



"All is for the best in the best of all possible worlds," claims Dr Pangloss in Voltaire's *Candide* – the spectacular Joint Senior Drama Production with St Helen's at the end of last term. The vicissitudes of fortune force our hero to travel the world, unlike Abingdon pupils whose studies and interests have taken them to no less exotic locations – from the bottom of the sea to the heart of the jungle. ■ Read all about it on page 4.



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Out of the Past



Music

Tuesday 29 January

School Organists' Joint Recital

5 pm: School Chapel

Thursday 31 January

New Year's Charity Concert

7 pm: Amey Theatre

Tickets: £6, £4 (concessions), £16 family

Wednesday 20 February

Chamber Music Evening

7 pm: Charles Maude Room

Friday 22 February

Evensong

Chapel Choir will sing Evensong

6 pm: Keble College Chapel

Tuesday 26 February

Abingdon 'Big Sing' Choral Concert

7 pm: School Chapel

Wednesday 27 February

Woodwind Masterclass with Paul Harris

7 pm: Charles Maude Room

Wednesday 6 March

Music Scholars' Concert No. 3

7 pm: Charles Maude Room

Friday 15 March

Singers' Platform

7 pm: Charles Maude Room

Drama

Tuesday 29, Wednesday 30 January

The Pardoner's Tale

Third-year drama production

7 pm: Abingdon Drama Studio

Check details of all these events on the calendar at:
abingdon.org.uk

Lectures

Monday 4 February

Is it Fair to Punish Criminals?

Consciousness, freedom and the Implications for Criminality

Deborah Bennison

4 pm: Charles Maude Room

Thursday 21 February

How Can We Cure Neurodegeneration?

Professor Kevin Talbot, Nuffield Department of Clinical Neurosciences, University of Oxford

6.30 pm: Amey Theatre

Thursday 28 February

Vergil

James Morwood, Emeritus Fellow of Wadham College, University of Oxford

6.30 pm: Charles Maude Room

Monday 4 March

Architecture and Design

Phillip Johnson, OA 1990, project architect for the London 2012 Olympic athletics stadium

4 pm: Amey Theatre

Tuesday 5 March

Chemistry of the Transition Metals

Ian Middleton,

Head of Chemistry, Abingdon School

4 pm: Room S21, Science School

Wednesday 13 March

Professor Frank Close

Emeritus Fellow of Exeter College and former Professor of Physics at the University of Oxford

5.30 pm: Amey Theatre

ASPA

www.abingdon.org.uk/aspa

Friday 1 February

Fifth-Year Parents' Supper

7 pm: The Parasol, Market Square, Abingdon

Friday 8 March

Lower School Parents' Event

Details to be announced

Friday 17 May

All-School Quiz Night

Sports Centre Hospitality Suite

Friday 7 June

All-School End-of-Year Dinner

Pembroke College, Oxford

Tickets £40 per person

Events

31 January to 21 April

Abingdon to Zanzibar – an A to Z of Abingdon and Abingdonians over 450 Years

An exhibition looking at the School and some of its famous pupils to mark the 450th anniversary of John Roysse's endowment of Abingdon School in 1563.

Abingdon County Hall Museum

Open Tuesday – Sunday 10am to 4 pm

Admission Free

31 January to 12 December

A History of Abingdon School in 63 Objects

A website history uploaded twice a week, term time only, until the end of the year

www.abingdon.org.uk/63objects

Wednesday 27 February

Private View: Abingdon – Zanzibar

6 pm: Abingdon County Hall Museum

Michael St John Parker, Headmaster of

Abingdon School 1975 – 2001, will give a talk afterwards about the above exhibition.

7 pm: Roysse Room, Abingdon Guild Hall

Admission Free – All welcome

Friday 1 March

Playing the Moldovans at Tennis

A public screening of Tony Hawks' film in which the comedian accepts a bet to see if he can beat every player in the Moldovan football team at tennis. The screening will be followed by a Question and Answer session.

Money raised will go to support the School's Moldovan charities.

7 pm: Amey Theatre

Wednesday 13 March

Copenhagen

Michael Frayn's play, based on the 1941 meeting in Copenhagen between Niels Bohr and Werner Heisenberg, will be performed as a staged reading by Abingdon's Studio Theatre Club as part of the Oxford Science Festival.

The performance will be followed by a Question and Answer session chaired by Professor Frank Close.

Tickets: £5 available at

www.scienceoxfordlive.com or 01865 810000

7.30 pm: Amey Theatre

FASBC

www.abingdon.org.uk/fasbc

Saturday 9 March

Annual Boat Club Dinner

Details to be announced

7.30 pm: Charles Maude Room followed by Dining Hall

Staff profile: Lesley Bosley Attendance Secretary

Lesley Bosley started at the school in 1997 working in the Registry. She then moved to the Masters' Common Room as secretary. She is now working as the School's Attendance Secretary and is also secretary to David Wickes, the Deputy Head Pastoral. In her role as Attendance Secretary, Lesley has to follow up any absences. She will admit that the phone was very busy at the end of the last term with all the seasonal ailments that hit the School.



Lesley is a Scot from Aberdeen. Her childhood was spent moving around with her family, as her father was in the RAF – they had two postings to Germany and one to Aden. It was the RAF that brought her to Abingdon where she has been ever since – working in a number of businesses, including her husband's butchery business, before coming to work at the School. Lesley has three grown up children. She enjoys singing and has belonged to various choirs and is currently with the Albert Park Singers. She is a member of the Green Gym, and also likes to play Scrabble, which reflects her love of words. ■

Copenhagen

Abingdon's Studio Theatre Club will perform Michael Frayn's *Copenhagen* in the Amey Theatre on 13 March as part of the Oxford Science Festival. The play focuses on the meeting between Niels Bohr and Werner Heisenberg in Copenhagen in September 1941. Once colleagues in the field of nuclear research the war had made them enemies – what did they talk about? The play has a particular resonance for the town of Abingdon and for the School as many of the scientists working in the same field as Bohr and Heisenberg later worked at AERE Harwell and sent their sons to Abingdon School.



Niels Bohr and
Walter Heisenberg

After the play there will be a question and answer session chaired by Professor Frank Close who is writing a biography of Bruno Pontecorvo, a Harwell scientist who sent his son to the School before defecting to the Soviet Union in 1950. ■

Tickets: £5 available at www.scienceoxfordlive.com or 01865 810000



Sir Andrew Hugh Smith

Sir Andrew Hugh Smith, who died on 3 October aged 81, was a Governor of Abingdon School from 1998-2006. A senior partner in the stockbroking firm Capel-Cure Myers, he was chairman of the London Stock Exchange from 1988-1994 and oversaw the changes made necessary by Big Bang, the deregulation of financial markets and the introduction of electronic, screen-based trading. ■



Portrait of John Roysse in the Amey Theatre, painted for the bicentenary in 1763

1563-2013

450 Years of Benefaction at Abingdon School

To mark 450 years since the first of a number of large benefactions that helped to establish the modern school, *A History of Abingdon School in 63 Objects* will go live on the School's website on 31 January with new objects uploaded every term-time Tuesday and Thursday throughout the year. Why 63? It was on the 31 January 1563, his 63rd birthday, that John Roysse signed an indenture endowing Abingdon School with money and property for a school that he hoped would have 63 free scholars in a schoolroom that he knew was 15 x 63 feet. The number 63 has maintained its significance for the School, which is why a party of boys is set to walk 63 miles in 24 hours over the 28 / 29 April, and why the school bell will sound 63 times to ring them home.

There will be an exhibition *Abingdon to Zanzibar – a history of Abingdon and Abingdonians over 450 years* at Abingdon County Hall Museum from 31 January until 21 April 2013.

On Wednesday 27 February Michael St John Parker, headmaster 1975-2001, will give a talk to accompany the exhibition. ■

Abingdon County Hall Museum 7.30 pm
www.abingdon.org.uk/63objects

"They say travel broadens the mind; but you must have the mind." *GK Chesterton 1929*

Learning About China

Third and Fourth-year linguists studying Mandarin visited China during half term and saw for themselves both its ancient and its modern cultures. They stayed initially at the university in Xi'an where their morning routine began with an hour of Tai Chi followed by two hours of Mandarin. Whilst in Xi'an they visited the Terracotta Army, took a bicycle ride along a section of the ancient city walls and practised their haggling skills at local markets. In Beijing they visited the Great Wall and the Summer Palace and were all very interested to see the Olympic Park. ■



Experiencing India



Lower-sixth geographers spent ten days in India last summer visiting Delhi, Agra, Jaipur and Mumbai, acquiring an insight into this fast-moving country and seeing at first hand the quality of its education and the ambition of its students. They also saw something of the challenges caused by rural poverty and deprivation and by the extremes of weather. ■

Lessons in Greece

The large party of 59 classicists who went to Greece over half term spent eight days in glorious sunshine visiting many of the major sites of antiquity – Athens, Delphi, Olympia, Epidaurus, Mycenae – all with a remarkable absence of other visitors. At a number of the locations the boys were given a talk about the site from one of their group – which certainly concentrated the minds of those doing the talking! ■



Diving in Egypt

An underwater group photograph of the boys who went on a diving course in Dahab on the Sinai Peninsula last summer. The aim was to complete their PADI instruction courses, which they all achieved. ■



Studying in Honduras

Trekking in the rainforest, climbing 40 metre trees to get the view from above the canopy, sleeping in hammocks, eating round camp fires, close encounters with strange-looking animals and insects, and with barracudas, rays and turtles – was all in a day's work for the fifteen biologists who went to Honduras last summer to assist scientists from Operation Wallacea with ecological and conservation research. It was very much a once-in-a-lifetime experience that the boys will never forget. ■





Christmas Tea Party

At the end of last term the community service volunteers hosted a Christmas tea party for some of the senior residents of Abingdon in the dining hall. The guests enjoyed listening to the musical entertainment, participating in the quiz and consuming the delicious Christmas fare. ■

Be the Best You Can Be

Mark Hatton, Britain's fastest Olympian in any sport – the luge, 86.7 mph – launched this year's Be the Best You Can Be campaign to an enthusiastic Lower School already inspired by last summer's Olympic Games. The campaign aims to show children what they can do when they set themselves targets and really push to achieve them. ■



Sponsored Walk



Boys and staff turned out in force on 27 September for the biennial sponsored walk – run, row or kayak – from Donnington Bridge back along the Thames Path to Abingdon. After days of torrential rain the weather was amazingly dry and the boys were able to enjoy a barbecue lunch at the Radley boathouse before completing their journey. The money raised will be split between AGAPE, which works with young children in Moldova, the British Red Cross, Alzheimer Research UK and Breakthrough Breast Cancer. ■



Remembrance Day

Despite the driving rain, the CCF paraded and the whole school stood in silence for two minutes on 12 November to remember the dead of the two world wars. At a service earlier in the Amey Theatre, the Heads of School read out the names of OAs killed in the two world wars and later laid wreaths of poppies under the memorials in the School Chapel. ■

Open Day

Blessed with sunny weather, there were crowds of visitors for Open Day on 29 September. One of the most attractive aspects of this occasion is the way the boys are always so happy to demonstrate life at Abingdon to their young visitors. ■





Theatre Studies in Japan

The group of theatre studies students who went to Japan last summer enjoyed one of the richest cultural experiences of their lives. They had training in Bunraku puppetry, which involved learning the shamisen – a three stringed Japanese guitar – the koto – a Japanese harp – and chanting. Calligraphy, flower arranging and the Japanese tea ceremony gave them still more experiences of old Japan but their visits to karaoke establishments and pachinko parlours – amusement arcades – ensured they didn't miss out on the new. ■



Candide

Cast, choreography, set and staging – not to mention the composer Leonard Bernstein, the original author Voltaire and the director Jeremy Taylor – combined to produce a fantastic evening in the Amey Theatre at the end of last term when actors from Abingdon and St Helen's put on the operetta *Candide*.

By turns humorous and profound, tragic and lyrical, the production accurately captured the essence of this enlightenment novel.

Christopher Young was extremely professional in the pivotal role of Voltaire / Dr Pangloss, switching effortlessly between the two and never leaving any doubt as to which character he was.

He was wonderfully supported by Toby Marlow as Candide and Heather Condor as Cunegonde and by the rest of the talented and versatile cast.



Warp Cops scoops Best Animation Award



The epic, animated, all-action spoof movie *Warp Cops* won the Best Animation Award at the Bradford Animation Festival in November. Like the Oscars, it's prestigious enough to be nominated – to win is a triumph! Made by AFU members Michael Bicarregui, Chris Mears and Oliver Sayeed, *Warp Cops* also won the Best Animation Award at the Wheatley Park Film Festival where another AFU film, *Under My Skin* – made by James Gordon with Kia Little and Isabel Kynoch from St Helen's – won the best documentary award. ■



Both films can be seen on the AFU website: www.abingdonfilmunit.com



Tate Modern

Success at GCSE Art depends on evidence of independent learning, which is why fourth-year artists visited Tate Modern on 22 November. Having designed their own personal tours of the gallery, they were free to complete first-hand research into artists who stimulated their interest. ■



The Big Sculpt

The Big Sculpt workshop saw groups of Third, Fourth and Fifth Year pupils, work in teams and enjoy the challenge of producing large 3D line drawings out of withies.

The inspiration for their work was that of the conceptual contemporary artist Michael Craig-Martin whose *An Oak Tree*, 1974, is now recognised as being a turning point in the development of conceptual art. ■



1984

Inspired by studying the play for GCSE Drama whilst at Abingdon, Ash Verjee, OA 1997, directed a joint production of *1984* at St Helen's at the end of last term. Joe Westcott and Georgia Aynsley played Winston Smith and Julia, lovers who dream of rebellion against the Party but who cannot ultimately hold out against Big Brother. It was a tense and gripping performance by a cast of skilled and passionate actors. ■



Chapel Choir at Mercers' Hall

With their rendition of Psalm 19 and the Purcell anthem *Thy word is a lantern unto my feet*, the Chapel Choir moved the congregation of the Mercers' Chapel to applause at the service before the Company's General Court meeting on 30 November. Abingdon School is associated with the Mercers' Company through our sixteenth-century benefactor John Roysse, and 2013 sees the 450th anniversary of his benefaction. ■



Christmas Concerts

The two concerts at the end of last term brought the first part of the musical year to a triumphant conclusion, epitomised by Henry Binning's virtuoso performance of the finale from Gershwin's *Piano Concerto in F*. In fact, choirs, bands, orchestras, quartets, soloists and ensembles all gave of their impressive best – as did the audience – and the collection at the end raised a significant sum for the charity *Nightingales Children's Project Romania*, which is run by Ben Wells, OA 2000. ■



Christodoulou's Win House Singing Competition

Directed by Jacopo Blumberg and accompanied at the piano by Joe Ereaut, Christodoulou's won this year's House Singing Competition with their rendition of *Some Nights* by Fun. Lower School came second with *Drive By* by Train and Davies's third with *The Cave* by Mumford and Sons. ■



Rugby

Abingdon fielded 23 rugby teams last season; they played a total of 216 matches, won 121 (60%), lost 88 and drew 7, an average of 24 points a match as opposed to 17 a match for their opponents – a huge achievement all round. At half term, the 1st XV had the honour of being invited to attend the St Joseph's National Festival – the premier national schoolboy rugby festival – where they acquitted themselves very well.

A total of six Abingdon U16 players were selected to represent their counties with three of them captaining their teams in different matches – Theo Brophy Clews the Berkshire U16s, and Jamie Pearson and Michael Dewar the Oxfordshire U16s. Later in the term, six U18 players were selected to take part in South West Trials. ■



Fencing

Abingdon's fencers demonstrated their dominance last term: they sent nine players to the Bucks, Berks and Oxon Competition on 14 October and came away with nine medals. They swept the board at both Winchester and Bradfield; at Harrow they won three out of the four matches, thus ending Harrow's four-year unbeaten record; and at the Southern Region Team Championships, the U16s won gold in the Boys' Epee. ■

Boat Club

The senior rowing squad went to Philadelphia over the Michaelmas half term to compete at the Head of the Schuylkill Regatta. The squad were divided into a lightweight and a heavyweight eight, which is how they entered the regatta. From a field of 39, the two Abingdon crews came 3rd and 6th – a very impressive result. ■





Hockey

Abingdon's U16 and U18 squads showed the quality of their play last term; at the local four-school tournament the U18s only lost out to Radley on goal averages, whilst the U16s won the tournament without dropping a single point. It is significant that twenty-six Abingdon players have been selected to attend Junior Academy Centres, the basis of the county squads. It all bodes well for the forthcoming season. ■

Selected for England: Rugby

Fifteen-year-old Theo Brophy Clews has been selected for the England U17 rugby squad for the forthcoming season. Theo, who is a key member of both the Abingdon 1st XV and the Berkshire U16 squad, is also registered with London Irish where he has been identified as one of the 'Gold' group of young players. ■



New Rugby Kit



Selected for England: Hockey

Will Carter Keall, who represented the South of England in their all-conquering team at the Futures Cup, has been picked to represent England in the U16 hockey squad for the Four Nations Invitation Tournament next Easter. ■



Black Belts and National Champions

At the English National Karate Championships in September, Joshua Valentine won bronze for his Kata (forms) and gold for his Kumite (sparring) and was selected to compete at the World Karate Championships for Children, Cadets and Juniors at Novi Sad, Serbia in October.

Magnus Gregory is a U14 National Kayak Champion in six events having won six gold medals at the National Marathon and Sprint Championships last summer.

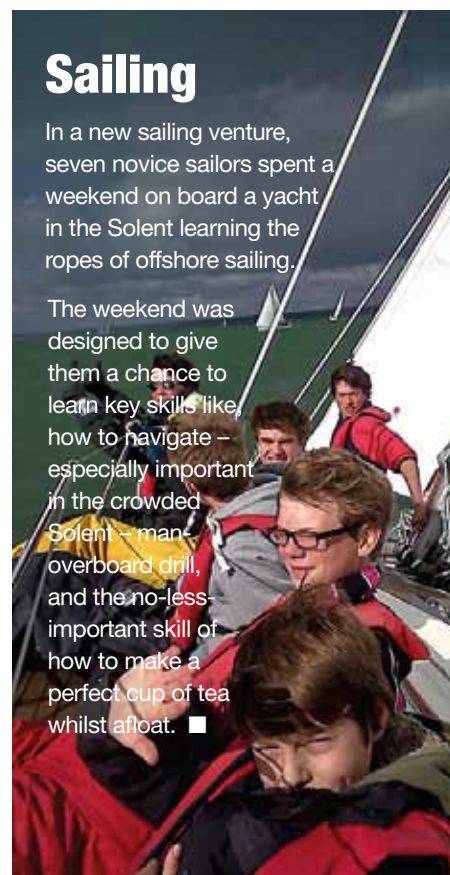
At the UK Championships in Liverpool in November, Thomas Shaw was awarded his black belt in the Korean martial art of Kuk Sool Won. ■



Sailing

In a new sailing venture, seven novice sailors spent a weekend on board a yacht in the Solent learning the ropes of offshore sailing.

The weekend was designed to give them a chance to learn key skills like how to navigate – especially important in the crowded Solent – man-overboard drill, and the no-less-important skill of how to make a perfect cup of tea whilst afloat. ■



Boys and Bushcraft



Years 6 and 8 honed their bushcraft skills this term. Year 6 spent a night out in the wilds of Cornbury Park in Oxfordshire. Boys learnt to build fires, the art of camouflage and trapping and thoroughly enjoyed cooking their meals over the camp fire. ■



Sponsored Swim

On the 24 November, 38 boys from Years 4-8 took part in a sponsored swim at Abingdon School. It was one of the term's major fundraising events for our chosen school charity, Helen and Douglas House. Boys swam a total distance of over 60 miles – equivalent to swimming from Abingdon to Cardiff! Many personal bests were achieved, with ten boys completing a mile and six the maximum 4000m, or 160 lengths. The afternoon was a resounding success and raised in excess of £2,000. ■



Independent Schools Barbarians

Several Abingdon Prep boys were nominated to go to the South East Independent Schools Rugby Trials at the Oratory School in November. Following a training session and two matches in cold and wet conditions, Gus Miller (U11) and Paddy Langdale (U13) were selected for the South East Squad. They played in the South West Squad in a trial match in December for a place in the Southern Regional Squad. Gus and Paddy are the first players from Abingdon Prep to be selected in the School's history. ■

Sculpture Workshop



In October, the Invitation Artist Group took part in a sculpture workshop with local artist Ian Shearman.

The boys created a range of different clay sculptures. Many of the boys chose the theme of heads and learnt how to make an armature using masking tape and newspaper. ■



Portsmouth Historic Dockyard

In September, Year 5 ventured to Portsmouth Historic Dockyard as part of their study of Nelson's navy. The tour around HMS Victory was superb and to stand in the very spot where Nelson was shot provoked many questions from why he wore his full Vice Admiral uniform to how long it took him to die. In keeping with this rather gruesome trend, the Orlop which boasted a full array of primitive surgical instruments, proved popular and the boys were delighted to be able to distinguish the saw used to amputate a leg from that used to cut off an arm. The pace of the day was frenetic with an opportunity to see the original sail cloth from HMS Victory (complete with battle scars), a film depicting ship life in October 1805 (some boys stayed to watch it twice), the museum, to do some sketching and of course a trip to the shop. ■



Firework Chemistry

Year 7 explored some of the chemistry behind this term's firework display investigating the different colours that metal salts give when flame tested. The boys also saw how fireworks get their fizz with iron filings. They were then able to put their new knowledge to good use identifying the colours in the School's fireworks display. ■



Carol Service

Jasper Perry began this year's Carol Service at St Helen's Church in the traditional way with Once in Royal David's City. His beautiful voice created a wonderful atmosphere which was followed by rousing singing from the rest of the School and congregation. Musical items ranged from instrumental groups, choirs and soloists to year group singing and congregational carols, all interspersed with readings. Most of Abingdon Prep's musical ensemble featured including the School Orchestra, Brass and Guitar Groups and Senior, Junior and, of course, the staff Choir 'Glee Club'. It was a thoroughly enjoyable evening and a lovely start to our festive celebrations. ■



Festive Fun at the Farm

On 5 December all three Pre-prep classes were wrapped up warm with hats, gloves and scarves and set out into the cold, snowy morning for a festive adventure at Roves Farm. The boys had a superb day with starring roles in the nativity play complete with real animals, a visit from Father Christmas and plenty of time to enjoy making Christmas decorations, the pets' corner and the adventure playgrounds. ■

ASP A Events

Last term we enjoyed the third-year parents' Italian Supper held in the Charles Maude Room where 80 people attended. The All-School Family Race Night, a new event, was a resounding success in November with nearly 90 people enjoying a great evening of fun and entertainment. Thanks must go to Peter Garrett and family for all their hard work in organising this event. The sixth-form parents' supper, held at the *Limoncello* in October, was greatly enjoyed by all. In November, the parents of the fourth year enjoyed an evening at *La Fontana* in East Hanney. ■

SUS Fund Raising

The second-hand uniform shop (SUS) has raised £8,000 since December 2010, which has been donated to the following School projects:

- £1,000 will purchase an open canoe for the School Canoe Club. The Club is in the process of moving away from sea kayaks to eight open canoes, which will allow more boys to get involved and prevent the cancellation of expeditions (eg Duke of Edinburgh) due to bad weather or tide times. The Club have already purchased six canoes and SUS has awarded them a grant of £1,000 for another.
- The Modern Foreign Languages Department will benefit from £2,000 to purchase 15 iPod nanos. These will be linked to a MFL department computer, so that boys can upload files and practise their language skills. This type of equipment is now used in the AS and A2 examinations.
- £700 has been made available to the Computing Project for hardware such as control circuitry, sensors and monitors. This project is part of the School's Other Half Activities, and enables boys to build computer controlled buggies and other machines.
- Hockey has been awarded £300 to buy four hockey rebound boards, which can be used in or out of doors. These boards are very versatile and allow boys to practise by themselves. They will be used in every hockey session.
- Rugby needs a new set of rugby posts for the 1st XV pitch and an award of £2,000 has been made to fund these.
- The CCF has been awarded £2,000 to purchase 20 sets of service dress, which is urgently needed. Not only is the School running very low on service dress for the boys, but the Army service dress also changed recently.

All this has been funded from the sale of second hand uniform! We have had letters of thanks from all the Heads of Departments expressing their great appreciation for SUS's work. Our thanks go to all the volunteers who man the shop – especially to Jackie Bryant, Rosie Brown and SUS co-ordinator Marilyn Moore. ■



Rosie Brown, Treasurer (L),
Marilyn Moore, Co-ordinator (R)

Second-hand Uniform Shop

Opening hours –
Saturdays: 11 am – 12 noon
Wednesdays: 12.15 pm – 1.15 pm

January:

Saturday 26th – Wednesday 30th

February:

Saturday 2nd – Wednesday 20th
Saturday 23rd – Wednesday 27th

March:

Saturday 2nd – Wednesday 6th
Saturday 16th – Wednesday 13th
Saturday 24th – Wednesday 28th

Please note, we have a large amount of cricket kit in stock – all garments are £5. We also have pads, helmets, gloves etc. It's well worth coming to have a look at our stock.

Photograph Competition

The annual ASPA Photo Competition was won by Carl Cox (£50 prize) and the runner up was Alexander Jefferies (£25 prize), both from Franklin's House. ■

ASP A Forthcoming Events

- 1 Feb** Fifth-year Parents' Supper
7pm The Parasol,
Market Square, Abingdon
- 8 Mar** Lower School Parents' Event
venue to be announced
- 17 May** All-School Quiz Night
Sports Centre Hospitality Suite
- 7 June** All-School End-of-Year Dinner
Pembroke College
Tickets £37.50 per person
book early, first come first served

See ASPA January mailing and website for more details

www.abingdon.org.uk/aspa



Pembroke College Dining Hall

Abingdon Pupils to Undertake Historic 63-mile Walk

Are today's Abingdon pupils as physically fit and mentally tough as those in 1963? We shall certainly find out!

50 years ago, in March 1963, a group of Abingdon pupils completed a 63-mile walk from Worcester to Abingdon in around 24 hours, celebrating the then Quatercentenary of John Roysse's endowment of Abingdon School.

The number 63 is, of course, significant to Abingdon, since John Roysse was aged 63 in 1563 when he donated funds for a new schoolroom for no less than 63 pupils and measuring precisely 63 feet long!

Fifty years later, a group of Abingdon pupils will attempt to undertake a walk of the same length, this time along the Ridgeway starting in Wiltshire (43 miles) and then along the Thames Path (20 miles). They will set off at 4pm on Sunday 28 April and should arrive back at Abingdon around 4pm on Monday, 29 April.

A 63-mile walk in 24 hours is a gruelling challenge for anyone. The team of walkers has decided to use this challenge to fundraise for Abingdon's Bursary Fund and an external charity (yet to be decided). They have set a target to raise £6,300 or £100 per mile.

To make fundraising and donation collection simple and easy (including gift aid), the team has set up an Abingdon School fundraising web page for their walk with Virgin Moneygiving:



<http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/charities/abingdon>

Also want to walk, but perhaps not the full 63 miles?

Parents and Old Abingdonians are invited to join the team of walkers for the final 9 miles along the Thames Path, from Dorchester to Abingdon. All walkers – whether in for 63 miles or just 9 – are invited to raise sponsorship money for Abingdon.

For details, visit www.abingdon.org.uk/63milewalk

2013 marks the 450th anniversary of Roysse's major donation to Abingdon School, which could be said to have established the modern school, but as importantly, 2013 marks 450 years during which Abingdon School has benefited from the generosity of many individuals, starting with John Roysse.

In the spirit of Roysse's founding gift to Abingdon, we hope you will join in our 450th anniversary celebration, as a walker and/or as a donor for this very special event! ■

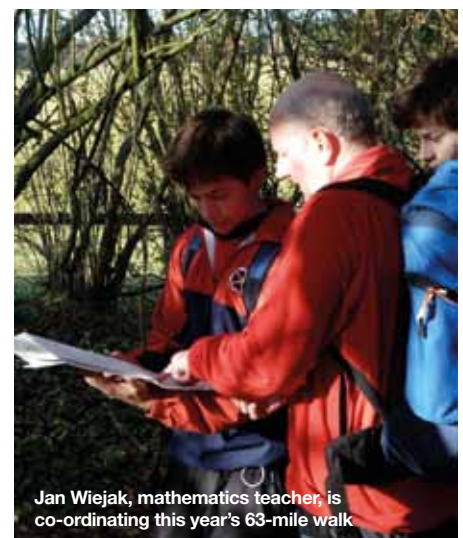
Please consider sponsoring the team for their 63-mile walk !



2013 walkers



1963 walkers



Jan Wijek, mathematics teacher, is co-ordinating this year's 63-mile walk



The Skye Group

In April 1957 a party of sixth-form scientists set off for Skye on an expedition initiated and organised by the boys themselves. Its focus was the study of botany, geology, ornithology and geography in conditions that would “promote mental and physical alertness”. It was clearly an unforgettable experience. Skye is a beautiful, wild and remote place – but as the boys were happy to admit, much of the value of the expedition lay in the difficulties that had to be overcome, difficulties caused by the wild weather and the wild seas and the lack of facilities.



The original Skye Group in 1957



The 1963 Skye Group in Ardnamurchan

This was the start of the Skye Group. In 1958 the group went to Wasdale in the Lake District and the next year to the Isle of Arran. In 1960 and 1961 they returned to Skye – the bulk of the group hitch hiking from Abingdon to Fort William before catching the train to Mallaig and the ferry to Armadale.

The Skye Group remained in operation until 1968, visiting Ardnamurchan in 1962 and 1963, Skye in 1964, Inverpolly in 1965, the Isle of Arran again in 1966 and Skye for the final trip in 1967. In 1968 the School took a lease on a farmhouse in Dolgoed in North Wales so that the expeditions could continue but within easier reach of Abingdon. ■



A woolly bobble hat in School colours first worn by the Skye Group in 1959. The hat was donated by Robin Moorshead who went with the group to Ardnamurchan in 1963. According to him, James Cobban sanctioned the hat providing it was never worn within a 400-mile radius of the School!



Whilst most of the boys hitch-hiked to Ardnamurchan in 1963 two had their own cars – a Wolseley Hornet and a 1938 Wolseley 4/48. The Hornet broke an axle in Preston and the 4/48 broke an axle and a lot more when it hit a boulder near the campsite.



Following in Great-Great Grandfather's Footsteps?

The photograph shows Hugh Digby, Captain of Boats in 1882 (standing right) who rowed in the 1st IV in both 1881 and 1882 when the School won the Town Challenge Cup at Abingdon Regatta. Last summer, one hundred and thirty years later, Hugh's great-great grandson Thomas Digby in the Fourth Year, rowed for the U14As who won the 8s at Marlow, the 8s and 4s at Reading, and reached the semi-finals at the National Schools' Regatta in Nottingham. ■

London Drinks Reception

Wednesday 5 December 2012 saw probably the largest ever gathering of OAs and current/former teaching staff for a drinks reception held at the National Liberal Club.

The OA Club expresses sincere thanks to Alan Williams (1965) for generously facilitating the venue. ■

“ Familiar faces, not so familiar faces, brought together by a common bond and thoroughly enjoying one another’s company even though many decades spanned the various groups that I chatted with throughout the evening. The OA Club President, Mike Stevens, was an excellent host and it was thrilling and reassuring to hear from Felicity Lusk on the current health of the school ” Mark Owen (1978)



Free Tickets - ‘Copenhagen’ Weds 13 March

Complimentary tickets are available for OAs - first come, first served (2 tickets per OA) - to see Michael Frayn’s classic play *Copenhagen* on Wednesday 13 March 2013, Amey Theatre, 7.30 pm. Please contact the OA Club Office to reserve your tickets by Monday 4 March 2013. Details on page 2.

Touchliners / OA Six Nations Event Sat 16 March

OAs are invited to join members of Touchliners to attend a buffet lunch and to watch two back to back Six Nations matches in the Sports Centre on Saturday 16 March 2013. Interested OAs are asked to contact Peter Coke, Director of Rugby: peter.coke@abingdon.org.uk

Abingdon School Road Relay Mon 18 March

Entries from OA teams are encouraged for the 2013 Abingdon School Road Relay taking place on the afternoon of Monday 18 March 2013. Please contact the OA Club Office with team entries (4 OAs per team) by Friday 8 March 2013. oa.club@abingdon.org.uk

Hockey - OAs v 1st XI – Fri 22 March

The annual OA hockey match against the School’s 1st XI will be held on Friday 22 March 2013. The match will take place at Iffley Road Sports Complex, Oxford, at 3.30 pm. If you are interested in joining the OA side please contact Steve Brenchley: steve.brenchley@abingdon.org.uk

OAs in Australia – Sat 23 March

Richard Bampton (1962) is organising a reunion in Sydney, Australia, (formerly arranged to be held in Brisbane) on Saturday 23 March 2013. A crew from Abingdon will participate in the International Rowing Regatta being held in Sydney, 18-24 March 2013. Please email Richard with expressions of interest and suggestions of a venue: angelarichard@hotmail.com

50s / 60s Event, Bath – Fri 10 May

Tony Howell (1959) is the coordinator of the reunion dinner for 50s and 60s OA leavers at Woods Restaurant, Bath, on Friday 10 May 2013. For further information and to make your provisional bookings, please contact Tony: tony@howell15.plus.com

OA Golf Day – Tues 14 May

David Blomley (1974) is organising the next OA Golf Day to take place at Frilford Heath on Tuesday 14 May 2013. OAs of all ages and levels of ability are welcome. If you would like further information please email David: d.blomley@btinternet.com



Toby Jones Nominated for Golden Globe Award

Toby Jones, OA 1985, has been nominated for a Golden Globe Award for his role as Alfred Hitchcock in the American mini-series, *The Girl*. The film centres on Hitchcock's obsessive relationship with Tippi Hendren, played by Sienna Miller. As he has done so often before, Toby disappears into the role and with the help of a fat suit and prosthetics – all of which took four hours every day to apply – delivers a masterly and convincing performance. The *Girl* was shown on BBC2 on Boxing Day. ■

Back Story

At a younger age than some, David Mitchell OA 1992, has written a memoir, *Back Story*, published last October. The book takes the reader on a walk through London and a walk through David's life – so far. Along the way he comments on everything from being recognised in the street, his Peep Show persona, Mark Corrigan, the origins of his comedy career in the Debating Society at Abingdon School and his happiness at the prospect of his marriage to Victoria Coren, which took place last November. ■



So You Thought it Was All Over

Just when you thought the Olympics were all over news comes in that Jamie Copus, OA 2011, represented GB as a member of the Youth Olympic Squad at the Australian Youth Olympics earlier this month. Meanwhile, Ollie Cook, OA 2008, represented GB in the Openweight Men's VIII at the European Rowing Championships in Italy last September where the crew won a creditable 5th place. Team GB view these championships as the start of a new four-year cycle and none of the GB Olympic squad took part, leaving it to the younger rowers to represent their country. So, that makes two to watch and if you thought it was all over, it isn't now! ■



John Rayson

John Rayson, OA 1944, who died in December, was a stalwart of the Abingdon community – a former Governor, a long-standing member of the OA Committee, a member of TASS, the fore-runner of ASPA, and the parent of two OAs. He was also one of a dwindling number of OAs who had seen active service in the Second World War. John served in the RAF and piloted a glider in Operation Varsity, the successful airborne crossing of the Rhine in March 1945. ■



Sir David Tanner

Congratulations to Sir David Tanner, OA 1966, who received a knighthood in the New Year's Honours. Sir David has been Performance Director of British Rowing since 1996 and team leader for GB rowing at the Olympic Games since 1992. ■



Mike Bartlett

Chariots of Fire, described by Time Out as Mike Bartlett's (OA 1999) "pitch perfect adaptation" for the stage of the 1981 film, opened at the Hampstead Theatre in May before transferring to the Gielgud Theatre, Shaftesbury Avenue in June where it finished its run in January. ■