



# AbingdonNews

## Exciting Advances in Music at Abingdon

The range and quality of music at the Christmas Concerts hints at the emergence of a golden era in music at Abingdon. The concerts featured a wide range of choral, orchestral and band music from all year groups. The Second Orchestra is very strong and our First Orchestra was in dramatic form in Sibelius' *Finlandia* and in Bruch's violin concerto.

July saw an epic Orchestra and Big Band tour to Japan and Hong Kong, and we have also enjoyed fascinating masterclasses, competitions, and study days. With much interest in music awards at the school next year, there is little doubt that we are entering an exciting phase of music at Abingdon.

## Message from the Headmaster

This term's middle school play, *Every Brilliant Thing*, was a breathtaking highlight of the Michaelmas term. The production, directed by Jeremy Taylor, involved students from the Third and Fourth Years performing a play by Duncan McMillan and Jonny Donahoe (OA) in a radically reworked setting in the Amey Theatre, known as the Palletdrome.

Although the play reflects on themes such as loss, suicide and depression, it is full of humour, music and laughter. To my surprise, the play also required a considerable degree of audience participation and I was struck by the sheer confidence that the actors showed in engaging so spontaneously with their audience.

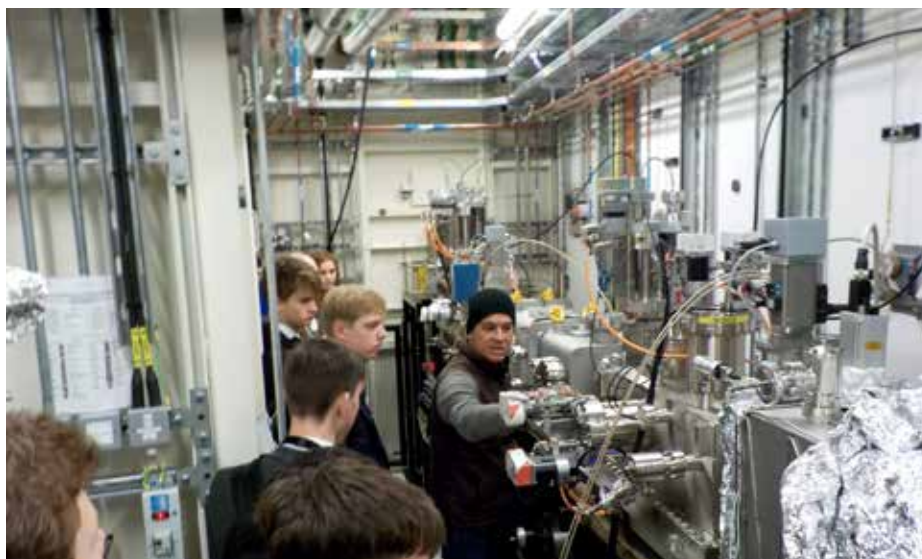
I was deeply impressed to see middle school students dealing with challenging issues with such sensitivity and delicacy and I felt it was an important staging-post as we try to encourage students to talk freely about their feelings and particularly about issues relating to their mental health. At some point in our lives, we are all likely to have to deal with some of the issues confronted in the play, and I want our students to leave Abingdon with the understanding that the best way to deal with such challenges is by facing them and talking about them.

The play really connected with our approach to mental health as expressed by our Personal Development Education programme, in school and house assemblies and through talks such as the one given this term by the writer and activist Natasha Devon.



I hope that the School can support wellbeing by allowing our students to discover and express themselves in a supportive and nurturing atmosphere. *Every Brilliant Thing* was a wonderful expression of that ethos.

*Michael Windsor, Headmaster*



## Diamond Light Source

Lower sixth physicists joined a group of Fitzharrys, Larkmead and John Mason students to travel to Harwell for an 'Inside Diamond' visit to the UK's national synchrotron facility, the Diamond Light Source.



## Joining the Lords Debate

Six members of Abingdon ATOM Festival's Student Ambassador team, from St Helen's, Larkmead and Abingdon, were given a unique opportunity to participate in the House of Lords annual public debate on the topic of 'Reaching a Sustainable Future'.

## Abingdon Film Academy Premier

The first fruits of a new filmmaking partnership between Abingdon, Larkmead and Fitzharrys Schools received their premier at a joint screening of new films in Abingdon's Amey Theatre. The Film Academy was launched in September 2018 to build on the success of the School's Film Unit, and has enabled young people to make their own short films with guidance from a team of film professionals.





# First Impressions

We welcomed 66 new faces to the First Year this term. After week one we asked the boys for their initial impressions, here are just a few of their responses:

“ I have really enjoyed my first week. I have met a lot of new first year pupils and I have made new friends. So far all the teachers have been friendly and welcoming.

“ The highlights of my first week have been my favourite lessons (Latin and English)

“ I have enjoyed starting my various Other Half activities including shooting, lower school debating and rugby.

“ My favourite part of the week was when I managed to find my cello in the Music Department without help!

“ My first week at Abingdon has been great, the sport was amazing and I really enjoyed the sense of responsibility you get, for example moving around the school and having to be on time for lessons.

“ All in all, Abingdon is a great school and I have thoroughly enjoyed the start of my time here.

## Team Building in the First Year


The first years enjoyed a morning of team building getting to know each other and developing their communication and listening skills. Activities included operating a giant parachute, the marshmallow challenge, and attempting to create the Abingdon griffen using their bodies.



## Ben Kane brings History Alive

Bestselling author, Ben Kane, brought Roman history alive when he spoke to Lower School and Middle School. The boys particularly enjoyed trying on armour and hearing about Ben's walk along the length of Hadrian's Wall in a full Roman legion outfit.

## Peer Support Mentors




Abingdon School in Partnership, ASiP, appointed seven upper sixth boys to the newly created posts of Peer Support Mentors. The students have been trained alongside their peers from St Helen's, Larkmead, John Mason and Fitzharrys using advanced listening skills taught to them by expert Nick Luxmoore. Their role is to support the third years who joined the school this term.



## Army Scholarship

Congratulations to sixth former Oscar Hitch who has won a prestigious army scholarship. Oscar succeeded despite a very demanding application process which concluded with a three-day selection assessment involving command tasks, interviews, written work and challenging fitness tests. Besides the financial benefits of the scholarship both for school and university, Oscar has a guaranteed place at Sandhurst after he finishes university.

## Green Anole Lizard



A baby green anole lizard has been spotted in the Biology department!



## Physics in Action

Lower sixth physics students unanimous favorite lecture from Physics in Action in London was all about the 2019 changes to the definitions of the kilogram, ampere, kelvin and mole, four of the seven 'SI' units - extremely clever and funny! Other topics ranged from the unsolved mysteries facing astrophysicists and cosmologists today to the physics of smart buildings.



## City Shaper project

Third years have spent the term building and programming robots out of Lego Technic to complete the challenges set out as part of the City Shaper project. The project highlights the problems facing our modern world and encourages participants to identify potential solutions to overcome them. The first Lego League competition takes place in the Lent term.

## TEENTECH



Ten third year boys visited TEENTECH in Bristol taking part in interactive activities led by engineers and scientists from large companies and academic institutions including Bristol University.



## BMX Champion inspires the Lower School

This year's Be the Best You Can Be programme was launched in fine style by visiting speaker Mike Mullen, former World and three-time UK BMX Halfpipe champion. He talked about the importance of having a growth mindset and realising that success comes as a result of plenty of hard work and perseverance. He also gave a demonstration of tricks, including jumping his BMX over three brave teachers, and taught Mr Jenkins and first year Dan Phillips how to do a trackstand - with Dan showing considerably more natural ability than his housemaster!



Boys in 2G raised over £65 for Children in Need at their cake sale.

## Does Morality require a Divine Foundation?

Dr Piers Benn gave a fascinating Edmund Society lecture to sixth form philosophy and theology students. Dr Benn - whose research interests involve ethics, such as medical ethics, philosophy of religion and philosophy of psychiatry - went into great detail about the question surrounding whether or not morality requires a divine foundation.

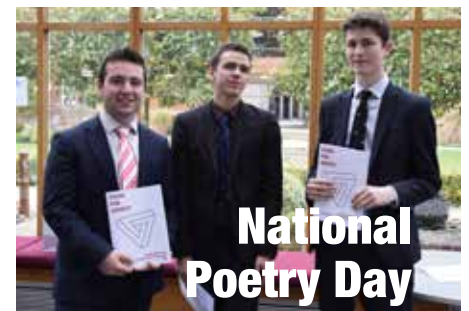
## Blood Wedding (Bodas de sangre) at the Young Vic by Federico García Lorca



Twelve sixth form Spanish students and staff enjoyed the English-language version of this infamous love triangle which had been relocated from rural Spain to rural Ireland. The play provoked an interesting discussion on the way home about the cultural similarities and differences between the two countries.



More than 60 pupils from Abingdon, Larkmead, Fitzharrys and John Mason studied a variety of topics ranging from descriptive composition to speech writing, as part of the ASiP English mentoring initiative to help GCSE pupils.



## National Poetry Day

The 25th anniversary of National Poetry Day was celebrated in great spirit with the annual poetry competition, a display of classic and contemporary poetry books in the library, and an open mic event in the Amey Theatre Foyer. The open mic attracted pupils and staff from across the school to share their favourite poems, or poems they had written themselves.



## Gold DofE award

Sixth former Alexander Scott was the first in his year to complete the Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Alex volunteered as a lower school assistant for his volunteering section, learnt the guitar for his skill section and played hockey for the School for the physical section. He successfully completed challenging expeditions on Dartmoor and the Lake District and will be invited to receive his certificate from a member of the Royal Family. 78 boys also received their Bronze award and 45 boys their Silver award certificates.



## Young Enterprise

Young Enterprise took part in their first event at the St Helen's Christmas Fayre



## Spotlight on Languages

Sixteen modern linguists sampled workshops and lectures at Bath University's annual 'Spotlight on Languages' day which promotes language related degrees.



## Christmas cheer

The Brass Band, Gospel Choir and Music in the Community group entertained Abingdon residents at the annual Christmas tea party. The highlight of the afternoon was the raffle expertly run by Thomas Kent and Callum Ryall.



St Helen's was once again victorious in the annual sixth form lacrosse match.



## Impelo Cymru

The educational dance company devised and created an inspiring and visually engaging production for primary-aged children. They used inflatable structures and dancers' movements to illustrate the amazing activity at cellular level in our bodies.

## European Youth Olympic Festival

Congratulations to sixth year Nick Skelton who had a very successful European Youth Olympic Swimming Festival where he was part of the GB squad competing in Baku, Azerbaijan. Nick swam a personal best in both the 100m and 200m backstroke and finished 7th in the 200m final. Nick also competed in two relay teams swimming freestyle in the 4x100m and medley relays. This resulted in a gold medal in the freestyle relay.



## David Briggs Poetry Masterclass

In preparation for October's National Poetry Day, ten students enjoyed a masterclass with poet David Briggs. The students enjoyed readings from Briggs' recently published collection, *Cracked Skull Cinema*, looking at poems ranging from teacups to the city of Ljubljana. The session ended with writing prompts, allowing students to quickly write and recite poetry of their own, capitalising on the advice they had learnt.



## Bridge experts past and present

The 2019 Junior Teach-In organised by English Bridge Education & Development, EBED, brought together Abingdonians past and present. The Teach-In is one of the main events for youth bridge in the country and saw David Emerson (OA 2006) tutoring those taking part, who included current third year, Freddie Beneat.

Freddie and his partner had a very successful competition winning the main event, the Arnott-Davidson Trophy. They were also in the winning team for the Saturday Speedball competition.



## Bridge Tournament Success

Abingdon enjoyed a comprehensive victory against Magdalen College School in the Bridge Club's first tournament with the first and second teams winning convincingly.

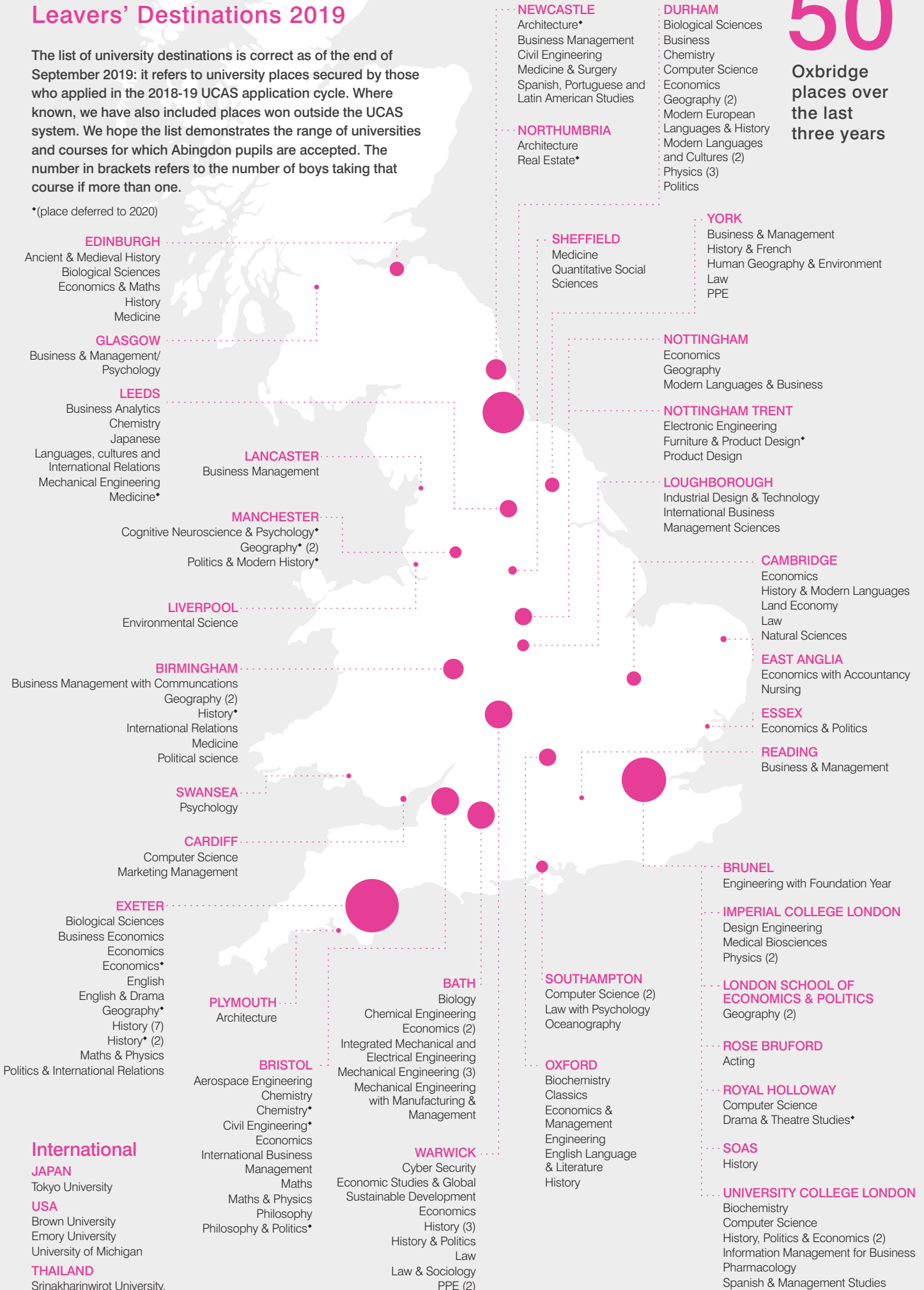
# Leavers' Destinations 2019

The list of university destinations is correct as of the end of September 2019: it refers to university places secured by those who applied in the 2018-19 UCAS application cycle. Where known, we have also included places won outside the UCAS system. We hope the list demonstrates the range of universities and courses for which Abingdon pupils are accepted. The number in brackets refers to the number of boys taking that course if more than one.

\* (place deferred to 2020)

# 50

Oxbridge places over the last three years





## Diversity of Choice for Leavers

2019 was yet another successful summer for our sixth form leavers. 97% of Abingdonians who applied to UK universities achieved a place, with an impressive 85% of those gaining entry to their first-choice university. The spread of degree and university choices reflects a growing trend to seek out courses which appeal to each individual, in subjects ranging from natural sciences to philosophy, oceanography to nursing, classics to geography, drama to physics, environmental science to modern languages and computer science to biochemistry. While core subjects such as engineering (13 places), economics (15) and history (21) remain popular, this diversity of choice provides strong evidence that Abingdon is a school where talent in a wide range of disciplines is encouraged and boys who have the drive and support to pursue their particular area of interest are rewarded with places at the university of their choice.



As with the subjects they choose to study at a higher level, our boys continue to show an increasing interest in a broader range of destinations. While Oxbridge remains a sought-after destination (with 6 at Oxford and 5 at Cambridge this year) and the usual favourites are still popular (Exeter 18, Durham 14, Warwick 11, Bristol 10), boys have also chosen universities which offer a breadth of contemporary and relevant courses: Bath, Brunel, Edinburgh, Lancaster, Loughborough, Nottingham Trent, Plymouth, SOAS.

It is encouraging to see that boys are willing to seek out destinations whose degree courses will provide them with the knowledge and skills that will prepare them well for whatever future they aspire to, and to note that they have the confidence to forge their own path towards that goal.

*Caroline Taylor,  
Assistant Upper Master, Universities*



## MFL Debating Competition

Sixth formers studying French, Spanish and German put in an impressive performance at the Modern Foreign Languages Debating competition at Cheltenham College. All teams won a good number of individual debates with the German team of Will Wakelam and Ben Kiraikou convincing adjudicators in the final not only with their wide range of language, breadth and depth of argument but also with their ability to listen and respond to the opposition's arguments on the question of whether we can learn from history - a topic many would have found a challenge to discuss in their mother tongue!



## Eight prestigious Arkwright Scholarships

Four lower sixth formers, Greg Lister, James Gibson, Will Shorrocks and Matthew Jones have been awarded Arkwright Scholarships bringing the total number of Arkwright Scholars in this year's Sixth Form to eight - a school record.

The Arkwright Engineering Scholarships is a programme from national STEM education charity, the Smallpeice Trust, which aims to inspire future leaders in engineering. More than 1,370 students applied and 415 were successful, receiving financial and mentoring support through their A-Levels. Abingdon School also sponsors an Arkwright Scholarship which this year went to a lower sixth form student at Wycombe High School.



# Looking for an alternative to university?

A career guidance counsellor gives guidance based on the client's particular needs. In a secondary school context, this means, among other things, helping pupils to choose GCSE or A-Level subjects taking into account career planning considerations. When a pupil enters the Sixth Form, needs shift to answering the question, "What should I do after I leave school?"

Given that the occupations on the short list of most Abingdon School sixth formers require a degree, and given the often irresistible appeal of university life, it's no surprise that 95% of each year's leavers go to university (either directly or after taking a gap year). Other pupils, however, are eyeing occupations that can be pursued without a degree, perhaps because they are not keen to study full-time for another three or four years or are reluctant to take on student debt. Others want to study and work at the same time, building valued employability skills and work experience.

However relatively few sixth formers seriously consider alternatives to full-time university study. Why? There can be several reasons, but one is the difficulty in choosing a route that few – if any others – are choosing, even if that route makes sense; it's just a lot easier (and less risky) to follow the well-trodden path.

*Michael Triff, Head of Career Guidance*

## So what are these alternatives?

### 1. Options to continue education that lead either to work or to university

This includes a Higher National Certificate (HNC) or Diploma (HND). HNCs and HNDs are work-related vocational qualifications linked to a particular occupation and are typically provided by further education colleges. Both can be used to find an entry-level job in a chosen occupation or to continue to study towards a related Foundation Degree and eventually a related full Honours Degree.

### 2. Options to continue education that lead to work

This includes National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs), which are vocational qualifications designed to confer either specific, practical skills needed for a particular occupation, or general skills suitable to a variety of occupations. NVQs can be taken as a student at a further education college, but are most commonly taken while working in a job or as part of an apprenticeship.

### 3. Options to work and continue education at the same time

This includes apprenticeships (and School Leaver Programmes, which are similar). Apprenticeships are real, paid jobs for between one and six years, depending upon the level of apprenticeship and the industry sector. All apprenticeships provide vocation-based workplace training that employers hope apprentices will use to gain a formal qualification (or several) via continuing education, either at a college, university, or online (e-learning). At the end of an apprenticeship, an apprentice may be offered a job (permanent or fixed term), which s/he may or may not be obliged to accept.

**For more information, ask your son to download a guide called 'Alternatives to University - At Least For Now'. (from the Career Guidance section of the pupil intranet, Firefly)**



## Exploring Pythagoras

The Third Year explored a very different introduction to the Pythagorean Theorem. Using only a grid on the carpet and some string (and a little direction) they interpreted the key aspects in their own words.



## Last Supper in Pompeii

Lower school boys explored the statues in the Cast Gallery at the Ashmolean Museum and visited the excellent "Last Supper in Pompeii" exhibition. Many of the objects in the exhibition were on view for the first time outside Italy.



## England Rugby U18s Tour Selection

Sixth former Charlie Atkinson was selected for the England Rugby U18s tour of South Africa this summer. Charlie who is also part of the Wasps Academy played three matches against Argentina, France and South Africa Schools.



## Royal Society Student Conference

The Abingdon Science Partnership's Royal Society Partnership Grant project on badgers was presented at the annual student conference by a combined team from Abingdon and Fitzharrys Schools. Accompanied by our research partner, Tanesha Allen of Oxford University's Wildlife Conservation Research Unit, the students spent the day engaging with visitors, presenting their project formally and explaining it to distinguished visitors, including many Fellows of the Royal Society.



The Lower School enjoyed exploring tree-house designs in their art workshop



## Top of the Bench

Congratulations to the middle school team who won second prize at the Royal Society of Chemistry's Top of the Bench poster competition at the University of Oxford Chemistry Department. They enjoyed an interesting afternoon of experimental work in the undergraduate laboratories.



## Investigating Light and Colour

Pupils from Rush Common Primary School's two Year 3 classes visited the Abingdon Science Partnership Lab to investigate Light and Colour. They enjoyed learning about how shadows change depending on how high the Sun is in the sky and how to mix coloured lights to make new colours.



## Abingdon and St Helen's 'Thinking Supper'

Second year pupils from Abingdon and St Helen's met for the first Thinking Supper of the academic year. Inspired by the latest David Attenborough series, they considered environmental issues, researching to find out more about wildlife at risk on the different continents. They continued their discussions over dinner and presented their findings to each other at the end of the evening.



## Scholars' trip to Oxford

The fifth year academic scholars had an inspiring day-trip to Oxford looking at New College with an OA, and having tours of the Ashmolean Museum and Bodleian Library. The tours were followed by a talk from world-renowned particle physics expert Professor Ian Shipsey at Oxford University's award winning Bencroft Building.



## Team Maths Challenge

Four sixth form mathematicians competed in the Oxford Regional Heat of the Senior Team Maths Challenge coming second in a very competitive competition.



## Debating the right to vote

Lower school pupils from Abingdon and St Helen's joined forces for dinner and to debate the motion, proposed by St Helen's: "This house believes that only those aged between 16 and 80 should be allowed to vote". After passionate and well-argued speeches on both sides, the motion was passed.



## Joint Literary Society dinner with St Helen's

The Poet Laureate, Simon Armitage, was the guest speaker for the evening, giving a reading of his work and taking questions from a rapt audience of A Level English literature and drama students. This was followed by the traditional literary quiz; a fiendishly difficult round of questions on literary allusions in pop music provided a tense finale to this enjoyable evening.



# Abingdon School in Partnership, ASiP

## Why are partnerships important to Abingdon?

Rob Southwell-Sander,  
*Director of Partnerships at Abingdon School*

The School's ethos from its foundation over 750 years ago to the present day has been to provide a broad access to education. Whether this is by helping families with fees through bursaries or by sharing access to our facilities, staff and skills. The School has much to benefit from being an integral part of the local community and to help in creating an area for education excellence to the mutual benefit of all. To do this we need to work together with local institutions and schools – both independent and in the state sector.

Working collaboratively with some of the excellent schools we have across the town allows us to both learn from our partners, especially in areas such as pedagogy and professional development while also sharing features of Abingdon that we are most proud of. By sharing knowledge of for example, training, teaching practice, the curriculum and systems everyone can improve standards as individuals and as whole schools. Abingdon does set the standard in many areas but we should never be complacent.

At a time when educational practice is debated like a political hot potato, it is crucial to build bridges with our local community and form sustainable, mutually beneficial relationships. Both independent and state schools have a lot to offer and a lot to learn.

## How can boys get involved?

Boys are involved with all of our partnership activities which span science, sport, the performing arts as well as pastoral areas such as peer support mentoring. Abingdon students have volunteered at science clubs, acted as academic mentors to younger children alongside other sixth formers from Abingdon schools, taught language lessons to primary school children and helped at numerous partnership events from the Business Challenge to the mini Olympics.



The boys feedback has been extremely positive.

“ I have loved every minute of the science mentoring and it has made me consider teaching as a possible career path. ”

Volunteering and service activities are core features of Abingdon's Other Half and the benefits are very evident in terms of building self-confidence, developing leadership qualities and organisational skills. The National Institute for Professional Practice states among the key skills needed for the 21st Century workforce will be collaboration, teamwork and good interpersonal skills. Our partnership programme delivers all three as well as enjoyment and a huge sense of achievement.

“ I found the actual teaching and interacting with younger students the most enjoyable thing in the process and I learnt many valuable skills, most notably the partnership scheme has helped me develop clear communication and organisation skills. ”

# Out and About



## Ireland

Besides watching and playing some excellent rugby, the U15 and U16 rugby tour included a visit to the Irish Houses of Parliament followed by a brilliant Q&A with the Justice and Equality Secretary, Jim O'Callaghan.



CCF adventure training included caving, canyoning, abseiling, climbing and even a ride on the rollercoasters at Blackpool Pleasure Beach!



## Moldova

Nine sixth formers travelled to Eastern Europe at the start of the summer for the annual Moldova Project which is now in its 20th year. Working with our partner charity Agape, the boys organised two summer camps for Moldovan children.



## Japan and Hong Kong

Boys and staff enjoyed a once in a lifetime music tour to the Far East giving concerts at the British School in Tokyo, Toho High School in Nagoya, a big band gig in Kyoto and a final concert at St John's Cathedral in Hong Kong.



## Banyoles

During the Boat Club's annual trip to the foothills of the Pyrenees, in addition to the rowing, the boys witnessed firsthand the independence protests taking place in Spain.

## Sailing at Cowes

The SB20 Abingdon crew faced strong winds at Cowes leading to racing being cancelled on two of the days. Over the course of the week the crew performed well winning the trophy for the first boat in the fleet on the final Saturday.



## Silver DofE

Eight boys completed their canoeing practice expedition on the River Thames in very challenging conditions.

## Spanish exchange

Abingdon and St Helen's pupils set out on an adventure to North West Spain to improve their Spanish and experience the different culture.



## Rugby Tour

Argentina and Chile – the senior rugby squad played 4 matches and explored the many cultural sites and experiences, including the tango and gaucho ranching, during their fantastic 18-day tour of South America.



## Sicily

Classicists embraced a packed itinerary during their visits to Syracuse, Taormina, Morgantina and the Greek temples at Agrigento, Selinus and Segesta.



# Abingdon Sport



Autum rain meant training on the water was difficult but the senior squad continued in a determined fashion on land and in the gym. Highlights for the term included Chris Fry, L6th, finishing 31st in the single scull at Great Britain trials and then invited to the GB team December training camp. At Fours Head crews finished 2nd, 10th and 14th in Band 2 Coxed Fours and 3rd and 5th in Band 1 Coxless Fours.



A windy first week of term saw new students to the Sailing Club paired up with experienced sixth form sailors and dinghy instructors to give them a taste of the sport.



The squad has had a particularly good term, with seniors and juniors enjoying plenty of success with wins against St Edward's, Bradfield, RGS High Wycombe, Wellington and Radley. We look forward to repeating last year's success in the National Shield.

## Croquet

Four boys represented Abingdon at the Croquet Association National School Croquet Championships and the National Junior Singles Championships. The boys played superbly and improved throughout the weekend.



## Racketlon

Lower sixth former Will Taylor was selected to play for the Great Britain U16 squad at the Racketlon World Team Championships in Leipzig. Will won five out of his seven matches.



Four lower sixth students were selected for the GB U21 Canoe Polo Development Academy, passing fitness, ball handling skills and kayaking assessments.



# Rugby

The Club has had a wonderfully successful season both on and off the pitch. This has been underpinned by a fantastic team atmosphere between pupils and staff and building and developing a culture and ethos to be proud of. This has ensured performances have been of the highest quality and some outstanding successes for all age groups on the pitch.



Upper sixth former, Charlie Atkinson, made his senior Wasps debut for their A team against Northampton Saints in the Premiership Shield



# Cross-country

The first half of the season has been one of our most successful to date with a record number of boys competing and securing some excellent team and individual results. Highlights: 1st senior and intermediate team at the Oxford Schools Championship, 2nd at St Albans, 1st intermediate team at Harrow and 1st junior team at the Abingdon Relays. The intermediate team secured a place in the National Cup Final where Will d'Arcy and Johnny James took silver and bronze to help Abingdon place second overall and become one of the fastest schools in the country.



# Fencing

The Fencing Club remains unbeaten for over five years although we had especially close matches against Eton, Winchester and St Paul's this term. The younger members of the squad fenced well with Ed Scott Payne and Ben MacLennan playing critical roles in the team's success. The future of the squad looks encouraging with all members training hard for the Public Schools Championships.

Congratulations to fifth year Ed Scott Payne (pictured) who won the National Cadet Fencing Championships (Epee). There was success also for second year Matthew Stone who won the bronze medal in the U14 boys epee event at the Berks, Bucks, and Oxon County Championships.





Our youngest musicians showed great promise at their lunchtime concert with ensembles for brass and strings, a double bass duet, two performances from boys on the harp, a Junior Blues item, two demonstrations of advanced drum kit playing and a Lower School Band to round things off with their rendition of *Tequila!*

## Tips from a Maestro



We welcomed back the distinguished Russian pianist and teacher, Katya Lebedeva for a very enjoyable and very informative masterclass with some of our pianists. It was wonderful to see the pupils respond with such immediacy to Miss Lebedeva's fine teaching.



Adam Treadaway directed this year's very impressive and hugely enjoyable concert which included pieces by Ola Gjeilo, Puccini and Mozart.



## House Singing Competition

The Lower School picked up this year's trophy with an impressive rendition of *A Million Dreams* from *The Greatest Showman*. The first and second years sang with commitment under the expert direction of Arthur Robertson. O'Doherty's House came in second with Rick Astley's *Never Gonna' Give You Up*, followed by School House with a rousing performance of Coldplay's *Viva la Vida*.



## First Solo Platform

The first Solo Concert Platform of the year gave us the opportunity to hear seven excellent performances from a range of talented musicians representing woodwind, strings and piano.



## Baroque Music Workshop

The renowned period ensemble, the Instruments of Time and Truth, gave live performances of two music GCSE set works and related repertoire, together with presentations from musicologist and choral director, Jeremy Summerly. We were delighted to welcome students and teachers from John Mason, Larkmead, Matthew Arnold School, OLA, Radley, St Helen's and Wychwood.



We are very grateful to David Allen (OA 1966) and his wife Shelagh for the wonderful new pedal harp which we received this term.

## A welcome Addition to the Music Department



## Second Solo Platform

In the second Solo Concert Platform, brass and singing were also included in the line-up with the 16 musicians demonstrating all five areas of instrumental teaching in the school.



## Cello Masterclass

Robert Max, distinguished cellist, chamber musician, educator and conductor of several orchestras gave four senior solo cellists and 15 chamber cellists a very impressive masterclass.



## Senior Solo Competition

The competition this year was characterised by excellent performances from five of Abingdon's post grade 8 musicians. The standard was again extremely high with 1st prize and the cup going to Nicholas Raptakis.



## Contact Light at the Edinburgh Fringe

A group of sixth formers from Abingdon and St Helen's together with a lower school pupil, Rupert Mathieson, performed at the Fringe in a new play called *Contact Light*, written by former St Helen's students. The performances were very well-supported and enthusiastically received, with audiences including representatives from the film and TV companies Working Title and Comedy Central. The Pianodrome venue also hosted the annual Loose Limbed Collective arts networking evening, and attracted approximately 50 OAs and former St Helen's students from the worlds of theatre, film, comedy and TV.

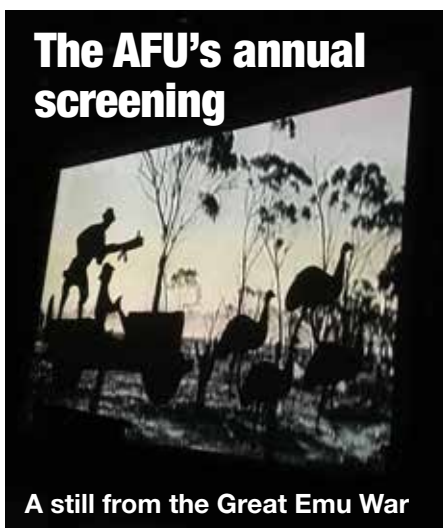


## Every Brilliant Thing

by Duncan Macmillan with Jonny Donahoe (OA)

The third and fourth year boys presented this one-hour piece which tells the story of a 7-year old boy who makes a list of all the brilliant things in life he can think of after his mother has tried to kill herself. The play featured 15 of our promising middle school actors who thoroughly impressed the very appreciative audience. Unique to the production was the world's first "palletdrome" - a bespoke hundred seat amphitheatre, brilliantly fashioned out of discarded pallets by our Amey Theatre Technical Team.

Our thanks go to Jonny Donahoe who we welcomed back to school earlier this term to coach the middle school thespians on how to tackle a play he helped to create.



## The AFU's annual screening

A still from the Great Emu War

The AFU's 16th annual screening celebrated the creativity and commitment of Abingdon's filmmakers with nine films providing a snapshot of issues that have preoccupied AFU filmmakers in 2019. This year we also welcomed representatives of the Abingdon Film Academy - a group of students from Larkmead and Fitzharrys Schools who work with AFU tutors and members.

## The Spirit of Grigsby trophy

was awarded to Kit Matthews (left) for his film, *Children of the Revolution*

## The Michael Grigsby Young Filmmaker of the Year Award

went to Tristan Mann Powter (right) for *A Bitter End*, the third of his trio of films about subjects in the town of Abingdon. All nine of the 2019 AFU films are available to view online at the AFU's dedicated Vimeo site.



# Abingdon Boarding



Appreciating the many historic sites of Oxford

Picking and pressing apples to make fresh juice



Cookies were on the menu for Cookery and Community Service.



Toasting marshmallows on a bonfire



No money changed hands but boarders enjoyed learning to play Texas Hold'em Poker!



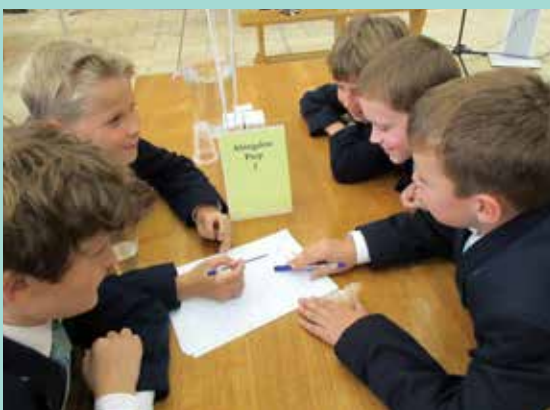
Following a traditional Belgian recipe the boys enjoyed making, and in particular eating, waffles



Burgers and bowling social with the girls from Headington School

# Abingdon Preparatory School

Boys have been exploring far and wide this term:



## Prep School Quiz Challenge

Two teams from Abingdon Prep enjoyed the annual Prep Schools Quiz Challenge which tested their knowledge of culture, geography, history, politics, art and literature.



## Surviving on a desert island

Our Year 5 and 6 Science Club has been investigating a STEM project all about exploring ways of surviving on a desert island. The first task was to create a water wheel that catches water and turns the central spindle which then can power a fan or raise and lower a weight.



## Owl Art

Year 5 was treated to some very special visitors for their project Animals in Art - Two a tawny owl and Megatron a southern white faced owl. The boys made some beautifully accurate drawings, paying close attention to the textures and facial details, in preparation for the sculptures they made later in the term.



## Blue Watch visit Abingdon Prep

Pre-Prep relished the opportunity to see inside the fire engine and tried their hand at the water hose while learning all about keeping safe.



## Music

Our musicians have been on fine form this term. Highlights have been enjoying the opportunity to play to parents, peers and staff at the Concert Platform, taking part in the Radley Orchestra Day and in the end of term finale, the Carol Concert. Music is very much a part of everyday life at the Prep with 18 Other Half music activities alongside music in the curriculum.



## Raising money for Be Free YC

This year the boys raised over £1000 for Be Free YC which helps and supports young carers in Oxfordshire. Each boy brought in a handful of silver coins to arrange on the charity's logo with the older boys helping the younger ones to put the correct coin on the correct colour of the rainbow.



## Rugby

Every boy from Year 3 upwards has represented the Prep School at rugby this term with some strong performances at festivals and in fixtures. The younger boys enjoyed our Tag Rugby Festival and our U13s put in a tremendous performance against tough opposition to win the U13 Sevens Festival at Abingdon Prep. The U10 squad had a memorable day out at Twickenham winning all their matches in the England Rugby Travel Festival.



## Nativity

The Pre-Prep Nativity was very much enjoyed by parents and performers.

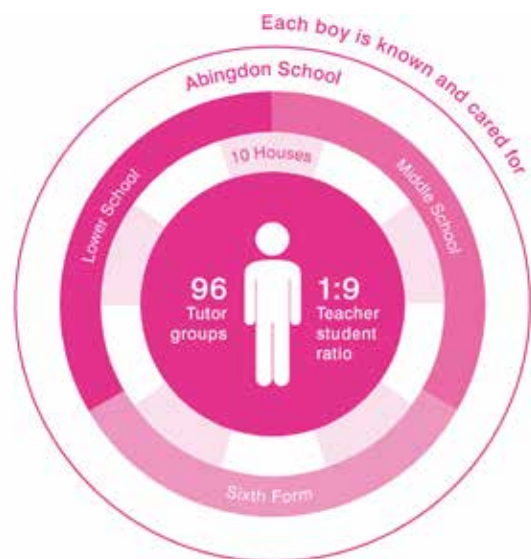


# Building Relationships

by Mark Hindley, Deputy Head (Pastoral)

Crucial to education and pastoral care are the relationships that boys build. They all need a role model to which to aspire: sometimes this is another pupil, sometimes it is a subject teacher, or a teacher who takes them for an Other Half activity; most often it is the person who has a pastoral role in that boy's school life.

Given this, at Abingdon we feel it is really important to create a system that allows for boys to interact with different people to build these relationships. To that end, we have a pupil teacher ratio of about 1:9, and 96 tutor groups in the school. Our 150 Other Half activities are not only about finding something you love, but also about meeting different staff and peers so that you build a range of relationships.



***We are a big school, and that provides awesome opportunities, but within the school we ensure each individual feels known, valued, and cared for.***

## Comfortable Spaces

Equally, the houserooms themselves are important. They provide a space for different year groups to mix, and for boundaries to break down over a game of pool or table tennis, or by discussing work, or even by the collective activity of moaning about the hardships of being a teenager. These dedicated spaces to unwind are accompanied by break out spaces in all of the other buildings on the campus, whether it's the Science Centre or the Sports Centre, or any of the Courts - Greening, Beech or Mercers'.

## Openness

Finally, if life does become tough, it is important that pupils don't shy away from that and pretend everything is ok. It is at times of difficulty that it takes the most courage to speak, and when strong relationships are most needed. We work hard to encourage openness about going to our team of adolescent specialist counsellors, or encourage pupils to ask for help from staff. It is for this reason that we have a rolling programme of professional development for staff with the goal of everyone being trained in Youth Mental Health First Aid.





## Mexico returns to Abingdon!

Why fly all the way to the beaches and nightlife of Cancun or the tequila and mariachi music of Guadalajara when a transformed school dining room and accompanying Mexican-style meal are available closer to home? Last term, 84 parents of third year boys pondered this question whilst getting to know each other over sombreros and margaritas.

*Viva la fiesta, viva la noche, viva la amistad!*



## Celebrate Burns Night in Style!

Dig out your finest tartan...else pin a bit of tartan ribbon to your dress!

Momentum is building with ASPA and the parents of Lower School to celebrate 2020 Burns Night in style on 25th January. This is a great opportunity for parents (especially of first year boys) to make new friends and put more names to faces.

Tickets are just £35 and include a live piper from the Oxford Caledonian Pipes & Drums, a glass of fizz in the CMR, and a sumptuous supper in the Abingdon School dining room.

Book your places now via the school website and box office. You can either organise a table or if you don't know who to sit with we can sort all that for you.

## Classlist update



A little while ago, ASPA introduced Classlist; a parent community service that many of you may have used at your son's previous school. We now only communicate via that route and so please do sign up if you haven't already. We believe that Classlist helps to create a welcoming and engaging community amongst our parents and encourage you to be a part of it.

A few things to let you know:

- *Classlist* will enable you to contact other parents safely and securely and to keep up to date with events organised by the Year Reps and ASPA. We have checked (with the help and support of the IT team at Abingdon School) where and how the data will be stored and are happy with the levels of security in place.
- The online system allows you to enter, manage and update the personal information that you wish to share with your child's year group. It means that you have full control over which of your contact details are shared, for example, just an email address or your full contact details. You can even choose to keep your email address hidden.
- Our parent community is much more than an online address book. By using *Classlist*, there is scope for parents to set up or invite others to events, join discussions or find other parents who live nearby.
- *Classlist* will replace and enhance the previous contact list system, if you are an existing parent please note that we will no longer be issuing these lists or using the Parent Portal for this purpose.

**If you have any queries regarding *Classlist* please contact [aspa@abingdon.org.uk](mailto:aspa@abingdon.org.uk)**

## ABINGDON

# 150

On 26 April 1870 Abingdon School moved to its current premises at Albert Park. To celebrate our 150th anniversary we are excited to be launching several fundraising campaigns.

### Abingdon Bursary Fund

To raise over £150,000 on our Abingdon 150 Giving Day on 18 March.

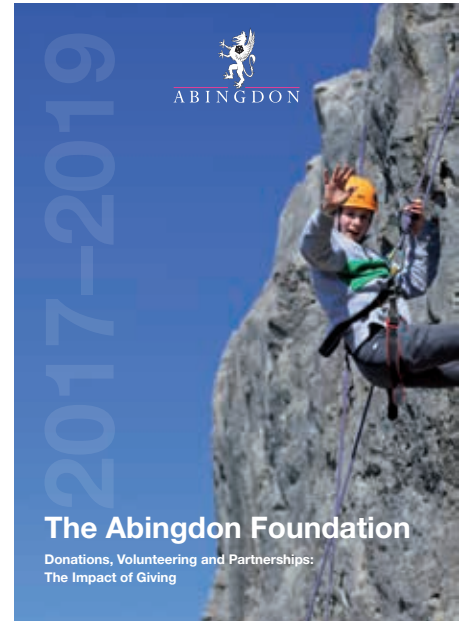
### Boarding Houses Project

Crescent House, Austin House and School House will all benefit - subject to planning permission - from ambitious re-modelling and upgrading.

### Leaving a Legacy

The 1563 Society is growing and we are aiming to increase membership to 150 by the end of 2020.

*We look forward to updating you on developments throughout the year and would love you to be involved.*



## Impact Report

Abingdon's first Impact Report was published in October. It is a celebration of the contribution that pupils, staff, parents and OAs have made both to the School and to the wider community over the past two years.

To view the report online please visit: [abingdon.org.uk/support-us/the-impact](http://abingdon.org.uk/support-us/the-impact) or if you would like a printed copy please contact the Development Office.

## The 1563 Society

The 1563 Society exists to recognise and thank those who have decided to leave a legacy to Abingdon. The Headmaster and Chairman of the 1563 Society were delighted to welcome members and their guests to the first Society lunch on 14 September, which was held in the Amey Theatre Foyer. It was a lovely occasion that fostered community between Society members who are brought together by their shared interest in, and support for, Abingdon School. If you would like to find out more about joining the Society please contact: [harriet.alderman@abingdon.org.uk](mailto:harriet.alderman@abingdon.org.uk).



*Legacies contribute to our future and enable us to expand the opportunities and excellence we have to offer. ♪*

Mike Windsor

## OAs dominate this year's school drama productions

Every year Abingdon stages seven drama productions ranging from a Lower School piece to the flagship joint production with the pupils from St Helen and St Katharine School.

This year, unbeknown to each other, the three teaching staff directors have each chosen a play written by, or with substantial input from, OAs.



Mike Bartlett

Mike Bartlett's (1999) celebrated *King Charles III* will be performed by our senior students, Lower School will be presenting Ed Rowett's (2005) adaptation of *Macbeth* and the Third and Fourth Years staged a play called *Every Brilliant Thing* in November, written by Duncan Macmillan with Jonny Donahoe (2001).



Ed Rowett

Ed and Jonny took time out of their busy schedules to visit school and impart their wisdom during workshops with our budding actors.



Jonny Donahoe working with students



Ed Rowett leading a drama workshop

### Forthcoming OA Events

**OA Big Band -**

**Sunday 19 January**

**Square Mile Coffee at the Mercers' Company -**

**Thursday 30 January**

**Manchester Drinks -**

**Friday 7 February**

**OA Football and Hockey -**

**Saturday 14 March**

**School Road Relay -**

**Monday 23 March**

**OA 50s, 60s Dinner at Walton Park, Clevedon -**

**Friday 1 May**

## 1870–2020: A Celebration of 150 Years at Albert Park

To commemorate this anniversary, which coincides with the 150th anniversary of the Royal Mail's first postcard, we will be printing a new school postcard which will be used as school stationery.

We are inviting pupils, parents, OAs, staff and friends of the School to submit a postcard entry inspired by Big School and its surroundings.

The winner will receive a £50 voucher and be announced in the Heads assembly at the start of the summer term.

Entries must be A4, and are to be submitted to the Old Abingdonian Club Office, Abingdon School, Park Road, Abingdon, OX14 1DE or digitally to [oldabingdonian@abingdon.org.uk](mailto:oldabingdonian@abingdon.org.uk). Closing date for entries is Friday 27 March.



# Abingdon Out of the Past

## 150 Years at Albert Park 1870 – 2020

After 300 years in the old schoolroom in the centre of town, and before that more than 300 years in various locations along Stert Street, Abingdon School moved to new, purpose built premises in April 1870. Designed to accommodate 124 pupils there were only 45 when the school opened. Today there are more than 1,000.

The two photographs show what a difference the years have made. The first one, although taken in 1939, shows the School as it had been since 1902. The second photograph was taken in 2018.



### The Physical Growth of the School

1. 1870 the original building – extended 1880, 1902 and 1977
2. 1894 Lacies Court, rented out in 1901 on 60 year lease. 1950 property extended by purchase of garden and Heylyns
3. 1897 Park Lodge built by OA architect Harry Redfern.
4. 1911 acquisition of Lower Field
5. 1928 purchase of Waste Court Estate using War Memorial Fund
6. 1950 Science Block – extended 1956, 1957, 1969, 1973 converted into Greening Court 2015
7. 1950 purchase of War Memorial Field
8. 1960 Court Room Wing Classrooms built, demolished 2016 to make way for Beech Court, opened 2018
9. 1960 Café
10. 1974 Dining Hall
11. 1980 Amey Hall, extended 2003 to become Arts Centre
12. 1984 Sports Hall, extended 2008 to become Sports Centre
13. 1984 The Warehouse (purchased 1981) opened as Technology Centre
14. 1994 Mercers' Court
15. 2015 Yang Science Centre

### The Numerical Growth of the School

Date	No. of pupils	Date	No. of pupils	Date	No. of pupils
1870	45	1924	154	1974	630
1884	48	1934	144	1984	702
1894	49	1944	227	1994	769
1904	86	1954	436	2004	800
1914	66	1964	600	2014	965

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