the opportunity to see one of Shakespeare's rarely performed plays, *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, in an imaginative staging by Alison Quick. Max Hutchinson, gave a highly accomplished performance in the title role of *Pericles*.



The Big Draw

Fourth-form artists joined a life-drawing workshop as part of this year's *Big Draw*. Paul Blandford, from the Royal Academy of Arts Outreach workshop, led the group who produced some inspired work.



Future Talent

Katharine, Duchess of Kent, attended a concert in the Amey Theatre in aid of her charity, *Future Talent*, which helps musically gifted children. Introduced by the actor Jeremy Irons, the guitarists Raymond Burley and Gordon Giltrap, played a mix of classical and modern pieces.



Fiddler on the Roof

A week after the staging of *Pericles*, **Ash Verjee** (OA 1997) directed a production of *Fiddler on the Roof* in the studio theatre at St Helen's. The show's dairyman hero, Tevye, was played with great gusto by Sam Johnson, who was very well supported by the rest of the cast. Musical direction was by St Helen's director of music, Helena Rakowski.



Film Unit

Budding producers learning their craft on the Abingdon Film Unit's training trip to Bognor last term.



Christmas Concerts

The First Orchestra performed Wagner's *Meistersinger* overture, Walton's *Crown Imperial*, and accompanied Timothy Chu in an impressive performance of the first movement of Schumann's *Piano Concerto in A Minor*, in two well attended concerts at the end of last term.



Concert, St John's, Smith Square, Monday 3 July. The First Orchestra will perform a selection from the repertoire they will take to China on their tour, which starts two days later on 5 July.

Rugby

This has been one of the School's most successful rugby seasons which, on the afternoon of Saturday 15 October, saw all fifteen teams victorious in their matches against opponents Stowe, Rugby and Josca's. The 1st XV won a total of nine of their fourteen matches last term and made it to the fourth round of the Daily Mail Cup. The Junior Colts A XV have made it to the last sixteen of the Daily Mail Under 15 Cup and will be playing Wellington College in January. The most successful team of the term were the Junior B XV who won all ten of their matches.



1st XV Results

Oratory	W	19 – 13
Shiplake	W	23 – 3
St Paul's	L	3 – 8
Henley College	W	33 – 0
Bedford School	W	8 – 7
MCS	W	13 – 3
Stowe	W	13 – 7
John Hampden GS	W	13 – 0
Pangbourne	L	0 – 3
Bedford Modern	W	20 – 14
MCS	L	12 – 17
St Edward's	L	5 – 47
Radley	L	7 – 17
Marlborough	W	18 – 5

Boat Club

The Boat Club attended a training camp in America during the autumn half term, in advance of the Head of the Charles Regatta in Boston. Impressive performances saw the 1st VIII finish 13th overall out a total of sixty-one crews. In the High School Division, they came second, just 1.5 seconds behind the winners, St John's High School, and well in front of other British school crews - Bedford Modern, Radley and Westminster. The 2nd VIII came a creditable 35th out of fifty-one crews. Both results bode very well for the forthcoming rowing season.



Cross Country

Two cross country teams attended the tough relay races run at Dr Challoner's on 30 November. The Abingdon A team came fourth overall, our best result to date in this event, with Neil Houlshby achieving the best Abingdon time of 9.38.



The 750th anniversary logo incorporates symbols from some of the people and institutions that have played a significant part in the School's history.

In 1563, the sixty-three year old John Roysse gave £50 to build a schoolroom that was to be sixty-three feet long and able to house a school for sixty-three boys. In itself, this was a relatively small sum of money but it ensured that Abingdon School was able to survive the financial hardship that had followed the dissolution of Abingdon Abbey in 1538. Roysse also endowed the School with property in Birchin Lane in the City of London. The income from the rent supported the School for three hundred years. It is appropriate that Roysse's griffen, with its mark of difference, a red rose on the shoulder, should be at the centre of the School's Coat of Arms and of our 750th anniversary logo.

On 8 February, at 7.30, the old schoolroom will be the venue for a Chamber Concert given by some of the School's leading ensemble players. Roysse Room, Guildhall, Abingdon. Admission free.

The Borough of Abingdon adopted the cross patonce of Abingdon Abbey in its own Coat of Arms. The Borough, which in 2006 celebrates the 450th anniversary of its incorporation by Royal Charter, was jointly responsible with Christ's Hospital for the administration of the School from 1563 until the educational reforms of the late 19th Century.



Pembroke College, Oxford, was founded in 1624 in part by a £5,000 bequest from Thomas Tesdale OA, for boys educated at Abingdon School. The teasel in his Coat of Arms is a punning reference to his name. Tesdale also endowed the post of assistant master at the School, a position known for centuries as that of the Tesdale Usher.

On 29 June there will be an evening reception in Pembroke, introduced by Michael St John Parker – former headmaster - who will talk about the historic links between the College and Abingdon School.



ABINGDON



The 750th Anniversary



The martlet derives from the arms of Abingdon Abbey. The School owes its origins to the Abbey which, first founded in 675, was re-established as a Benedictine abbey in 950. Abingdon School may well date from this period but the earliest surviving reference to it is dated 1256 and records the endowment created by Abbot John de Blosneville for the support of thirteen poor scholars.

St Edmund of Abingdon, whose father was an official of the Abbey, would have received his first education at the School. At 6.30 on St Edmund's Day, 16 November, Benedictine monks from Douai Abbey will sing Latin Vespers in St Nicolas Church, the extra-mural church of Abingdon Abbey, built for the benefit of the lay community, whose earliest rectors seem likely to have been headmasters of the School. Later that evening, the monks will sing Compline in the School Chapel.



The Calvary cross represents Christ's Hospital of Abingdon which, at the granting of its charter in 1553, was charged with the maintenance of the grammar school. The Master and Governors of Christ's Hospital have supported the School over the centuries, especially between 1608 and 1870 when they were responsible for appointing and supporting the Tesdale Usher and the six Bennett scholars.

On 7 June, Nigel Hammond, the Honorary Archivist of Christ's Hospital, will conduct a walking tour of Abingdon that will take in the Hospital's beautiful 15th-century Hall. The Hall will also be open to the public on English Heritage Open Day, Saturday 9 September.



The figure of the Virgin marks Abingdon's association with the Mercers' Company. The Mercers, today conspicuous as a philanthropic corporation devoted to education, are benefactors of the School. The association has its origins in the will of John Roysse but it has only become significant since the 1970s.

Josca's Preparatory School, symbolised by the unicorn, joined the Abingdon Foundation in 1997 when it became Abingdon's Junior School. Josca's began life in Oxford as a small private school for fewer than ten boys, one of whom was nicknamed Josca. Josca's celebrates its 50th Anniversary in 2006.

*A programme of 750 events will be published in January
For details of all 750 events: www.abingdon.org.uk/go/750
For all enquiries: 750@abingdon.org.uk*

The Abingdon School Society - TASS

The Abingdon School Society 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. All parents are automatically members of TASS and the committee includes parents, staff and governors.

SUS - as good as new!

Well perhaps not quite (we are, after all, talking boys' uniform here!), but you'll be amazed at what bargains there are to be found in the second hand uniform shop (SUS). The shop is manned by parents and sells items, either on behalf of parents or items unclaimed from lost property. SUS is open between 12.15 and 1.15 on the following dates

Saturdays 14 Jan. 4, 25 Feb. 25 March
Wednesdays 18 Jan. 8 Feb. 8 March



The SUS shop is situated on the ground floor at the end of Hamilton's House Room.

Lost Property

Lost property comes to SUS (Second hand uniform scheme) after it has been in the school lost property system for six weeks. It is then listed and the details are passed to the boys' housemasters so that they can be reminded to collect it. To reclaim the property there is a charge of 50p (£2 for a complete games bag). If it remains unclaimed for a further half-term it is sold in aid of school funds.

Open Day

Open Day, held in October, proved to be a good fundraising event with well over £1,000 (raised by serving lunch and refreshments) going to the TASS coffers.



Tom (right) celebrates his scaling of Kilimanjaro

TASS: Making a difference

Each year, boys leaving the Upper Sixth are invited to apply for TASS/Tappins Travel Awards to support them in their gap year projects, whether they are concerned with community, charity or personal development. (Awards are in the region of £100 to £500.)

Tom Sykes, who received an award in 2002, has written of his experience –

“My gap year, spent for the most part in Africa, is one I shall never forget and left me more prepared to cope with life's surprises. It's one of the most amazing things I've done.” Tom, who left Abingdon in 2002 is now studying Geography at Southampton University.

Tom joined Africa Asia Venture, a leading 'year-out' organization which for three months involved teaching English in a primary school in northern Tanzania.

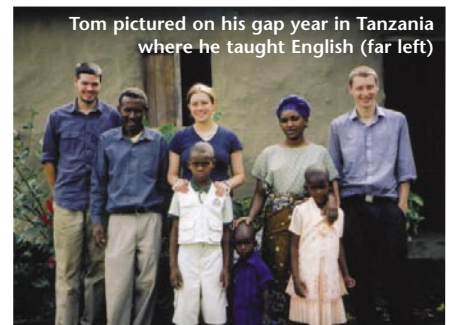
The highlight of his trip was climbing all 5,895 metres of Kilimanjaro. After five days of trekking through difficult and varied terrain, the last assault involved an eight hour slog up a 70 degree scree slope to the summit. The exhaustion, however, was worth it for the sheer exhilaration and sense of achievement.

“We stood at the summit, did the obligatory photos, had the clichéd kiss and watched Africa slowly appear out of the cloud. It was amazing, really beautiful...”

Tom rounded off his gap year by white-water rafting in Uganda and a safari in the Serengeti.

“My gap year gave me many things but above all else it gave me independence, confidence and the knowledge that I can cope with most situations and make new friends.

“Travelling through somewhere does not compare to actually living in a community - feeling and understanding a new way of life - and above all making close friends”.



Tom pictured on his gap year in Tanzania where he taught English (far left)

Calling Dads!

The TASS committee always welcomes new blood but as the number of men on the committee is few and far between, it would be particularly nice if there were any dads out there with an interest in joining our throng. It is after all a boys' school and male input is welcomed!

Membership of the committee need not be onerous and it gives you an insight into the workings of the School that you might not otherwise have.

If you would like to be involved in any way, big or small, please contact tass@abingdon.org.uk or come along to the next meeting, initially on a no commitment basis, on 17 January at 8pm in the Christ's Hospital Room, Mercers' Court.

Burns Supper

A highlight in the TASS calendar is Burns Night, held in Oxford Town Hall, and at the time of going to press all the tickets were sold out. We hope, however, to have pictures and a report of the event in the next magazine.

Look up TASS under the welcome tag on the Abingdon School website

www.abingdon.org.uk

Advent Service

The annual Advent Carol Service was enjoyed by all at Josca's. The programme contained a variety of performances from soloists to carols performed by all boys from Year 3 to Year 8. The main musical items were linked by instrumental groups and readings delivered by the boys.



Art Workshop

Josca's undertakes various trips throughout the year involving all the year groups in the school. A number of our senior boys were involved in an art workshop held at Radley College

Rugby Results



A praiseworthy set of results can be found on the Josca's website - www.joscas.org.uk

Toddle Waddle



The annual 'Toddle Waddle' for charity took place with much enthusiasm.

Nativity Play – The Raggedy King



The Raggedy King tells the story of a group of shepherds waiting for the coming of a new king. On arrival, David is dismayed to find it is a stable and not a palace! When he sets eyes on the baby Jesus, he realises a king can be humble.

The entire pre-prep department took part in the production, learning songs with actions, the children also played a variety of instruments. The soloists were outstanding, particularly Darius Oraee who played David.

The staff were immensely proud of the children, as were the parents of our budding thespians.

How to Age 350 Years in 43

How is it that we celebrated our 400th anniversary in 1963 and are now, forty-three years later, celebrating our 750th? The answer lies in the fact that in 1963 we celebrated the quatercentenary of John Roysse's re-endowment whereas in 2006 we are celebrating the 750th anniversary of the earliest surviving reference to the School in a Charter of Abingdon Abbey dated 1256. The Charter refers to Abbot John de Blosneville's will in which he created an endowment for the support of thirteen poor scholars. James Cobban, headmaster in 1963, who was always aware of the School's medieval origins, discovered this 1256 reference during the quatercentenary year itself and was able to mention it in his 1963 publication, *Church and School*.

Headmaster James Cobban introduces Princess Margaret to the prefects when she visited the School, 14 June 1963, for the Quatercentenary celebrations



Abingdon 750, OA Open Day

No Tumbled House and *Letters to America*

On Saturday 22 April the School will host a special 750th Anniversary OA Open Day. Following lunch, *No Tumbled House* (1955) and *Letters to America* (1955) will be shown in the Amey Theatre. In addition, the boarding houses and the Boat House will be open and the 1st XI will be playing cricket against Eton on War Memorial Field. It is hoped that as many OAs as possible will come back to visit the School on this day.

Further details will be announced in the Abingdon 750 programme, which will be published at the end of January.

A scene from *No Tumbled House* 1963



Zanzibar and the Slave Trade

In 1858, **General Christopher Palmer Rigby** (OA 1833), was appointed the East India Company's agent in the British Protectorate of Zanzibar. Although the slave trade and slavery had been abolished within the British Empire, it still flourished along the east coast of Africa. Making full use of his limited powers, Rigby worked tirelessly to suppress the trafficking in, and ownership of, slaves by British subjects in Zanzibar. He is credited with liberating more than 8,000 men, women and children during the three years he spent on the island.

This photograph of General Rigby in 1860 has recently come into the School's possession.
© Royal Geographical Society

Wilton Smith

A set of four chased, silver-gilt salt cellars and spoons, together with two silver sauce boats and ladles, have been donated to the School by the Royal Kensington Masonic Lodge in memory of one of their members, **Wilton Beresford Smith** (OA 1928) who died at the age of ninety in 2001. The gift commemorates Wilton's life-long attachment to the School about which he wrote in 2001, "I am eternally grateful for being educated at Abingdon". Wilton Smith was a founder member of the John Roysse Lodge, which was established in 1963.





OA Sixties Dinner, 28 October 2005

David Brice (1961) organised a naval mess dinner at the Royal Naval Club and Royal Albert Yacht Club in Portsmouth, to celebrate the 200th Anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar. It was a very successful evening and saw a larger-than-usual attendance of 38. From 1959: David Morris; 1960: Tony Dillabough, James Milne, Randell Moll, Michael Neilan, Bob Shepard; 1961: Rupert Allison, Richard Bampton, Roger Bampton, Michael Bett, David Brice, David Goodwin, Roger Havelock, Richard Hook, Jeremy Hurd, Terence Libby, David Pepler, Rodney Pitt, David Riddick; 1962: John Bunce, Anthony Leathem, Christopher Scott, Peter Sheard, John Talbot; 1963: Adrian Burn, Tym Marsh; 1964: Richard Leathem, Michael Livingston; 1965: John Dunthorne, John Mellor; 1966: Martyn Holloway, David Letley, Ken Mein, Mike Spencer; and, from 1967: Grenville Collings and Ian Stevens. Former Common Room, Keith Holloway (1950-67) and Former School Bursar, Rory Jackson (1995-2005) also attended the event.

Richard Bampton looks forward to welcoming members to lunch and an air display at Old Warden Park, Bedfordshire on 1 October 2006. For further information please contact Richard at: anglarichard@hotmail.com or the Club office.

Message from New Chairman, John Bunce (1962)

On Friday 7 July - the first day of the OA weekend - and as part of the School's 750th Anniversary celebrations, the Abingdon Alligators will play the Lord's Taverners on War Memorial Field. A strong Alligators XI will play a team of international cricketers and celebrities. If you are interested in taking a table, please contact me on 07768 374925 or john.bunce@anite.com

Full details of all 750 events will be circulated at the end of January.

Professional Development Awards

The 2005 recipients were: Kelvin Cheung (1999) Neil Fisher (1997), Martin Gee (2002), Matthew Hawksworth (2000), Tom Hester (1999), Andrew Roberts (2002), and Ben Warner (2000). Contact the Office if you would like an application form for the 2006 Awards.

OA Day

The Pre-1959 Reunion took place on Saturday 8th October coinciding with the School's Open Day. It was a wonderful gathering of over 85 OAs and guests including: 1933: Terence Charley and Maxwell Laybourne; 1934: Fred Wiggins; 1937: George Peck; 1938: Norman Holmes; 1939: Robert Jackson and Hugh Lunghi; 1941: Bill Bradfield, Philip Carter; 1942: Donald Hayter, Geoffrey Hill, Edward Lay, John McMahon, John Rayson; 1943: Ian Crudgington, Peter Keys; 1944: David Barrett, Gordon Dodge, Peter Jones, Lionel Lacey-Johnson, Derek Slingsby; 1945: Rodney Deval, Peter King, Guy Willson; 1946: John Platnauer; 1947: Basil Margrave, Robert Pezaro; 1948: Barry Budden, David Wheaton; 1950: Robin Grant, Michael Heavens, Ivor Juggins, Brian Wiggins; 1951: Robert Acklam, David Heavens, Bev Stevens; 1952: David Andrews, Geoffrey Crockford, John Hullett, Michael Matthews, John Norman; 1953: David Banfield, Colin Brown, Hugh Leach, Robin Mills, Norman Shurrock, Barrie Whiteford; 1954: Jeffrey Heavens, David Shaw, Kenneth Smith; 1955:

Richard Griffith; 1956: Graham Gingell; 1957: Bill Broad, Graham Brown, Nigel Hammond, Brian Smith; 1958: Alan Aitchison; 1959: Andrew Rowles and Patrick Wyatt. Amongst the Former Common Room were Brenda Coleman, Diana Griffin, Keith and Audrey Hasnip, Tim King, Bill and Angela Potter and Hugh Randolph.

Guests met for coffee in the Ingham Room, a buffet lunch was served in the Dining Hall and during the afternoon *Days in June*, a film about four OAs killed in the battle for Normandy made by the Abingdon Film Unit, was shown in the Amey Theatre.

From Darshan Puri (2003)

The 9th Cronk-Cunis annual U21 Old Boys Rugby tournament took place on 4th of September. A large squad of Old Abingdonians travelled to Richmond to compete in this prestigious event. Our first opponents, Bryanston, turned up with too few players forcing us into playing a ten-a-side game. Next we defeated Bishop's Stortford. A memorable try came from Andrew Marsh (2004). In the quarterfinal we defeated Downside, the turning point coming when Henry Monsell (2003) broke several tackles to score under the posts. Our backs in this game were well marshalled by Jeremy Mather (2001), whose tactical kicking and intelligent lines of running posed problems for the opposition. We lost to a strong and well-drilled Stonyhurst side in the semi final, despite courageous and aggressive tackling from many individuals, in particular Justin Henley (2003).

The whole tournament was played in super spirit and it is a great opportunity to defeat old adversaries and meet up with other OAs. If you are interested in playing in 2006 contact me at: darshpuri@aol.com or Andrew Marsh: marshyas@hotmail.com

Some OA Club Dates for your Diary

Fri. 7th July: Alligators v Lord's Taverners

Sat. 8th July: President's Dinner 2006

Sat. 30th September: 1970-1979 Reunion and School Open Day

City Lunches

Matthias Bader (1999) has taken over organising the City Lunches from Jack Wearne (1998) who has done a great job of coordinating the Lunches for the past two years. Thank you Jack! If you would like to make sure you are on the email list for the next lunch, please contact Matthias at matthias.bader@hawkpoint.com.

Deaths

Patrick Collings (1933), Timothy Greader (1958), Keith Haarhoff (1960) and Sir George Sinclair (1931). A Memorial Service for Keith Haarhoff will be held in the chapel of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, on Sat 18 March at 2.00pm. A Reception will follow in the Bowden Room at the Finella Building on Grange Rd.

Due to ill health, Hugh Randolph has resigned as Membership Secretary and Editor of *Griffen*.

If you have any news, please contact Marilena Kaye at the School
Tel: +44 (0)1235 849074 Email: administrator@oaclub.org.uk

Old Abingdonians

Sir George Sinclair

Sir George Sinclair (OA 1931), one of the brightest stars among that pre-war group of Abingdonians known as the 'Grundy boys', died on 21 September 2005 aged 92. He came to Abingdon in 1923 and by the time he left he was Head of School, Captain of Boats, Cricket and Rugby and winner of the Pembroke Scholarship. After Oxford, he joined the Colonial Service and served with the Royal West African Frontier Force during the Second World War. He was knighted in 1960 for his work with the Colonial Service from which he resigned in 1961. In 1964 he became Conservative MP for Dorking, gravitating to the liberal wing of the party and becoming an active campaigner on human rights and environmental issues. He retained strong links with Abingdon becoming a member of the Governing Body in 1969 of which he was Chairman from 1972 to 1980. Michael St John Parker has written a full obituary of Sir George in this year's Abingdonian.



Sir George on Founders' Day, 4 April 2003, with the Heads of School, William Allan and Nicholas Herbert.

Our Man in Moldova

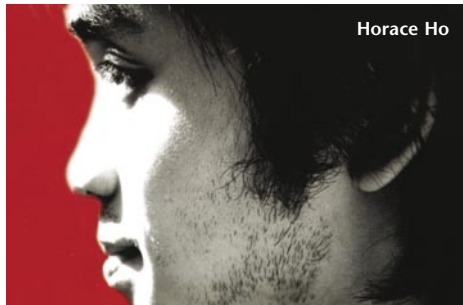
John Beyer (OA 1968), has been appointed Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Republic of Moldova and will take up his appointment in January 2006. John began his career with Amnesty International, after which he spent two years as a Chinese language teacher at the University of Westminster. He was appointed Deputy Director of the Sino-British Trade Council in 1984 and Director of the China-Britain Trade Group in 1991. He entered the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in 1999.



John Beyer with Princess Anne

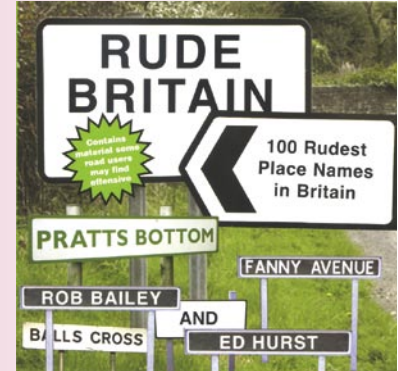
Oxford in Shanghai

Horace Ho (OA 2004), has recently had an exhibition of his work at the *I.Studio*, Shanghai. The exhibition was based around the concept of *Yuanfeng*, an untranslatable Chinese word referring to the 'wired' connection that exists between some people, leading their lives to collide at significant moments, usually to the benefit of both parties.



Horace was born in Shanghai and first came to England in 2002 when he entered the Sixth form at Abingdon. He has applied the term *Yuanfeng* to his paintings of Oxford, where he is currently reading Engineering Science at Keble.

It's All in the Mind



Following two year's extensive etymological research into the derivation of British place names, **Rob Bailey** (OA 1990) and Ed Hurst have produced a collection of one hundred town and village names which, if you didn't know any better, you might think sounded vulgar. Despite the book's name, *Rude Britain*, the authors assure us that their toponymical studies have been motivated by nothing but academic curiosity and that if there appear to be any unfortunate connotations attached to such names as Pratts Bottom – an inoffensive village within the London Borough of Bromley – it is all in the reader's mind.



Rob Bailey