

Abingdon News

September 2009 | No. 21

The Newsletter of the Abingdon Foundation Schools

Three cheers!



Three cheers for last summer's exam candidates who all achieved such excellent results: at A level there was a 100% pass rate with 90% of all passes being at grades A and B and eleven boys gaining five A grades each; at AS level we had our best results ever and at GCSE, for the second year running, over 40% of all passes were at A* with twenty-two boys achieving nine or more A* each. The Headmaster, Mark Turner, spoke of his real pleasure at all these results, particularly as the boys also participate in a whole range of extra-curricular activities alongside their academic studies. Congratulations to everyone – boys, staff ... and parents! ■

www.abingdon.org.uk

Same address, new website – have a look and see for yourself the improvements in the site that will make it easier for the Abingdon School community to keep abreast of news and information when it goes live this term. New features include password-protected areas to provide a higher level of security through user login. The website, designed by The Creative Consortium in conjunction with the School's web development group, combines the Abingdon, Abingdon Preparatory School and the OA Club websites into one site. ■



02

News



04

Sport



07

Arts



13

Development



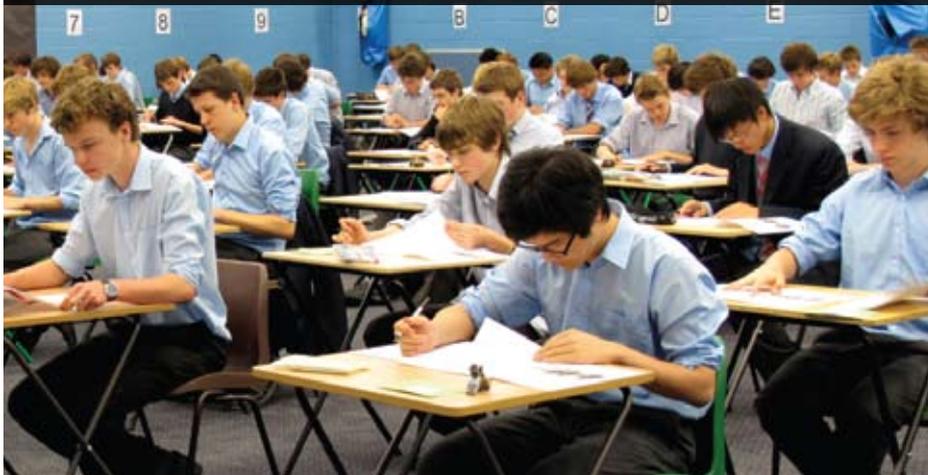
16

OA News



ABINGDON

League tables. *Caveat Emptor!*



League Tables have been an established part of educational life for the past twenty years, used by Government as a way of comparing the performance of individual schools and by parents to determine their choice of school. However, among educationalists there is a feeling that they have reduced education to something that can be judged by a narrow range of questionable exam statistics.

In their favour, League Tables have forced schools to focus on the importance

of teaching and learning, and it is acknowledged that they are a good general indicator of a school's academic record. However, League Tables should never be used as the sole criteria on which to base a choice of school: pastoral care and the quality and range of the non-academic activities that are offered are among other factors that should also be taken into account.

Those who study League Tables need to be aware that the picture they present

can be both incomplete and inaccurate. Some high-achieving independent schools no longer participate in them in protest at the educational distortion they believe they cause. As for their accuracy, the introduction of different exams types – IB, Pre U and IGCSE – has made sensible comparison of results almost impossible, nor have the tables been able to take account of later corrections due to inaccurate marking.

In addition, the criteria on which tables are based can make quite a difference to a school's position. Some years ago Abingdon came 15th, 36th, 59th, 91st and 123rd in different League Tables – same boys, same A level results just a different way of assessing them. Some tables use UCAS points, others allocate a numerical score for each grade and then total them, some judge by the number of entries graded A and B, or calculate an average points score per candidate, or an average points score per subject.

For the present, Abingdon will continue to participate in the League Tables but as the Headmaster, Mark Turner, emphasised in an article in HMC's *Conference and Common Room* last June, there is much more to choosing a school than just the bald statistics of its League Table position. ■

Richard Dick – High Sheriff of Oxfordshire

Richard Dick, a Governor of Abingdon for twenty-three years, who stepped down as Chairman of the Governors last December, was appointed High Sheriff of Oxfordshire in April. Now mainly a ceremonial role, the High Sheriff can bring together local individuals for the benefit of the community. Richard, who is keen that all young people should be given a chance, has chosen to support *Pact* – Parents and Children Together – whose mission is 'to build and strengthen families' with among other things a network of local community drop-in centres; *Trax*, aiming to channel the enthusiasm of young people into positive and challenging directions so as to increase both their self-esteem and their future aspirations, and the *Footsteps Foundation*, a young Oxfordshire-based charity which helps children and young adults with neuro-motor disorders to develop and maximize their physical abilities. ■



Richard Dick at Prize Giving last term with some of the prize winners



A fine view

This aerial photograph, taken last June, provides an excellent view of the new Sports Centre, which can be seen in the top right-hand corner surrounding the old Sports Hall. Whitefield can be seen in the top left-hand corner. Following conversion work, the ground floor of Whitefield now houses the Development Office, OA Office and the Archives. ■

Award winning food!

Abingdon has won a regional award from Sodexo for the quality of its catering, which means that it will go forward to the next stage of the competition.

The award recognizes the contribution the School has made to the improvement of its catering services since appointing Sodexo in 2007: its investment in a new kitchen and dining hall servery, the continuing appointment of quality staff – Catering Manager, Head Chef and Front of House Manager – and the general commitment to ensuring that the food on offer is both nutritional and good to eat. ■



Mark Turner

After what will have been eight and a half years as headmaster of Abingdon, Mark Turner will be leaving at the end of this academic year to take up a new appointment as headmaster of Shrewsbury School.



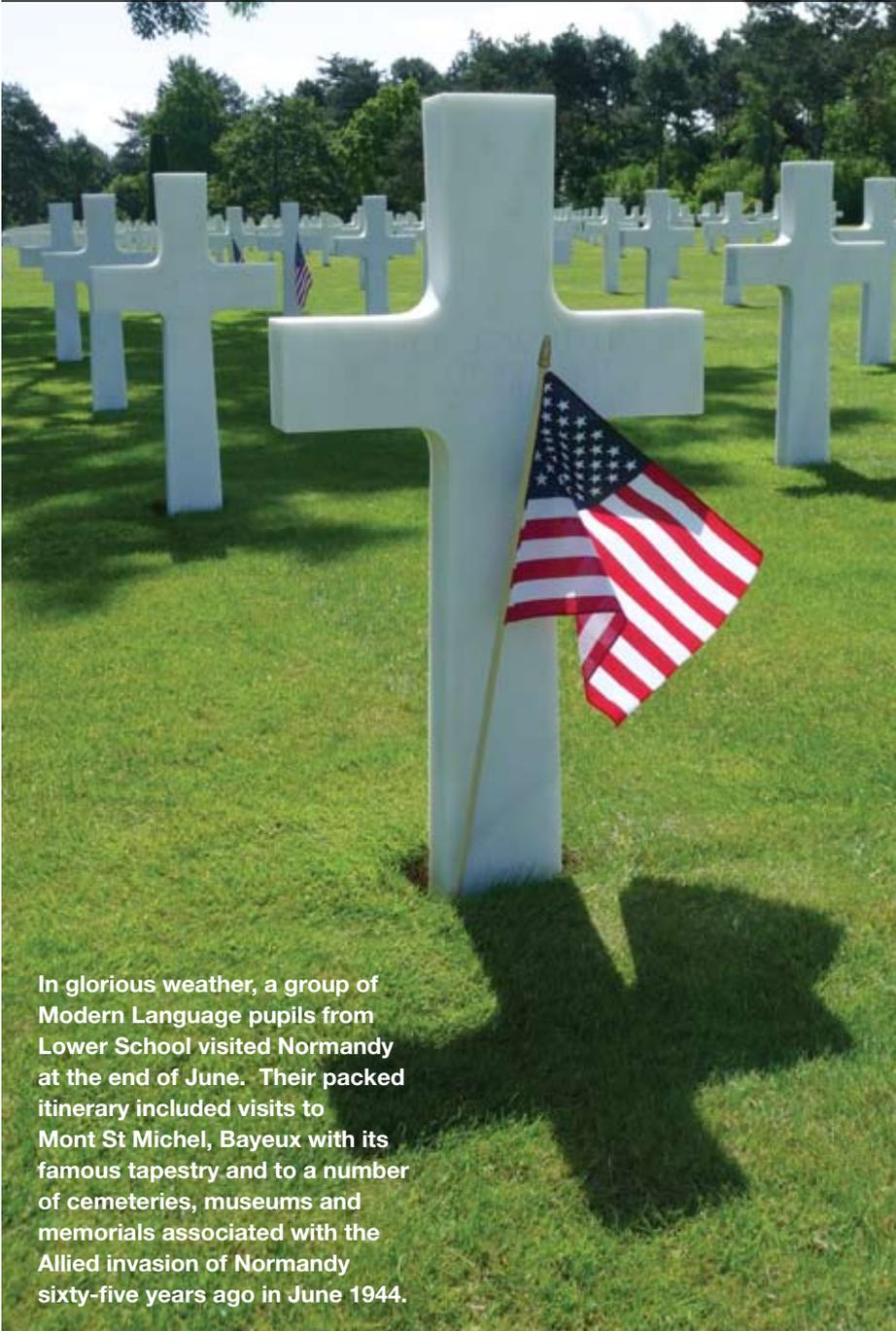
The search for a new headmaster for Abingdon is already well underway and the Governors hope they will have made their decision before the end of this term. In announcing his departure, Mr Turner acknowledged that the Shrewsbury Governors had been impressed by Abingdon's academic reputation, its breadth of activities and the achievements of its boys and he thanked everyone whose work contributed to the attainment and maintenance of these high standards. ■



Griffen Ball

Guests enjoying pre-dinner drinks in the early evening sunshine on Upper Field at the start of the Griffen Ball. Organised this year by Mrs Rosie Brown and her committee, this annual rite of passage for leavers, staff and parents was a thoroughly successful event. ■

Normandy visit

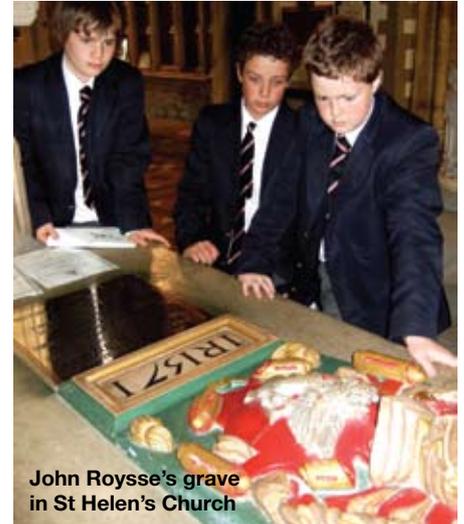


In glorious weather, a group of Modern Language pupils from Lower School visited Normandy at the end of June. Their packed itinerary included visits to Mont St Michel, Bayeux with its famous tapestry and to a number of cemeteries, museums and memorials associated with the Allied invasion of Normandy sixty-five years ago in June 1944.

Shadowing the Carnegie

A group of Lower School boys joined teams from all of the other Abingdon secondary schools to read for themselves the seven books shortlisted for the Carnegie Medal, awarded annually to the most outstanding book for children and young people published in the past twelve months. The Abingdon schools chose *The Knife of Never Letting Go* by Patrick Ness, reflecting the choice of 'shadowers' nationwide. The panel of children's librarians who made up the actual judging panel chose *Bog Child* by Siobhan Dowd. ■

Knowing your roots



John Roysse's grave in St Helen's Church

First-year boys were introduced to the history of the School when, following a talk by the School's archivist, Sarah Wearne, they went on a walk around the town of Abingdon to see for themselves the buildings and monuments associated with its centuries-old history. In St Helen's Church they visited the tomb of John Roysse, the man whose financial support ensured the survival of the School following the Dissolution of Abingdon Abbey in 1538. In 1563, the sixty-three-year-old Roysse paid for a new schoolroom and created an endowment to help pay for a schoolmaster for the sixty-three free places he hoped to be able to create for boys from the town. In 2013 the School will celebrate the 450th anniversary of Roysse's benefaction. ■



Abingdon's Carnegie 'shadowers'

Abingdon's prize-winning chemists



The 5 CREST gold award winners

Abingdon's chemists continue to achieve amazing success: at the recent National Chemistry Olympiad involving 2,200 students, three Abingdon boys – Gregory Craven, Mark Scott and Ian Houlsby – were placed in the top 200 thereby winning gold awards. Ian Houlsby, who came within the top 25, was chosen to represent Great Britain in this summer's International Chemistry Olympiad held in Cambridge.

In May, five Upper 6th pupils – Fayaaz Ahmed, Kris Kao, Tomer Faraggi, Andrew Phillips and Mark Scott – won CREST awards from the British Science Association for their work on the metallization of polymers, and in July a team of chemists from the Lower 6th – Joe Mason, Josh Stedman and Robbie Henley – won second place in the national finals of the Royal Society of Chemistry Schools' Analyst Competition in July. 1,500 schools took part in the competition.

Not to be outdone, two boys, Geoff Pennington and Josh Stedman won gold medals in the recent AS National Physics Olympiad. ■

Community service

At last term's Community Service tea party, guests were entertained by the School jazz band and challenged by a prize quiz whilst being served tea, scones, strawberries and sandwiches. The occasion gave the boys the opportunity to mark Mr and Mrs Dix's 65th wedding anniversary with a presentation of chocolates and flowers. ■



Raising £50,000 for charity

During the past twelve months, Abingdon boys have raised over £50,000 for a variety of causes from a number of activities that have included selling refreshments at the house tug-of-war competitions last term, comedy shows, talent shows, charity football matches and last September's sponsored walk, which raised £20,000. ■

Studying the past



Studying the past has always been considered an important factor in understanding the present, which is why boys are regularly taken to visit important history sites. On a visit to the Corinium Museum at Cirencester last term, Third-year pupils studying Classical Civilization learnt what life was like for Roman cavalymen posted to the fort here, and saw the sophisticated comforts of life in the 1st-century Roman villa at Chedworth. First-year pupils on a visit to Fishbourne Palace were able to appreciate some of the best-preserved Roman mosaic floors in Britain and learnt how archaeologists use evidence to find out about the past. ■



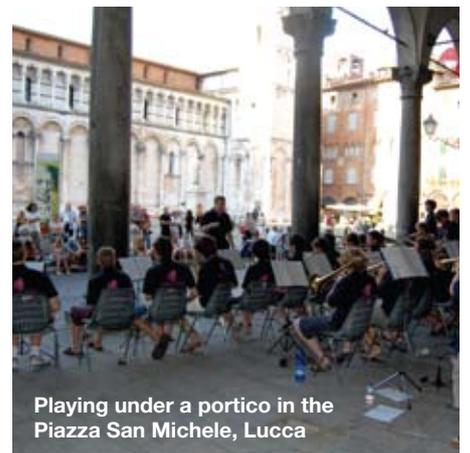
Big Band visits Italy



There was dancing in the street when the Big Band visited Lucca, Abingdon's twin town, on their tour of Italy during the summer holidays. Wherever they went in Montecatini, Florence and Lucca, their accomplished performances attracted appreciative audiences. However, it was not all work and the band had time to visit cultural sites in Pisa, Siena and San Gimignano and to relax by playing energetic games of volleyball and Ultimate Frisbee. The Band is made up of boys from all years at the School but, whether performing or relaxing, the cooperation between them all made for a very enjoyable tour for everyone. ■

Sketch, Drugs and Rock 'n' Roll at the Fringe

Mark Heffernan, Stephen Hodgetts and Jack Trotman, creators of the comedy show *Sketch Drugs and Rock 'n' Roll*, with support from Josephine Hall, Andrew Partridge and Lindsey Russell, took the show to the Edinburgh Fringe in August, performing every evening at the C Soco Studio 3 on Chambers Street. The show has been received by enthusiastic audiences each time it has been performed at School: first last October when it raised nearly £2,000 for Cancer Research and second last term when it was raising money for the Edinburgh trip. ■



Playing under a portico in the Piazza San Michele, Lucca



In the six years since it was founded, the Abingdon Film Unit has made a total of seventy-four short films, a mixture of documentary, fiction, animation and claymation – many of which can be viewed online at www.abingdonfilmunit.com.

This year's crop of new films was shown in the Amey Theatre on Wednesday 13 May. The subject matter of the seven documentaries varied from Didcot Power Station to the mountains of Afghanistan, and from Hong Kong to life in the School. A particularly striking documentary, on what it is like to come to school in England, 6,000 miles away from your home in Hong Kong, will be shown to boarding staff at The Dragon next term.

After half term, Matthew Copson and Tom Bateman cooperated with Larkmead School, helping to make a film about the challenges faced by deaf and hearing-impaired students, before spending part of the summer in Moldova working on a film about life in that country. ■

Art and Design Technology summer show



Drama in the past

Drama students from Abingdon and St Helen's got a taste of the past when they visited both the Globe and the Rose theatres on London's Bankside on 29 June. Whilst the Rose is the preserved archaeological site of an actual Elizabethan theatre, the Globe is a reconstruction of a rival theatre in which we know that Shakespeare himself had shares.

Later that day the group attended a production of Checkhov's *The Cherry Orchard*, produced by Sam Mendes at The Old Vic. ■

Summer music

For some it is the end of a year's hard work whilst for others it is the culmination of their school careers, but whatever it is, the music performed at the School's end-of-year concerts is always of the highest standard. This was certainly the case at the School's Bands' Concert on 6 May where the Big Band in particular were able to showcase their skills prior to their summer tour of Tuscany. At the Summer Orchestral Concert on 8 May, George Bone, in his final concert at the School, gave a very fine performance of Franz Strauss's horn concerto. The concert also saw a second performance of Simon Whalley's new work, *Abingdon-Tokai a Festive Overture*. The Big Band were in action again on 19 June for the annual *Jazz on a Summer's Night* concert when ASPA – Abingdon School Parents' Association – joined in the fun by serving champagne and strawberries in the interval. ■



The match against MCS

A winning season

It has been one of Abingdon's best cricket seasons, which has seen forty-two victories out of fifty-nine matches played. The 1st XI was only beaten once, by Shrewsbury in the last sixteen of the National Schools' 20/20 Competition, and they only drew once, to St Edward's. Among their notable victories was a ten-wicket victory over Magdalen College School who were

97 all out, and a three-wicket victory over Radley in which Smith achieved a magnificent 91 not out. There were notable performances from the Under 14s, Kitche scored 81 and Khaitan was 57 not out for the U14 As in the match against Stowe, whilst in the U14 B match, in which the team beat Stowe by 89 runs, Bethall bowled 3 for 8. The U14 As reached the final of

the county championship where they lost to MCS. The U15s beat Radley, Bradfield and Bloxham to be crowned county champions and the U12s too are county champions, beating Bartholomew School, Eynsham in the final.

1st XI player Timothy Deeks won the distinction of being listed among the top school bowlers in this year's Wisden on the basis of his 2008 bowling figures. ■



Abingdon at rest having just beaten Belmont Hill School, USA, by three-quarters of a length in the quarter-finals of the Princess Elizabeth Cup at Henley

At Wallingford the J18 coxed fours won a great victory when the crew of Rory Copus, George Rossiter, Jakob Schleu, Felix Wood and Jamie Cook achieved a time of 6:30.8 over the 2,000m distance, the fastest time recorded by a British school crew. At Bedford the J16s competed in the Novice Vllls event and beat St Edward's, Bedford, Winchester and Eton to win the title. The 1st VIII took second place in the Ghent Regatta, a very honourable second since the winners were a crew formed from the French national squad. The 1st VIII also came second at the National Schools' Regatta, this time to a very strong Eton crew. The 1st VIII did brilliantly to reach the final of the Princess Elizabeth Cup at Henley where they were beaten by the same strong Eton crew. ■



Abingdon's athletes

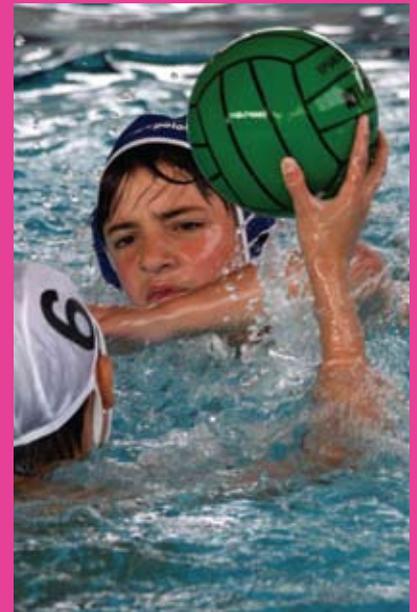
Among a number of outstanding performances at the inter-schools athletics match at Harrow in April was Thomas Watkins' victory in the 2,000 steeplechase in which he knocked 40 seconds off his previous best time. Other notable senior performances came from Alex Muir who won the 800m and Mike Summers who won the 200m. Among the intermediates, Peter Barnshaw continued to break records in the 400m and in the sprint hurdles. His run of victories continued at the Oxford Athletics County Championships where he won gold in his first ever 400m hurdles and in the 100m hurdles – as well as winning a bronze medal in the high jump.

At the Oxfordshire Schools' Athletics Association Meeting in July, Michael Summers came first in both the Senior Boys 100m and 200m, Alex Muir was first in the Senior Boys 1,500m and Tom Foxon was first in the Intermediate Boys 800m.

Competing in the English Schools Athletic Association Combined Events Midland Regional Final in July, Peter Barnshaw came second overall having scored personal bests for all his throws and knocked 15 seconds off his previous 1,500m personal best. ■

Ruling the waves

At last April's National Schools' Sailing Association Match Racing Championships at the Queen Mary Reservoir in West London a team of four Abingdon sailors – Sam Delo, Rory Spriggs, Finlay Curran and Nick Wilkinson – together with Nick Goodchild from Burford School, dominated the championships for the second year in succession. Sailing J80 match racing boats against teams from Sevenoaks, King's School Canterbury and Magdalen College School, the Abingdon crew won all ten of the events and hence the championship. ■



Swimming and Water Polo

The opening of the new 25 metre, eight-lane swimming pool has enabled the School to develop the Abingdon School Swimming Club as a competitive swimming squad and our swimmers are beginning to challenge schools with longer established teams. At the Bromsgrove Relays in April, where the team were competing against eighteen other schools, the Abingdon Under 15 team, having qualified for the final in both relays, came 3rd overall in the Medley Relay.

At the House Swimming Competition, in which two hundred boys participated in both individual and team races, the competitive nature of the event was enhanced by the new automatic timing system. As a result of the Competition several new members were invited to join the Swimming Club.

In their first ever home water polo fixture, which was the School's fourth ever water polo game, the Under 16 team achieved a 5-0 victory over Stowe.

The School is grateful to ASPA who donated money to water polo for caps, balls and mini-goals. ■

Sporting highs

As well as the usual cricket and tennis matches, there were a few sporting firsts during the summer term.



Abingdon Prep sent 13 boys to the regional round of the National Prep Schools Athletics competition where Nick Boreham qualified for the 100m finals finishing third.

The Prep School was able to initiate swimming galas using the marvellous new facilities at Abingdon, including the inaugural U13 water polo match (against Abingdon, won by the Prep School).

The cricketers were busy, too. By the end of the season the number of wins outweighed the losses (thanks to some great results in the 2nd, 3rd, Colts B and C teams). Dan Matthews, who represented Oxfordshire U13 in a pre-season tour of South Africa, led the 1st XI by example. He scored four half-centuries and enjoyed a fine season behind the stumps.

Perhaps the highlight of the term was Sports Day. The weather was perfect and the event as colourful as it was entertaining. Parents and boys had a wonderful time watching some tremendous performances. Following lunch, staff and parents competed in the annual Treviso Trophy cricket match and, after a tense final few overs, the staff won by 5 wickets to regain the trophy. ■

Exploring science

The Science Department had a very busy summer term with everything from a pre-prep science day, where the children were able to make slime, to the Year 8s working towards their Bronze Crest Awards. BA CREST is a nationally recognised accreditation scheme, for project work in science and technology, aimed at students aged 11–19. The award encourages students to develop their scientific curiosity and to find solutions to problems or tasks, in the same way as professional scientists and engineers do. The Year 8s worked on



their own practical projects independently and applied their work to the 'real world'. They learnt a lot about the importance of accurate experimental methods and data collection.

Other highlights of the term included the Year 5 science day and a 'microbes visit' from microbiologist, Dona Foster. Amongst a range of exciting activities, Dona took swabs from boys' fingers and incubated them overnight. The boys were amazed to see what microbes had been on their hands. It certainly encouraged them to wash them more thoroughly! The Oxford Trust led the Year 5 science day, which involved challenges and problem solving including building a 3D car from KNex and building a parachute, from recycled material, that would prevent a falling egg from breaking. ■



Sunday 21 June saw an excited posse of Year 8 boys ready to depart for foreign lands. The ferry trip was entertaining once it was discovered there was a disco on board. The boys gradually got braver and were keen to strut their stuff! The week proved to be a great success with lovely weather, which is always a bonus.

The Normandy trip consisted of a good mix of cultural visits – William the Conqueror's Castle, the D-Day landing

sites at Arromanches, the Allied war cemetery and the Bayeux Tapestry and fun and relaxation after a hard year's work. There was time to swim and play on the beach plus a trip to a snail farm with some tasting afterwards. The strong smell of garlic stayed with us for a while! Sleep just seemed to be an optional extra and the boys (not to mention the staff) were exhausted after a very enjoyable week. ■

Young talent celebrates Artweek

Eight pupils from the Art Club took part in this year's Artweeks across Oxfordshire. Their artistic talent, based on the theme of birds, was exhibited at Linacre College, Oxford with a private viewing on Sunday 3 May for a busy gathering of students, parents, teachers and people linked to the College. The wonderful array of pictures impressed the visitors. Each artist answered questions about their techniques and thoughts. A taste of things to come, if any of these budding artists choose art as a career!

The boys taking part were Thomas Howard, John Wiejak, Jack Bradley, Ben Oliver, Luke Shepherd, Alexander Sheard, James Swain and Red Rowan-Hull. ■



Summer concert

Following the hugely successful pre-prep end of year performances, the 18th June saw the rest of the School gathered in the Amey Theatre for the summer concert. A packed house was treated to a dazzling array of musical performances, from soloists and duets to large vocal and instrumental ensembles, reflecting the wide range of musical activities that have been running throughout the course of the year. ■

£10000 raised for Barnardo's

Dr David Barnardo, OBE, the great-great nephew of Dr Thomas Barnardo, who founded 'Dr Barnardo's Homes', was the guest of honour at lunch on Friday 19 June. The lunch was a celebration of the Prep School raising over £10,000 for Barnardo's. The main fund-raising event was the musical "Carrots" in the Lent term, but another tremendous effort was a sponsored swim by Luke Teh, Oscar Perry, Todd Giles, Luke Mayor and Kristian Soderstrom who swam over 40km in the Abingdon pool and raised over £3,000.

At the lunch David Barnardo said, 'I am overwhelmed by this fantastic fund-raising effort. The money raised will be used to help the many disadvantaged and marginalised children with whom Barnardo's works today, following the example of my forebear in Victorian times'. ■

Congratulations 2009 leavers!

Our congratulations go to all last year's Year 8 pupils who performed extremely well at Common Entrance. We were delighted that all the boys progressed to the secondary school of their choice. Six of the leavers must also be commended for the awards they won. Their achievements give all of us at Abingdon Prep enormous pleasure. ■



All that Jazz

On a pleasant evening in June a number of Abingdon musicians, members of the Blues Society, Big Band and a Jazz Quintet, filled the Amey Theatre with the sound of jazz. To this musical accompaniment, ASPA committee members and helpers busied themselves in the theatre foyer preparing some traditional summer refreshments – strawberries and champagne! As the final pre-interval number drew to a close the corks were popped and glasses charged, confirming to the appreciative audience that summer really was here. ■

Putting you in touch

In response to parents' requests, ASPA is compiling a contact list of parents/guardians. From this term, a list of parents, who have agreed to have their contact details circulated, is available for each of the Middle School years. The purpose of the lists is to enable parents to contact each other easily on School and social matters. The list is compiled at House/Tutor Group level in the Third Year and maintained by a parent volunteer Tutor Group Rep as the cohort moves up the School.

ASPA aims is to foster a greater sense of community among families in each year group. Some ASPA Committee members have taken on the role of Year Reps.

- Lower School Reps: Sally Carpenter, Lenore Churchman Davies
- 3rd Year Reps: Nicki Peirce, Margot Scholey
- 4th Year Reps: Neil Leah, Peter Garratt
- 5th Year Reps: Phillip Bell, Suzette Wilson-MacDonald
- Lower 6 Reps: Alison Elliott, Susan Williams

If you would like to add your name to your House List or would like to get in touch with your Rep, please specify which year group you would like to contact and e-mail the ASPA Secretary, Leila Beggin: aspa@abingdon.org.uk

www.abingdon.org.uk/go/aspa



Volunteers welcome

ASP members serving supper in the CMR at Parents' Evenings

The current ASPA Committee is keen to welcome new parent members. There are around six meetings a year including the AGM. Even if you do not wish to join the Committee we would welcome your support on an *ad hoc* basis. For instance, volunteers are needed to serve refreshments at the forthcoming Open Day in October, as well as at future Parents' Evenings.

Please contact the ASPA secretary. ■

ASP awards

The ASPA Development Awards provide bursaries to boys in the Sixth Form undertaking challenging and worthwhile activities. Up until this year they were intended for Upper 6 boys taking a gap year but the awards are now also open to any Lower 6 boys with a suitable project.

There were sixteen submissions this year, the highest number yet. ASPA awarded £2,600 in total and Tappins a further £1,000. The cheques were presented at Leavers' Day at the end of June.

Travel awards went to:

Tim Jones	£500	Parathan Rabintran	£100
Jamie Brown	£400	Dan Harris	£100
Edward Stansfield	£250	Robert Stevens	£100
James Hunter	£250	Sam Badenoch	£100
Tim Deeks, Tim Delaney,		Edward Crystal	£100
Oli Henstridge share	£250	Oliver Boddie	£100
John Merritt, Joe Glover		Jack Maynard	£100
	share £250		

The Paul Tappins Memorial Award was split into four awards of £250 each to the following boys/groups:

Tim Deeks, Tim Delaney,	Edward Stansfield
Oli Henstridge	
John Merritt and Joe Glover	James Hunter

Diary dates

14 September: 7.45 for 8 pm
ASPACOMMITEE meeting in the Christ's Hospital Room, Mercers' Court, Abingdon School. All welcome!

3 October: Open Day
ASPACOMMITEE will be serving refreshments

13 November: 7.30 pm
ASPACOMMITEE Third Year Parents' Social Evening in the Sports Centre Hospitality Suite, designed to provide an informal atmosphere for parents to socialise and get to know each other.

14 November: Friends of Abingdon School Boat Club are holding a Quiz and Curry Night.

Second-hand uniform shop

Opening hours 12.15 – 1.15

Sept 5, 9, 12 Oct 3, 7, 17
Nov 7, 11, 28 Dec 12

NEW! Second-hand ski wear
In the Michaelmas term and up to half term in the Lent term, the SUS shop will stock second-hand ski wear. The same labelling and payment arrangements as for other SUS items will be used.



A Duke of Edinburgh Award camp in the Wye Valley in May

Shaping the future

Our strategic plan was published, for the first time, earlier this year and the response we have received from members of our wider community has been very heartening. It is equally heartening to be able to report progress towards a number of our objectives; a snapshot of just a few follows.

Academic

The most immediate change will be the conversion of a current classroom into a science laboratory, which will be available for teaching at the start of the Michaelmas Term. The size of the science department, and the number of laboratories and ancillary rooms, has grown steadily to meet the increasing demand at A Level for a high quality scientific education. The new laboratory will service all three sciences and allow us to ensure that all science lessons are taught in laboratories. This is just the first step towards the School's ultimate aim of a new teaching block for the sciences, which would sit alongside the new laboratory.

The Other Half

The opening of the new Sports Centre has allowed us to offer new and exciting opportunities for Other Half activities. Many boys are now participating in water polo and in the new Abingdon School Swimming Club and there are a growing number of fencers taking advantage of the fencing salle. There are also more boys than ever taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme with many enjoying the opportunity to complete their expedition phase by kayak or sea canoe.

Personal and social development

Our enhanced tutor training programme has recently focussed on counselling. The Middle School tutors and Upper School tutors attended a workshop organised by Nick Luxmoore, and Lower School tutors participated in a role play session with Debbie Lee, both experienced professional counsellors who are well known in Oxfordshire. Tutors will also be attending individual external inset courses organised by providers such as HMC.

Community bursaries

Our bursary scheme has been boosted by the generous legacy of Nigel Hammond, an OA and former member of Common Room who left in excess of £500,000 to the School. This endowment has already been added to through the generosity of other donors. The importance of this fund in the current economic climate cannot be overstated and, with the implication of the Charity Commission's recent findings appearing to be that many schools must now aim to provide a significant – but still unspecified – proportion of their turnover in bursaries, this fund will help to ensure that Abingdon fulfils the Commission's public benefit requirements.

Of equal importance has been the boys' own efforts at fundraising. Over £50,000 has been raised for charitable causes during the year, 50% more than has ever previously been generated.

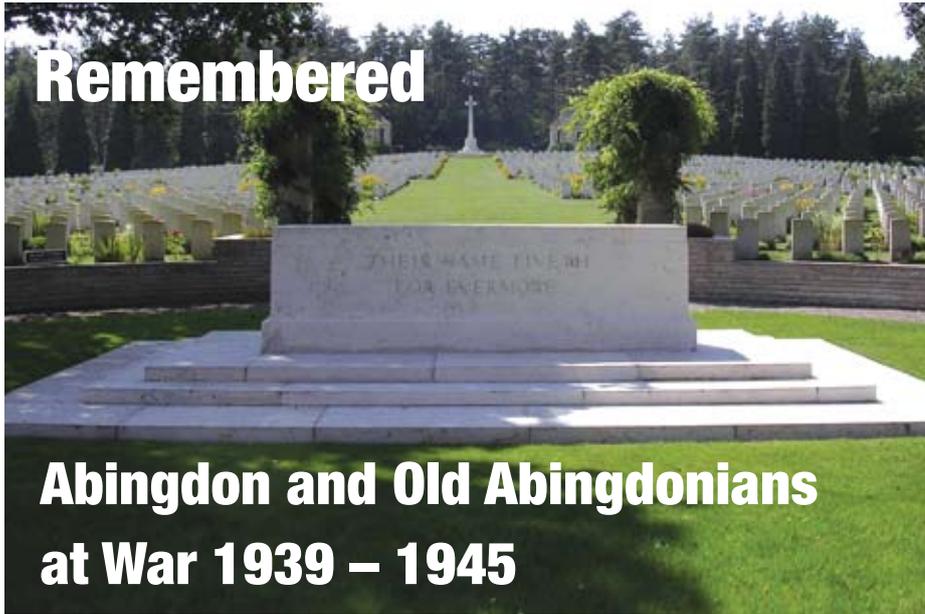
Financial health

The School's aim of maximising its revenue from income sources other than fees was boosted in September 2008 with the appointment of a new theatre manager whose brief was to increase the number of outside lettings. This has already allowed the School to start generating greater revenue from its facilities and we hope to make further progress in this direction over the coming years.

Accelerating progress

We can accelerate our progress towards our future with your help. Bursaries will always be at the top of our priority list and we are off to a very good start. It would be wonderful if we could enhance this by building the fund to help parents of current boys if they experience an unexpected financial crisis. And, with so many enthusiastic teachers who offer challenging and exciting lessons, there is always a demand for resources which fall outside the School's normal operating budget, which allows potential donors to make a gift towards something they feel strongly that they would like to support. ■

Please do visit our website to find out more.
<http://shaping.abingdon.org.uk>



Remembered

Abingdon and Old Abingdonians at War 1939 – 1945

An exhibition to mark the 70th anniversary of the outbreak of World War II

Private View

Friday 6 November 6.30 pm
Amey Theatre Foyer

Remembered: the work of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

An illustrated talk by Julie Summers
7.15 pm – Amey Theatre

All welcome to both private view and talk
Admission free

Julie Summers is the author of the most recent book on the work of the Commission, which cares for the graves and memorials of the war dead from the Runnymede Memorial at Windsor where OAs David Wardlaw, Peter Darbishire, Richard Langebear, Michael Nathan and

Michael Barnard – who all failed to return from flying operations over Europe – are commemorated, to Taukkyan in Burma the burial place of Arthur Adams, killed two months before the end of the war. ■

So that we can ascertain numbers, if you would like to come to the reception and the lecture please let the OA office know

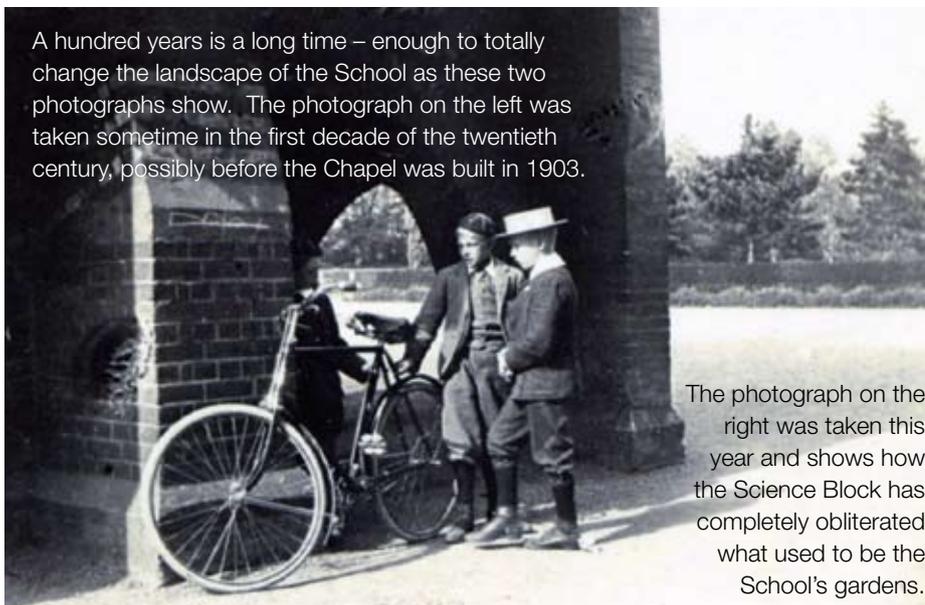
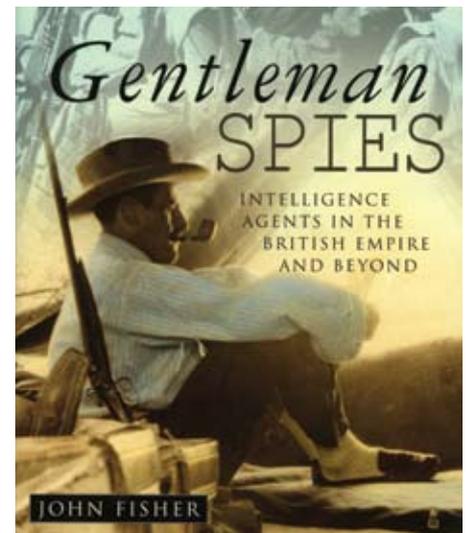
oaclub@abingdon.org.uk
01235 849098

Exhibition Open:

6 – 27 November: Amey Theatre Foyer
To visit the exhibition please check the opening hours on the School website or with the OA Office.

A spy in our midst?

We seem to have had a spy in our midst – a gentleman spy of course, rather along the lines of John Buchan’s Richard Hannay. Herbert William Childs came to the School in the 1880s when his father was vicar of Shippon. There is a suspicion that he was the William Childs who travelled widely in Asia Minor between the years 1909 and 1920, discreetly recording anything that could have been of military significance to the British. Childs features in Dr John Fisher’s book, *Gentleman Spies*, the subject of his lecture at The Royal Society for Asian Affairs on 18 November. ■



A hundred years is a long time – enough to totally change the landscape of the School as these two photographs show. The photograph on the left was taken sometime in the first decade of the twentieth century, possibly before the Chapel was built in 1903.

The photograph on the right was taken this year and shows how the Science Block has completely obliterated what used to be the School’s gardens.

Then and now



2009, a corner of the exterior of the Lower Library, originally a covered play area



Twenty20 cricket

Sunday 21 June 2009 saw the first Abingdon School Community Twenty20 Cricket Tournament. It was held in memory of Gerald Smithson, the former Yorkshire and England player who was the Abingdon School cricket coach and head groundsman during the 1960s.

Teams composed of OAs – captained by David Allison (OA 1993) – current boys, parents and members of staff assembled to compete for the inaugural trophy, which was won by the pupils' team who were undefeated in their three matches.

We were honoured to welcome Devon Malcolm, former England cricketer and legendary fast bowler, to Abingdon as our guest. At lunchtime Devon spoke of his pleasure at seeing so many enthusiastic cricketers coming together to promote the sport within the school community. He also gave a very lively re-enactment of the iconic nine wickets he took against South Africa at the Oval in 1994! ■

Legal dinner

On the evening of Wednesday 30 September there will be a dinner for OAs who work in the legal profession at which current boys and members of the School's wider community will also be welcome. This will be the first in a series of professional dinners to be hosted by the OA Club. The event will be held in the Parliament Chamber and Queen's Room at the Middle Temple in London and is being hosted by Sir Vivian Ramsey (OA 1968), a prominent High Court Judge.

There will be a reception with pre-dinner drinks in the gardens, weather permitting, followed by a three-course formal dinner at which there will be a short address by Sir Vivian. Full details are available on the OA Club website. ■

OA website

A great thank you to nearly 1,000 OAs who have now registered for access to the new members' area of the Club website. If you haven't already done so, please do. Once registered, you will be able to update your entry in the OA Club database, tell us how you wish us to communicate with you, and search for your friends online. It also allows you to let us know whether you wish to be part of our new career mentoring service and connects you with others in your profession. ■

Full details of our forthcoming events and other activities are available on the OA Club website: www.oaclub.org.uk
The OA Club, Abingdon School,
Park Road, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 1DE
Tel: +44 (0) 1235 849098
Email: oaclub@abingdon.org.uk

A ladies lunch

A gloriously sunny day in July saw ten local ladies enjoying school lunch followed by tea and croquet at Whitefields. Not just any ten ladies however as these ten have been connected with Abingdon School for many, many years: Diana Griffin, wife of John Griffin who taught English; Angela Potter, wife of Bill Potter, biology teacher and master of Crescent House; Judith Payne, daughter of Donald Willis, Second Master, master of Larkhill House, teacher of English and history and master in overall charge of games, Judith is also married to Nigel Payne who taught history at the School for many years. Audrey Hasnip, wife of Keith who taught modern languages; Anne Smithson, wife of the School's cricket professional; Brenda Coleman who was married to Ron Coleman who taught woodwork and coached swimming at the School for 26 years; Janet Taylor whose husband David taught modern languages and was responsible for directing numerous drama productions; Jane Egerton-King whose husband used to be Assistant Bursar; Gill Barratt, once secretary to James Cobban and Mary Moore whose husband, the Vicar of Abingdon was once a regular preacher in Chapel. Whilst OAs might be more familiar with their husbands, the lunch was designed to acknowledge the huge contribution they have all made in their many ways to Abingdon School. ■

OA Open Day

Saturday 14th November is the new date for OA Open Day at the School and OAs are warmly invited to visit. Highlights will include the 1st XV against the Oratory, the OA Club AGM and the annual dinner. Full details will be circulated nearer the time and posted on the OA Club website.

The Open Day will give OAs the opportunity to visit the exhibition *Abingdon and Old Abingdonians at War 1939-1945*, which will be on display in the Amey Theatre foyer. ■



Chess Blue

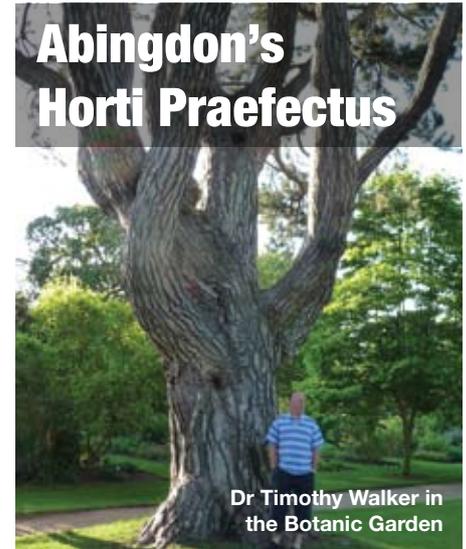
Stuart Robertson in action against the School

Stuart Robertson, OA 2007, reading Mathematics at Trinity, represented Cambridge in the 127th Varsity Chess Match held on 14 March at the RAC Club in Pall Mall. This is the second year that Stuart has played for Cambridge. Last year he faced his old school rival Graham Morris, OA 2007, who was playing for Oxford. Not only had the two of them played formidable chess whilst at School but both have played for England.

At the Activities Fair last September, Stuart repeated his popular blindfold display using the Club's giant chess set. A couple of weeks later he returned to give a simultaneous display and bravely agreed to the same conditions that GM Peter Wells accepted last year. This meant that facing Stuart alternately as White and Black were eighteen boys selected in equal numbers from the U13, U15 and U18 age categories, and two members of staff. Each player had 1¼ hours for all their moves. Stuart, whose ECF grade is now 160, performed exceptionally well, conceding only five draws and no losses, and so won the encounter 17½ – 2½. ■

Duet for One

A revival of *Duet for One*, written in 1980 by Tom Kempinski, OA 1956, opened the 2009 season at the Almeida Theatre with Juliet Stevenson in the starring role as a former world-famous violinist forced to give up her career following the onset of Multiple Sclerosis. The play toured the Bath, Windsor and Richmond theatres before transferring to London's Vaudeville Theatre. Kempinski, who began his career as an actor, has written more than forty plays. ■

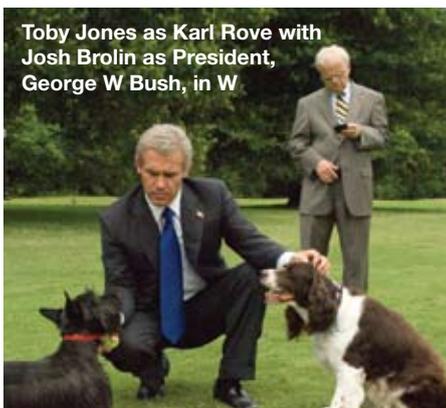


Abingdon's Horti Praefectus

Dr Timothy Walker in the Botanic Garden

Dr Timothy Walker, OA 1977, who describes himself as a product of the Abingdon Talbot-Potter axis of biology teaching, has been the Horti Praefectus, or Director, of the University of Oxford Botanic Garden and Harcourt Arboretum since 1988. The Garden, founded in 1621, is not only the oldest Botanic garden in Britain but houses the national reference collection of 7,000 different plant types, making it the most compact yet diverse collection of plants in the world. The Arboretum, situated at Nuneham Courtenay, six miles south of Oxford, is currently the venue for an ambitious landscape restoration project on fifty acres of former set-aside. Thirteen thousand native trees have been planted on twenty acres while the remaining thirty are being returned to species-rich pasture over the next three years.

Dr Walker, an amusing and informed speaker, accompanied a Common Room group on a very enjoyable visit to the Botanic Garden one evening last June. ■



Toby Jones as Karl Rove with Josh Brolin as President, George W. Bush, in *W*

Toby Jones

Toby Jones, OA 1985, returned to the London stage last January after an absence of five years to star in Tom Stoppard's *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour* at the National Theatre. He followed this up in March with the lead in Jez Butterworth's new play *Parlour Song* at the Almeida. In his recent film appearances, Toby has appeared as Swifty Lazar in *Frost-Nixon*, the dramatic retelling of the Watergate story, Karl Rove in Oliver Stone's *W* and will soon be seen on our screens as Thomas Huxley in *Creation*, which will be released in the UK on 25 September following its world premiere at the Toronto Film Festival on 10 September. Toby's voice will be heard again next year as Dobby the House Elf when the first part of *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* is released, and in 2011 as the voice of Silk in *The Adventures of Tin Tin: the Secret of the Unicorn*. ■