

THE



2020



1st XI

KUKRI

KUKRI



4  
1st XI





# The Abingdonian

2019 – 2020

Volume XXVI No. 3 Issue 324

---

## Contents

Editorial	2
Head's Foreword	3
Michaelmas Term	4
Lent Term	24
Summer Term	46
House Reports	70
Staff Farewells	90

---

# Editorial



Welcome to *The Abingdonian* 2020. It has been a unique year by all standards, with the latter parts of the academic year changed to an unforeseen degree. Nevertheless, it has been a year full of great achievement across the board.

Academically, the school had another very strong year and the dedication to learning from staff and students both in school and over Zoom was remarkable. In the Other Half students continued to take opportunities to expand their horizons, many participating in societies and clubs they had never tried before. Even during lockdown we saw pupils take part in new challenges behind or beyond a screen from creative and academic writing, to producing art, to collaborating in innovative sports competitions. We hope this edition does justice to all of the fascinating activities and events that took place.

I have worked on *The Abingdonian* for five years now, and it has been a great pleasure to help in producing the publication and to work with such a hard working team. This is my and many of my fellow editors' final edition, but I am confident that we are passing the torch on to a very capable team next year. I'd like to thank Mr Jenkins for his unwavering commitment to getting the very best edition out each year. Many thanks also go to my fellow student editors: Rory Bishop, Andrey Gerasimov, Ian Ip, Anderson Lai, Andreas Lo, George Nott, Matthew Viner and Kevin Wan, as well as all of the contributing staff and student writers.

*Sam Penrose, 7BS*

---

# Head's Foreword



This edition of The Abingdonian reports on a year like no other. We enjoyed a busy and productive Michaelmas Term which included some spectacular highlights, including drama productions, concerts and some notable sporting success, not least the 1st XV's dramatic run to the quarter finals of the National Schools' Cup.

Then, in January 2020, the world changed. At that stage, I don't think many of us understood the implications the coronavirus might have on everyone's lives. I certainly didn't anticipate that we would end up spending more than a term working remotely.

The strength of any organisation is only really tested in adversity, and the response of students and staff to the challenge of moving online was astonishing, characterised by resourcefulness, commitment, creativity and determination. The school site was suddenly eerily quiet but our sense of community was sustained as students Zoomed into lessons from around the world, Other Half activities were adapted to virtual forms, and even House Sports Days went ahead, with boys joining in from their gardens, bedrooms and living rooms. We were proud of the key roles that members of the Abingdon community - parents, governors, Old Abingdonians - played in combating the virus.

The quality of our online offering ensured that academic momentum was sustained while we also maintained our responsibilities for the wellbeing and welfare of our students. Having said that, we were all relieved to return to the school site - and at least an element of normality - in September.

Happily, we were also able to sustain momentum in our latest building project. Faringdon Lodge, at the north end of the site, will provide a beautiful new home for Computer Science, Economics and Business as well as accommodating two new day houserooms, a new Reception area and the Second Hand Uniform Shop. It will prove to be a great asset.

I am grateful to Mr Jenkins and the editorial team for putting together this edition of The Abingdonian and capturing such an extraordinary year in our collective lives. Despite the many challenges that we continue to face, the School is set to emerge strengthened and emboldened, thanks to the collective spirit that underpins our community.

*Michael Windsor*

---

# Michaelmas 2019



## Starting in Middle School

I'd like to share some experiences I've had at Abingdon.

It was the first day of the year and I was late and I was still learning my way around. Then I found that my laptop wouldn't work, so I just sat through the chemistry lesson, barely listening to what the teacher was saying.

"Do you have coloured pencils? You need coloured pencils for what we're doing now." I looked up and saw two kind faces looking at me; the owner of one of them handed me some pencils. I remembered being all warmed up inside, as the two of them told me what to do, even shared their laptops with me throughout the lesson. They then offered to take me around school, showed me how to get to my lessons, and they sat with me during lunch. It was on that very first day, that I felt like I truly belonged, and that I could fit in perfectly with the boys at my new school.

Sports in the UK are very different to Hong Kong too. During the Michaelmas

Term, I joined the rugby team. I hated it at first; I didn't like getting dirty, and I didn't like getting tackled, so I was pretty bad at it. Even so, the coach put me on the team for a game against Eton. I remember complaining loudly to the coach about his decision, and he just told me to try it before I said anything more.

On the day of the match, it was -2 degrees. It drizzled during the whole game. And I was obviously underdressed. Wearing just shorts and a short sleeved shirt, I felt like I was going to freeze to death. It didn't help that the Eton boys were overwhelming us with their skill. By the second half, Eton was winning 34 to 0. I looked at my teammates, expecting to see that they were ready to give up like me. Yet, they met my gaze with blazes of fire in their eyes. The captain yelled as we continued to run and execute their plays. We might not have been as skilled as the Eton boys, but what we lacked in skill, we looked to make up for with passion and grit.

I was dumbstruck. How could we ever win? It was impossible. Yet my teammates didn't give up. They kept playing with determination and will. Even

if they were aware of the dire situation, they never stopped running nor tackling for one second. Before I even realised it, I was running alongside my teammates with a smile on my face, with the will to win. We lost in the end, but no one was upset. No one had any regrets, as what was important was that we had played our hardest, and that we had fun.

These experiences were just a few of many in my first term in Abingdon. For me, they illustrate the vast difference between studying in Abingdon and in Hong Kong. Back in Hong Kong, I had no time to branch out and do new things, as tutorials had took up most of my time, to prepare for exams. Yet here, I am able to try new things, and hone skills at things I am good at, like the basketball team, where I have been chosen to join the U18 squad. I am grateful for the opportunities given to me and grateful to all the people who have supported me and been with me during this school year. Abingdon has truly broadened my horizons, and I am very proud to call myself an Abingdonian. I look forward to many more years to come!

*Matthew Chan, 3GJC*



As someone who attended two years of Lower School before finally making the leap to Middle School where the push towards GCSEs begins, I was not particularly intimidated by the timings and rules of the school day I had been told to abide by, as I had experienced many of them before. This did not mean, however, that the new wave of students flooding through the coach park was something I did not fear. I had been made aware of these new people coming to join me on this journey towards our final exams, but it was only with my tutor's support and the help of the friends that I had made in Lower School that I was able to proceed through the day without question.

When I first stepped into my designated house room in School House, I was immediately struck by the number of older boarders who were sitting there waiting for me and the other day students to arrive. This struck me, as I was expecting to find comfort in the friends I had made previously, but here in front of me sat a group of people who I had never before seen in my life. For a while, the house room did have a bit of a divide, where students would spend time only with the people they already knew but, with the help of our tutor, we soon got to know each other properly, and the divide quickly broke down. Soon after, the house room began to flourish, becoming a very comfortable environment in which everyone knew each other, and could bond further over activities such as table tennis, pool, or



getting on with homework.

Lessons were a very similar situation to start with, where groups of friends who already knew each other would arrive in a talkative manner, while on the other side of the door, everything could go silent through the nervousness of not knowing all of our peers. The process of getting to know each other was majorly accelerated, however, by the seating plans of our teachers, which placed us with people we didn't already know. Our academic year then started to go very smoothly, with plenty of memories made along the way, until early January, when we started receiving news of Covid-19.

By the end of the Lent Term, the country had gone into lockdown and the school

site had closed, prompting fears of a sudden halt to our education. Luckily, the school had the situation under control, and we quickly resumed lessons online. Inevitably we had to make compromises with events such as our end of year exams being cancelled due to social distancing rules. This ultimately resulted in a calm end to the year, with no need to revise or panic, despite the pandemic that was occurring around us. Although we did not have the chance to experience the Summer Term together at Abingdon, this was at least partly made up for by the many memories and new friends we had already made on the way!

*Addison Hill, 3JCM*

---

## Film Unit

I joined Abingdon Film Unit in the third year; unbeknown to me at the time, I would go on to produce a trilogy of short documentaries about the life of my hometown.

Abingdon was a different world, let's say sixty years ago from now, and I always feel it's worth knowing about the changes seen by a community you are involved with. I gave myself the goal of spreading the word of what Abingdon was like, and has become today. By going around my local community and interviewing people from all backgrounds I have been able to portray vivid images steam trains pulling out of a bustling railway yard; a quasi-civil war over a pair of ox's horns in the market square; a thick, yeasty must coating Abingdon town from a brewery that was once one of the largest in the UK. I was already familiar with — and fascinated by — these aspects of the town, but it was clear that nowadays very few students know about Abingdon's past. The locations of Poundland and Waitrose seem to be the extent of a typical pupil's knowledge.

Initially I was a bit clueless about what path I should take in terms of filmmaking, but it seemed sensible to start off close to home. A distinct aspect of the town I'd seen many times was its traditional Morris dancers. They danced in public every now and then and had some quirky historical tales which accompanied the group. Every documentary needs an underlying story, though, and it was a perfect coincidence that, at the time I first spoke to the group about a potential film, a father and his eight-year-old son were joining the group and (re)learning the ropes together. This was gold dust for my film, as I could then describe the history of the group whilst following two main characters, who would serve to help give the audience an emotional attachment to the film.

At this point I had not planned that my next two films would also reflect my local area, but with the knowledge gained from my first film I was confident about making a more retrospective documentary. I already had a fascination with railways, so it was perfect for me to



tell the story of an old railway, nicknamed 'The Bunk', which ran between Abingdon and Radley. By interviewing locals, I could develop a narrative told through their memories and anecdotes. Archive footage from the school and the internet backed up the film, allowing me to expand it and discuss the controversy around Doctor Beeching's 'axing' of the British railways, which affected many small lines such as the branch to Abingdon in the 1960s. The icing on the cake for this film came when I received the opportunity to film at Didcot Railway Centre, where I could catch trains in motion as well as see various topical artefacts in their collection. Although the film had a shaky start, with difficulties in finding people to interview, I was very pleased with the result and felt there were definite improvements over my previous film.

The last of the three short documentaries was on a larger scale. I had chosen to tackle the now disused Morland brewery, which was situated on a large site off Ock Street for the majority of its existence. Intending to create both a portrait of life at the brewery and a story of its demise, I interviewed ex-workers and other people from Abingdon, who shared great stories of strong, friendly environments as well as rather surprising aspects of brewery life that would not be found today. Having this incidental trilogy end with the closure of the brewery felt a bit depressing, though, so to make a more optimistic conclusion, I made

contact with a local micro-brewery to show that there is a future to local brewing, and to industry in general, in Abingdon. The film was both my favourite to make and the most satisfying upon its completion.

Making these films would have been far too daunting a project for me if I'd envisaged the totality at the beginning. But now, as I look back on them, I am very glad I kept going. Making a film is no easy prospect, as anyone at the Film Unit could tell you. From the initial planning and filming, to the collating and editing, the process can be tedious and tiring, but the achievement you feel at the end is huge. Of course, I owe a whole lot of gratitude to Mr Taylor and the tutors of the Film Unit, who offered their wealth of experience and knowledge to help me improve my projects.

It truly is a magical moment when you complete your film, especially when you stand on the Amey Theatre stage in front of an audience describing your journey and unveiling your magnum opus on the big screen. Be sure to recognise the dedication and perseverance of your peers if they are able to complete such a feat. By no means do you need to be a prospective professional filmmaker to produce something captivating and personal, so I would always advise any pupil in the school to consider trying out Abingdon Film Unit.

*Tristan Mann Powter, 6KJY*



## Debating Society

In May 2019, I became chair of the Debating Society. I wanted to take the society in a new direction: to develop it outside of our traditional Friday debates, both by investing more in competitions and by collaborating more with students from other schools. It's been a pleasure to preside over real success in debating competitions, particularly the Schools' Mace. On 19 November, we played host to the first round of the regional Schools' Mace competition. Our team, James Gibson and Johan Nerlov, defeated their opposition, then went through to the second round, where they defeated Radley at St Edwards. In March we defeated Wellington in the third round - the mid-south regional final - opposing the proposition "THW introduce a universal basic income." Unfortunately, however, we were knocked out of the competition by Eton, who beat us on points, allowing them to progress to the next round.

We also planned to host our own competition, which would bring forty students together from schools across Abingdon for an evening of debating. Several months in advance, we worked with ASiP and the debating societies of St Helen's, Larkmead and John Mason to build a team for each school. Due to logistical issues we unfortunately had to cancel it at the last minute; however, we can pass the lessons we learned on to next year's society, who have the plans and contacts to swoop into action.

One highlight of this year was the 2019 General Election. As is custom, we ran a parallel election within school, in conjunction with the Student Council. However, I felt that past school elections focused too much on the ballot box, and avoided the issues influencing how students actually voted. To try and counter this, and discover more about our student electorate, I made a fifteen-question poll on a couple of current issues which I sent out at the beginning of election week. Over the course of the week, our candidates harangued each year group in morning hustings. In previous school elections, the Tories were usually assured of victory, with all

other parties polling at around 13%. However, given that pre-election polls indicated just 21% of the school were Brexiters, and that the Conservative Party was focused on delivering Brexit while the Liberal Democrats were pro-Remain, it quickly became a two-horse race. Despite just over a quarter of respondents identifying as centre-left or hard-left, the Labour Party achieved their worst electoral result in school memory, with Johan Nerlov getting just 12 out of over 500 votes. Many of the centre-left voters were (presumably) soaked up by Kit Mannix, representing the Liberal Democrats. He was, however, unable to capitalise on this and secure victory, with Conservative James Gibson winning by three votes. The posters from right wing parties - in particular, those from the Brexit Party, represented by Tristan Tonks and Charles Maddison - were much more prolific than those from the

left and centre, perhaps contributing to their victory.

Another success was getting more students from St Helen's involved. Students such as Katy Biggs-Williams spoke in debates such as "THW limit passengers to one return flight per year" alongside George Carver, and swept the floor in our Valentine's Day debate ("THW date your political opposite") alongside Jonathan Ferry, against myself and Jake de Jongh. We also collaborated with St Helen's in their own General Election; of the ten candidates, a Conservative and the two Brexit Party representatives were Abingdonians.

I'm proud of how we've involved the Debating Society more in the community this year, and am glad of the legacy we leave for the Lower Sixth to build on.

*Lancelot Wilson, 7DTP*



---

## House Singing Competition

As the pianist for the Lower School House Singing, I was one of the most nervous people on the stage (apart from the soloists, our conductor Arthur — and Mr Jenkins, of course). Walking out I felt that the whole of Lower School was ready, and that we were more finely tuned than last year. A hush fell over the audience, as if they knew this year was ours, and when the choir sang they were in the zone from the first note I played - we had saved our best performance 'til last. After shakily finding the rhythm, we gained confidence, and Arthur steadily led us to the end of a fantastic performance - and we knew we had nailed it. Hard work in practice really paid off and the whole House (though not the school!) united in cheers of sheer joy as the judge declared us number one at singing out of the entire school. As the audience dutifully applauded we were ecstatic; we had won for the first time in Lower School history. Mr Jenkins seemed to be the happiest - after all, the main reason we won was his constant urging for us to learn the words (or the music, in my case).

*John Cairns, 2SCVM*

As I had performed the song 'A Million Dreams' twice in a Year Six production, in a Year Six leavers' do, a couple of times in church and in lots of choir performances, the song had started to get a bit boring for me and I wasn't highly motivated to perform it again. At least I didn't have to learn the lyrics for homework! But when Mr Jenkins told me I was going to sing in the descant, I became more interested. I had never sung the song with a descant before — I didn't even know there was one! So I listened to the real song, which had the descant, right at the end, that I had never noticed before. It sounded really good, and I was really looking forward to the first rehearsal to learn the tune. In the first full rehearsal, everyone else stopped singing when the descant came in, which was funny, because the descant was less than a fifth of the whole choir, yet louder than everyone else. I knew that this would need a lot



more practice. In the last rehearsal, right before the competition, I was feeling very nervous, but I could also see the whole thing finally coming together; we had improved a lot from the first rehearsal. I thought we might have a chance of coming third, or even second, but I wasn't expecting us to win. I guess everyone could see our joy after the results were announced. I have to admit, even more than for myself, I felt happy for Mr Jenkins, because he had been trying to win for many years, and this is the first time he has won.

*Samuel Price, 1RHH*

This conducting experience was a very tough task. In fact, it could make or break my time in Lower School: either it would provide me with a memory that I could look back on and treasure forever, or it would be a memory that I'd try my very best to ignore. It was extremely daunting that Lower School had never won before and it felt like a weight on my shoulders that it was down to me to lift. I also felt that if we didn't win, it would be my fault. And from the moment I was told I was conducting, to the day of the event, the most realistic target I

could think of was second or third place; that was until I was lining up outside the theatre, when a voice filled my head, saying, "Come on Arthur, let's go for gold." And I think it was that voice that filled everyone's head, propelling us from second place to first.

Another thing that changed last minute was my conducting technique. In rehearsals I used one of those conducting batons that are generally quite appropriate, but in my case it made my conducting feel flat, so I made a last-minute decision, just as I was about to walk in, to scrap it completely and instead just use my hands. I think this let me connect with the choir so much more, which made all the difference.

If it seems that I think I did all the work, then I couldn't be more wrong, because without the amazing choir, fantastic soloists, extremely talented musicians and finally all the teachers that helped the choir and me along the way, we could never have dreamt of succeeding in the way we did.

*Arthur Robertson, 2PCWM*

When I was chosen to sing a solo for



House Singing, nerves flooded through me. This was to be in front of the whole school, all the teachers and the external judge. What could possibly go wrong?

We were sent away to learn the words and music. When we got back to school there was a significant hurdle to clear: the first rehearsal. This was the first time that anyone would hear my solo. I felt excited but at the same time apprehensive, as I did not know how people would react. However, I realised that there was no point in being worried about it, so I went and tried my best.

The reaction was very positive. We were all very relieved, but it was still only the first step to the actual competition. Over the next week of rehearsals we all worked our hardest and really wanted to achieve the victory.

Finally the day was here. In the morning we were all talking nervously about what was coming up later. We knew our chances were good, but none of us wanted to tempt fate. If we won, it would be the first such triumph in the history of Lower School. At last it was time to go on stage. I took a deep breath and

walked out. Then the all-too-familiar introduction started to play. When I started to sing, I forgot all about my nerves and just concentrated on doing well. Once the song had finished, we felt that the performance had been a success, possibly our best performance ever. But it was still a surprise to be crowned the 2019 House Singing champions! We were elated, having all worked so hard for this record breaking moment.

*Rupert Mathieson, 2HFCP*



# GIS Club

A Geographic Information System (GIS) is the gathering, managing and examining of data around geographic locations. It utilises computers, specialist software and websites. GIS is used in lots of different industries, including urban planning, logging and many more. An example of a practical use of GIS is making a map that shows

the distribution of pollution levels, geographic sources of pollution and what areas are sensitive to pollution. People can then use that information to work out the best place to build new houses.

In GIS Club we often looked at recent and topical events and made maps on them to help understand them a little better. For example, during the bushfires in Australia in January we made some maps that showed where the fires were

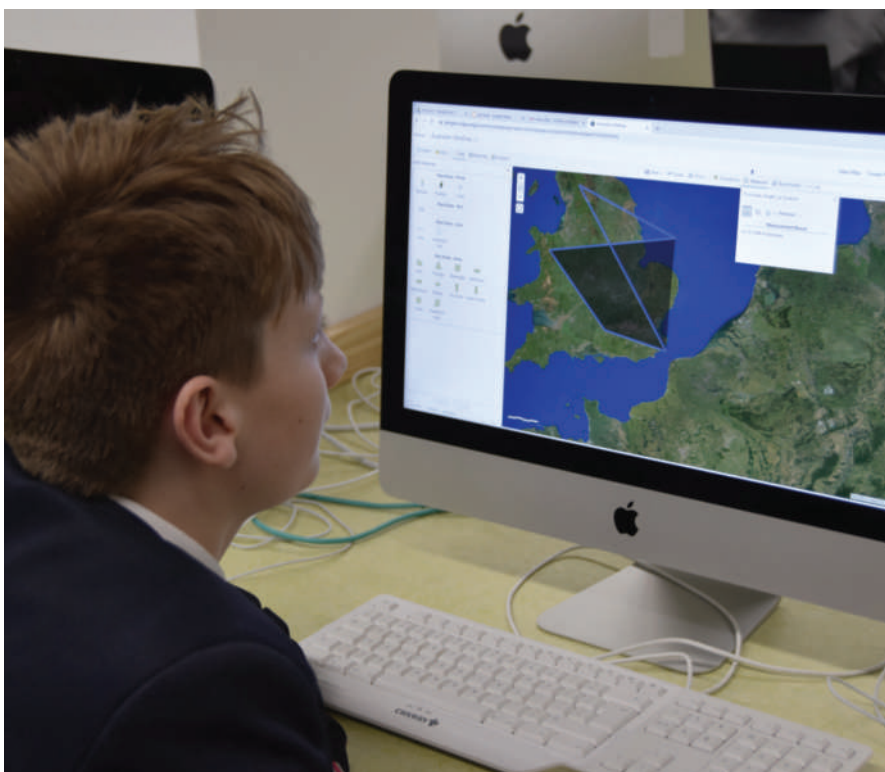
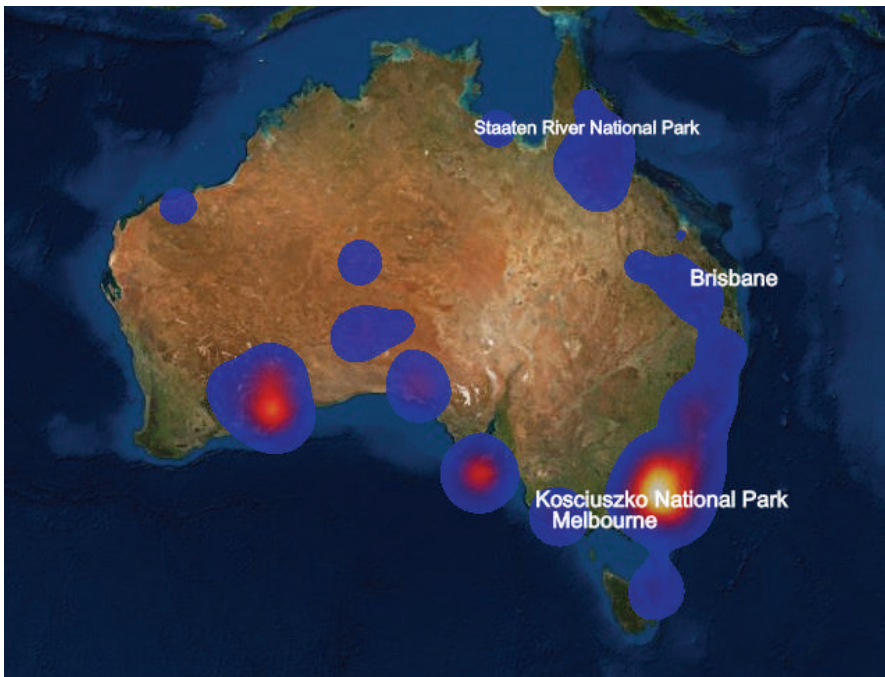
and their effect on the people living there. We also looked at how GIS can be used to help firefighters work out where and how best to fight the fires; what animals might have been affected by the fires; and when it was safe for people to move back into their homes. However, the most interesting part of the project was looking at how the media had produced lots of very misleading maps, such as maps that had no key or suggested things that weren't true.

As well as making lots of maps we worked on projects around the school. For one such project, we made a map looking at trees in the school. It showed the number and concentrations of trees, what species they are and also their estimated age. We then put the information into a map and estimated the amount of CO2 that the trees were offsetting each year. We also did an environmental survey of the school to work out which parts of the school were the most untidy and where new bins might be put in place. We also did the occasional session of GeoGuessr, where we had to guess where each map was from.

During the weeks leading up to the closure of schools in England we made maps following how the coronavirus spread around the world and then throughout the UK. We first made maps of its spread through China and Asia. Then, two weeks later, we made maps showing the epicentres of the virus in the UK, using a heat mapping tool. I found this project one of the most interesting we did, as the data changed rapidly, so we could really see how much the virus had spread as we updated and made new maps each week. It showed how quickly the virus spread over the three weeks we worked on that project and how hard it is to keep up with something that is constantly changing.

GIS is an extremely powerful tool that can be used to turn locations and data into fascinating maps which can be used to find out information to help you make smarter decisions. For crises such as natural disasters and global pandemics, it helps make data a lot easier to process, enabling people to more quickly make decisions on what to do.

*Leo Shipley, 2PCWM*



## Spanish Exchange

On Thursday 10 October students from Abingdon and St Helen's set out on an adventure to north west Spain to improve their Spanish and experience a different culture firsthand. The journey was easy and uneventful, except for one of the Abingdon boys losing his boarding pass! Soon enough we landed in Santiago de Compostela and after a short bus ride arrived at the renowned Peleteiro School (ranked best school in Spain in 2016). The first evening we all met up in a local restaurant to chat and reflect on our first few hours whilst eating some wonderful Spanish food. A menu mishap saw me ordering a huge plate of octopus for dinner - a baptism of fire!

Friday's activities during the day included walking a 7km stretch of the Camino de Santiago to the famous cathedral, which was breathtaking. Senora Fraile and Senora Payne also gave us the opportunity to go out with them to a traditional Spanish tapas restaurant - it was 'muy delicioso' and it all disappeared within a matter of minutes.

We spent the weekend with our host families. Mine took me up to the coast to a place called A Coruña, where we went for a long walk around the peninsula and then climbed to the top of a hill that had amazing views out over the sea and surrounding city. Others were taken on tours all over Galicia. On Sunday we all met up at the local trampoline park; after an hour of bouncing, we went out for more Spanish cuisine.

A Coruña was also where we went on Monday for a school outing, visiting an aquarium with Gaston the bull shark, a fun and interactive science museum, and an ancient lighthouse that is the oldest still in use today - Torre de Hercules.

During the second week in school, we spent a couple of days with our exchanges, experiencing the Spanish style of lessons, having lots of fun in the Latin dance and folklore workshops, playing basketball, and being interviewed by the very sweet junior school pupils. Their English was considerably better than our Spanish! We said our goodbyes



knowing that we would soon see our new friends again, when they made the return journey to Abingdon.

In late February the Spanish exchanges landed in the UK on a day that began with snow, continued with hail and ended with glorious sunshine - clearly they had brought the Spanish weather with them. Similar to our visit, they had trips during the day organised by school that took them to places such as Bath, Winchester and on a tour of the wonderful and exotic town of Abingdon.

On Saturday I took my exchange, along with a bunch of others, into Oxford for a bit of cultural immersion: eating at the classic English restaurant - Nandos. Afterwards we went ice skating where it was clear who had done it before and who was a complete novice. We all went home with plenty of bumps and bruises that night. On Sunday we took the train into London, inadvertently meeting up at Paddington with virtually everyone on the exchange. Organising fifty teenagers was like herding cats, so we split into smaller

groups and went on a mini-sightseeing tour around London, visiting Tower Bridge, the Shard and Big Ben. We also did a bit of shopping so the exchanges could purchase souvenirs for themselves and their families. We got the train back home and arrived back to find a hole, a food that my exchange found intriguing. He obviously enjoyed it as he asked for the recipe!

The Spanish Exchange is one of the most enjoyable things you can do as part of the Spanish iGCSE. It was tremendous fun and I had an amazing experience. My Spanish listening and speaking improved immensely. However, the best thing by far is that we have made lifelong friends with our exchanges and the wider group. I very much hope to visit my exchange and his family again at some point, and they know that they are always welcome here. I thoroughly recommend the Exchange to anyone who does Spanish.

*Matthew Jarvis, 5MTJ*



---

# Classics Trip to Sicily

Located at the crossroads of the Mediterranean, the fertile island of Sicily has enjoyed a rich and complex history. Shaped by a diverse range of cultures, the pivotal role Sicily played in the ancient world made it an ideal destination for this year's Classics Trip. The week-long tour began at a surprisingly decent hour, with 30 boys and four staff leaving Abingdon by coach at 7 am. The subsequent flight went smoothly and we were greeted by the welcome sight of sunshine and blue skies. Upon arrival, we were transferred by coach to the first of three hotels, via the port of Catania. Our tour guide's enthusiastic, albeit idiosyncratic talk, provided an entertaining introduction to Sicilian history and culture, especially given his somewhat peculiar fixation on the merits of British public transport and our apparent etiquette at traffic lights. Our first night was spent in a hotel on the outskirts of Catania, which yielded spectacular views of the coast, in particular of the volcanic rock supposedly hurled at Odysseus by the mythical Cyclopes.

The next morning, suitably recovered, we visited Syracuse, a city-state which rivalled Athens as the largest and most powerful city of the Greek world. Cicero famously described it as 'the greatest Greek city and the most beautiful of them all' and to this day it remains a hugely impressive site. An informative visit to Syracuse archaeological museum was followed by a tour of the Roman amphitheatre and Greek theatre. The spectacular view of the Great Harbour provided a fitting backdrop for a talk by Tristan Tonks on Syracuse's involvement in the Sicilian Expedition of 415-13 BCE, a pivotal event in the Peloponnesian War and wider history of Greece. A sobering visit to the stone quarries of Syracuse, used as a prison camp for Athenians captured during the expedition, served as a reminder of the brutal reality of war, particularly when viewed in the context of Thucydides' moving account of the suffering of its prisoners. The 'Ear of Dionysius', was a particularly striking site whose strange acoustic properties have given rise to the legend that the tyrant Dionysius I used to eavesdrop on his Athenian captives. The rest of the day was spent exploring Ortygia, the historic centre of Syracuse, with a talk from Tom Phillip about Cicero's *In Verrem* followed by a visit to the spectacular cathedral of Syracuse — constructed around a

Greek Doric temple. The first of many ice-cream stops concluded the day!

Day three began with the much-anticipated trip up Mount Etna, the mythological forge of the Greek blacksmith god Hephaestus. Though we could not get near to the craters themselves, a climb via cable car to around 2000m offered breathtaking views of the surrounding area and provided an incredible setting for a series of talks by our tour guide about previous eruptions and volcanic rock. After making the winding descent to sea-level via coach, we travelled to Taormina. The highlight of this picturesque town was a visit to the Ancient Greek theatre (restored by the Romans) which commanded a stunning location combining panoramic views of the sea and Etna's imposing peak rising above the clouds. This also provided the perfect opportunity for a fine performance of *Plautus* by the Upper Sixth which really did the comedy justice, though perhaps the humour has not aged all that well...

On the following day, we left our first hotel and made our way west to the Greek settlement of Morgantina. The site contained, amongst other remains, a residential area, agora and well-preserved theatre, offering a valuable insight into the layout of Greek houses and towns. We then travelled on to the Roman villa of Piazza Armerina, famed for its incredible collection of mosaics covering over 2,500 square metres. The villa was unexpectedly uncrowded allowing us to fully take in the impressive range of mosaics. These ranged from an immense hunting spectacle to a charming image of young women playing ball in bikinis! Perhaps most peculiar were the mosaics depicting a chariot race where the chariots were drawn by birds, and a portrayal of the Cyclops Polyphemus with three eyes (which would have rather ruined the myth). After a thoroughly enjoyable day, we arrived at our second hotel.

The next day, following an early departure, we made our way to Agrigento. Known as Akragas in Ancient Greek, this settlement was one of Sicily's most prominent cities, famed for its affluence, strategically-important position, and fair share of psychopathic



rulers. To begin with, we visited the local museum and its extensive collection of artefacts from its time under Greek, Carthaginian and Roman rule, which impressed upon us the multicultural history of the city. Afterwards, we were taken to see Agrigento's landmark temples — or rather what's left of them — in the famous 'Valley of Temples' (a misnomer: it is in fact a ridge). First stop was the temple of Hera Lacinia, followed by a visit to the remarkably well-preserved temple of Concordia (its comparative lack of disrepair owes to the fact that it was converted into a church in 597 CE). But most striking of all was the Temple of Olympian Zeus. This temple, which would have been 113 metres long and 20 metres high, is believed to have been the largest Greek temple ever constructed in the Doric style; had it ever been fully finished, it would likely have rivalled any Mediterranean architectural work of the time. It is widely held that the temple was constructed as a monument to the Greek victory against the Carthaginians at the battle of Himera in 480 BCE, which is often, probably spuriously, claimed to have occurred on the same day as the legendary Greek victory against the Persian Achaemenid empire at the battle of Salamis. The temple was initially being built by the enslaved Carthaginian prisoners-of-war from Himera, but this construction was cut short by the Carthaginian sack of Agrigento in 406 BCE (a fate that could have perhaps been avoided had the resources that were used on the temple instead been put into the city's defenses).

Once we had contented ourselves at a nearby gelateria, we travelled across the island to Erice, where we checked into the rather ironically-named Hotel Moderno. Erice is especially high up, being about 750 metres above sea level, and during a night-time wander of the town we were struck by the seemingly all-encompassing fog, which greatly enhanced the town's already quaint feel. Erice, formerly called Eryx, was originally a Carthaginian colony, and was known for its links with the goddess Venus. Erice also overlooks the site of the Battle of the Aegates Islands in 241 BCE, which was the last clash of the First Punic War between Rome and

Carthage, responsible for the end of Carthage as the premier power in the Mediterranean, a mantle which would be taken up by Rome. Thus, we were indeed in a place with a great deal of history to it.

Day six of the trip was taken up by our visits to Selinunte and Segesta, which had been bitter rivals in antiquity. Our first destination was Selinunte, where we took our fill of several Doric temples, which, although their names are now lost to the ages, were all impressive to see. The temples also provided a fine backdrop for a talk from some of the Lower Sixth on the history of the ancient city-state, which left a sizable mark on the island in its own right. Selinunte was also taken as an opportunity for the Abingdonians to try and gather the best photos in a bid to triumph in the now infamous, though perhaps not entirely glorious, photo contest, spurred on by Dr Burnand's bribes of chocolate. After getting lunch at a road-side restaurant that a horde of flies had, much to the displeasure of everyone, colonized, we made our way to Segesta. The legends state that Segesta was founded by a contingent of Aeneas' Trojan companions who refused to go to Italy with him; perhaps due to this (claimed) shared heritage with Rome, Segesta became an unwavering ally of Rome in her wars against Carthage. Upon completing a somewhat tedious trek up a hill, we arrived at Segesta's Greek theatre. The theatre, commanding a powerful view of the surrounding area, enabled us to clearly see not only the hurriedly-constructed temple (owing

to the Segestans' successful desire to dupe the Athenians about how wealthy they actually were), but also a ridge from which thousands of Segestans were allegedly catapulted during one of many sacks of the city.

This penultimate day concluded in traditional fashion with a hotly contested quiz. Split into five teams, the quiz saw the 30 Abingdonians go head-to-head in a Star Wars-dominated movie round, cryptic crosswords with a classical spin, and a couple of picture rounds, ranging from busts of Homer and Thucydides to images of the Parthenon. The lead switched back and forth repeatedly over the course of the quiz, but after one final change in fortune, victory was afforded to one of the more steadily consistent teams in the contest, captained by Tristan Tonks.

The final day was spent travelling, with our flight from Palermo departing at 10.15 am. Fortunately, we enjoyed a largely undelayed return journey, though almost all the other flights were cancelled. Despite fears that our baggage had been lost at the last hurdle, we arrived back at school with few issues, thereby wrapping up a thoroughly enjoyable trip. We are all extremely grateful to all the teachers who helped to run the trip, and also to our bus driver in Sicily, Salvatore (especially when he was on time). But particular thanks must go to Dr Burnand, for planning and running such a memorable trip.

*Jakob Hobbs, 6KJY and Seb Watkins, 6AGH*



---

## Every Brilliant Thing

In November 2019, members of the third and fourth year put on a performance like no other, and I was lucky enough to be part of it. Duncan Macmillan's 2014 play *Every Brilliant Thing*, written with OA Jonny Donahoe, is quite possibly the most challenging production I have been involved with.

The story is simple enough. The play follows the protagonist from the age of seven into early adulthood, and relates his efforts to counter his mother's attempts to end her life by creating a list of all the brilliant things he can think of. Despite the serious subject matter, the play is full of laughter. One reviewer described it as "One of the funniest plays you'll ever see about depression – and possibly one of the funniest plays you'll ever see, full stop." A case in point was the scene showing the protagonist's hilariously bad flirting technique. But there were also moments of sombre reflection and sadness, including the play's ending, in which the mother finally succeeds in taking her life.

For me, the real challenge, and what made the play so unique, was the form in which it is written. The play has just one character, referred to in the script as 'Narrator'. In the original production, this role was played by OA Jonny Donahoe, but in our version, the lines were divided between fifteen actors, who changed places on stage like tag wrestlers, each one relating the next part of the character's story. Some scenes involved

everyone on stage at the same time; in others, individual actors had the stage to themselves.

Passing the storytelling baton smoothly and swiftly was one part of the challenge, but another, even more demanding aspect of the play was the fact that it called for other roles – such as the Narrator's father, a therapist, a university lecturer, the girl the Narrator eventually marries, and so on - to be played by members of the audience. This required us to select then prompt chosen spectators through a series of largely improvised encounters whose course we would never fully be able to predict or rehearse before the actual show. I had never before seen this done, suffice to say, it was a challenge to pull off. But we did it, thanks in large part to the invaluable help and advice we received from Jonny Donahoe, who created the role in the original production and went on to play it more than five hundred times, including for a film version recorded during the play's New York run. The workshop with Jonny was undoubtedly a highlight of the experience for all of us.

Jonny explained how, as the audience entered, he gave out numbered pieces of paper, each bearing a line of dialogue, and told the recipient that when their number was called out in the play, they should say their line as loudly as possible. While he gave out the pieces of paper, he was also scanning the audience in search of the most appropriate people to cast in the main roles. This was the challenge facing us, but when the performances came round, we managed it pretty well.

Another unique aspect of the production was the Palletdrome, an intimate, steeply tiered theatre-in-the-round, created specifically for this show by the Amey Theatre Technical Crew under the direction of Nick Lloyd, George Killick, Steve King and Emma Fever. Made entirely out of recycled wooden pallets, it was truly a one-of-a-kind item. Built on the Amey Theatre stage, the structure allowed the actors to sit among the audience, and take to the stage quickly when required, or simply tell the story from where they were. This gave the performances momentum and helped audiences to feel more involved in the action.

One of my scenes took place in a hospital, just after the mother had attempted suicide for the first time. I began on stage before approaching a couple in the audience and identifying them to the audience as "nice old people," which of course produced a laugh, as the couples I chose each night were invariably not that old. I then sat down next to them and explained my idea of writing a list of all the brilliant things I could think of, before depositing a half-eaten bar of fudge on the lap of one of my victims. It was a sticky moment in every sense, but it got another laugh.

A lovely surprise came after the final performance when we discovered that the playwright's parents, who live in Oxfordshire, were in the audience. They were so enthusiastic about the show that they immediately set up a Facetime call between the actors, our director Mr Taylor and their son, which meant we all found ourselves in conversation with Duncan Macmillan! He congratulated and thanked us for taking on the play, before asking us how we'd found the experience of performing it. For me, the answer was easy: the performances had been challenging, but great fun and a unique experience that I don't think will ever be replicated. After all, I am not sure there can be another play in which I will stand watching my father completely forget he has a line to say and just stare blankly for a few seconds before suddenly blurting out, "Oh, the colour yellow!"

*Warwick Jones, 3JGHP*





## Joint Choral Society

The Joint Choral Society once again gathered together for the yearly November concert, which this year was directed by Mr Treadaway. Having taken a modern approach while choosing our piece, he opted for Ola Gjeilo's *The Sunrise Mass*, which adopted the traditional Latin text *Kyrie Eleison*.

*The Sunrise Mass* is a musical juxtaposition of complexity and simplicity, moving the audience through a plethora of emotions. As the composer himself said, "I wanted the musical development of the work to evolve from the most transparent and spacey, to something completely earthy and grounded; from nebulous and pristine to more emotional and dramatic, and eventually warm and solid – as a metaphor for human development from child to adult, or as a spiritual journey."

Our weekly rehearsals, which took place at St Helen's and St Katherine's, started not long into the Michaelmas Term, and although this was a compulsory activity for all musicians doing GCSE and A-Levels, even if singing wasn't their forte, these rehearsals were approached with gusto from all students. With only 45 minutes per week to rehearse, it wasn't an easy task to get through 65 pages of music, especially with only eight sessions in total. Nevertheless, with great determination and constant encouragement, helped by Mr Treadaway's great sense of humour and enthusiasm, the students from both schools came together in harmony to perform in November. More astonishingly, the string orchestra managed to learn a colossal number of notes in just four rehearsals thanks to sheer will and talent.

The concert was highly anticipated by students and parents alike, both knowing how much work had gone into this within a short period of time. The concert started with a wonderful

rendition of Puccini's *Crisantemi*, a strings-only piece, performed by virtuosic string players from Abingdon and St Helen's, bringing a sense of tranquillity to the start of the evening. The Joint Chamber Choir and strings then showed their musical prowess with a performance of Mozart's *Ave Verum Corpus*, before the eagerly awaited Gjeilo.

In presenting this modern piece to the audience, the choir and orchestra performed with sensitivity and virtuosity. There was a wonderful atmosphere filled with layering textures, overlapping voices and the slow progression of harmonic chords which brought the deep emotions within the piece to light.

Thanks must be given to Mr Treadaway for his fantastic conducting and dedication in teaching us such a delicate piece of music. It was a memorable evening for all involved, and a joy for me to be part of this amazing choir.

*Andreas Lo, 6BDS*



# Fighting the War at Abingdon School, 1939-1945

The grass had scarcely had time to grow on Abingdon's First World War memorial playing fields before Britain again found itself at war. With only 177 pupils in 1939 Abingdon was a small school, yet 437 Old Abingdonians served in the war, 49 of whom died.

Abingdonians played their part in all the theatres of the war: Dunkirk, the Battle of Britain, the Arctic convoys, North Africa, Italy, Normandy, the Rhine Crossing. There was even a Russian speaking Abingdonian who translated for Churchill and Attlee at the Tehran, Yalta and Potsdam conferences.

Meanwhile, back in Abingdon, the boys had their own battles to 'fight'; the first of which was the blackout. One sixth-former remembered returning to school early and spending two hectic weeks using vast quantities of wooden battens and black cloth to make window frames, curtains, roller blinds and lampshades to ensure that the building showed no

lights after dark. But according to the Headmaster, Mr Grundy, most of the blackout was achieved by 'blanking', making window-sized frames and filling them with two pieces of brown paper stuck together with black tar.

Life continued without much disruption until the Germans launched their blitzkrieg in May 1940. Suddenly anything was possible, including the invasion of Britain. Overseen by staff veterans of the First War, the boys frantically dug a trench which they covered with corrugated iron and mounds of earth. It was intended to protect the whole school from aerial bombardment; Grundy was able to reassure the Governors that "in view of possible extreme emergencies" the double-width, 70 yard long trench would accommodate 210 persons, "allowing 2 feet per person on either side."

Because it was felt that this would not be enough, a gun emplacement and look-out was constructed at what was calculated to be a strategic road junction from which the German invaders could be repelled – the corner of Bath St and Faringdon Road.

May 1940 was a period of the war that burnt itself into the memories of the boys who were then at school.

Do you remember May last year  
When we dug?

Do you recall our silent fear  
That Hitler and Goering would soon be  
here,

So we set ourselves to a task severe  
And we dug?

That May was a month of rainless skies  
When shirtless boys mid hungry flies  
Carved out that trench as a big surprise

For a Nazi thug.

But the Nazis never came and the trench proved to be too far away from the dormitories to make a very effective air raid shelter so the roof of the gymnasium was strengthened with timber struts and this space, surrounded by sandbags, was used instead.

The boys remember hearing the bombers on their way to Merseyside



and the Midlands whilst they were doing their prep in the gym before bedding down on straw palliases until the all-clear sounded. News of the success or otherwise of German attacks was strictly censored, but nothing could stop the boys reporting back to their parents after the night in November 1940 when a German bomber, that had followed the Whitleys returning to RAF Abingdon, dropped its bomb load on the runway: "15 bombs in quick succession. They fairly woke the place – and after the all-clear too."

Not surprisingly, military training occupied much of the boys' time – most breaks and often three afternoons a week. The boys, whether they belonged

to the ATC (Air Training Corps) or the JTC (Junior Training Corps), received training in drill, using a wireless, rifle handling, navigation, morse signalling, map reading, the recognition of aircraft and first aid. Senior members of the JTC formed a platoon of the Home Guard where, according to one member, "it goes through a gruelling course of tactics guaranteed to baffle any Nazi genius in the event of an invasion."

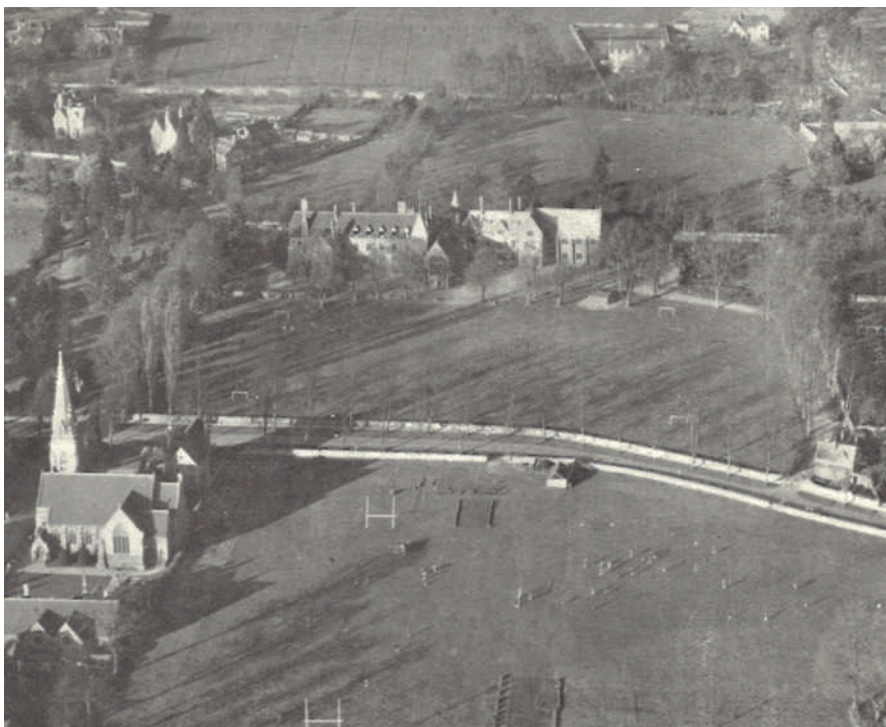
There was another Home Front 'battlefield' – food. Rationing was making it extremely difficult to feed the boarders, leading to "an acute crisis," as one boy told his parents. The crisis was caused by a mother complaining to Miss Grundy, the Headmaster's sister, who

was in charge of housekeeping. The mother's complaints turned to insults, and Miss Grundy retaliated. Mr Grundy intervened and the mother apologised, stating, "I'm sorry if I've offended you", to which Miss Grundy replied, "I'm not sorry that I've offended you."

In response to the Ministry of Agriculture's encouragement to 'Dig for Victory', the School were growing their own vegetables. This, as Mr Grundy told the Governors, was producing: "3 ½ tons of potatoes, over ½ a ton of beetroot, approximately ¼ of a ton each of carrots and parsnips, and over 1 cwt each of turnips and onions." In addition, Miss Grundy was keeping pigs and chickens.

It was a difficult time. Pupil numbers had increased as other schools closed, but there was no expansion in accommodation. Young staff were impossible to get unless they were in some way medically unfit for military service. Many of the masters were therefore forced to stay on beyond retirement age. Grundy himself was over 60. He had been headmaster since before the First World War and the death of his former pupils was in many cases a real grief to him. There is therefore something infinitely moving to read about the day that he donned his full uniform in order to report to every section of the School that Allied Forces had successfully landed in Europe. It was D-Day, 6 June 1944. The end of the war was still over a year away, but this was the beginning of the end.

*Sarah Wearne*



---

# Rugby

After a wonderfully successful senior rugby tour to Chile and Argentina and a superb pre-season, the Rugby Club went into the 2019 season on a high.

Our Lower School players made huge progress over the term, with over thirty fixtures played across four age-grade squads and well over seventy pupils having an opportunity to represent Abingdon School. A real focus on their basic core skills reflected in terrific performances against local schools, including victories over Cokethorpe, the Dragon, and Caldicott Prep.

Our U14 year group enjoyed a season in which they made massive progress over the course of the term. At half term they went on tour to Rutland and Leicester to play Oakham School and Loughborough Grammar. It was certainly a successful tour on the pitch, but even more so off of it, with pupils really bonding and new combinations throughout the squads being tried and tested. This definitely led to a huge improvement in performance and off-field cohesion. Big results were recorded against RGS Guildford and Bedford later in the term, confirming that real development had taken place, and the A team capped off the season at the County Cup tournament, winning the competition in fine style.

The U15s had a tight competitive season. The work rate and enthusiasm to push skills and team development were clear to see, and the finish to the season against Bedford and RGS Guildford was superb after a close game against Radley. Huge potential for this year group in years to come.

The U16s are a terrific group with great team spirit and a love for the game. Their season started superbly, with wins over St Paul's and Berkhamsted. They are hugely impressive bunch of young men with a real dedication to improvement and a wonderful commitment to developing their skills. The future of Abingdon senior rugby next season is bright.

The U15s and U16s had the opportunity to go on a tour to Dublin, Ireland, where they played a match against a school and trained at Leinster Rugby's ground,

meeting former England coach and now Leinster head coach, Stuart Lancaster.

Our Senior XV's had a cracking year. Numbers and spirit were strong throughout the year off the back of the successful tour to South America. Against Radley, Bedford, Eton and RGS Guildford, the seniors could offer a 5th XV, which just shows the love these year groups have for the game and their desire to create some fun memories with

their friends.

Our 1st XV had a season to remember, driving Abingdon school rugby into national waters, inspiring the school and leaving a strong legacy behind them. They played superbly well and had incredible victories over Berkhamsted, Eton, Radley, Bedford, RGS Guildford and St Edward's. They also played in the RFU national cup competition, reaching the quarter finals, losing narrowly to



a very strong Whitgift School, which made the final. This was a tremendous achievement for our pupils and for Abingdon School rugby.

Our Touchliners parental group has, as ever, been incredible with a wonderful group of parents representing every year group of pupils. They organised a highly successful fundraising dinner on the

evening of the Radley block fixture with former Welsh international and TV pundit Jonathan Davies as guest speaker, and will be funding new long term projects, including fixed and portable cameras, which will support player and coaching development in the years to come.

The rugby staff have been so supportive of the pupils. Their drive to create an

environment for our pupils to thrive in has been second to none. A huge thank you goes to them for their continued commitment, effort and passion for the game and what it gives our boys. The club is in an exciting place.

*Matthew Gold*



---

## Lower School History Club

Lower School History Club was always very entertaining and interesting, thanks to Miss Merrifield. She always made history fun, like the time we made models of Guy Fawkes hiding in a barrel while watching a documentary on how he was going to blow up Parliament. Then there was the time we had to create a food model of a famous landmark, such as the site of the Battle of Hastings, and the time we built a model of Chichen Itza. We always had a great time and at the end of each session, just before we had to leave, there was always the fun little dance from Just Dance to fill in that little bit of time and use up the last bit of our energy!

*Bertie Dinsey, 2PCWM*

This year in Lower School History Club we have covered multiple historical events. We started the year looking at coding and its uses during the World Wars, decoding some of the scrambled messages that were sent. Experiencing the kind of communication used during the Wars gave us a better overview of life as a soldier. Then we moved on to the history of Abingdon School. This set

of activities taught us about the history of the buildings that we have grown to love. We got to explore the hidden gems of our school. The figures represented in the portraits that line the walls of corridors we ran through so often became known people to us: founders, sponsors and influencers of the school. After this, we moved on to group work creating then presenting a slideshow on an influential historical event. This topic taught us how the events of history shaped the way we live today. In the New Year, we looked at historical monuments. One of the tasks we had was to make a monument out of food.

This task made studying monuments we have known for years so much fun. During the Summer Term, working from home, we looked at how we can give our houses a historical touch, such as adding a portcullis to a door frame.

Throughout the year, Miss Merrifield has run an entertaining and amusing club. She has helped all of us who attended the club to become better historians in a very fun way. I have learnt so much more than I expected while attending this club, and Miss Merrifield is to thank for that.

*Alexander Woolmer, 2PCWM*



## Cross Country

The Abingdon School cross country team had a very successful season with great results from all age groups.

As always the season for the senior team started with the Longworth 10K. This featured some great performances, especially from debutant Roy Schumacher, who narrowly missed out on beating club captain Alexander Pennington, who received first place in the U18 category.

Classic fixtures at St Albans and then Harrow followed. The inter boys once again impressed with fifth, seventh and ninth place for, respectively, Johnny James, Rowan Miell-Ingram and Will d'Arcy in a strong senior field at St Albans. All three teams performed well at Harrow, taking home second-placed team in the juniors, first in the inters and first in the seniors. It was great to see all the young runners representing the school so well, particularly because not too many years ago the senior team was the only priority.

In a further display of their strength, the inter team competed at the ESAA XC National Cup Final, finishing second overall, narrowly missing out on the gold medal to a very strong Judd team. Will d'Arcy and Johnny James ran superbly to finish on the podium as second and third placed individuals. This was a superb achievement on a national stage.

After a well-earned Christmas break the senior team were straight into the historic Knole Run around the gruelling 9km course. The stand out performance was once again by Will d'Arcy, who dispatched all his elder team members to finish in an outstanding 16th place.

The King Henry VIII Relays, a highlight on the Abingdon race calendar, attracts the best cross country schools in the country to compete around the War Memorial Park in Coventry.

Fifty-seven teams toed the start line this year, all eager to try and secure a felt badge (awarded to the top eight teams), and see if they could join the likes of Seb Coe, Alistair and Jonathan Brownlee and Richard Nerurkar on the 'all time fastest runners' list. Alexander Pennington, now a veteran of this race, took the first leg and positioned the team in tenth place. The rest of the team, made up of promising young talent, slowly picked off competitors as the race progressed, crossing the finish line in sixth place. This is a tremendous achievement considering four members of the team still have three years to compete here.

At this point in the season all the races came thick and fast. But the most anticipated of them all is the School County Championships. With places in the Oxfordshire team up for grabs, this is the race in which every team member wants to perform well. Incredible results all-round led to eight team members qualifying for the county team in Liverpool later in the year. Securing this

many of the 24 places up for grabs demonstrated the strength of cross country running at Abingdon. The county race proved to be the last time the boys raced together before widespread cancellations due to coronavirus.

I wish every member of the squad good luck for the future and look forward to keeping up to date on their results when racing resumes.

*Alexander Pennington, 7RMF*



---

## Community Service

Toby Smallcombe and I were lucky enough to volunteer at Abingdon Community Hospital for almost two years while we were in Sixth Form. We found it a valuable experience which helped deepen our appreciation of our National Health Service as well as solidify our desire to study medicine. We were based on the stroke rehabilitation ward, where we learnt supported-conversation skills which helped us understand the lives and challenges of the patients there. We owe a very special thanks to the brilliant speech and language therapists who gave us so much of their time.

*Joe Bradley, 7MSC*

Over the last two years I have learned a great deal from my time spent at various Abingdon care homes for the elderly, as part of the Abingdon School Service and Citizenship Scheme. Every Tuesday afternoon for an hour during term time, a group of us visit a local care home, where we spend most of our time helping to organise quizzes or playing games of dominoes with the care home

residents. We also help the new third year volunteers, who are visiting for the first time, become more at ease chatting and engaging with the older people at the homes.

We have also helped to run the events that Abingdon School puts on for the elderly in the community. These typically occur towards the end of each term, such as the Abingdon School Service and Citizenship Scheme Christmas Tea Party. This involved us helping out with the organisation of raffles and themed quizzes, as well as other festive activities. The event is a great opportunity for the guests, as it helps to provide them with a wider range of social interaction. We also invite some of the many Abingdon School choirs to provide live music, which the residents thoroughly appreciate as they do not typically have the opportunity to hear live music.

Participating in this scheme and experiencing its many benefits has helped me to develop as a person. It has given me the opportunity to help organise events and interact with new people that I would not otherwise have met. I have also developed my public speaking skills, but more importantly I have been able to engage with the Abingdon community in areas which I would not have been able to before.

This has all taught me the importance of helping the community and the social responsibility that we younger people have to older generations.

*Callum Ryall, 5MGD*

In the third year, I started community service with an open mind, not knowing what to expect. In the Summer Term, I began to visit Bridge House which was an amazing experience, and I decided that continuing it into fourth and fifth year would be a good idea.

I continued my weekly visits and, once in the fifth year, I had the opportunity to take part in the organisation of the raffle during the Christmas dinner. We were given a budget and bought the raffle prizes – it was quite a challenge to find what might be appealing, so we played it safe with copious amounts of chocolate and biscuits. Compèring the raffle itself was something I was happy to hand over to Callum, but it was good fun to hand out the prizes to the winners, who all really enjoyed the event. Another highlight of the year was the inaugural pancake race which had us alongside the third years, racing around the lounge with the residents cheering us on, much entertained by some of our rather inadequate techniques.





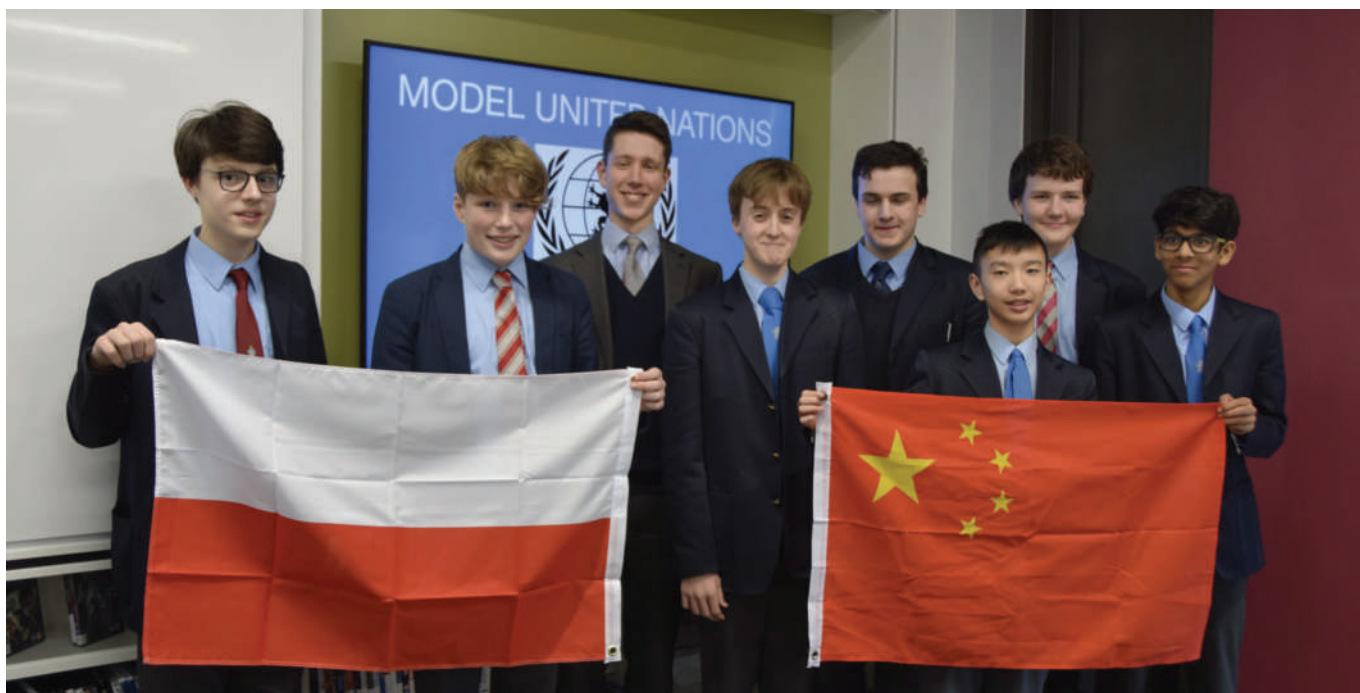
I have found my visits to Old Station House to be a fantastic opportunity to get involved with the local community and appreciate fully that the benefits of these visits work both ways. I have enjoyed talking to a wide range of people and have pushed myself out of my comfort zone in my involvement in the raffle - something I really enjoyed. Above all, I found that the gap of a generation or two is no barrier to great conversation, mutual interests, and a keen sense of competition when it comes to winning at dominoes!

*Thomas Kent, 5KEB*



---

# Lent 2020



## Model United Nations

I took over MUN at the beginning of the academic year. As Secretary-General I wanted to focus on two things; improving the conferences we hosted (where students debate current affairs while representing different countries) and increasing the number of young students in MUN.

Our highlight this year was Abingdon's MUN conference. Last year's main conference went well, but I felt that given the size of the school, it was too large for a first attempt. Because we didn't have enough of our own involved in MUN, we faced difficulties on the day with logistical issues such as printing. At the end of last academic year we staged a smaller mock conference involving schools from Abingdon town alone. This was more successful because we could focus on getting our delivery right without compromising on quality. It was this experience that allowed us to build up to a slightly larger conference — though still only

from Abingdon town — on 29 January.

We had some initial difficulties finding chairs for each of our five committees, and, once we'd established these, we nearly had to cull a committee because we struggled to confirm how many students from outside Abingdon were coming. As Sec-Gen I was worried about this on the day, but the registration process went very well; we started on time and ran a day of quality debate. It was the first large-scale trial of our YoungMUN wing (third years put through an MUN training program) at one of our own conferences; most of our own attendees (around 30) were from the third or fourth year, and did astonishingly well, taking several awards.

I enjoyed the end of the conference the most, because bringing all our delegates together for the last debate was quite exciting. Normally, in our final session, we tell the delegates about a crisis in the form of a video. Within an hour, the delegates have to come up with a UN-led response. This year, I wanted our crisis to focus on the Russian government; a coup gone wrong, destroying the Kremlin, killing

the President, and creating a power vacuum into which a general and a disgraced politician both stepped, fomenting civil war. Usually, actually making the video involves hasty shots in empty classrooms between lessons, but I wanted something different. I grew up surrounded by Lego and now, eight years later, I wanted to put the skills I'd honed to use. Over the course of several weeks I shot a stop-motion film where charismatic Lego minifigures played terrorists battling soldiers in Moscow. It was received very well, with delegates representing Russia, France and China making reference to the foreboding scenes of minifigures torn apart in its gory plastic scenes.

The second highlight of the end of the conference was our keynote speaker. Layla Moran, MP for Oxford West and Abingdon, spoke engagingly on why international politics was important to her, and why student-led debate on the subject mattered. She took questions from the floor and talked about how her views as a Liberal Democrat led her to consider international issues such as the Israel-Palestine dispute.

Our success at school was reinforced



by glory won outside it. For the 2020 Magdalen College School conference, we dominated with the unlikely duo of China and Poland, receiving over ten awards between us. We really enjoyed playing the part. Our ten Chinese delegates not only wore People's Liberation Army caps for all of the two-day conference, but we also brought our own copies of the bible of the one truth faith (and by true faith we mean Marxism-Leninism with Maoist characteristics) with us. We found the Little Red Books useful in denouncing capitalism (after buying them at extortionate prices). The Chinese delegate for the Political committee, Jonathan Ferry, did superbly, winning an award for outstanding leadership and eloquence in standing his ground on the issue of combating ideological extremism, while one of our delegates for the Human Rights committee, Ted Smethurst, really impressed the chairs with his charisma in explaining China's policy on LGBTQ+ education. In the Security Council, I faced the issues of the South China Sea and the Uighur Crisis, convincing the P5 to recognise China's right as a sovereign nation to infringe on the autonomy of other

sovereign nations. Toby Pinnington, representing China in the Economic committee, received a commended award for cogently explaining not only why China was innocent in the trade war, but why the Belt and Road initiative was a project the UN should be grateful - even paying China - for. MCSMUN was a pleasure to attend and in the end we maintained our three-year streak in winning the best delegation award out of over 30 schools.

*Lancelot Wilson, 7DTP*



# Primary Science Club

I have been participating in the Primary Science Club (PSC) for the past two years and I have thoroughly enjoyed it, as it is a truly rewarding activity. It has included me preparing and presenting fun and educational science experiments to local primary school pupils as part of the team of Science Ambassadors. Just as it has brought knowledge and fun to the younger pupils, it has benefited me (and the team) considerably in areas ranging from leadership skills to communication skills. Not only is it so rewarding to see the children having fun, whilst learning some basic science, but it also helps build confidence and clarity when presenting the science-based ideas. This can come in really useful when trying to talk about the subjects you like with others — even though the level of scientific ideas is much more basic! The Primary Science Club is also a great way of getting the Volunteering section for the three DofE awards done, whether it is Bronze, Silver or Gold. Some have also done a Gold CREST Award through the club, which is a great way of showing your passion for science and, as an added bonus, it can help with your UCAS personal statement.

The Primary Science Club has had many successes this year, but one of the greatest was when a group of primary pupils from the club won a prize of \$1000 in the Fluor Engineering Challenge 2020 after learning about and testing catapults and projectiles. The challenge involved making a catapult to “fire” a ping-pong ball at a makeshift cricket wicket made from two pencils and a rubber. The aim was to make the rubber fall by firing the ping-pong ball as many times as possible in a given period of time. It was particularly rewarding to see our teaching and mentoring efforts helping the younger pupils win this competition.

Usually, we are split into two groups of Ambassadors with one group presenting and the other preparing another topic for the following week.



However, with the lockdown, the Primary Science Club had to change tactics by making worksheets and videos to post on the Abingdon Science Partnership's website. In groups of 2 or 3, we each designed an experiment and provided an explanatory sheet, which the younger pupils could use to conduct the experiment at home with common household items. For example we made worksheets about making a soap-powered boat or invisible ink, explaining all the corresponding concepts to the pupils.

Overall, I would say that the best thing about participating in the Primary Science Club has been the personal growth that it has brought us all as Ambassadors. Some of the comments from the group have included:

“I have truly enjoyed Primary Science Club as it has developed my planning, practical and leadership skills in an extremely rewarding way.”

“I find the Primary Science Club really rewarding as it is not only enjoyable to teach the children experiments but I also find it useful as I get to go over science, helping to revise some topics. My favourite part this term was probably the egg drop, as I love to see all the different designs that the children come up with and I love to see which experiments work.”

“It's been very useful in helping me develop leadership, teaching and public speaking skills, alongside being enjoyable to do.”

So, as you can read, the Primary Science Club has been extremely appreciated by all of us. I would most definitely recommend it to anyone who wants to have a good time and also benefit in many other ways. It's especially interesting if one wants to feel what it is like to be on the other side of the classroom.

*Alexandre Peuch, 5KEB*



## Squash

This has been the most outstanding year for Abingdon Squash. We have had an exceptionally strong squad of seniors and juniors:

- 1 Nikhil Vyas
- 2 Will Taylor
- 3 James Munday
- 4 Alex d'Arcy
- 5 Felix Loeffen
- 6 Joshua Ponting
- 7 Jai Biswas-Gladwin
- 8 Max Struthers
- 9 Max Sheppard
- 10 Joseph Betts
- 11 Miguel Ferreira

We have played more fixtures than ever before, and fielded juniors as well as seniors for many of them. The boys have played and beaten Bradfield, Radley, St Edward's, Stowe, RGS High Wycombe, Wellington, Merchant Taylor's and Harrow. We were only beaten by Eton and Aylesbury, both of which made the top eight schools in the country. Just outside that group, we qualified top of our table for the National Shield, and were hot favourites to win at the National Finals in Nottingham before it was cancelled by the Coronavirus lockdown. Congratulations go to the whole squad for Abingdon's most successful year ever.

Nikhil Vyas has been the school's best player yet, and he has led by example throughout his Abingdon career, showing dedication, discipline

and good humour as first string and School Captain. James Munday and Alex d'Arcy also earned their colours for their excellent contribution over the years, and Joshua Ponting became a fine player too; we wish them all well for university. Will Taylor, already a formidable player, is named as School Captain for next year, and he will be well supported by the boys stepping up to the challenge of playing in the

Abingdon first team.

We are greatly indebted to our brilliant coach, Ben Rosec, who combines the highest standards with an enthusiastic and supportive manner. He is superbly assisted by Guy Tupper, who also combines outstanding coaching and support for all ages.

*David Franklin*

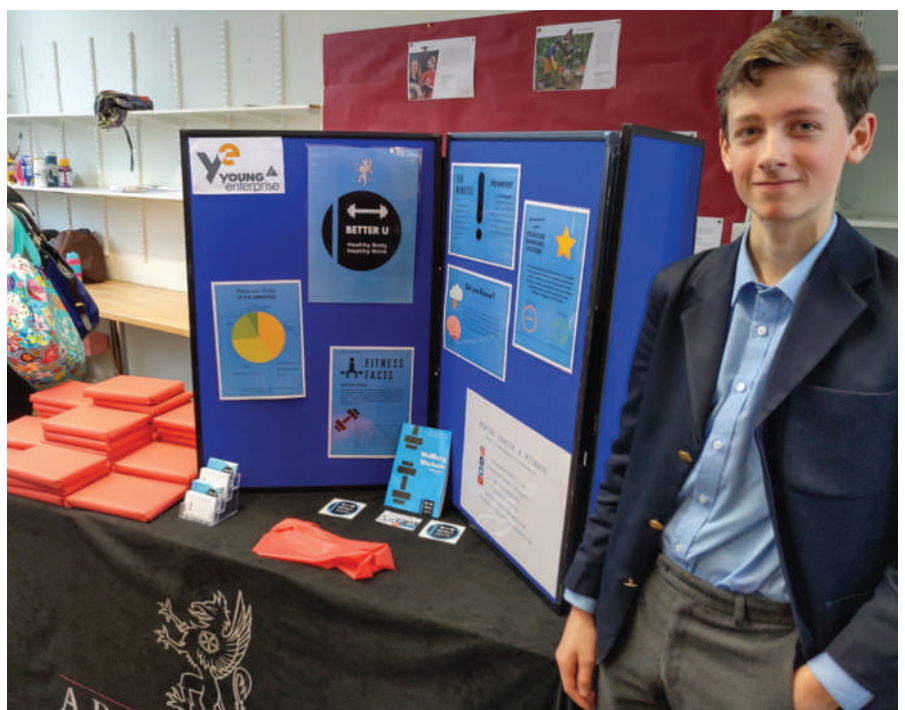


# Young Enterprise

During my experience of Young Enterprise I learned how to both work as a team but also how to take a leadership role as part of my company, Chopping Wood. It is important to listen to people when they are talking but you also have to be decisive when you make decisions when the group is split. Furthermore, it is important to be organised especially when we went to fairs because we had to account for all of our products, our stand and everyone who was supposed to be there and when they were supposed to be. Furthermore, when we were selling in Abingdon town, I learned how to think quickly on my feet and how to appeal to people. Also, it was crucial that we communicated because we manufactured chopping boards and clocks but we had to make sure we didn't run out of wood and that all of our designs and decisions were run by everyone in our group. In addition to this we have had to be more organised and communicate well as a team especially as we had to work from home and do our weekly meetings via Zoom during the lockdown.

*Roman Buckland, 4AMB*

Over the last year, we led the Abingdon Young Enterprise team, Chopping Wood. The year was full of ups and downs but we ended up succeeding and pulling in around £700 of profit. We all learnt a lot within our different roles, whether it was how to advertise and build a brand within social media, or how to run the financials of a small business. The program has given each of us a wide range of entrepreneurial skills that not only will look good on CVs or personal statements but begin to give us the skillset required to be successful in the highly competitive start-up world. Thank you to Mr James and our business advisors who were with us for every step of the way, giving advice and educating us from their fruitful careers. We cannot begin to explain how much we have learnt from this program and we wish the best of luck to next year's teams.



*Leo Miller, 4RAJ and Thomas Sherwood, 4AMB*

Over the course of two terms, myself and seven other fourth years, combined to create a business called Better U. We started with brainstorming and simple suggestions and after long consideration through weekly board meetings we came to the conclusion that we wanted to make a product to address the issue of mental health. After assigning roles and deciding on our product we knuckled down and did some consumer research. Following this we attended trade fairs where we had to bring lots of business and life skills together in order to sell successfully to the wider public. I personally felt this greatly advanced very useful life skills such as communication and negotiation. Despite being unsure and nervous at first, I gained a vast amount of knowledge and skills which have introduced me to the 'business world' and what it takes to run and participate in a company.

*Marc Sheriff, 4PRB*



## Scholars' Lecture

In January, the scholars attended a fascinating lecture given by Professor Myles Allen, Professor of Geosystem Science in the School of Geography and the Environment at Oxford University and Head of the Climate Dynamics Group in the University's Department of Physics. Professor Allen addressed the increasingly pressing issue of Climate Change, which our generation must face boldly and responsibly to resolve the impacts that the human race has inflicted upon itself and put a stop to this exponential, pertinent crisis. After the lecture, I was inspired to undergo some extra research to consolidate my knowledge and put together this article as a reminder to all that we all carry the duty of protecting our planet for future generations who will work alongside us for this aim of mitigating Climate Change before it is too late.

We often hear of climate activists campaigning for individuals, governments and other bodies of various levels of authority but just as vital influence, to take small steps such as planting trees, consuming less, becoming vegetarian and riding public transport for the environment. But this is only enough to slow down Climate Change. The Professor suggested that if we are to completely stop Climate Change, we must stop dumping carbon dioxide into the atmosphere immediately. This argument is supported by data showing that if we are to stabilise carbon emissions, CO<sub>2</sub> atmospheric concentrations would continue rising whereas fully eliminating emissions would plateau CO<sub>2</sub> atmospheric concentrations but with a lag time of several years after action is taken. Surely this is not very feasible since there would be fierce opposition from all aspects of society, having grown accustomed to the economic benefits and convenience that the burning of fossil fuels brings over more sustainable energy sources?

Apart from large-scale planting of trees for naturally removing carbon from the atmosphere (carbon sequestration), there is only one solution technological

advancement has bestowed us with so far, Carbon Capture and Storage. And the only people with the resources to access this technology are the very companies who are responsible for drilling into the earth for fossil fuels in the first place. Without having to persuade the world to give up such a valuable commodity, especially developing countries who rely on fossil fuels as a cheap means of energy to develop their economies and sanitation, Carbon Capture and Storage is the capture of carbon from the air or from point sources (localised and stationary areas of pollution) such as power plants, transporting it deep underground where it remains deposited in geological formations. Although carbon dioxide can in theory be injected deep into the ocean from oil platforms since it is soluble in water, it is not popular due its harmful impacts on marine organisms potentially as a result of acidified water conditions and high costs.

Although this technology is more or less mature and successful and in fact financially viable in the long term despite being seemingly expensive (the cost of electricity production is increased by 35-85% with the implementation of CO<sub>2</sub> sequestration), it is not very widely used. Thus, the role the Professor gave us at the end of the lecture is to persuade more people to adopt this method of reducing carbon emissions by 80-90% to save the planet by compensating for our emission of greenhouse gases which directly correlates with global mean surface warming. At the current rate, the carbon threshold of 1.5 degrees C global warming in this century would be exceeded in 2028 and if we do not restrict this to below 2 degrees C or more ambitiously 1.5, ecosystems will

be damaged and result in more extreme weather such as droughts that could destroy crops and lead to starvation, particularly in developing countries, or even drown populations as a result of rising sea levels.

In conclusion, we are all members of Planet Earth, and hence in return for the gifts of life and resources which we have misused we all must play a part cohesively in resolving the not totally irreversible but soon indelible damage that we have done to Mother Nature, addressing her cry of desperate help towards us. In my opinion, this lecture reiterated a topical issue which I once considered tediously repetitive and fruitless due to humanity's tendency to dismiss responsibility, refocusing our attention that solving Climate Change is a group effort of disseminating decarbonising technologies and raising public awareness.

*Boco To, 3SJP*





## King Charles III

Proroguing Parliament, a constitutional crisis, departures from the royal family – surely not, we all thought, sitting down for the first read through of Abingdon and St Helen’s 2020 production of King Charles III. Despite the initial focus on a human reality and importance to the play and an appreciation for its exploration of divided politics and family in a polarised time, a more immediate relevance would be found closer to the opening night. As it was approaching the cast of the show became acutely aware of the astonishing prophecies made by the 2014 writing of Mike Bartlett (the OA and esteemed playwright), as Harry and Meghan were negotiating a withdrawal from the royal family and politics faced existential dilemmas of a noticeable magnitude.

What unfolds in the text is a breakdown on many fronts. A breakdown of the Royal family, of England as a nation and of the King himself as he tries to test the limits of his constitutional power. The challenge of the play lies in that fact that Bartlett does not give Charles an unarguable point to hold but instead the opinion that a new law restricting the rights and power of the press should not be passed. On its surface this law, coming from a Labour government in the play, sounds as if it would have an appreciative audience among left wing politics of the 21st century. The issue then morphs into a question of autocracy and ultimately, the play refuses to let the autocratic figure of King Charles wield power with William ascending the throne. This plot line is combined with scenes similar to an Alastair Campbell No 10 and ‘The Thick of It’, and a domestic plot line as Harry desires to parachute from his royal duties, but again, the unwavering nature of the Royal family prevails.

During any rehearsal process I often think about the idea of searching for something. Broadly, if one tries to boil it down, an actor is just trying to negotiate with words on the page and a director to produce something entertaining, a piece of drama people want to watch. The joy in this endeavour, I think, is found through the joint enterprise with others and people who may have no



connections with each other. In a school environment specifically, where we so often fraction ourselves off into different friendship groups, different schools or different year groups, the senior productions have the immense ability to bind an otherwise unrelated group of people together. All can rejoice when we feel, at the end of a two-hour rehearsal, we have stumbled across something fundamentally exciting in a scene, and all can feel frustration when an energy is lost or a moment cannot be translated from something dull into something engaging. The reward is also personal. I am usually surprised when a character suddenly seems to appear days before a first performance. Trying to find a character is a strung-out ordeal and small incremental changes can rarely be felt from day to day, but when compiled the alteration is palpable.

It had been a while since I had performed in any school production in a large capacity and unfortunately, the reality of nerves had escaped me over that period. Standing in the wing and trying to get ready for the show, I could only think of every time we had managed

to mess up the entire opening. However, nerves themselves are very useful things and in many ways enlightened me to the reality of theatre as an activity. Just before you take the steps into the limelight a short gasp for air is consumed and there is a sharp bracing of the muscles – almost like jumping off a cliff, though not nearly as bad! In essence, there is enormous potential for failure and yet, it is so often this fear which binds a company together in the final stages of preparation. I could feel a new temperature in the room as we all gathered for vocal and physical warm ups, just able to hear the buzz of the first few audience members arriving. The new ‘temperature’ I felt could of course be attributed to the roughly 3 kilos of silver hair gel that had been slathered on about an hour before to quell my otherwise potently ginger locks. Harry may be a red-head, but Charles certainly is not!

Thanks go from all the cast to Mr McDonnell and the Arney Theatre technical crew for the amazing work they did in bringing this production together.

*Samuel King, 6AGH*



## CCF

When first joining Abingdon in the third year, I was given a decision to make, between choosing CCF or Services and Citizenship. I had heard all kinds of things about the CCF, mostly from people who had done it in the past, and most of what they said made it sound interesting. They talked about learning how to handle a rifle, learning all sorts of techniques that are used in the army, going on adventurous trips, becoming more confident and learning how to work as a team — all of which sounded amazing. But then there were people who thought otherwise, saying CCF is boring, or it's tough, it's time-devouring or scary. I personally felt drawn to the CCF with the knowledge that I will have to do compulsory military training since I'm a Swiss citizen, but I know that for others, the decision wasn't so easy. However, as I later came to find out, I made the right decision, as I can say with confidence that CCF is a thrilling experience.

In our very first session of CCF, I remember everyone was buzzing with excitement. We all stood outside the CCF headquarters and were addressed by Squadron Leader Cottam, Captain Edwards, and 2Lt Moore, the head of the recruits. We were all given our kit and uniforms, and a brief explanation of how CCF works. We were also told about the recruit training weekend that

was coming up the next week, where we would properly begin our recruit training. The trip took place in St Georges Barracks, Bicester. It was the first time being in a barracks for most of us and although we didn't see many soldiers around, it was an interesting experience. During the trip, we were properly divided into our sections and assigned Section Commanders. The weekend was mostly made up of different workshops that taught us different skills we would need in CCF. There was a teamwork workshop, one where we were taught how to stand to attention, another where we were taught about the attributes of a cadet in the CCF, and more. Other activities included a movie night, with pizza and tuckshop, and we watched a film about a US marine fighting in Somalia - quite relevant to the whole 'army' theme.

For the rest of the Michaelmas Term and most of the Lent Term, most of our CCF training revolved around weapon handling. As cadets use the L98A1 GP rifle, we were going to have to learn how to safely use a rifle so that we could do all the activities that were waiting for us in Easter camp which would be in the Easter holidays. Weapon handling training, although not the most exciting thing, meant that we could complete our weapon handling tests, which we did in early February. Other highlights of the Michaelmas Term and early Lent Term included our very first Remembrance Parade, practising other skills such as

marching, and our very first Contingent Dinner, where we were fortunate enough to be addressed by a General in the army, who had a lot of wise advice for everyone in the CCF. It was a very eye-opening experience. Once our weapon handling training had come to an end, we began to do more exciting exercises in preparation for Easter camp. This included harbour drills, practising patrolling and what to do when under attack. All of these were practised on the Recruit Field day, which was a personal highlight for me and many other recruits in the contingent. It was great fun, and a favourite for my section was an activity where we had to practice stealth, meaning we wore camo face paint, and had to crawl through bushes and shrubs to capture a certain point without being spotted by the enemy.

Sadly, due to the recent pandemic, Easter Camp, which all of the CCF was looking forward to, had to be cancelled, which was very unfortunate, as lots was planned for us recruits so that we could complete our training and advance in our CCF journey. However, I look forward to coming back to school in September, and returning to the CCF! I would definitely recommend it to anyone who wants to try something completely different, and who wants to gain a sort of experience you simply can't gain from any of the Other Half activities Abingdon has to offer.

*Jonathan Ochero, 3JCM*

Open days at Abingdon have shown me the amazing facilities and opportunities the school has to offer. Even after joining in the first year, I would attend so that I could look at all the sports, clubs, and trips that I could be a part of. However, I always found myself wrapped up in the CCF, listening to their stories of spending 48 hours in the forest with only a rifle and their friends for company, or those in the RAF section explaining how they had circled the area from above. The moment I saw my chance, I took it. The learning process as a cadet is constant and has taught me differing things through the years. The first few years were spent learning about the military: how it operates, what exactly each branch does, even down to the practical element in the field. In under eight months, I was a part of a fully functioning team able to carry out an organised attack on an enemy.

After Easter camp, I chose to be in the RAF section and went on to study various parts of an aircraft and the RAF like physics and history. Within a month, I was sitting in a Grob Tutor (the primary training aircraft for the RAF) next to an experienced pilot. He gave me 10 minutes to get to grips with the controls and their effects before he told me I was able to learn some aerobatics. Before I knew it, I was taking the plane through loop-the-loops and barrel-rolls. It was then that I had my heart set on becoming an RAF pilot myself. At the beginning of that same summer, I went on an RAF camp. This helped me gain further knowledge about what a career in the forces would be like. Our time was spent looking around the different

stations such as the nuclear bunkers housing (the now decommissioned) Tornado GR-4's, the underground bomb and missile silo, as well as the ever so important go-kart track at the end of the runway.

As the end of my time at Abingdon started edging closer, I grasped more of the opportunities presented to me. After a challenging GCSE exam period, I met up with another 40 cadets from around the UK and we headed to Cyprus for ten days. Between our time scuba diving, rock climbing, and zip-lining through the trees, we found time to relax at a local waterpark and take a boat around the coast to swim with different sea life. The trip allowed me to experience things I never thought I would, like the amazing views from the peak of Mt. Olympus or the taste of a homegrown lemon cheesecake mountainside.

Moving into the sixth form, I decided to take on some official leadership training through a week at RAF College Cranwell with another 60 cadets from around the nation. This course involved three stages of leadership activities within our flights (groups of 9 or 10 people) including two nights sleeping in a wooded area on base. It was here that the inter-flight competitions started to pick up including group orienteering and a timed log run. These events allowed us to all get to know each other more and function better not only as a team but as friends. By the end of the week, I had passed the course with merit, was a member of the best flight, and even had an unofficial title from the staff as the cadet with the highest standards. A memory that I will never forget is when I got the opportunity

to parade in front of College Hall Officers' Mess; one of only two courses in the world that allows you to do this.

My final year at the school has gone quickly, after applying to senior roles the year before, I had gained the position of 2IC RAF before being promoted to 2IC of the Contingent where I worked closely with the staff and all of the cadets. This year has arguably been one of my most successful as I began my application to the RAF (gaining promising scores in my tests), I was awarded a two week-long flying scholarship in Dundee where I will get the opportunity to fly a plane solo this coming September, and, after sadly not quite making it to the final stage of the Sir John Thomson Memorial Sword, I have still been recognised for my achievements and am now one of thirteen senior cadets who are helping the RAF review how all cadets operate post-covid-19.

There have been an extraordinary amount of opportunities put before me through the CCF and I have only been able to accept so many. I have been to exciting places, learnt new skills, and made more friends through each and every experience. The CCF has shaped me into the man I am today.

*Charles Engwell, 7OTL*



# German Exchange

Going to Germany we knew that there would be obvious differences between the culture, family life and more importantly the food. However, I believe that many of us had not anticipated a major change within the actual school system, apart from the prior knowledge that the school day was a lot shorter than ours typically was. It soon became apparent that the way Germany looks at education differs drastically from Abingdon.

The first day at the Ratsgymnasium took a bit of getting used to. The shortened timetable meant that classes were a lot more concise. You could say that this made them seem slightly less productive since some classes had very little time for students to get properly invested in the learning. The teachers, in general, seemed very relaxed and friendly with the students. The classes we attended seemingly being structured as more of an activity or a conversation rather than a teacher giving the class a specific presentation.

The Ratsgymnasium gave the students similar learning opportunities to Abingdon with their curriculum involving extra languages, ancient languages and many other subjects to choose from. Hearing from my exchange parents that all German schools are free surprised me since in England we no longer have many state-run schools that offer this

type of education. I was told that the German school system was split up into three different levels, one for less academic, one for intermediate and one for very academic students. This means that students can be kept around people of a similar mindset and be kept in a more appropriate environment.

School finishing earlier meant that our exchanges had an array of opportunities to make the most of in the afternoon. Many played sports and went to different clubs and there was the ability to go into the city for lunch when we had time to spare. It was a nice break from England, away from the chaotic nature of the day, being able to loosen up and go and do activities as a group such as bowling or laser tag. Going to Germany and experiencing the changes gave us the option to try new things that we don't have time to try back at home.

After the first couple of days of school life in Germany, we were all wondering how the students seemed to get as good results as they do since we

thought that the half days would affect the amount that they would be able to learn. It was also evident that they were not used to getting homework nearly as often. Having a conversation with my exchange family over dinner I realised that they were shocked by how much work we do and they found it funny that I still had more assignments than the students despite me being on holiday. They told me that the one way that the Ratsgymnasium makes up for the time lost during the day is slightly shorter holidays and a bi-weekly Saturday school.

On the whole, I would like to say that the exchange to Bielefeld was a great experience. We had the occasion to see a different culture, practise our language skills and sightsee with new and old friends. I suggest that anybody who gets the chance to go on this exchange in years to come takes the opportunity with an open mind.

*Henry Skelson, 4RFM*



## Chess Club

The new school year began with Abingdon participating in the English Chess Federation's Eton Rapidplay tournament, with an aim of qualifying for the regional stage of the National Schools' Chess Championship by scoring 15.5 points from 30 games across five rounds of fixtures. Abingdon began well, defeating Brentwood School's B squad (6-0) in the opening round, before losing to eventual tournament winners RGS Guildford (0-6) in round two. Round three saw a difficult loss to Skinners' School (1-5), although Frederick Beneat performed well to beat his higher-ranked opponent. Round four saw Abingdon secure a win against MCS's B squad (4.5-1.5), leaving us requiring four points from the final match against St Paul's Girls' School. Unfortunately, a strong performance by our opponents led to a loss (1-5), leaving us three points short of the score required for qualification. The individual results at Eton were 1. Ross Tselos (1.5/5), 2. Oliver Yau (2/5), 3. Frederick Beneat (3/5), 4. Jonathan Lee (3/5), 5. Seb Watkins (2/5), 6. Eric Huang (1/2), 7. Stephen Lin (0/2) and 8. Dhruv Lakhani (0/1).

October saw the return of the simultaneous display, with Grandmaster Mr Wells playing against 22 players simultaneously in the CMR with a time control of 70 minutes per player. It was great to see a mixture of experienced boys as well as newcomers to the school from the first year and third

year take part in the display. Mr Wells managed to secure wins on 21 boards but congratulations went to Seb Watkins for securing a well-deserved victory on time after a tense showdown on the final two boards, with Ross Tselos also performing well but just falling short of a result.

The House Chess competition took place on the last Wednesday of the Michaelmas Term, with all houses fielding three players in a Swiss system tournament with three rounds. The final results were as follows:

- 1st – Border's
- 2nd – Franklin's
- 3rd – Austin
- 4th – School
- 5th - Crescent
- 6th – Donnelly's
- 7th – James'
- 8th – Pygott's
- 9th – O'Doherty's

The Border's House team of Frederick Beneat, Henry Riehl and Roscoe Marshall did exceptionally well to score 6.5/9 across the three rounds, securing the win with a close-fought 1.5-1.5 draw in round three against Franklin's who took second place – a great change of fortune for Border's after finishing in ninth place in last year's competition!

The Lower School inter-tutor group chess tournament took place in the Lent Term with the grand final seeing first year champions 1H (Xien Hu, Gleb Kuprin and Dhruv Lakhani) take on second year winners 2P (Aluinn McDonald, William Sue and Harry

Vinall). 1H were victorious, winning seven of the nine games.

Following promotion from Division 4 of the Oxford and District Chess League last year, Abingdon begun the 2019-20 season in Division 3 in October with a well-earned win against City 3 (4.5-1.5), including wins from Eric Huang, Frederick Beneat, Stephen Lin and Dhruv Lakhani. After seven matches in February, Abingdon were sitting in sixth place, level on points with City 3 and occupying the relegation spot, with a crucial match away to City 3 scheduled for March looking likely to decide who would remain in Division 3 at the end of the season. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Abingdon's final three matches of the season did not take place and the 2019-20 season was cancelled. In the coming 2020-21 season, Abingdon will begin a new campaign online and look to continue competing and achieving results against experienced teams across Oxfordshire and the surrounding area. The individual results from Abingdon's seven matches in Division 3 in 2019-20 were Frederick Beneat (3.5/7), Seb Watkins (1/6), Mr Barber (2.5/5), Dhruv Lakhani (2/5), Jonathan Lee (1.5/5), Stephen Lin (1/4), Eric Huang (1.5/3), Oliver Yau (0.5/3), Dr Jeffrey's (1/2), Ethan Chui (0/1) and Charlie Leyland (0/1).

After the closure of the school in late March due to the COVID-19 lockdown, Abingdon School's Chess Club moved online to chess.com for the remainder of the school year, including a weekly chess puzzle challenge submitted to the boys via email. Congratulations go to Seb Watkins for winning the challenge overall, finishing ahead of Frederick Beneat and Dhruv Lakhani in second and third places respectively. Final congratulations go to this year's recipient of the King Chess Trophy, Jonathan Lee. Jonathan has been a dedicated and valuable member of Abingdon Chess Club throughout his time at the school, being a key member of the ODCL squad and showing good leadership on a weekly basis to help younger pupils develop their chess game in Other Half sessions.

*Lawrence Barber*





## Football

The 2019-20 football season saw competitive football played in the Michaelmas Term for the first time in the School's history, as the 1st XI competed in the prestigious Boodles ISFA Cup. After a 2-1 away win in the first round at Lingfield College, a convincing 3-1 win at home against Merchant Taylors' Crosby helped the 1st XI into the third round. A tough draw against Hampton brought our first year in the cup to an end, however a lot of positives could be drawn from the experience, despite the 1-4 defeat to the national champions.

As we moved to the Lent Term the U12 As and Bs beat Hampton Bs and Cs, 5-0 and 3-2 respectively, before also securing victories over Cokethorpe, Wellingborough and The Dragon. The

U13s started their season with excellent wins over Caldicott, 2-1 and 1-0 respectively, with the U13 As going on to win four of their five games played. Most important however was their positive approach to football, as we look to develop our playing philosophy from the very youngest of age groups.

The U14 age group was again packed with enthusiasm and competition for places. A 1-0 win over Shiplake got the U14 A's season underway with a 3-2 win over Aylesbury Grammar to follow. The Bs earned a hard fought 1-1 draw with Hampton and had a real highlight in their 4-0 win over Marlborough. The U14 Cs scored 23 goals, winning four and drawing one of their five games played, whilst the U14 Ds won all of their four matches including victories against Berkhamsted and Wellingborough Bs.

The U15 As put in a huge shift against Hampton, 2-1 the final score, with further victories to follow against Shiplake, Radley and Aylesbury Grammar to name a few. The Bs also played some great football, including a 5-1 victory over Radley. The U15 Cs earned an excellent 1-1 draw against Aylesbury Grammar whilst the U15 Ds put in some promising displays including victory over Haileybury early in the season.

The U16 As played some entertaining football and secured well-earned victories over Marlborough and Berkhamsted, but will also feel they could have got more from draws with MCS and Haileybury. The U16 Bs secured a 2-0 win against Radley, with a 2-0 win over Haileybury another highlight. The U16 Cs started positively against Haileybury, going on to win two and draw two of their five games played.

As we move into the senior sides the 5th XI secured a terrific win against Radley College 6th XI whilst the 4th XI secured victories over Marlborough and Shiplake. The 3rd XI won three, and lost three of their six games played including a 4-0 win against Wellingborough. The 2nd XI also put four past Wellingborough before beating Radley 2-1 and Shiplake 4-1.

Unfortunately bad weather, frozen and waterlogged pitches, as well as the early closure of schools meant that the 2020 football season was not as eventful as





it could have been. There were however a number of positives to draw upon and the Club now looks forward to competing in the Lent Term Football League, as well as the Boodles ISFA Cup in the season to come.

I will leave you with Daniel Hollis, Football Club Captain to provide an overview of the 1st XI's campaign.

*Tom Donnelly*

This year the 1st XI's season started with the School's first involvement in the Boodles National Cup in the Michaelmas Term. The cup run began with an extra time win against Lingfield College, which was followed by an excellent team performance against Merchant Taylors' Crosby in a 3-1 victory to reach the last 32, before the team bowed out to the defending champions Hampton. The strong performances in the cup from a side that had yet to really get to know each other was a promising sign for the season to come in the Lent Term, and the success experienced by the School's first attempt at the National Cup is hopefully something that teams to come can build upon.

After a productive pre-season that included a 3-3 draw against a returning OAs' XI, and a 7-0 win against Malvern College, the season began away at Haileybury. A gutsy performance resulting in a 2-1 win set

a platform for the season, and this was followed by wins against Shiplake and Wellingborough to round off the first half of term.

After a rocky start following half term, including a loss to the Corinthian Casuals in the annual fixture, the team bounced back with a strong performance against Marlborough that finished in a 3-3 draw, before the season was unexpectedly brought to an abrupt end with two fixtures remaining due to the School's closure. With the team wanting to have a final game to round off the season, a last minute fixture against an OA team was arranged. The season was then capped off with a 7-1 victory, bringing an end to another successful season for the 1st XI.

This season was also the last for Mr Donnelly as master in charge of football and coach of the 1st XI. The success the Football Club now enjoys year on year is due largely to the work of Mr Donnelly, and I know that all those that have played football for Abingdon over the last few years are extremely grateful for everything he has done.

Whilst it was not how we had envisioned or indeed wanted the season to end, the season was nonetheless enjoyable for all involved, and brought to an end the successful football journeys of all the Upper Sixth at the school.

*Daniel Hollis, 7DE*



# Solo Instrumental Competitions

## Senior

The Senior Solo Competition this year was characterised by some excellent performances from all of the contestants, all post-grade 8 musicians. The standard was extremely high and several of the performances were given from memory.

The adjudicator was Mr Peter Foster, who is Director of Music at Oxford High School. A well-established local musician, Mr Foster had the unenviable task of comparing a wide range of musical instruments and repertoires.

The pianists included Daniel Zhang (Mozart's Sonata in Bb), William Bywater (Schumann's Intermezzo from Faschingsschwank Aus Wien) and myself. We also had the pleasure of hearing the fine cello playing of Oliver Simpson (Shostakovich's Cello Sonata, 4th movement), which was exciting and technically demanding, as well as the nimbly played saxophone of Josef O'Connor (Monti's Czardas).

Preludium by Paul Hindemith is the introductory movement to the set of 24 pieces, Ludus Tonalis ('Tonal Games'). In performance, it often is accompanied by the following fugue, although I did not play it on this occasion. This was part of the repertoire that I had been studying for my piano ABRSM graded exam, and I thought it would be an interesting

choice to enter into a competition.

Honestly, it was risky, as the music is rather odd at times, and it can be difficult to convey its intricacies in a performance. An inexperienced listener can often be thrown off by a lot of Hindemith's music, it being of the 20th century era. This set in particular was composed in 1942 during the composer's visit to America.

The mood of the music changes many times; the movement I played is probably the most varied of the set. Together with this comes a high specificity of dynamics, which I felt I conveyed well. It was important for me when preparing for the competition that all the instructions written by the composer came through clearly, and as such the performance had to be very expressive.

The opening, for instance, consists of a single line that cascades downwards with increasing speed, each note accented individually. It is not beautiful. This is a sudden, quick start, meant to grab attention and it was crucial that it was executed to perfection. My favourite section of the piece is near the end, where a short phrase is repeated low down on the piano, and the chords on top gradually change, getting louder and louder, until it suddenly drops again and the piece ends in calm.

In his adjudication Mr Foster gave generous compliments to everyone and found many interesting points of development for us to consider. We were kept guessing until the end as he found it difficult to separate the top three performances. Third place went to

William Bywater, and second to Oliver Simpson, who both played beautifully. I was delighted to be declared the winner.

*Nicholas Raptakis, 6BS*

## Intermediate

On the 5 March I was part of the Intermediate Solo Competition. I was told about it by my drum teacher a couple of weeks before and to be honest I had no idea what to expect. I had recently done my grade 7 and had passed with distinction so it was the perfect time to have the competition because you had to have done grade 6 but not 8.

I had thought of some options for pieces and decided to go for one of my grade 7 pieces. I played all of them and I decided to go with Toxicity by System of A Down. So I practised. Again and again. I did need to refresh it in my mind as it had been some time since my exam in November.

On the day, I had a nice surprise of meeting the adjudicator who happened to be Mrs Jamison, head of music at Headington School - and the wife of my tutor! I had my own setup with my drum kit (Tama Starclassic), mixer (Xenyx Q1202) and speakers (DBTechnologies BHype10") which meant that I was a bit more comfortable with the setup compared to using a school kit. I just played to the best of my ability and was really pleased to be announced as the winner. A tip: even if you are not, make sure to make it look like you are enjoying yourself (eg. smiling!)

*Oscar Scannell, 1AJ*







## Chapel Choir

Back at the start of my first year at Abingdon School, someone recommended that I joined the Chapel Choir. So I came along to a rehearsal and a few weeks later, I attended my first Evensong at one of the Oxford colleges. From that point on, I was hooked. We went to the Royal Albert Hall to sing a scratch Messiah just before Christmas that year. Looking back, I think that hitting the high notes in Handel's famous 'Hallelujah' was one of my proudest moments in Chapel Choir. Between then and now, I have had many other opportunities to visit amazing places with Chapel Choir. Another one of my proudest moments was when I sang the first verse of "Once in Royal David's City" at the Parents' and Boarders' Carol Concert this year. I have thoroughly enjoyed all my time in Chapel Choir over the last two years, and I am looking forward to many great performances in the future.

*Daniel Chamberlin, 2PCWM*

I joined Chapel Choir in the third year and from that point onwards it has been one of my favourite Other Half activities. One of my most memorable and enjoyable experiences was when the Chapel Choir performed in the Royal Albert Hall as part of the Scratch Youth Messiah. I really enjoyed singing as part of a larger choir accompanied by a professional orchestra. This combined with the acoustics resulted in a magnificent sound and one which I will remember for a long time. Another highlight of my time in Chapel Choir was the annual visits and performances at the Mercers Guild. It was always great to perform for such a distinguished company and I feel that the choir often stepped up and performed some of their best work there despite the somewhat challenging singing arrangements and often shortage of time to rehearse there.

This year in addition to the Mercers Guild we also visited Merton College and Coventry Cathedral. Our performance at Merton was one of the best of my time in Chapel Choir and overall it was a great experience. We were given a

tour of Oxford's oldest college and were especially lucky to be performing with the Merton Chapel Choir. This was great as it gave us an experience of the quality of a university choir which helped elevate our own singing. Having performed at Coventry Cathedral multiple times I can say that it has the most striking stained glass windows of any cathedral I have visited with the choir. This in combination with the echoing acoustic results in a uniquely enjoyable singing environment.

Overall my time in Chapel Choir has provided me with some of my favourite memories whilst at Abingdon and I would highly recommend it to any budding singers.

*Oliver Elly, 7DTP*



**BMC**

## BlottMatthews Challenge 2019/2020

# Luna for Living

**L4L**

## First Prize

### SPACE FACTORY

#### Abingdon School

Richard Blott

Charles Matthews

## Blott Matthews

In September 2019, four teams from the Lower Sixth entered into the Blott Matthews engineering challenge. All teams were set the same task, which was to create the design for a commercial moonbase as well as its operations, using technology foreseeably available within the next 10 years. Despite being given the same objective, the different teams had a surprising diversity of both the general and specific design choices, and the team I was part of answered questions and researched areas of science we would never have considered relevant at the start of the project.

The most important decision from the start was how a commercial operation can be sustained on the moon. Currently, the only realistic plans to place humans on the moon in the next 10 years are sponsored by governments and have no commercial side, so we needed to generate our own ideas. If disbelief about the real world economics are suspended, there are a wide range

of interesting ways to exploit the unique environment of the moon to make money. The possibilities for mining alone are tremendous, from the extraction of precious metals and helium 3 to capturing asteroids for their valuable elements. There are also some more offbeat suggestions such as a moon hotel for the ultra rich, or advertising with the moon acting as a billboard.

A downside to these suggestions is that all these things can be done comfortably within the gravity well of earth, and while it is difficult to breed helium 3 or mine platinum, it is hard to imagine a time when it becomes easier to turn to outer space than simply increasing domestic production. Our team chose to use the vast cost to reach space to our advantage, and designed a base to lower the amount of launches needed to outer space rather than increase it. This was done by manufacturing fuel, solar panels and assembling satellites on the moon itself, to be sold to other space users such as NASA and Starlink.

With a general goal chosen, designing the specifics required at least as much

creativity, and calculating the specifics of the design pushed our A level physics' knowledge to beyond breaking point. At this stage in the project, teamwork played a huge role, as, although the larger project could be split up into smaller challenges, the requirements of these individual systems were heavily dependent on the other parts of the designs. Once the designs were completed, we were able to make full 3D models to demonstrate our solutions in the clearest manner.

The final project in the form of a document of about 50 pages was submitted by each team in the February half term. A presentation day was scheduled to take place in March to explain our project and exhibit our ideas, however this was canceled due to the coronavirus outbreak. The team I was part of was awarded first place and £500, and another Abingdon team was placed third. The experience certainly pushed us to develop our engineering and teamworking skills, and was ultimately very rewarding.

*James Gibson, 6RLR*

## Rifle Club

It has been an extremely successful yet varied period for the Rifle Club. In spite of the unfortunate cancellation of the 2020 Stade Tour and the cessation of shooting for the Summer Term, the club is stronger than ever and continues to move from strength to strength.

The shooting year got off to a flying start with a very challenging yet successful 2019 Bisley National Rifle Meeting. All members held a consistently high standard of shooting throughout the week and excelled themselves both individually and as a team. Oscar Bennett and Will Shorrocks posted scores of 353 and 373 respectively for the Astor Championship, and all members posted impressive scores for the County Championship. Benjamin MacLennan finished overall fifth place in the D Class aggregate, and a team composed of Oscar Bennett, Benjamin MacLennan and Will Shorrocks won the Daily Sketch Trophy for the Junior Team of Three. Oscar Bennett, Will Shorrocks, Benjamin MacLennan, Charles Symonds and Marius Williamson also competed in the British Junior International Competition, where they all achieved impressive scores. Overall it was a very enjoyable week of shooting for all involved and all team members gained further experience of shooting in the challenging conditions Bisley presents each year.

Moving into the Michaelmas Term, Will Shorrocks was selected to shoot for the England Team in the British Schools' National Pistol Competition and attained



a score of 194/200. Marius Williamson and Toby Baker were also selected for the Wales Team for the same fixture and both attained impressive scores.

As for the Lent Term, the club returned to the BSSRA British Schools leagues, and after a term's worth of dedicated shooting from all team members, we yielded some impressive results. The 10-Bull A Team, composed of Benjamin MacLennan, Will Shorrocks, Oscar Bennett, Charles Symonds and Marius Williamson, achieved second place in the division, with the highest team average going to Will Shorrocks. The 5-Bull B Team, composed of Will Shorrocks, Oscar Bennett, Benjamin MacLennan, and Marius Williamson,

achieved first place in the division, with the highest team average going to Benjamin MacLennan. Finally, the C Team, composed of Toby Baker, Freddy Martin, Charles Maddison and Oscar l'Anson, also achieved first place in the division. The highest team average went to Freddy Martin.

The club also welcomed the acquisition of a new set of shooting jackets, slings and gloves, which I have no doubt will serve our members well in the future. I also have no doubt that upon the resumption of shooting in the Michaelmas Term 2020, the club will continue to develop and make impressive progress towards further wins and achievements in 2021.

As always, thanks must go to our Head Coach, Alan Smith, for continually providing training of the highest standard and for his outstanding commitment to the club. To Mandy Pritchard, for her enormously valued contribution to the organisation of trips and competitions, and finally to the Master in Charge, Mr Johnson, for his exemplary contribution and skilled management of the club. Once again, many congratulations to all and I wish the club every success as it moves into next year.

*Will Shorrocks, 6KJB*





## Hockey

Once more the ever-growing Abingdon School Hockey Club had a very successful season, with over 200 boys representing the school in 16 teams on a weekly basis competing in the Independent Schools' Hockey League (ISHL). As a club, Abingdon managed to score 104 goals over the course of the season in the ISHL against opposition including Wellington College, Marlborough College and local rivals Radley College.

The 1st XI had another unbeaten season finishing top of the league for the second season in a row. This was the second year in the team for many of the boys

and final year for some, with Mr Deasy, Mr Birkbeck and Mr Hobley making up the formidable coaching team. For the first time in the club's history, the 1st XI was entered into the National Cup. The team stepped up to the challenge, managing to get to the final 16 where they were narrowly defeated (3 - 4) by Dr Challoner's Grammar School in a very competitive fixture. The 1st XI games were greatly enjoyed by the spectators with an abundance of goals and action. A few of the biggest wins included a 9-0 win against RGS High Wycombe and an 8-1 win against Wellington College. In total, the team scored 55 goals in 11 games with the highest scorer Freddie Smith scoring 25 followed by Jayden Zamler who scored 11. Despite numerous spectacular goals

from Freddie, he was unable to claim the goal of the season, as this was claimed by Kipp Mainstone in the final game of the season against local rivals Radley College. Under the floodlights at the fortress, that is Tilsley Park, on Friday 13 March (unlucky for some, lucky for others) the 1st XI faced Radley College for the final match of the season which would decide the winner of the league. As the high stakes game was nearing the final whistle, with the score at 2-2, Kipp rocketed the ball into the roof of the net from the top of the D with a reverse stick shot to win the game and league! Without question, this was the goal of the season. Many of the 1st XI players were Lower Sixth students, who will help to create a strong squad next season to continue the streak of league wins and





to drive the club's success even further.

The U16s continue to develop as a team finishing second in their league, an improvement on finishing third the previous year. There were several stand out performances from Joshua Khan (goalkeeper) who managed to keep 4 clean sheets out of the 7 games.

The U15s also saw tremendous improvement this season and, after finishing last in their league last year, they ended up in top spot this year winning the league. The widespread talent in this age group is an exciting prospect for the club's future as they progress through the school.

The U14s were the only other team in



the club to have an unbeaten season in the league. Unfortunately, due to coronavirus restrictions, their final game against Bradfield College was cancelled, which would have been the decider for the winner of the league. This meant they finished in second place, 1 point behind Bradfield. Nevertheless, the team had some fantastic results such as beating St Edwards's 14-0. They are certainly a team to watch out for in the future.

The U13s had a strong season with a 75% win ratio, scoring 40 goals in their 11 games. Highlights from their season were an 8-1 win against New College School and 8-3 win against Shiplake College. We look forward to seeing another strong season for this team as they are strengthened with new pupils from the third year next season.

Abingdon School Hockey Club is thriving in terms of both results and culture, for which a huge thank you has to go to Mr Deasy who has built the club up over the past few years as Head of Hockey. During his time at Abingdon, he has created a passion for hockey and a high level of enthusiasm throughout the club. Sadly this was his last season at Abingdon, but his legacy within the club will live on for many years to come. As Mr Deasy would say, we are all "buzzing" for the season ahead!

*Rory Mitchell, 6BW*



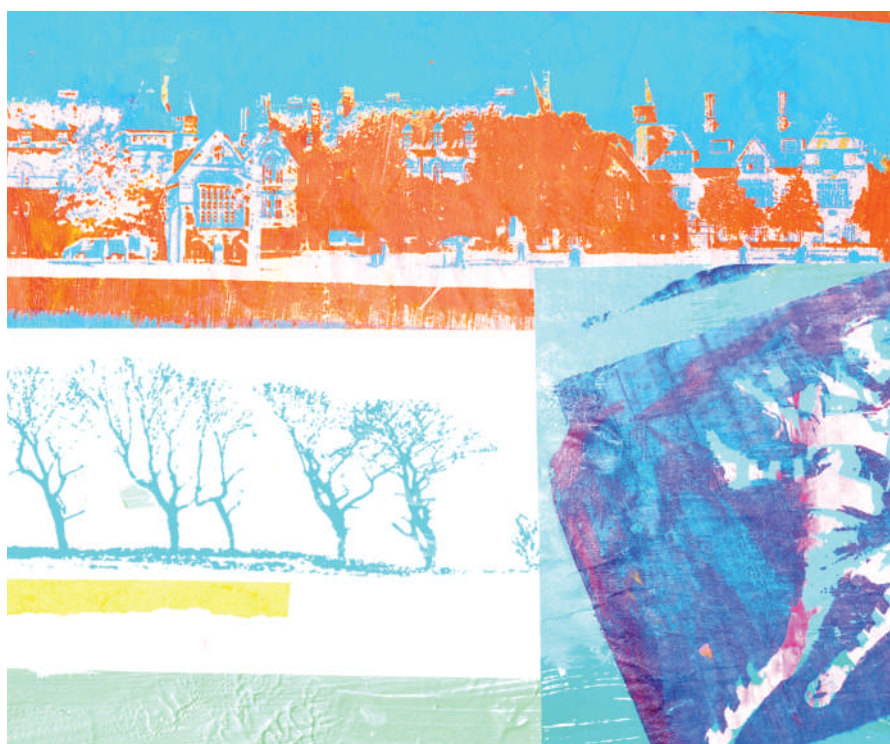


Eric Huang, 5TEA

## 150 Postcard Competition

Abingdon School moved to its current site near Albert Park in 1870. To celebrate the 150th anniversary of this, members of the school community were invited to design a postcard.

The Headmaster, Michael Windsor, selected the winner. Congratulations go to Eric Huang, who submitted the winning entry (above). Mr Windsor chose this entry as he 'likes the fusion of ancient and modern, which captures a key aspect of Abingdon, and the fresh perspective he has taken.' In second place was Mr Price, and Mr Windsor also wanted to give special commendations to Boco To, Archie Turnbull and Adam Andrews for their fantastic entries.



Archie Turnbull, 7MSC



Aleksander Ustic, 2SCVM



Boco To, 3SJP



Adam Andrew, 1AJ



Mr Price



Samuel Price, 1RHH

---

# Summer 2020



## PPE Manufacture at Abingdon

At the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, there was a huge demand for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) from hospitals, local GPs and pharmacists. Many of these key workers are parents, and they contacted the school to see if we could help out. The Design & Technology Department began experimenting with different design solutions using their manufacturing facilities. Prototypes were developed using the 3D printers and laser cutters, with the design quickly being refined by Mr Johnson in order to improve the speed of manufacture and feature more economical use of material. This soon became a national effort, with D&T departments across the country

sharing their designs and experiences in order to help meet nationwide demand.

We were overwhelmed with requests and interest from local and national organisations, and produced well over 1,000 products in the weeks leading up to Easter. To speed up manufacture, we outsourced some of the laser cutting to local firms who went out of their way to help us meet the demand, and enabled us to provide essential PPE to many local health care providers.

This department effort was met with huge support from our boys. Many wanted to help with assembly and distribution, as well as many using their home 3D printers to aid manufacture, working with local and national crowdsourcing organisations. Huge congratulations go to Toby Lee (third year), Harry Watkins (fifth year), and Benjamin Broadbent and Freddie Nicholson (Lower Sixth), who between



them produced a significant number of protective visors. Benjamin set up a crowdfunding site to cover his material costs and raised almost £1,000, which is an exceptionally notable achievement.

*Dan Hughes*





## Bellringing Club

The tower we ring at in Abingdon, St Helen's, is around 800-900 years old. In the late 1800s Abingdon-on-Thames became an affiliate member of the Old North Berks branch of the Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bellringers.

I became a member of the ODG this year after ringing for around two years with the school at St Helen's church and for about a third of that time at my home church of St Andrew's in South Stoke. Although that seems like a long time, every moment has been a learning experience and I have learnt that if you

really put the effort in to something, you can really end up enjoying it! Bellringing is a fun activity because not only are you training your mind, with the sometimes complex sequences of which bells follow which, but also your muscles as the bells take more effort than you might think to sound off.

Passing through the different stages on the Learning The Ropes booklet makes you try harder to progress further and it is very satisfying to pass through the stages and strive to learn more techniques and improve your skill.

The Club has been going on ringing trips

around the region for the past few years and this year I was involved in organising one by getting permission for us to ring at my home tower. It was the first time a group of young people or school ringers has come to St Andrew's. We also visited the churches in Cholsey, Goring and Streatley. We had a lot of fun trying out the different bells and adapting to the different weights and sounds.

Bellringing with Abingdon School has been a great way to meet new people from different year groups, work together as a team, and socialise.

*Jack Higgs, 3JGHP*

---

## Lower School Assistants

I still remember my first session with Lower School pupils when I had to step up, be more assertive, and organise an innovative game of table-tennis. Not a particularly creative person, I resorted to a simple tournament and managed to pump up their excitement through my 'bribery' of sweets every once in a while. The Lent Term saw me being in charge of organising debates for a group of 12 pupils. Items of confectionery once again became a highlight of the activity, but the boys were kept busy with a different set of debating questions each week that I had come up with after researching on the internet. It was great to see most, if not all, of the students being very enthusiastic during the sessions.

Unfortunately, due to the pandemic and the subsequent lockdown in March, the activity sessions were cut short and it was not possible to see the boys in school for the whole of the Summer Term. In order for us to keep up some

kind of relationship with the Lower School students, Mr Jenkins organised us to Zoom the respective tutor groups which we were assigned to at the beginning of the year each week. Quizzes became the new activity during Tuesday lunchtimes, but we also just had the chance to chat with the boys about how they were getting on with virtual schooling.

Over the year it was rewarding to see most of the students adapt to their new school environment quickly, making friends and actively participating in the wide array of activities we organised. The switch to a new activity every six weeks meant that Lower School pupils could try out something new every once in a while, from debating to sports, from guitar playing to being an IT detective. I hope that our team of 24 Lower School Assistants have brought some excitement for first and second year students during their Tuesday lunchtimes and in their tutor periods.

Finally, I would like to thank Mr Jenkins and Mr Price for giving me the opportunity to step up and become a leading figure and hopefully, a helping hand for the Lower School pupils. I

wish all of the boys the very best as they progress through their years at Abingdon.

*Andreas Lo, 6BDS*

Being a Lower School Assistant was without a doubt one of the most formative experiences I have been able to undertake during my time at Abingdon School. To start, the opportunity to write your own application and then have an interview was incredibly helpful and instructive, particularly when it comes to applying for university or entering the world of work later on in life.

Helping out in the Lower School is also the first time that many of us are ever put in a position of real responsibility and are looked up to by other members of the student body. Though perhaps daunting at first, one quickly learns the vital skill of effective organisation and soon comes to grips with running activities and programmes that keep others engaged and interested.

I myself have found that the lessons learnt during my time as a Lower School Assistant have helped in several



different parts of my school life. I have definitely become better at working in a team or indeed leading groups of people and, on top of that, I have come to learn how to be more organised and efficient, helping greatly in my studies. Being a Lower School Assistant is by no means always an easy or simple task, but it is definitely a deeply rewarding one.

*Johan Nerlov, 6KJB*

Being a Lower School Assistant was a true pleasure. Over the hours we spent playing sport, making art, debating and even playing chess I really saw the Lower School boys develop and mature.

Joining Abingdon in the first year can be a daunting prospect for 11 year olds, however during the induction day I saw some really strong characters,

and our activities helped spread their confidence and positivity to all boys.

After a term of coaching two groups of dodgeball, I was covered in bruises, but more importantly I'd seen some ferocious competitors and also boys who had told me at the start of the year they weren't sporty really enjoying the sessions we ran.

I also enjoyed becoming a trusted peer of the boys and dealing with a few small disagreements, helping boys become best friends once again. We even maintained our support for the Lower School boys through lockdown by providing chats on Zoom and small online activities all together.

Thank you to the Lower School for giving us such an exciting year.

*Jayden Zamler, 6BS*





## Moldova Project

The last academic year has seen significant developments in Abingdon's long-standing partnership with Agape, a charity working in Moldova, the poorest country in Europe.

The Abingdon team that visited Moldova in July 2019 to run summer camps with Agape were very grateful for the support they received from a team of young Moldovan volunteers who organised the activities of the camp with them and acted as interpreters. At the start of the new academic year those volunteers put together a display about the work they did to present to their peers and teachers at Petre Stefanuca School in Ialoveni. Each of them felt that they benefited greatly from the camps themselves, not only developing their English public speaking and presentation skills, but also enjoying the opportunity to work as a team in collaboration with the Abingdon boys.

They then wanted to make a difference in their local community and so worked with Agape and their teachers to organise a four week activity

programme in December for Moldovan primary school students. As a thank you for their efforts, Agape presented them with a selection of books aimed at helping them further develop their skills. To quote one of these volunteers reflecting on what they feel they have gained from the experience:

"This has been a great opportunity to discover something new about leadership and self-development and to learn new things about ourselves that we didn't even know we were capable of. This project really changes people and their way of thinking and I am grateful for that."

Lower School undertook some fundraising for Agape in the Michaelmas Term through a charity pool doubles tournament and a collection after their carol service. Over £300 was raised. They also wrote Christmas cards which were delivered to children at several different schools in Moldova. The Moldovan students then sent cards back – which also gave them an excellent opportunity to practise their English!

Some of the money Abingdon has donated this year enabled Agape to organise events in the villages of Bardar, Puhoi, Milestii Mici, Ulmu and

Zimbreni in the district of Ialoveni aimed at encouraging young people to read more. Many schools in Moldova, especially in villages, struggle to find the funding to provide reading resources for their students and so this offer of help was gratefully received. About 300 books were bought and donated and were soon being eagerly devoured by lots of children.

The donation also created the opportunity to build a solid partnership with these schools and consequently Agape has offered consultancy and training opportunities for several groups of young people from each of them as well as from Ialoveni. Their aim is to create a real movement among these young people to get involved and make a difference in their community.

Although the coronavirus pandemic meant that the annual trip to Moldova planned for July 2020 had to be cancelled, the group of sixth formers who had signed up to go on it still agreed to undertake a fundraising event in aid of Agape. The plan had been to use the school's gym equipment to collectively travel 398km, the distance that the river Dniester flows through Moldova, but, due to the school closure, this plan was adapted and the boys used whatever equipment they



had available to them at home instead. A combination of cycling, running and walking saw the total distance more than covered over a weekend and just over £2,000 was raised as a result.

This donation could not have come at a more welcome time as lockdown and school closures were having a very significant impact on the poorest families in Moldova. Agape had been quick to organise donations of plant seedlings and chickens to these families to help them to provide food for themselves, but the money raised by the Abingdon boys also allowed them to, among other things, provide educational supplies and resources to allow their children to engage in the online learning provided by their schools that had been inaccessible to them before. This support went to 100 different families so, although the sixth formers did not get to visit Moldova this year, they can still be assured that they made a big difference to the lives of people out there.

Abingdon's partnership with Agape began in 2000 with our first donation being sent in December of that year. In the 20 years since, over 150 Abingdon pupils have visited Moldova and nearly £85,000 has been donated to Agape. It seems appropriate to end with some



words from Nicu Bocaneala, Director of Agape for all of those years:

"The educational partnership between Abingdon and Agape is of incalculable value and a unique experience for Moldova, I think. It is a transformational partnership, providing experiences that have changed the destiny of many teachers and young people, and

has left a visible mark on the lives of schools and communities.

We are deeply grateful to all those who have contributed with their time, their money and especially with their love for Moldova and its people."

*Adam Jenkins*



## Charities Committee

The last year has been a productive year for the Charities Committee despite disruption caused by the pandemic. The committee has remained passionate about supporting both local and international charities and we raised a total of £6,500 to distribute to the following charities:

**Save The Children:** The world's leading independent children's organisation. For nearly 100 years their priorities have been determined solely by the needs of children, not by any political, religious or commercial affiliations. Their aim is to stand side by side with children in the toughest places to be a child. They do whatever it takes to make sure they survive, get protection when they're in danger, and have the chance to learn.

**UNICEF:** UNICEF is mandated by the United Nations General Assembly to advocate for the protection of children's rights, to help meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential. UNICEF is



guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and strives to establish children's rights as enduring ethical principles and international standards of behaviour towards children. UNICEF insists that the survival, protection and development of children are universal

development imperatives that are integral to human progress.

**Abingdon Bridge:** Their counselling team work with about 100 different young people per year. The Abingdon Bridge also supports about 700 students within local secondary

schools, delivering education and workshops aimed at increasing young people's resilience around healthy lifestyles.

**Mind:** Mind provides advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem. They campaign to improve services, raise awareness and promote understanding. Their goals are focussed around empowering choice, enabling social participation, removing inequality of opportunity, and promoting organisational excellence.

**Close the Gap:** Scotland's expert policy advocacy organisation working on women's labour market participation. Since 2001, they have been working with policymakers, employers and employees to influence and enable action to address the causes of women's inequality at work.

In the Michaelmas Term, the Charities Committee organised a home clothes day in the first half of term, followed by the annual Christmas Jumper Day held on the penultimate day of term. These events proved as popular as ever, and the Committee was able to raise a substantial amount of money from both, as well as see some entertaining and quirky Christmas jumpers. In addition, Lower School members of the Committee organised several doughnut and cake sales across the term. The third and fourth year production in the Lent Term; *Every Brilliant Thing* also raised £800 for Young Minds.

In the Lent Term the Committee organised a foodbank collection for Abingdon Emergency Foodbank, asking students to bring in any food products with a long shelf life to deposit into boxes in their houserooms. The event ran for a week in February and we managed to gather two minibuses worth of items, which will be of great use to our local food bank, with Lower School donating the most of the school houses.

In the Summer Term the Charities Committee organised a 'Not Home Clothes Day' owing to the fact that the school was online and all students were in their home clothes anyway. Instead, students were encouraged to wear items of clothing they usually



wouldn't wear at home to stand out more and participate in the event. Many participated, and we saw some amazing outfits and costumes from students and members of staff.

The Summer Term also saw some tremendous individual efforts by students to raise money for charities close to their hearts and important to them. 2M as part of their 'Journey to school challenge' raised £3,700 for Cancer Research UK. First year Charlie Taylor along with his teammates raised over £1,300 for Abingdon United Football Club and for NHS fundraising. The Moldova Project volunteers also walked, ran, cycled and rowed the length of the Dniester river in Moldova

to raise funds for the project and made over £2,000 for the cause.

It has been a great delight to work with the Charities Committee and its host of enthusiastic volunteers to continue to organise events which have had positive impacts on our local community and internationally too. I would like to thank Mrs Ley for her committed leadership of the Committee and the hard work and long hours she has put into organising events. As a committee I think we should be very proud of what we have achieved in the past year, and I can't wait to see what we can accomplish next year.

*George Nott, 6RKJ*



## Languages in Lower School

Modern Languages is an essential subject. You can learn new dialects, discover new cultures and communicate with people all over the world. You have to start learning a language at some point. Abingdon Lower School is where some begin this journey.

Learning languages in Lower School is enjoyable and always fun. In the first year, you do half a year of French and half a year of German and in the second year you choose which one you would like to study for that year. I am in the first year and so have had time learning two different Modern Languages this year.

German is a really enjoyable language which poses quite a few challenges for the learner (spellings, pronunciations etc). For a beginner, it is difficult to get the hang of but when you do it is really fun. In German, there are lots of funny words (Kartoffel, Überschlange), while German sentence structure is similar to English and French. The most tricky

thing about German for me are the articles and when to use the accusative and nominative cases and whether it is a neuter or masculine word. German is a challenging language which some people may not enjoy but personally I do.

French is also a beautiful language, correctly titled as the language of love. All the words in French flow whereas German words are quite guttural and onomatopoeic. I had done some French before in primary school so I knew a little bit about the language and this helped me a lot. In French, I really struggle with accents but I overcame the struggle by finding similar sounding words with accents and, knowing which words they are, I can work out whether it is grave or acute. For example, cheminée and l'école sound the same so I know that their accent is different to règle and très. In my opinion, the language is really smooth and delicate.

As a linguist, I find learning languages challenging, different and fun. Languages are all different and that is what I really enjoy about them. My parents met in their year abroad in France so I know

learning languages opens up a myriad of opportunities,

We also have lots of fun in lessons, especially when we watch the Angry Family (Mr Angry Potato Head and Mrs Mildly Angry Carrot are my personal favourites). We also watched Tintin and Asterix and learnt the origins of the characters which was fun. Sometimes, we have class quizzes on the last lesson which are always competitive between the teams. Sweets are the prizes which make everyone try really hard.

Finally, I want to just say how Modern Languages worked after the school was closed due to the Coronavirus outbreak. Normally, we logged on and registered. Then, we looked at Firefly to see what we had to do. Most classes required independent learning but ten minutes before the end, we would check in and talk through our work. I think that being independent is good as you can test your own knowledge. The teacher could take questions and help if needed. I am sure the lessons vary from teacher to teacher but that is how my lessons worked online.

*Nathan Shestopal, 1RHH*



## Lower School Desert Island Book Winners

Imagine that a close friend of yours is going to be spending a year living alone on a desert island. They will have ample shelter, clothing, food and water, but no phone, music, YouTube, TV, or any other form of online entertainment or education. Your friend is, however, allowed to take three books with them, and has asked you for advice on what to take. Which books would you recommend - and why?



*One of Us is Next* by Karen M McManus is amazing. It is a real page-turner. It is very convincing and realistic. It tells the story of some teenagers in high school trying to solve the mystery of who created the new truth or dare game. This book is a mystery book, a romance book and a thriller. You should definitely take it with you on the island because it is very entertaining. The chapters are written from the perspectives of different characters which is very effective. It has a great beginning, middle and end and it is very mysterious and hard to guess the plot. This is a brilliantly written book. The ending is very tense and hard to guess. There is murder and lots of tension and we should definitely study this book in English lessons. I recommend this book to anyone above the age of 10. It is great

for adults and teens.

*I Know What You Did Last Wednesday* by Anthony Horowitz is my favourite of the Diamond Brothers series. It is a take off of Agatha Christie's 'And Then There Were None.' It is a comedy, a mystery, an adventure and an action book. It is everything and it will definitely entertain you on an island with little to do. It tells the story of two stupid and bankrupt detectives who get invited to a Scottish island where they are picked off one by one. It is quite short but will linger in your mind for a long time. This is possibly my favourite mystery book of all time. It is also a bit creepy. This book is incredibly well written and planned and it would be very hard to guess the ending. Most mystery books are incredibly serious and a bit creepy but this book also has so much comedy, it is hilarious. It is a very quick and easy read.

*The London Eye Mystery* by Siobhan Dowd is an adventure book and a mystery book. You will not be bored on the desert island if you read this book. You can also try to solve the mystery whilst you read this book. It tells the story of two children trying to solve the mystery of a missing child. The characters are very interesting, one of them has Asperger's and the other is a stropky teenager (but they are a very good team). This book had an amazing plot and there are lots of great, funny characters. I loved this book. It is also a quick and easy read. Siobhan Dowd is very talented. It is quite a modern book so isn't old-fashioned and a bit boring like Agatha Christie's books. The book is very enjoyable and has a very happy ending. The follow up book 'the Guggenheim Mystery' is also very good.

### *Hamish Bloom, 2PCWM*

The first book that I would choose is *Facing the Frozen Ocean* by Bear Grylls. The main reason that I have chosen this book is because it is full of resilience and endurance. That is important as it is guaranteed that if you are going to be on an island by yourself for that long, the going will be tough at some point and this book will give self belief so you can power through. In this book, Bear Grylls crosses the Atlantic ocean in a RIB (rigid inflatable boat). This is something that had never been done before and

he and the people he was with needed incredible self determination, something you will also need on the island. In some places it also will show that what you might be going through on the island could be a lot worse. In my view if you believe you can do something (and that goal is reasonable) you can do it if you put your mind to it. This will be useful on the desert island as it will make you able to put yourself in the best position possible. This book shows amazing endurance and would definitely help you on the desert island.

My second set of books are the Harry Potter series by JK Rowling. This is because they are books that everyone has come to know and love. The key point in having this series on the desert island is for its escapism. These books let people move into a different world and allow them to forget about anything they want but instead become fully immersed in the story. These books are entirely fictional, other than basic connections with the real world. It is important that the books have connections with the real world as without them the reader would not be able to relate to the books in any way. Another great factor about these books is that the more you read them, the more you find out. Most people who will read the whole series will still not know everything in the story unless they read the books many times.

My final book is the *Encyclopedia of Sailing*. I have chosen this book as when you are on the desert island, you will have a lot of time where you do not have much to do. Therefore, having a book that you can learn from would really help as it is a larger activity and will take up more time than just reading a book. It is also a lot more useful than reading a normal book as all of the stuff in this book is useful and interesting to know. I have been interested in sailing for a long time. However, even though I would be unable to actually sail on the island, I would like to spend as much time learning about it and learning how to be as fast as possible. This book contains lots of information from how to sail in trapeze to navigation and night navigation.

### *Rupert Mathieson, 2HFCP*

---

## 'Covid Chronicles': Prizewinners

### Lower School - 'Remember to get the shopping'

"Remember to get the shopping."

Every Monday, she'd tell me that. And I would drag myself to Lonsis to do so.

Mum had cystic fibrosis, which meant that her life had already been cut short, cruelly. When the government announced the shielding measures, I felt more of a sense of anxiety than protection. She was usually such a social person, meeting friends daily. Most of the time she would chat like an endless spinning top. I hated it. But I couldn't watch her suffer on her own.

What would I do without her?

Back at school, bullies would dump me to the ground, treating me as a plaything, their slanders threatening to demoralise me for life. But Mum would restore that courage inside me. She always cared for me, making breakfast, teaching me things that I didn't have the courage to learn at school, and looking out for me.

But now what? When the ambulance arrived today to whisk her away for treatment, I asked myself: what reason do I have to carry on? If my reason for living had contracted a virus that would most likely kill her, then I had no means of surviving. I had no friends. I didn't even have a father. She was all I had. And now... she would be a statistic in the government graphs and to the millions of people who didn't know her, would never know her. But she was much more than a statistic. She was a true human being: kind, generous, caring, defying all haters, the latter being something I hadn't the courage to do.

I couldn't live. I would die a merciless, innocent death. Why shouldn't I take the opportunity to join my sick, tired, tranquil mother in heaven? I didn't even have hope that she might survive; her cystic fibrosis would make an alliance with the coronavirus and end her life. Nobody would convince me to change my mind



about dying.

...Except for myself.

After all, she did always tell me that I could prove all of the doubters wrong. And I can. And I will. Without my life support. She's gone. But I'm not.

*Pranit Narain, 2HFCP*

### Middle School - 'The Square'

The street is quiet now. The overcast sky has a slightly pink hue as I trudge down the silent road. A plastic bag ripples in the wind, breaking the melancholy silence as my feet trudge along the loose gravel. I notice the gaunt, harrowed faces of families, shielding their children from sight as I cross the road. Nobody can talk anymore, there is just a silent nod of acknowledgement and understanding. In the distance, the sound of a shrill siren of an ambulance penetrates the eerie silence, before fading slowly. The wind however is continuous, persistent, rippling through my hair and my clothes, as I pull my thin fleece more tightly around my shivering body.

Mounting the pavement across the road, I hear faint whispers and hushed voices echoing from within the houses, stretching for what seems like miles

down the road. I strain to make out any of the voices, any of the words, just to remind myself of accents, inflections or tones of voice other than my own. I have grown used to the sulphuric smell in the air by now, as has everyone. It doesn't sting as much as it used to, but I can still feel a slight pang whenever I inhale the toxic fumes. I continue to walk in a dreamlike state, stumbling along the path.

They say the government is going to distribute more food parcels today, but, as they've said that for the past week at least, I'm beginning to lose hope, already falling into a spiral of despair. I cross the road again. I've lost track of the months, but the leaves no longer adorn the trees, indicating that summer has passed and we are in the gloomy clutches of late autumn. I attempt to increase my pace when a spasm of pain shoots up my leg; I inhale suddenly, the sulphur enveloping my lungs and slowing my walk.

I begin to notice more and more people leaving their houses, kissing their loved ones goodbye, perhaps for a couple of hours, perhaps longer. There are no words exchanged, just pained murmurs as the wind picks up, blowing dust and ash up into faces from the ground, leaving clothes and bodies blackened and eyes stinging. I hear the lulling drone

of white noise in the fuselage of the street.

I can see the square now. The fountain statue towers over the swathing crowds, thronging in from every direction, moving towards a platform that has been set up in the centre. The doors of the town hall are still bolted shut, as they have been for weeks. The silence of the square belies the mass of humanity present in the vast crowds.

As I reach the square and join the back of the nearest queue, a sharp lightning bolt sears through the grey, late-afternoon sky, prompting gasps and yelps from the crowd. There have been no planes in the sky for nearly a year now, so this sudden noise provokes panic around me. As I stand there, I see mothers pull their children closer, hoping that this will protect them from the inevitable onslaught of desperate people, frantic, forcing their way towards the central platform.

Past the hopeful, optimistic faces of many of the people, lurks a chronic despair. Despair for themselves, despair for their families and a longing for how it used to be. All anyone can do is just stand there, waiting for food, waiting for a lifeline, wondering if normality can ever be restored.

*Oliver Clark, 3SJB*

### **Upper School - 'Coronavirus, Teenagers and Mental Health'**

This period of 'lockdown' is, of course, a peculiar and challenging time for people across the nation; to some extent or another, our lives have been altered in ways that would have been unimaginable mere months ago. From the outset it is important to establish that this is being written from the perspective of an 18 year-old. By no means am I attempting to capture the state of mind of an entire populace, nor that of my generation collectively. Instead, I will endeavour to detail my personal account of lockdown, how it has affected me personally, and what I have tried to do to combat the more difficult aspects of this unconventional day-to-day existence.

At the time of writing, I am just a few days away from what should've been

my first A Level exam. It seems almost inconceivable now that I should be tying up all the loose ends from my school years and revising for what would have been the most important and formidable test of my academic career so far. My school term, indeed my physical school career, concluded abruptly on 20 March following government instruction. On this last day an informal leavers' ceremony was held, giving us an abbreviated chance to say goodbye to the friends that we had spent the past five years growing up with. Inevitably, I think like all last days of school, it didn't feel adequate; outside my closest school friends, I know that there are people in my year group who I will most likely never see again. It's a strange feeling, but one that I've now come to terms with.

I'm a theology student and for the past two years I've studied the Greek principles of 'telos' and 'ontos'; these terms have remained in my mind throughout quarantine and have given me both great difficulty and great strength. The idea of telos was introduced by Aristotle to refer to the full potential or inherent purpose of a person or thing; it is similar to the French term 'raison d'être' used first by J S Mill in the 19th century. For all of his flaws, Aristotle may have been on to something in proposing that the ultimate telos of humanity is contemplation. However, contemplation is a double-edged sword during lockdown; whilst contemplation is a crucial part of human existence, lockdown begs the question: what exactly should we be contemplating? Right now, I feel as if I should be 'contemplating' Hamlet for my English Literature exam, in the same way that most people feel they ought to be contemplating issues in their job or in activities that have been taken away due to the virus. I, as I'm sure many people do, rely heavily on a set structure in my day to remain productive and keep my mind engaged; the structure of school and the ultimate goal of exams had previously given me my telos, but now we have been plunged into a situation where all things seem rather incoherent and true telos seems to be a far-flung and unattainable ideal. There is a danger when looking at the ancient philosophers to perceive

them in a grandiose way; the idea of a 'telos' or ultimate purpose appears to be a very daunting prospect, particularly when difficult and abstract terms such as 'rational thought' and 'virtue' are bandied about so liberally in Aristotle. But we should not be intimidated by these terms in lockdown or in everyday life. We can all find telos in the most trivial of everyday activities. Personally, I have taken to reading more. I took part in an online book exchange so that I might challenge myself to read material that I wouldn't think of doing so otherwise, but it hasn't just been reading that has given me a purpose over the last few weeks: I've also been walking, cycling, writing, and keeping up with friends to keep me engaged. These pursuits might give the impression of being diversions away from the looming reality of being perpetually imprisoned in my house, but I urge everyone to look upon them differently. If we can all see the profound value of keeping our minds and bodies occupied, no matter the means by which it is done, then we are all one step closer to finding telos, an invaluable asset in maintaining mental health during difficult periods.

In the Greek philosophical tradition, Parmenides was among the first to propose an ontological characterization of the fundamental nature of existence; the Greek 'ontos' means 'being', and therefore 'ontology' is the study of 'being'. By no means am I suggesting that the philosophical arguments proposed in the tradition of ontology are useful for us trying to deal with lockdown, but I will say that some of the questions proposed in this school of thought are helpful in discerning the importance of our existence during this period. Two of the most important questions in ontology are 'What is existence?' i.e. What does it mean for a being to be?' and 'What constitutes the identity of an object?' Ontologists would attempt to answer these questions in metaphysical terms, but that is far too existential a topic when we are already having existential difficulties while isolating from one another! I mentioned that I have been trying to keep in touch with my friends as much as possible at the moment (and we should all feel privileged that we have access to the technology that allows us to do so

---

easily). But talking to them and reading articles on the internet has opened my eyes as to how strange the predicament is that we have found ourselves in; our individual struggles are both unique but comfortingly similar at the same time. Of course lockdown has taken its toll more significantly on some people than others. Where you live, who you are isolating with, and the state of your mental health before all of this occurred are fundamental factors in deciding how much the lockdown has and will affect you. But, coming back to the aforementioned questions, it is clear that this situation has affected us all and that we can cultivate a sense of identity and being from this fact. Our individual struggles in relation to the restrictions imposed upon us can be compared in some way to the struggles that other

people are facing, and by starting a meaningful conversation with friends and family we can be enlightened in knowing that any difficulty or stress that we feel can be understood by almost everyone. It's almost paradoxical to suggest that in 'isolation' we can be more connected and united with other people than ever before, but I shall do so anyway. I firmly believe that, in this country, a greater sense of community has been established over the last few locked-down weeks than ever existed before in my lifetime. It is extremely unfortunate that this connectivity has taken place in a time of such great difficulty and pain, but if we can take a positive out of isolation, then I think this should be it. For me, lockdown has brought into perspective the surprising similarities of human existence: our

backgrounds and cultures may be incomprehensibly disparate, but our worries and concerns remain similar in a way that unifies humanity in a single sense of being, or 'ontos'.

I hope that everyone can find some strength in these ancient Greek values, and I also hope that they will be useful beyond lockdown. Although life may seem alien to us at the moment, and it may take a while for us to adjust to a new reality as the restrictions continue to be lifted, it is important to bear in mind that every task you undertake contributes to your telos, and that we are all united in some way under the principle ofontos.

*Patrick Heath, 7TJG*

## If - by 2P

As part of the Be The Best You Can Be programme, 2P were inspired to re-work Rudyard Kipling's famous poem, If, to reflect some of the values they had learnt during the last two years. An initial reading of the poem left the boys dissatisfied with some of Kipling's sentiments about what makes a man, and so they were challenged to

write new stanzas on the importance of goal-setting, resilience, teamwork, self-awareness, and learning from mistakes. This they did in groups, mostly during the remote-learning period, with guidance on the rhythm and rhyming pattern of the poem from Mrs Burrows, their English teacher.

We decided to keep the opening couplet to show it was a deliberate re-working of the original, and the final stanza, with a

twist! Though we could not hope to rival Kipling, the end result was impressive for its technical accomplishment, and more importantly for the emotional engagement and creativity of the boys, who go into Middle School armed with the tools to become great Abingdonians.

*Hugh Price*

If you can keep your head when all about you  
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,  
If you can see beyond a cool but unconsidered view,  
And, though the mass oppose, side with the few,

If you can make mistakes when all others don't-  
But not give up, and not lose hope,  
If you can push yourself when your peers won't,  
And yet you manage still to cope,

If you can risk not taking the easy path  
Though times ahead may treat you rough  
If you can force yourself to grind and graft  
And prove to all that breaking you is tough,

If you can treat the errors you have made,  
As lessons from which your greatness grows,  
If you can see success is 10,000 hours played,  
And that from practice top performance flows,

If you can lead your team to be the best,  
With mutual trust and extreme respect,  
But work with your peers, as hard as the rest,  
That your words might have the more profound effect,

If you can stay strong, in every trial and test,  
And keep it going if you are bruised,  
If you can claim, though not at your best,  
When the pressure came on you never refused,

If you can traverse the widest of rivers,  
By hopping and skipping from stone to stone,  
If you break down the whole by slicing into slivers,  
With SMART goals, you'll have succeeded and grown,

If you can fill the unforgiving minute  
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,  
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,  
And - which is more - you'll be an Abingdonian!

## 2M Back to School Challenge

On the weekend of 20/21 June, 2M participated in a charity challenge to support Cancer Research UK. In the weeks previously, our tutor, Mrs McRae, and all of us had planned the event: what the challenge was, what charity to raise money for and when and how we would complete it. The only things left to do were to train and gather sponsorship money.

When it came to the two days in June, with pictures taken and a final briefing on Zoom the night before, we set off with the aim of travelling the combined distance from all of our homes to school on transport powered purely by us. This added up to an overall distance of 719 miles, meaning that we each had to travel an average of 31.3 miles over the weekend. I personally travelled on

my road bike, which I had been using almost daily over the lockdown period as my exercise. Other members of the tutor group came up with a number of creative ways of getting around, including walking, running, riding on a cycle trainer in the comfort of their own home, open water swimming and even unicycling! All of these added to the fun and spirit of the weekend. When organising the event, some people linked some parts of their routes with other people who lived near to them to meet up during the challenge (while social distancing of course!). Others also included the school in their routes which was fitting for what we were doing.

At the end of the first day, all of the boys in 2M, along with family and friends who had joined us, logged our distances on Google Sheets to see how far we had to go on the next day. The distance achieved so far by the boys in 2M was 534.4 miles and the distance traveled by our friends and family was an additional 688 miles. At 7pm that evening, we had another quick Zoom meeting with our

tutor to discuss the highlights of the day and decide on the plan for the next day.

The average needed for the second day was 8 miles each, so, for many, there was a lot less pressure on raking in the mileage. We managed to go well beyond, achieving almost 40 miles over the target. With the friends and family distance added on, we managed to go 1,696 miles, meaning that we could probably have taken a whole other tutor group to school and back.

The giving page was hugely successful and, a few days after the challenge, we had raised well above our target of £2,500. Our overall total including Gift Aid was £3,703.25.

We all really enjoyed completing the challenge and we wouldn't have been able to do it without our tutor Mrs McRae. She came up with the idea of 2M doing a sponsored challenge every two years and has raised thousands of pounds for charity as a result.

*Lachlan Keene, 2SCVM*



---

# Prizegiving Speeches by the Heads of School

Good morning everyone,

So, here we are, prizegiving on Zoom. I had never heard of Zoom until the lockdown. But they say “The past is a foreign country” and we have travelled very far in a short space of time. Yet it is also an apt book end to my first day at Abingdon, when the whole School Assembly took place on Upper Field.

Our year has always had an eventful journey through school: we’ve had the 2016 referendum followed by Brexit, the Climate Crisis, two elections and now the Covid-19 pandemic. Many of us began at Abingdon in portacabins for our tutor periods, lessons, or even as a Houseroom. Our RS lessons took place in what is now Beech Court, and science lessons in what is now Greening Court.

We are the only generation to have had our A Levels cancelled and everything that goes with it: the stress of doing the exams, but the relief when they

are finished, and the associated rites of passage. But as Shakespeare says, ‘Sweet are the uses of adversity which, like the toad, ugly and venomous, wears yet a precious jewel in his head.’ I think that this is true and our futures are exciting.

For James Lloyd, Abingdon is a marmite bagel, or for Ed Gill, it’s a Doctor Pepper, or for Archie Turnbull, a pizza slice smothered with ketchup. But for me Abingdon has been like a delicious cake. All the ingredients work in harmony and create a perfect whole. I don’t know how the alchemy works, but there is a masterful blend at Abingdon with a perfect balance of the sweet and savoury, the arts and the science, the sports and the academic, the curricular and the non-curricular. And the after-taste will linger with us all.

I could just list all the incredible achievements for our year in sport, with the unbeaten hockey and rugby teams and so on, or the academic accolades and olympiads, the music, the drama. The list is endless, but I won’t. Of course it is all amazing, but I want to focus on what makes our year exceptional. Our year is diverse, it’s talented, yet inclusive with big brains, big muscles, big characters and big talents, yet we all see ourselves as part of something

greater. Again, back to the cake, it is this alchemy of the whole that is so extraordinary. Exactly what it is, I can’t put my finger on, but it’s there.

‘A teacher affects eternity: they can never tell where their influence stops.’ So thank you to all the teachers for inspiring and challenging us, for making us laugh, for telling us to tuck our shirts in or take out our earphones. You are great characters and superb teachers. To our housemasters, thank you for keeping us on the straight and narrow and nominating us for house competitions, especially house debating, and for the inspiring assemblies with growth mindset, resilience and bounce-backability as popular topics.

Thank you to our parents, for driving us to and from matches on Saturdays, for collecting us from rehearsals and missed buses, but most of all for galloping up and down the Big School stairs at break-neck speed for parents’ evening. Thank you for sending us here. I wouldn’t want to have been at any other school.

Mr Dawswell, for your endless good humour and kind support. I am sure you have been at every event that the school has ever hosted. Thank you. And Mr Windsor, the icing on the cake, for always putting us at ease, supporting us,



diffusing stress and always being up for a laugh. Thank you.

The prefect team, you have been brilliant at leading the school; organising the lunch queues and trying to stop the Lower and Middle School boys from walking along the path in the Art garden. And to Lloyd Langley and Peter Mason for doing many, many tours.

And now to my peers. Thank you to each and every one of you. It has been such a privilege and a joy to be a part of this year. I think we are a most remarkable year group. It isn't an exaggeration to speak in superlatives. I surprise myself at my depth of feeling for our year, but believe me when I say that I feel lucky and that I have been bettered by being part of this year.

I wish you all the most thrilling futures and I know I'll see you all soon.

*Louis Renouf, 7MAS*

Good morning, good afternoon or perhaps even good evening for some...

If this be the last time I get the chance then I must come full circle with a farewell 'Morning gents'...

Firstly, I must congratulate all of the prize winners today. This event - despite its virtual setting - always clearly highlights just how successful the community of Abingdon boys, staff and parents is. It is clear that the success of the school is down to the way in which every moving part of this community works in such great harmony in shaping and moulding such brilliant young men during their time here.

Now, if their sleeping patterns have not been too disturbed and a few are actually watching this, I would like to address my peers - the class of 2020. Usually, the less virtual setting of this event would have allowed me to glorify the various end of year celebrations such as the Griffen Ball, Leavers' Day and indeed Prize Giving - these such glittering occasions that majestically mark the end of our 14 years of school education. I would have mentioned them because, traditionally, these have been the perfect moments to look back and reminisce on the cerise-tinted memories that this institution has afforded us. I'm sure I would have also indulged in a few

extended metaphors comparing school and the rest of our lives to a running race or something of the sort.

But, this year is different.

This year is different for a plethora of reasons not just for those that immediately spring to mind. Of course, some of these more blatant reasons will have led to feelings of sadness, loss and injustice over the past few weeks. Nevertheless, I would like to challenge my peers to attempt to look past this thick fog of uncertainty and find the more subtle reasons why this, of all years, is different to others.

To do this, let's look back to those oh so innocent, lego-haircut and slightly chubbier times. A time when, as a timid 11, 13 or 14 year old, we tentatively made our first steps off the buses and almost immediately into the cafe, a place which many came to call home... a time when we discovered the memorable sights and smells of Big School, or more specifically the old Southwell Sander's houseroom. Since then we have seen a week turn into two years, two years turn into adolescence and now we find ourselves on the precipice of adulthood.

Now, I am an avid Office fan and despite the questionable quotes that David Brent is usually associated with I think this one in particular neatly sums up our situation as leavers:

'I don't look upon this like it's the end, I look upon it like it's moving on, you know. It's almost like my work here's done. I can't imagine Jesus going 'Oh, I've told a few people in Bethlehem I'm the son of God, can I just stay here with Mum and Dad now?' No. You gotta move on. You gotta spread the word.

You gotta go to Nazareth, please.'

Hopefully, this appeases Reverend Steer whilst also showing a valuable message about the importance of moving forward and taking everything we have learnt at Abingdon with us.

Another pertinent quote I encountered whilst investigating the American version of the Office - I know slightly controversial - was 'I wish there was a way to know you're in the good old days before you've actually left them'. This left me almost as emotional as Alex Scott or Will Moores on our impromptu final day - sorry fellas...

Therefore, to the latest members of the OA Club I now challenge you to take many improvised Griffen Ball-like moments to hark back across the years at the whirlwind of lessons, fixtures, concerts, performances, olympiads, friendships and maybe even a few exams that we have all been so fortunate to be a part of.

So, what did I mean when I mentioned those other more subtle reasons that make this year so different? Actually, there is only one that we really need to understand. And that is that this is the year that Abingdon releases our year group into the wild, our year group, our unique, unforgettable, successful and immensely resilient year group.

Thank you to every parent, teacher and boy who has made this journey through Abingdon, one of growth, enjoyment, dad jokes and friendships. I hope we are able to celebrate in the near future; but until then, we must not look at this as the end. Thank you.

*Jimmy Straine, 7PDW*



# Art Competition

The task was to recreate a copy of a famous painting in photographic form

whilst we were in lockdown. Students could express how living in such unusual times feels in their work.

We were delighted by the amount and excellent quality of the entries submitted.

This project encouraged our students to have fun with photography, drama and art history.

*Paul Williamson*



**Alexander Lees, 3EP**



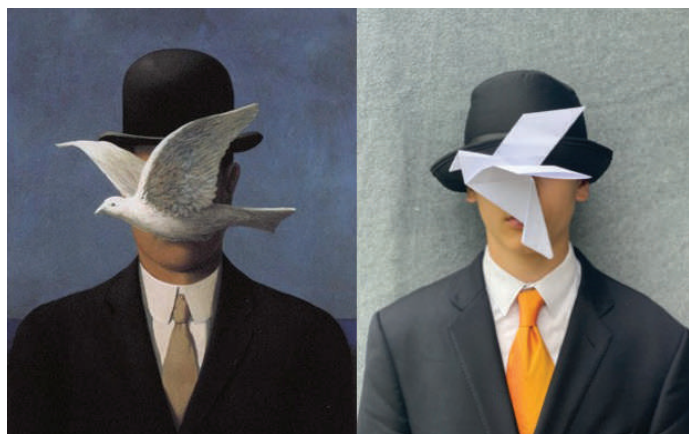
**The Price Family**



**Sam Penrose, 6BS**



**James Mennie, 1SJC**

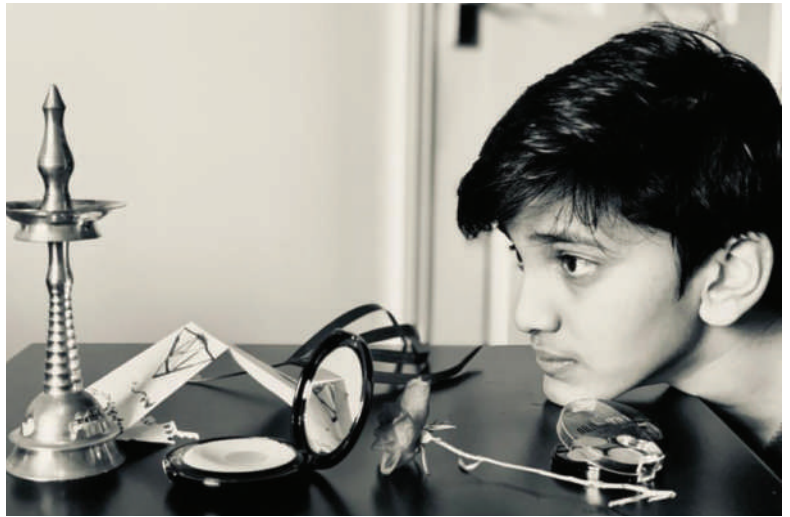


**Luke Skates, 2HFCEP**





Alex Day, 1SJC



Jeetu Raj, 1SJC



Lucas Sammartino, 2PCWM



Matthew Robson, 1SJC



Samuel Price, 1RHH



Yasin Saoudi, 1AJ

# Shine Media Awards Success

Over Easter The Martlet Editorial Team soldiered on as we sought to uphold the quality of the paper and its content throughout lockdown and have it be a staple of normality in an ever-changing world. As a part of this, we entered the annual Shine Media Awards. The awards are arguably the highlight of the scholastic journalism calendar, an event matched by few others in esteem and acclaim.

We had already begun piecing together the application prior to lockdown. After a series of deep analytical discussions as to what issue we would submit, and extensive email chains grilling each other on what could only be described as the peak of journalism, we eventually sorted an application come May. Hours were spent trawling through articles, and in the end not a semicolon was left absent, nor a headline uncapitalised as tireless nights were spent perfecting our craft. The Financial Times would cower in fear if they ever saw the rigorous editing standards of Johan Nerlov and Miss Williamson.

All jokes aside, the selection process was quite thorough. Our last entry to the Shine Awards had been in 2017 when helmed by the likes of Nick Harris and Blake Jones, who had left us with large shoes to fill, a pressure only increased by our three year absence. We plan well in advance for the Shine Awards, considering the range of journalism and the role of local news, as well as other factors based on previous feedback of 'dry content.' We wanted to come back stronger than ever before, and whilst 'tireless nights' might be somewhat of an exaggeration, I would like to commend the team and especially the editors for compiling the application. We had high hopes that quarantine would leave other schools scrambling desperately to meet the deadlines and thought we had a strong chance this year.

Whilst the event would usually be held in London, giving students the chance to celebrate their achievements in person,

naturally this year this was not the case. After the application was put in, all went silent for a while until news of the June pre-recorded award ceremony quickly came in.

When the day arrived we were happy to be met with quite some success. We came away with two awards, and were highly commended in three other categories.

The first, and most commendable of our victories was Sam Penrose's success in the 'Best Stand Alone Piece' category. Having interviewed his aunt, Dr Catherine Penrose, prior to lockdown, the piece has become one of the crown jewels of The Martlet in recent years. Normally a designer, Sam only infrequently writes for the paper but his article, wittily titled 'Organ Donations: Have You Got the Guts?' saw a tightly analysed and comprehensively researched article of journalism. Bearing a pair of lungs across the double page spread, it is unsurprising to see why this article had such success. Judge Liz Hunt commented that she 'could see this on the health pages of a national newspaper' and Sam will receive a personal tutorial with Liz Hunt in the new year for his success.

Our second success was for 'Best Newspaper Front Page.' Whilst this was my own piece, a quickly dated coronavirus explanation, it was definitely a group effort. Designed by Sam Penrose and with the title

'Coronacrisis' - which took an effort from the whole editorial team to come up with - the page was said to be 'clear, uncomplicated and powerful' with 'no ambiguities, just clarity.' The front page saw a recent redesign with adjustments to fonts and the addition of a martlet bird logo in Abingdon cerise. Next year it will be joined by an official Shine Awards seal of approval as well.

Our success was also seen in our highly commended award for Best Print and Design. I'd like to thank my fellow designers, Matthew Viner and Sam Penrose, for what can be quite a lengthy and arduous task. We were also highly commended for 'Best Overall Content' and 'Best Newspaper' for which I'd like to thank our writers and editors. Special thanks go to Samuel King, our editor, who was pivotal in the creation, management, and application of the paper. As I step into the editorial role this year, I hope I can just manage to get an entry into the award, let alone achieve such success again. I would also like to thank our section editors Johan Nerlov, Lachlan Jones, and Ben Lisemore for the effort they have put into news, features, and sport respectively. I look forward to seeing the continually high quality work they will produce this year, as well as that of all our staff writers. Of all the core school publications, The Martlet continues to be the only award winning paper!

*Rory Bishop, 6MS*



## Closing the School

Since the outbreak of Coronavirus, I have frequently been asked whether illness has ever before caused the School to close. The answer is 'yes', to my knowledge, twice. The first time was in November 1869, before it moved to the present site, when it was closed by an outbreak of Scarlet Fever, which killed two of the Headmaster's children.

During the 19th century, Scarlet Fever was a feared disease causing devastating pandemics with high mortality. It was a particular scourge of boarding schools where it could spread like wildfire. On 29 November, Abingdon's Clerk to the School Trustees wrote to tell them that 'the

School is currently broken up', and on 9 December that, 'it can scarcely be expected that parents will allow their sons to return and even the day boys may be kept away.'

Fearing that parents would not send their sons back after the Christmas holiday, the Clerk's solution was to speed up the building of the new school in Albert Park with its less crowded premises, better drainage, sanitation and water supply. The new premises however did not open until April 1870. I don't know whether the school opened in the interim, I'm assuming it did. But when it did open, although built to accommodate 120 boys there were only 45. This was considerably down from the numbers shown in an 1867 photograph when there were almost 70.

The second closure was caused by the flu pandemic of 1918. The maths

master, Mr Wright, charted its progress through the school noting that the first victim, a young day boy, reported sick at 3 o'clock on the afternoon of Thursday 10 October. Over the next six days the number of cases rose to eight, but in the following five days 66 boys fell ill and on Monday 21 October the School closed, leaving five healthy boarders and 18 day boys. School reopened two weeks later on Sunday 3 November.

The School was closed for refurbishment for almost a year in 1810 but I suspect there have been more closures over its long history caused perhaps by the succession of headmasters who died of the plague in the sixteenth century, and by Civil War in the seventeenth when the Headmaster and the town of Abingdon found themselves on opposing sides and the Headmaster was dismissed.

*Sarah Wearne*



# Abingdon in Lockdown

## Teaching and Learning Under Lockdown

We spent some anxious moments leading up to the final lockdown, speculating whether we would actually need the Zoom training we were being given. Surely teaching is all about being in the classroom? When the government made the decision to send everyone home and start the process of remote learning, staff could be seen hurriedly putting monitors and boxes of resources “just in case” into cars. Visualisers were distributed and the sense of going it alone began. The site was eerily quiet as everyone left, not knowing how long before we would be back again.

In the initial days, there were concerns about whether boys would behave on Zoom, whether they would turn up to lessons, whether staff would manage the technology. The boys were amazing. Perhaps they were desperate for some sense of rhythm to life at home. They got up in time for a slightly later registration and with some encouragement turned on their videos to allow us to see that they were out of PJs and ready for the day of learning. They got to Zoom rooms on time and shared their work via google docs, Firefly or google classroom. Staff were amazing. Some had to juggle commitments to teach their own children at home alongside cramped conditions and hot weather. They planned and created incredible learning opportunities. They went above and beyond to ensure that our boys did not miss out.

There was much to learn. Cold calling took on a delayed reaction as “you’re on mute” became the typical anthem in lessons. The “chat” was used to give answers and “breakout rooms” were risked with varying success. A juggling act was in motion and it soon became apparent that “good enough needed to be good enough” as lessons were pared back to the essentials and off-piste conversations had to be curtailed in favour of getting through content alongside managing wi-fi difficulties.



A teaching and learning bulletin was established and thank you messages were shared as we tried to support one another. Top tips and celebrations of pupils’ work were highlighted and survey results were given - 93% of parents praising teachers for the great work with their sons.

However, the reality was tough. Our teacher training had not prepared us to be in front of a screen all day. Necks ached, stand-up desks had sold out, dining room chairs were uncomfortable and despite being encouraged to get up and have a break it wasn’t always easy to do. We missed the spontaneous opportunities to chat about a lesson or an aspect of teaching over a coffee and to connect with the boys whilst on the sports field or in a more relaxed environment.

That said, there were elements that we are still celebrating as we tentatively return to school. Technology has provided us with ways of doing things more efficiently and of course Zoom still looms as we are joined by remote learners. Perhaps we are all more happy to be videoed, having seen ourselves on screen for so many months too!

*Ronnie Reading*

## Pastoral Life in Lockdown

There was a time when none of us had heard of Zoom, when flying abroad was something taken for granted, and when no one had spent an evening doing a virtual Pub-less Quiz. When lockdown came, a key issue for the school was how to stay connected with the pupils,

and ensure that they felt supported while history unfolded around them.

It was for this reason that going online for lessons was accompanied by a robust programme of pastoral care. Every day tutors registered their tutees via a Zoom video link, enabling staff to actually see their tutees, to ensure students were coping, and to encourage the boys to feel connected with each other, with staff, and with the school. Tutors also had weekly one to one catch up chats with their tutees, so that they could talk in more detail to each individual about how they were getting on. For the boys and staff engaged with seeing the counsellors, this service has carried on unabated via Zoom, and has been critical in helping some people in managing the whole experience. Assemblies and Chapel have carried on, albeit by a variety of different links and videos, and there have been all sorts of initiatives to bring boys in the houses together – whether that has been virtual pizza nights, online horseracing, or even running around the world.

As well as these systems, everyone has been encouraged to look after themselves and keep their Other Half going. Led by the Head of Wellbeing, there have been lots of communications with the boys about how to look after their mental health. Tutors have been asking boys to get outside, to help others, and to try something new. Building independence and resilience have been the watchwords of lockdown.

Remote education has been no replacement for the experience of being surrounded by the buzz of school life,

bumping into peers and staff, being physically in the classroom, and being able to walk next to someone and share an emotion. However, there have been silver linings that we will take out of the whole experience: one of these is that the shared sense of displacement between staff and pupils has helped to build even stronger pastoral relationships.

*Mark Hindley*

### Other Half Under Lockdown

One of the great joys of the Other Half, in all its many forms, has always been collaboration. This took a new form in the Summer of 2020, but I was constantly impressed by the innovation and flexibility shown by staff and pupils alike. I'd like to start by offering my thanks to all my wonderful colleagues for their enthusiasm and willingness to adapt in sometimes difficult personal circumstances.

There were some great examples of new and innovative challenges throughout the Other Half. Photography became a popular pastime for many: Mr Middleton's gardening club, bereft of the school allotment, instead used their cameras to study the flowers and plants found growing at home, whilst the school photography and art clubs took advantage of the good weather

and extra time at home to explore old passions and discover new talents.

One of the most impressive achievements must be the Zoom Debating Club. The Summer term is the traditional time for a new committee of Lower Sixth boys to take over the running of the club and the new chair and his team found themselves in uncharted territory. They were not to be beaten, however, and with Mr Jackson's help the Debating Club entered the digital age. Boys joined on Zoom in massive numbers and were able to pose questions to the speakers in an orderly fashion thanks to the chat function and the excellent stewardship of the committee. This has proved invaluable as school has returned, as restrictions mean that boys cannot gather in large numbers in the CMR as they might have done before but the debating club can continue, and those unable to attend in person can still take part.

There were some great examples of boys joining in at home: Mrs Muller and Mr Crisp taught online cookery classes, Mr James set up housebound putting challenges for keen golfers and the renowned Abingdon Film Unit kept on working with tutors meeting with boys on Zoom to help with their projects. The boys in Community Service wrote cards and quizzes for the residents of the homes they normally visit, and it was

good to see them remembering those in the community who found themselves in the most challenging of circumstances.

Some things just couldn't continue, of course. The collaboration that I referred to is never as good online as it is in person, and one of the great joys of returning to school has been boys being able to interact with one another again and enjoying shared passions and experiences once again. For many of us the lockdown experience has reminded us of the value of human interaction and the importance of hobbies and interests to our mental and physical health. This is one of the many reasons Abingdon sees the Other Half as a vital part of its education and will continue to do so in the future.

*Henry Morgan*

### Sport Under Lockdown

It was a challenging time for us all moving to a remote curriculum but the PE Department developed a new curriculum that not only met the needs of staying active but also could be adapted to each student's individual home environment.

There were 'live' PE lessons for many that focused on the 5 pillars of the Abingdon Movement Skill curriculum – Squat, Pull, Pillar, Push and Hinge - through a range of body weight





of the majority of ensemble work and instrumental teaching - but now remote and online, using the Zoom app. Careful preparation enabled the visiting music teachers and their pupils to optimise the use of this platform with the enhanced audio features available. Several teachers were able to share performances of their pupils, both solo and ensemble, with the wider community. Simon Currie's "remote band project" performance gave us some particularly cheering news during the Easter holidays, showing as it did the jazz musicians recording their parts remotely using mobile phones and editing them together for an ensemble performance. From then on there was a steady flow of solo performances, both audio (such as Oliver Glover, oboe) and video (Mark Hanlon, harp) that we were able to share with the wider Abingdon community. Some concerts, such as the Lower School Gala Concert, were able to be realised through the presentation of remote performances gathered together and placed on the school's teaching and learning platform, Firefly. Academic teaching required the learning of new skills of teaching and learning, resource-sharing and group research work through new platforms such as Google Classroom and the Zoom breakout rooms feature - and all these brought new skills and unexpected and often inspiring results.

Clearly, we regretted the loss of those end of year musical rites of passage – the final concerts and concertos, the Leavers' Service, the planned musical riverboat cruise. But it was heart-warming to see the cheerful resourcefulness of our teachers and musicians and their stamina in continuing to direct and to attend "remote rehearsals". And, whilst musical performance generally requires the use of reasonably close togetherness in ensembles, we were optimistic that we could find a way of resuming our activities, even with social distancing, when we returned to a new but different normal. What gave us tremendous cause for optimism was the resilience and positivity of our pupils and teachers and their determination to strive for the experience and the joy of making music.

*Michael Stinton*

exercises. To go beyond these 'circuits' all boys chose one 'focus sport' from athletics, cricket, hockey, football, rackets, rowing, rugby and swimming. Each week for their chosen focus sport boys received a sport specific task sheet to work through in their two core sport lessons. We expected them to choose the tasks appropriate to their ability and environment, completing as many as they could, as well as to touch base with their respective head of sport during their core sport lesson on Zoom if required. Many boys had great 1-2-1s with Mr Davies, Head of Athletic Development, to fine tune their 'at home' training programmes.

This did not mean that the boys only followed one sports programme as they were actively encouraged to look at participating in any activity from the focus sports. To help with this all boys were sent a weekly challenge sheet that not only had a suggested "work out of the week" but also a range of technical and tactical activities from each of the focus sports as well as mental and educational topics for the boys to explore.

Boys were also encouraged to be active outside of their timetabled lesson times through three main challenges:

Firstly the weekly Zoom Circuit City on a Wednesday afternoon where a live circuit was hosted by all members of the PE Department.

Secondly we launched the 'Run The World' challenge asking all boys, parents, staff and OAs to keep track of all their on foot exercise through the Strava app and link this to the Abingdon

School Cross-Country Club so that their efforts could feed into our overall distance. The challenge of covering the 40,075km required to circumnavigate the globe was achieved just before the start of the new academic year with 280 runners taking part. An average distance of 2,357km was clocked up each week.

Thirdly there was a weekly sports video competition where boys were encouraged to email Mr Bignell with a short video of their sporting efforts throughout the week. Each week a winner from each group was chosen and a prize sent in the post.

Staying active, fit and having some fun away from screens was at the heart of this new PE and Sport curriculum, and the Abingdon sporting philosophy of developing a diverse range of sporting interactions remains at the heart of everything we do.

*Pete Bignell*

### **Music Under Lockdown**

By the time we reached the date for our Spring Concert – Thursday 19 March - we already knew that the nationwide lockdown had been scheduled for the following day. So it was particularly gratifying that we were still able to use that afternoon for a rehearsal and filming of the two concertos that had been scheduled for the concert. Parents and pupils were subsequently able to hear extracts of both the Elgar Cello Concerto (soloist, Joe Bradley) and the Chopin Second Piano Concerto (soloist, David Bicarregui).

From then on, the music staff shifted gear in order to maintain the momentum

## My First Year at Abingdon

For the previous seven years I had been going to a small village school with pretty much the same 25 people and only being a three minute drive from home. Now I was going to a school where I knew no-one, had to get on a bus and have a completely different school uniform and a blazer with buttons that, when I twisted them, fell off. "How many other people have come from village schools like me?" That was one of the many questions I was asking myself.

On my first day, I didn't have any lessons since it was an induction day and which gave me a chance to meet the boys in my tutor group. However once lessons had started, I noticed a big difference between the lessons at Abingdon and those at primary school. Although I already knew I would have to do it, moving around the school to go to lessons was a big thing for me. Before, I used to be in one classroom all day. We

would only change classrooms when we moved up a year. Now, I was moving every fifty-five minutes to different parts of a huge school. However, I really enjoyed this and also the enthusiasm and positiveness of the teachers from all different subjects - previously, I had the same teacher for all lessons. The opportunity to learn different things that I had heard about such as Latin, Physics, German, and Chemistry was becoming a reality.

One of my favourite things about my first year at Abingdon has been the Other Half. This has given me an opportunity to try things I'd never done before or knew existed like fencing, ceramics, GIS, history club, archaeology club, The Blazer and Books and Biscuits. I like how it all contributes to the Lower School Baker Award. The Other Half has also allowed me to represent the school at hockey, as well as go on a Touchliners trip to see Wasps Rugby.

Another big part of life at Abingdon is music. Although I play a musical instrument outside of school, there have



still been lots of opportunities to be part of music in school. There was house singing when Mr Jenkins was incredibly pleased we won, the Lower School carol service and the whole school Christmas Concert where there was a variety of talents from lots of different people across all the school years. It was amazing.

The Summer Term was massively different and I surprisingly enjoyed online school. Before it started, I was thinking about questions like "How will I show teachers my work?" and "What happens if my internet goes down?". Of course those questions were soon answered. There were many things that I did which I probably would never have done if there hadn't been Covid-19 like the Lower School Easter Challenge, making a bug house in biology, kitchen chemistry experiments, and having to do an egg-drop challenge in Physics. Even though I wasn't seeing anyone in person, teachers put us in breakout rooms so we could see each other on a screen and talk to our friends while we were working. The Other Half also continued too - I've made collages, done an archaeology project, built lego and completed weekly history assignments.

In conclusion, I have thoroughly enjoyed my first year at Abingdon and have really liked the opportunity that I have been given even with the strangeness of the coronavirus pandemic. I hope that returning to school in the second year will be just as rewarding. I can't wait!

*Sam Wormald, 1SJC*



---

# House Reports

## Austin House



The year started with the boys in very high spirits following some excellent public exam results for both our fifth year and Upper Sixth leavers. We were soon into the swing of things with the first house competition, House Singing. Under the stern direction of Justin Chan, we went about the challenge of the Queen classic, *Crazy Little Thing Called Love* with requests to be 'funky', 'jazzy' and 'sassy' at various stages throughout the performance. Whether we achieved this is another matter (!), but it was another strong fourth placed performance and I thank all the boys for their efforts, with special mentions to our

director Justin and Bentley Cook for his fabulous skills on the piano.

Inter-house sport took centre stage to finish the second half of the Michaelmas Term and once again, there were some excellent individual and group performances; Henry Lu coming third in the U18 singles badminton, and Michael Lam and Garfield Zhang achieving the same result in the doubles. Cameron Khoo took first place in the U18 singles table tennis and our U18 touch rugby side achieved a well-deserved third place in a very competitive competition. U16 squash proved a successful event for the house with Max Sheppard and

Joseph Betts achieving second and first positions respectively, whilst the newer 'bike challenge' event proved less successful for the house!

In a year that started with such high expectations and fizzled out with uncertainty and a sense of unfinished business for many, it would be remiss of me not to mention the contributions of our outgoing Upper Sixth boys. Our two Heads of House, Joshua Li and Charlie Betts were never anything but outstanding role models and I am thankful for their dedication to the house and their care for others over the years they have been in the house. It





is a year group full of great characters, as I am sure their tutors Ms Lee and Miss Papadopoulos will testify to, and they will be greatly missed. Their skills and passions span far and wide, from genius inventors to prospective high ranking army officers, from athletes to film directors and a wealth of truly natural leaders – I know that we will see great

things in the future from this memorable year group.

September 2020 sees the appointment of Mattie Hardman and Ben Kiraikou as Heads of House in what will be a peculiar and unfamiliar start to the year, and I look forward to working with them both. We will also see a number of staff

changes in the house. Mr Richards joins the boarding team as one of our third year tutors, Mr Allen takes on the role of Assistant Boarding Housemaster, and we welcome Mr Gold and Mr Magee to the boarding team.

*James Golding*



---

# Crescent House



The Crescent House year started off fairly normally; the first half of the Michaelmas Term brought the trials and tribulations of house singing, but a stirring rendition of *Down Under* by Men at Work was enjoyed enthusiastically by the boys of Crescent, and in their minds contributed to yet another fourth place finish! The inter-house sports at the end of term also showed off the range of the boys' talents. Brian Ho, Tong Tong Sukamongkol and Perry Tsai have been stalwarts of Abingdon School badminton over the years that they have been here, and have contributed great success to Crescent House teams too. This time round they capped off their careers in fine style, with Brian and Tong Tong winning the U18 doubles and Perry winning the U18 singles. This combined to make an excellent victory in the U18 competition, and contributed to a fine second place overall. In the pool competition, Dan Keeble (U16) and Tom Cammell (U15) played well to both finish second in their year groups, and were tied for overall first place on points. Harry Stephens and Alexander Wakefield came third overall in the U16 squash competition, despite both being U14s.

At this point in the narrative of the academic year, I should be continuing with tales of success, both team and individual, over the following two

terms, but of course from February onwards, everything changed. Normality disappeared.

How does one write a house report when all the constituents of the house were scattered by the coronavirus pandemic to the four corners of the globe? How do you maintain the social cohesion that is so important, particularly in a combined boarding and day house, when the most that staff and students saw of each other was through Zoom?

These are questions that colleagues and I wrestled with, and for which there are no definitive answers. Online quizzes and competitions all had their place, and I very much enjoyed seeing the imaginative entries in the Crescent House Toilet Roll Challenge - won by Mr Ball's tutor group, closely followed by Mr Barnes's group - and the Lego MOC (My Own Creation) challenge, in which Laurie Clark and Joshua Ebner demonstrated their design talents. Virtual common rooms were perhaps less successful, but I very much appreciated the efforts of the Upper Sixth in trying to make them work.

In fact, I was enormously impressed with the efforts that all the boys and staff of Crescent House put into making remote learning work as well as it did. The effort that everyone put in should not

be underestimated, and is a testament to how adaptable and positive our students are. In particular, many of the overseas boarders overcame the dual challenges of time zone differences and overenthusiastic firewalls to work 'as normal' in a way that I could have never anticipated.

Despite this huge endeavour, I have very much missed the normality of the day-to-day life of Crescent House. The buildings remained quiet, and lacked the hustle and bustle of daily interaction. The importance of boys from different years and different backgrounds mixing and engaging with each other has never been clearer than when it became impossible to do. Next academic year will bring its challenges too, with limited opportunities for boys to interact, but I am confident that the Crescent House spirit will pull through.

I felt particular sorrow for the Upper Sixth and fifth year students who were unable to take their public exams in the summer, but pleased that so many were able to achieve excellent results nevertheless. At GCSE, Ethan Chen, James Healey, Isaac Tan and Edmond Wang all achieved the maximum 10 grade 9s, with Jacob Drew and Aryann Gupta achieving 8 9s and 2 8s, and Cameron Gouldstone achieving 7 9s and 3 8s. At A Level, Jason Ng achieved



5 A\*s and Ethan Chui, Matthew Lau and Perry Tsai all achieved 4 A\*s. Seven other Crescent students achieved a mixture of A\*s and As.

Over the course of a very unusual year, the house was ably led by Heads of House Perry Tsai and Oliver Botting, with Nathan Hudson and Kai Li representing Crescent as school prefects. I thank them and the other senior boys for all of their support and hard work.

We said goodbye to Mr Taylor as a tutor after one year. We replace one physicist with another as Mr Magee joins the house in September. My thanks go to all the tutors for everything they do, as well as to Miss Poole in her role of Assistant Housemaster and Miss Deaves-Small as Matron.

The Heads of House for 2020/21 will be Eric Zhong and Harry Richards, while Rory Mitchell and Owen Ravden will be school prefects. I am confident that they and the rest of the Upper Sixth will lead the house ably, in what I am sure will be an unusual but hopefully very successful year for Crescent House.

*Matthew Kendry*

Crescent is a house that is built on community and inclusivity, with the games room being the centre of everything that goes on. It is a place where boys from all year groups interact and come together during break times and lunchtimes to enjoy a bit of pool, toast and table tennis. Throughout the lockdown period, this space was missed greatly by all boys in the house across all year groups. However, we tried to maintain the house spirit and tried to replicate this environment by setting up multiple virtual games rooms that were hosted by the senior boys on Zoom. Although these were not as much of a success as anticipated, it did get a number of boys from different year groups chatting at breaktime.

Crescent is a house with such a diverse culture with boys coming from all over the world from Russia to Hong Kong. This made tutor periods very challenging and meant some boys were joining having just woken up and still finishing their breakfast and other boys had already been up for eight hours and had just finished their dinner. At times this was testing but all boys coped well and were very mature with their approach.

Inter-house competitions see all

Crescent boys getting involved, showing great house spirit and devotion. Although we were not able to participate in the usual events over the course of the Summer Term, we ran our own Crescent House challenges which had plenty of prizes up for grabs including the tutor group toilet roll challenge and the individual lego and tik tok competitions. A large number of boys in the house from all year groups got involved, put in a lot of time and effort, and most importantly had fun. Towards the end of the Summer Term, we also had our virtual sports day and road relay which saw many Crescent boys participating with great commitment and dedication.

During the Summer Term we also welcomed the new third years to the house during their virtual induction day. This consisted of them meeting their new tutors and a number of senior boys in the house. It was great to have so many boys join in from all over the world. The event was enjoyed by all and gave the new third years a great insight into what Crescent house life is really like. We look forward to seeing them again at the start of the academic year.

*Harry Richards, 6BW*

---

# School House

Despite the year in school being curtailed in March, there were the usual high levels of participation in the inter-house events and huge numbers of outstanding performances from individuals in many different areas.

Alvin Tam, Jacob de Jongh and Alex Glover were not only hugely talented musicians across a number of orchestras and groups but showed the younger boys how musical and academic successes could be combined to great success. A large number of younger musicians will hope to follow in their footsteps in the years to come on both string and wind instruments.

Despite our rendition of Coldplay's *Viva la Vida* being very well rehearsed and catching the enthusiasm of the whole house, it was a disappointment to only follow last year's success in the House Singing Competition with second place. The minor solace that the song was greatly enjoyed by those listening in the Amey Theatre didn't seem to cut it at the time... The boys who worked so hard to bring such a great performance together deserve a lot of praise, particularly Alvin Tam for his accompaniment on the piano and Alex

Glover who skillfully conducted the choir with good humour throughout.

The annual AFU screening featured films from three School House pupils; James McRae's *The Great Emu War* used shadow puppetry and evoked 1920s-style newsreel footage magnificently; Leon Guan's *The Sun in the Morning* was an interview with his grandparents talking about how they had lived through Mao's Cultural Revolution; whilst the Michael Grigsby Young Filmmaker of the Year Award went to Tristan Mann-Powter's film *A Bitter End* about the closure of the Morlands and subsequent birth of the

Loose Cannon brewery. The whole house had the chance to see these in a whole house event in the Amey Theatre in November.

Hector Chambers was the Upper Sixth's stand out sportsman, having played first team in three major sports (rugby, football and cricket) for a number of years, as well as the occasional appearance at squash. Daniel Hollis was central to the success of the 1st XI at football whilst he was in the sixth form. Together Daniel and Hector were the foundation for good performances in many house sporting events over the years. Harry Baston-Hall leaves





the Fencing Club having won medals at multiple national and international competitions in his time at the school, but is followed by talented fencers such as Nicholas Chan and Isaac Ip.

In the Michaelmas inter-house sports we won the badminton event overall through consistently high placing across all year groups. Addison Hill was the best performing cyclist from the third year (or fourth year for that matter) in a new team cycling event that the boys enjoyed.

In the Summer Term a virtual sports day replaced athletics at Tilsley Park for third and fourth year students. The best individual performances were from Max Struthers in the fourth year and Jim Allen in the third. Both teams competed in exactly the right spirit and finished second overall in their respective competitions.

Heads of House Jack Ellard and Jacob de Jongh were excellent ambassadors for the other pupils and were great in their leadership to the younger boys, particularly in very uncertain times. They were particularly supportive in House Singing, but also in helping raise support for teams in the termly sporting events.

We wish all of the Upper Sixth leavers

well as they go off to university or a gap year - unfortunately they didn't experience the usual end of school final exams and leavers' celebrations. It is notable that a high proportion of them are going off to top courses at highly competitive universities, including an impressive four who will be studying medicine. Particular praise goes to Peter Wan, who won both physics and chemistry prizes at Prize Giving as well as awards for his physics factors work. He is now heading to Cambridge to read Natural Sciences.

The new third years were tutored by Mr

McDonnell, who leaves School House after three years tutoring and helping with boarding to join a day house. He did an outstanding job with these boys after taking sole charge of the tutor group around Christmas - they were very fortunate to have his energy to help them through a difficult time. Thanks go to him from everyone for all the work he did in three years in the house and we wish him good luck in the years ahead.

Finally congratulations go to Mr Johnson and his wife who became parents during lockdown to a healthy son, Freddy.

*Mike Litchfield*



## Border's House

It was a pleasure to welcome back all the members of the house at the start of the academic year, and of course to welcome plenty of new members. Along with a host of new third years, we welcomed Mrs Kaye, Dr Haar, and (re-welcomed) Ms Hancock to the tutoring team.

The major house event of the first half-term was the House Singing Competition – traditionally not an area of strength for us! It was great to bring together a team of boys from across the full age range to help work on this, and after much debate, we settled on the brave choice of *Bohemian Rhapsody*. It was a huge challenge but under the incredibly enthusiastic leadership of Liam Deegan we came together and rose to it. Alas, despite our best efforts, we once again had to settle for our traditional placing of “joint fourth”. A lot of fun was had by all, however, not least the sixth form who after the annual whingeing at the start of the week, ended up performing with real gusto on the day!

Still, there was plenty of talent on show elsewhere in Michaelmas Term, with an excellent mentoring programme being put together by Deputy Head of House Sinclair Pearce, Greg Lister being awarded the prestigious Arkwright Scholarship for Design Technology, Frederick Beneat winning the Arnott-Davidson trophy for bridge, William Bywater wowing us with a piano rendition of Schumann's *Warum*, the Miell-Ingram brothers producing some astounding cross country performances, James Sparkes teaching science in local primary schools, and three of our sixth formers starring in the emphatic 30-3 victory against Radley 1st XV. This was far from our only success on the rugby pitch, with Elliot Broadbent, Tim Fowler and Zach Broad becoming county champions at U14 level, and Henry Bury, Edward Jones and Oscar Mitchell following suit at U18 level.

The end of term saw the usual inter-house competitions, with some incredibly enthusiastic performances and some notable successes including both the U16 and U18 rugby teams claiming second, Joshua Ponting and Caleb

Owusukwaah taking silver in table tennis, and, as has become custom, the U18 swimming team being crowned overall champions! That's four years on the trot now – can they make it five out of five next year?! Perhaps the biggest shock, based on our performance in previous years, was victory for the chess team

of Frederick Beneat, Roscoe Marshall and Henry Riehl. This was particularly enjoyable as the team spanned the entire age range within the house but came together brilliantly. This was similarly true in the impressive efforts of the cycling team of Greg Lister, Charles Symonds, Jamie Firth and Theo Scampion.





The Lent Term started with a bang as the fifth years produced some mock results to be proud of, but also showed great maturity in responding to any less positive results. The academic theme continued with our first competitions of 2020 focussing on debating. It turns out that some of our boys are pretty good at arguing (who knew!) with Luca Frauenfeld and Daniel McNamara making the sixth form semi-finals, Clem Davies, Arthur Larousse, Daniel Barratt and Max Siriwardene combining to make the semi-finals of the fourth year competition, and Jack Cabell and Toby Pinnington going one further to make the third year final.

Unfortunately this is where the usual schedule of house events came to a rather abrupt end, but it was certainly far from the end of the story. As we moved into remote learning, the boys showed incredible fortitude, enthusiasm and dedication to make the most of the opportunities still available to them. Some real creativity was shown in engaging with the various competitions put forth, not least in Ollie Graham's toilet roll challenge hockey video, and some excellent attempts at the extreme tea-making challenge. After many strong entries, Cai Evans finally took the plaudits for the latter.

Another lockdown highlight was seeing how tutor groups came together over Zoom to try some different things. I enjoyed seeing the third years take part in a live bake off, various scavenger hunts taking place, and of course our whole house quiz which was eventually won by 6LNH. The absolute highlight for me though was the virtual sports day for third and fourth year students. Agreeing to take part myself soon became something to regret as the boys thoroughly showed me up in a range of shuttle runs, cereal box jumps, broad jumps and various catching and throwing events – we certainly have some athletic boys in the house!

Whilst it may not have been the Summer Term we were expecting, I cannot think of a time where I have been more proud of the boys, or felt more privileged to work with them and their tutors.

*David Border*

We saw off the term with our celebration assembly where we handed out house prizes, beautifully handcrafted by Charles Symonds, and then had our now traditional candlelit carol service in

chapel. My thanks go out to Rev Dr Steer for leading the service, Joshua Ponting and Thomas Mennie for their readings, and Charles Geday and Mr Barber for accompanying us on piano.

---

## Donnelly's House



As thoughts start to move towards the next academic year, for a number of reasons the academic year 2019-20 will be a year we will not forget. For some that may be due to the current pandemic, but for me it will be because, beginning in September, this was the year the house transitioned, following on from the stewardship of Mr Townsend, Mr Boyd and Mr Morgan, to become Donnelly's House. What a year it has been.

The annual House Singing Competition got us underway, an event which epitomised the house spirit, collaboration and identity that we wanted to establish as Donnelly's. Whilst the tuneful appeal and choral beauty of our entry, *Shine* by Take That perhaps didn't see us secure a top three place (maybe next year?), what it did do was provide a first opportunity for the house to draw together, bound by our values of determination, respect and fun, alongside diligence, humility and courage. I am very grateful to Jack Harvey and David Bicarregui for their patience and enthusiasm in driving our entry, alongside Joe Bradley and Iman Taghol's accompaniment.

The remainder of the Michaelmas Term passed in a flash. I was delighted to see Will Shorrocks receive his Arkwright Scholarship, whilst Oliver Clark, Dylan Kaeuper and Edward Bennett kept the

audience on the edge of their seats in *Every Brilliant Thing*, Edward going on to successfully gain a place at the National Youth Theatre later in the year. A remarkable number of the house represented the school this year on the sports field, and as we moved into the last week of the Michaelmas Term it was great to see these talents displayed in Inter-House sport. Unsurprisingly, 1st XV captain James Coombs led our sixth form rugby team, packed full of potential, to first place in the U18 competition, whilst the fifth years and third years finished fourth and third respectively, securing first place overall. The third years also gave their all in the swimming pool, while Joshua Willson and Ben Smith helped secure the pool trophy.

As Christmas approached, I was delighted to meet so many parents at our inaugural Carols By Candlelight service, and whilst the A34 did its best to disrupt proceedings, it was a festive and enjoyable way to bring the term to a close within the house community.

The Lent Term is always a busy one and 2020 was no different. Round by round the breadth of knowledge and infinite facts recalled by the sixth form House Challenge team (Dominic Clark, Jonathan Ferry, Johan Nerlov and Max Williams) never ceased to amaze me; the team ended as very commendable

losing finalists. The fourth year and fifth year teams were semi-finalists and quarter finalists respectively. The third year team (Edward Bennett, Sam Corbett, Archie Leishman and Alex Mapplebeck) secured victory in the final on the nail-biter tie break question! The bar has now been set.....! The Lent term also underlined the depth of dramatic and musical talent that we have in Donnelly's, with Head of House Archie Turnbull and Lower Sixth Charlie Hobbs both taking to the stage in *King Charles III* whilst David Bicarregui and Joe Bradley both performed concertos at an impromptu virtual spring concert. Attention then moved to House Debating, with the third year representatives of Harry Litchfield and Oliver Clark making it to the quarter finals, and Johan Nerlov and Freddie Merrett doing a terrific job, eventually finishing second in the U18 competition.

Unfortunately the exciting final week of the Lent Term, planned to include the Road Relay, Inter-House sport and other house activities, had to be put on hold as we transitioned online for both the end of the Lent Term and whole of the Summer Term. It was not the manner in which any of us had anticipated the year would finish, but I was remarkably impressed with the camaraderie, companionship and community maintained by the house throughout.





The third years kept themselves busy, particularly in the kitchen as they set about cooking up Abingdon-themed pizzas from scratch, Alex Mapplebeck's the overall winner, before they took on the challenge of eating vegetarian for a week as part of our house eco-week during which we addressed our carbon footprint. The fourth years enjoyed each others' company at a virtual Night At The Races, and it was a pleasure to catch up with the Donnelly's fifth year pupils before they departed. A difficult period followed, yet I was delighted to see these boys achieve so strongly this summer; three boys achieving all 8s and 9s (Oscar Bennett, Alasdair Emmett & Callum Ryall), and Andrei Roberts gaining 10 grade 9s.

This year's Lower Sixth are a remarkably talented group, and I was therefore delighted when five (yes five!) of them were appointed to the school's prefect body, four as school prefects (Ben Crofts, Toby Hindley, Johan Nerlov and Will Shorrocks) and Freddie Merrett as Head of School.

The release of the GCSE grades was preceded by the A-level grades, and although we have not yet had the chance to share the normal end of term formalities with these departing members of Donnelly's, an enjoyable occasion was had by all as hymns passionately echoed around Big School in their final chapel service. The outgoing Upper Sixth are a very talented group of pupils, with each of them going

on to pursue a variety of avenues be it university, music or professional sport. My thanks go to Iman Taghol and Archie Turnbull, this year's Heads of House, who have been ably supported by Toby Smallcombe, Rishik Kumar and Huw Williams as House Prefects. They now pass the baton on to our 2020-21 prefect team, led by new Heads of House, James Daly and Max Williams.

I would like to thank all the members of Donnelly's House for making my first year's experience as Housemaster so memorable for the right reasons, and I look forward to continuing to work with you all to develop our community, striving to make the house a better place for all next year.

*Tom Donnelly*



# Franklin's House

Heads of House this year were Edward Gill and Jimmy Strainge, and Oliver Ely was Deputy Head. The House Prefects were George Carver, Charlie Farrar, Kiran Gathani, Alister Jamieson, James Magé, Tom Phillip and Lancelot Wilson. It makes everything better for the house when the senior boys are so inspiringly able, energetic and friendly, and this really was a vintage year. Huge thanks to these guys, and indeed to our whole Upper Sixth.

The House Singing Competition was the first house event of the year. We dived into an excellent performance of *Hold Back the River*, ably led by Iain Storrie, with Ashwin Tennant again accompanying brilliantly, and Jonah Marsh singing a superb solo line. We were widely regarded as the best entry, but nobly allowed Lower School to take the limelight.

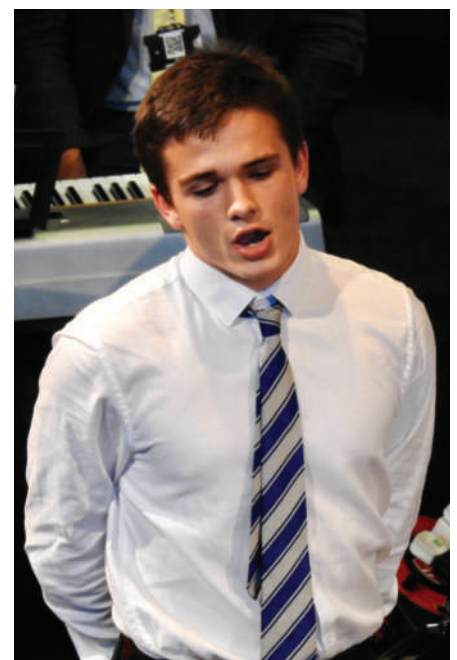
The next event was the winter house sports, and it was our most successful event ever. Seb Watkins, Ashwin Tennant and Lawrence Putt were runners up in the chess competition; and then Oliver Ely, Harry Watkins, Rufus Cox and Alex Heffernan came second in the bike challenge. The rugby went even better: Freddie Coode, Lucas Marsh, Dominic Wood, Tom Robson, Krishen Rao, Lachlan Borthwick, Luke Prior and Zac

Connell won the U16 competition; and Oliver Thompson, Harry Martin, Archie Kind, Tye Willis, Alexander Kleinknecht, Lawrence Dew, Arthur Strong and James Hall won the U14 competition. The swimming was equally brilliant. Our team consisted of Nicholas Skelton, Max Hems, Euan Baldwin, Ollie Martin and Matthew Houlton (U18); Christopher Skelton, Benjamin MacLennan, Johnny James and Trystan Moore (U15); Samuel Hughes, Torsten Ayerst, Owen Chetwood, Dhruv Hegde and Warwick Jones (U14). They won the competition by a mile. We have always dominated the table tennis, and our team was outstanding; with Huba Varady, Rohan Gathani and Conrad Smith at U18, and Todd Stanmore, Luc Tucker and Jamie Robson at U16, we romped home in both competitions and were the overall winners again. Huge congratulations to all our competitors!

The Lent Term was of course curtailed by the lockdown, but we had more successes first. We produced some great performances in the debating competition, and Alex Heffernan and Warwick Jones won the third year competition in great style. The House Challenge tests general knowledge, and Franklin's have a very strong record here. Our fifth form team (Johnnie Willis-Bund, Johnny Stavropoulos, Dominic

Wood and Edward Scott Payne), and sixth form team (Seb Watkins, James Robinson, Lachlan Jones and Matthew Houlton) were unbeatably brilliant, and both teams emerged as winners of their competitions. Well done!

The March lockdown ended our school year in many respects, and we missed the opportunity to compete in the usual house events from then on; but many of our boys achieved great things. Jimmy Strainge was Head of School, and won the Ayling Cup for tennis, the Veronica Walker Memorial Prize for modern languages, and the ASPA quatercentenary prize for his school contribution. Edward Gill won the English, German and Greek prizes, and the Mercer's School Memorial Prize. Tom Phillip won the Latin prize, the Bowen Prize for creative writing, and the Mercer's School Memorial Prize. George Carver won the History and Ancient History prizes, the Duxbury Prize for service to the Library, and the High Sheriff essay prize. Oliver Ely won the Sawbridge Choral Prize. Matty Ball won the James Molloy prize for innovation in design. Edward Scott Payne was a national fencing champion, and won the Dawson Trophy. Lancelot Wilson ran the MUN superbly and won the Mitchell Seward Cup for debating. Samuel King won the David Taylor Drama Prize,



and the Cobban Prize for his brilliant all round contribution to the school. Nicholas Skelton is a national champion in swimming, and won the Chester Cup. Ashwin Tennant played some marvellous performances and won the Sheldon Peach Prize for piano. Seb Watkins captained the school chess team with distinction. Johnny Stavropoulos again achieved the highest mark in the school in the UK Advanced Linguistics Olympiad, earning a silver, and Torsten Ayerst did brilliantly, especially for a third year, to score a bronze. Todd Stanmore continued to make progress on the national stage in table tennis, as did Christopher Skelton as a swimmer. Johnny James is one of the top middle distance runners in the country, and he and Christopher Skelton are both outstanding triathletes.

I am grateful to all my tutors for their brilliant support once again, and it was with real regret that we had to say farewell to two of them. Dr Justice was both supportive and ambitious for her tutees' progress, and she brought a great deal of fun to tutor time; conspiracy theories flourished! I don't think there was a conspiracy behind her leaving Franklin's; she moves to be a boarding tutor in School House, so we will not have to say goodbye to her completely. I thank her very much for the great job she has done for us.

Mrs Fishpool is the only tutor to have endured the entire Franklin's regime, which testifies to her exceptional patience and tolerance. She has been a brilliant sixth form tutor, always prepared to give her time to her tutees, listening to their problems and helping them with their university plans as well as their school lives. She has written superb UCAS references as well as thousands of impeccable and caring school reports, and it is typical of her that although she will not be tutoring next term, she has agreed to write her final round of references for the boys she has been tutoring. She has been a fantastic colleague as well as teacher and tutor, and on behalf of Franklin's House I thank her warmly and wish her all happiness for her retirement.

*David Franklin*



---

## James' House

Writing my James's House review of 2019/20 in August 2020, I find myself casting my mind back across what feels like a chasm. Though in conventional terms I'm reflecting back over a matter of three terms, in thinking back pre-pandemic, pre-lockdown, pre-Zoom I may as well be writing for the school's history magazine, Timeline. For all that, though, the sense of community, positivity and support provided by the tutors and boys of James's has offered a much-needed sense of continuity - a touch-stone - for me over the past few discombobulating months! A role the house has played for others too I hope. Paradoxically, writing this article and reflecting on the earlier parts of last year has also offered a sense of optimism. A sense of projecting ahead to what hopefully will be again. To being able to play rugby together again. To being able to stand shoulder-to-shoulder and belt out a tune in House singing again. At least, Covid-19 and a lack of public gatherings this coming term has provided me with a ready-made excuse for not winning the latter this year! Silver linings.

Michaelmas 2019 started with the new

Heads of House, Alex Lawrence and Archie Birmingham leading the way as house prefects, not least when it came to hosting induction events for parents and new boys. Indeed, the new intake of third years has proved to be fabulous, both academically but also in aligning themselves with what we're all about as a house. Symbolic of this was the enthusiasm which they brought to the James's House Bake Off Competition, instigated by Mr Bliss and Mrs Bridgeworth, and contested fiercely. After six gruelling preliminary rounds, largely requiring us to eat cake every Tuesday morning, the final was contested by Archie Hunt, Nick Gurney and Kajan Sivakumar judged by VIP guest Mr Windsor. After much deliberation (and several soggy bottom jokes) Nick was our eventual winner with a cake themed around the life cycle of the bumble bee (don't ask).

Student leadership was a big theme of the Michaelmas Term, with a house assembly on coping with sporting injury from Archie Delafield, and another on the House Eco-Charter by fourth years Joe Watkiss, Samuel Dominic and Rahul Singh. Though our (superb) James's House School Prefects Archie

Delafield, Oran Forrestal and David Harding, and our (fabulous) Head of School Louis Renouf may beg to differ, for me the most demanding student leadership role that Abingdon has to offer is that of leading House Singing. Certainly Alex Lawrence was phenomenal this year in the way that he led, encouraged and cajoled over 100 boys in singing Queen's *Under Pressure* – no mean feat! Perhaps we bit off more than we could chew (though I feel safe in saying our choice of Queen song proved more 'chewable' than *Bohemian Rhapsody!*), but I cannot fault Alex for the calm and confident leadership he provided. Our musicians were fabulous too – Angus Fenton and Hugo Leedham on guitar, Luka Shanidze going above and beyond to learn the piano part and Toby Lee taking on drums as a third year! Our turn soon to win, surely.

On reflection, the Lent Term constituted an intensely transitional period. Traditional themes in the house remained intact, however, including huge involvement in school productions (this year with Louis Renouf (as William), Ted Smethurst (Archbishop of Canterbury), Max McNally (John





Bercow sound-a-like) and Ben Lisemore in *King Charles III*). We were also able to continue our run of success in the Inter-House Challenge quiz competition, with our fifth years coming second and our fourth years (Samuel Dominic, Matthew Rolfe, Freddie Stanford, Ollie Sutton and Mark Taylor) winning their competition. Another traditional strength is the Inter-House Debating competition, and whilst it was pleasing to see each of our teams putting in strong showings here, it was even more gratifying to see the sharing of advice and expertise across year groups. To top this all off, Samuel Miles and James Gibson were able to clinch the sixth form title, and as such remain undefeated as a pairing! It's noteworthy however that their hotly contested final took place remotely over Zoom, a sign that we had already moved into remote teaching and lockdown. As such, events such as the road relay, mainstays of the Lent term, were not able to take place and the likes of George Owen and Alexander Pennington had to make do with competing in the James's House remote version. Given Strava times in the region of 8min 35sec for the 2.6km course, both would have been in the hunt at a school level had we been able to run, a great shame for Alexander in particular as an outgoing U6th - he has led the House in this event in tremendous fashion for the five years I've been housemaster.

And so to the Summer Term, taught remotely for its entirety and with everyone's modes of working disrupted. It was a remarkable success

really, and all down to the attitude and hard work of my colleagues and the boys. Though I missed conversations around the house room and in passing around school, and more of our business was conducted electronically than I'd ever have thought possible, the house spirit remained strong. Remote learning highlights included our tutors filming a pass-the-loo-roll video showcasing their many and varied talents and 5MRG recording their own live version of *Yellow Submarine*, whilst our various competitions only served to underline what a wealth of talent we have got. Winners of our Lockdown Creativity Competition were Saxon Supple and Oliver Smith for their musical compositions, and David Haar for his Poem *Ballad of the Sea*. Submissions for our lockdown photography competition - won by Saul French, with Isaac Mortiboy and Harry Gale runners up - seemed also to reflect how many of us were starting to pay a little more attention to nature than previously. Indeed this was a thread picked up by Mr Fisher and Mr Middleton in their video assemblies on running and the Great British Allotment respectively. We followed the latter up with a Grow Your Own competition, won jointly by James Gibson and Zebedee Marsh.

And so, a point which for a long time had seemed like a speck on the horizon, the end of term, was somehow upon us. We said farewell to Mr Bliss as a tutor who has served the house since well before I took over as housemaster, and who has helped countless numbers of students over

the years. Testament to his impact was just how many students wanted to sign a leaving card, and just how effusive their comments were about him as a fun, positive and yet exceptionally organised and 'on it' tutor. Reading end of year reports only served to confirm just how remarkably resilient the students of James's House had been in adapting to our new ways of working, and just how committed they remain to everything else that Abingdon is about: summed up perhaps by the sight of our third formers literally bending over backwards to succeed in the virtual sports day (and gaining the bronze into the bargain), or the creativity and enthusiasm I saw in our first house prefect meeting of the new cohort held over Zoom. Perhaps the most emblematic moment of the entire year was the very final one, our house assembly on the final day of term, attended enthusiastically over Xoom by over 70 students, a reflection of the loyalty and sheer good humour that I have been so appreciative of over the past year. The quiz which we did on that final day of term was largely run by Samuel Miles and Hugo Leedham, our new Heads of House, in whom I have great faith. Indeed, I leave it to Hugo to conclude this article, who in applying for the Head of House role and reflecting on Abingdon said: "I really think the genuine care for wellbeing is one of the things that sets us apart." I hope that this is, and will continue to be true and will continue to be driven at a student level.

*Simon James*

---

# O'Doherty's House



In a break with tradition I tasked the Upper Sixth House Prefects to write some short reviews throughout the year so that you would get an insider's perspective about what has gone on in O'Doherty's House. It has not been a typical academic year but we have continued to be united as a house and have worked hard to be positive in our thinking and kind in our actions. I am immensely proud of how the boys dealt with lockdown and remote learning and I want to thank the tutors for their amazing pastoral care through the year. I also want to wish our Upper Sixth boys the very best of luck in their next life adventure.

*Emily O'Doherty*

## House Themes

The O'Doherty's House theme in the Michaelmas Term was 'Adventure'. Over the course of the term we explored how to find adventure in different aspects of life with many insightful house assemblies from Mrs O'Doherty and the sixth form. We were inspired by many famous acts of adventure but also learned how to incorporate it into our daily lives too. The main message from the term was that adventure is simply pushing the boundaries of what we know and are

comfortable with - it doesn't need to be especially daring or risky to be meaningful.

*James Coode, 7OTL*

For the Lent Term the theme was 'Perspective and Viewpoint'. During one of Mrs O'Doherty's house assemblies we were shown how artists manipulate perspective in a physical sense in their work, which can have various implications on how their work is viewed by others. Another house assembly given by Peter Mason and Hugh McKenna focused on how one's perspective changes as we become older and more mature. A boy's perspective is certainly very different when they arrive at Abingdon aged 11 to when they leave aged 18.

*Peter Mason, 7RMT*

## Football & Pizza Evening

The O'Doherty's football and pizza evening proved to be a huge success and saw over 40 members of the house come together to play some extremely high quality football. Particular highlights included Mr Southwell Sander's silky stepovers! It was a very enjoyable evening for all those participating and the pizza, as

always, was enjoyed by everyone.

*Alexander Scott, 7RMT*

## Quiz & Curry Evening

This year's curry and quiz was run by the house prefects and was a resounding success. James Lloyd and Hugh McKenna used their excellent pronunciation skills to great effect, whilst Ethan McLellan was fantastic in his role of scorer and adjudicator. The superb curry meant that everyone was a winner.

*Jake Sedgwick, 7OTL*

## Inter-House Singing Competition

The best things happen unexpectedly - and this was most certainly true of the result in the recent House Singing Competition. After a lot of rehearsals, we had finally got to a point where I was content as a conductor that we would do well in our song - but we did better than I could have hoped on the day itself. In the performance, it is certainly true that there were other houses who had more complicated sections and better dynamics. However, the adjudicator showed that he had the same principles in marking as we did as a house and that is that the heart of the performance we gave



was more important than anything else. We pulled ourselves together for one last, superb performance that outshone all expectations, singing difficult sections we had struggled with earlier that day, even, completely effortlessly. It was an all-round, rousing performance that succeeded in scoring us second place. I'd like to extend a thank you to all the boys in the house, and in particular the band members who provided the excellent backing which was singled out as a winning factor by the adjudicator.

*Raffy Armon-Jones, 7RMT*

### Inter-House Sports

Opportunities for inter-house sports were limited during the year but the Michaelmas Term drew to an end with some fantastic overall achievements for the house. Whilst only being overall winners in the U15 badminton, we did achieve top positions in a variety of sports. All boys who took part put in maximum effort and showed house spirit. During lockdown we won both the third and fourth year virtual sports days and, although it was a bit strange watching boys run, hop and jump around a mini box on a screen, it was really fun and provided a real sense of community.

### Summer Term

The Summer Term was always going to be a challenge, as it started in such an unusual fashion. The Abingdon

community however did not let this change get in their way as everyone managed to work together and get through. This was greatly helped by the tutors who made efforts to catch up with students one on one every week and by Mr Broadbent's weekly quiz which brought everyone together on a Friday. Although certain events were not able to take place, like the Henley Regatta and end of year exams, lots of positive things still took place like the third and fourth year virtual inter-house sports day which everyone enjoyed from home. The third year mentoring programme also still took place weekly and saw members of the Lower Sixth have the opportunity to talk to the third years about anything they felt like talking about.

Despite the fact that formal exams were unable to take place, students were still tested regularly online across their subjects, which enabled them to keep up to date and consolidate topics which they would have had to revise for their summer exams. Reports were also done online, and students were able to set themselves goals with the new system.

There were also still opportunities for awards and charitable acts, as there were weekly house competitions, like the photography challenges and tutor cooking competitions. Mike MacLennan and Jayden Zamler raised money for various charities through sporting ventures. Sam Penrose won an award for his work as part of The Martlet

design team, and Middle School prizes were awarded to Jake Church, Thomas Paddick, Jack Rickman, and Fran and Louis Trotter.

Overall there was a greater sense of community than ever before, as it was paramount that everyone came together to push through the difficult circumstances of Covid-19. Unfortunately for the Upper Sixth, this meant that they didn't get their farewells like they deserved, but they did receive a virtual pizza and drinks night! Hopefully something proper will be put in place for them soon, and, in the meantime, we wish them all luck in their future endeavours.

*Alex Hankinson, 6JAP*



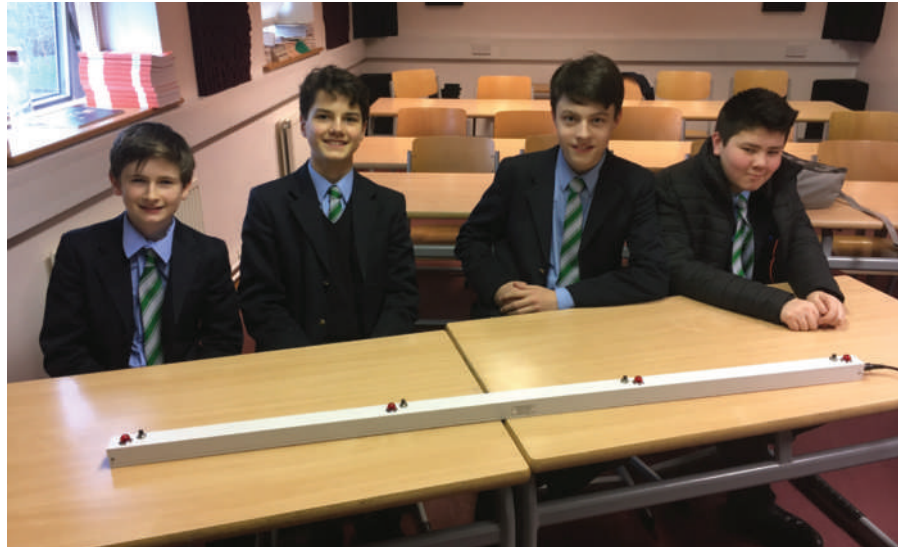
# Pygotts's House

At the start of last year I gave an assembly on *The Good Place*, a Netflix series set in heaven. The main character, Eleanor, is there by mistake and has to be taught by her friend, Chidi, what it is to be good. He tells her that Aristotle says that good people are good because they decide to do good things and that all you have to do to be a good person is to do good things. I challenged the house to be good people and to do good things... would they succeed?

To the Michaelmas Term. Last year at house singing we were criticised for looking too miserable. We took all of this feedback on board and picked one of the most miserable songs available (*Somebody That I Used to Know*). Arthur Boulton did a fantastic job arranging the piece for us to sing, but in the end it proved hard to get the house to look cheerful singing lines like "you can get addicted to a certain kind of sadness, like resignation to the end, always the end." My profound thanks to him for conducting and to Daniel Zhang for playing the piano. Next year – a happy song!

The end of the Michaelmas Term brought the inter-house sports competitions. Notable performances included Will Taylor bringing us second place in the U18 table tennis, Kane Watson bringing home the house pool trophy (for the second year running), Jai Biswas Gladwin winning the squash trophy, and a creditable third place in U18 swimming. The term ended with the annual house carol service led by Reverend Steer.

The Lent Term brought the house challenge and house debating. In the former, we started strongly, with first round wins for the third year, fifth year and Lower Sixth. The fifth year and Lower Sixth then lost close semi finals, while the third year (David Bassett-Jones, Philip Kimber, Thomas Woodrow & Luca Zurek) made it all the way to the final, which they lost by a single agonising point! Mediocrity was grasped from the jaws of success – I couldn't ask for anything more.







It was not a vintage year for house debating and I don't think we won a single debate in any year group. As I said to the house – I'm confident that if we ever start planning our speeches then victory is assured.

Usually at this stage I would talk about all of the wonderful sporting and cultural events that occurred during the Lent and Summer Terms, alas the former was curtailed by social distancing and the latter by the national lockdown. However, there are other things to talk about – the house spirit during lockdown was immense, and everyone did some great things.

Many in the house threw themselves into some lockdown challenges that I'd set over Easter – the vast array of highly calorific dishes cooked was particularly appealing. Mrs Middleton even knitted a house scarf for her sloth and translated the house motto into Russian! Benjamin Broadbent on the other hand spent the whole of his Easter making PPE for the NHS.

Many in the house kept going with their Other Half activities by whatever means necessary. Alexander Fleming garnered praise for his excellent gardening photos, Rory Kind for his devotion to first orchestra, Joe Nicholas, Philip Kimber, and Francesco Bartolini for keeping bellingring going to the bitter end, and Alexey Soloviev, Aidan Coster and Alexander Davies for giving spirited



defences of absolute monarchy, fascism and the crusades respectively! Alexander Lees proved to be the busiest in the house during lockdown. He managed to get 24 commendations in the Summer Term and four Other Half Praises. During this time he also managed to make a film and enter various art competitions! Well done.

Lockdown sports day was an interesting affair. Under this system all results were self-reported. I saw this as a great opportunity... surely this would be the end of mid-table obscurity? All we had to do was self-report some good times. Well, the third year (our most sporting year group) managed to self-report themselves into seventh place, and the fourth year into fifth place – the epitome of mid-table obscurity.

Many of the fifth years took the opportunity the Summer Term afforded to enter into the new extension project competition. There were some fabulous projects and three of them ended up winning prizes: Ross Tselos for his project on prime numbers, Edward Saunders for his project on communicable disease, and Tom Henderson for his video on water security.

The winner of the annual house commendation competition this year was Philip Kimber who managed to get an incredible 89 commendations!



Alexey Soloviev came a close(ish) second with 69. Honourable mentions to Marc Sheriff (36) who got the most in the fourth year and Will Taylor (26) who got the most in the Lower Sixth. Jai Biswas Gladwin got the most Other Half Praises over the year (10) and therefore got the coveted title of 'Mr Other Half.'

After rigorous statistical analysis, the prizes for the best reports in the house went to Philip Kimber (third year), Geordie Anderson (fourth year) and Will Taylor (Lower Sixth), and the prizes for the most improved reports went to Ruairi Tilley (third year), Will D'Arcy (fourth year) and Patrick Hannon (Lower Sixth).

Lockdown was very difficult for lots of people, but I was incredibly proud of every single member of the house during the Summer Term. A lot of people did good things and channelled the spirit of Aristotle. On the back of this I can personally guarantee every single member of the house a place in heaven...

Finally, my deepest thanks go to all the tutors and to Matthew Buhler and Arthur Boulton who were heads of house. They were always willing to attend induction days and house events and were very enthusiastic leaders of the house.

*Richard Pygott*

---

## Lower School



It can sometimes take a while for a new Lower School cohort to gel as a team as first years make the jump from primary school and second years take on the responsibility of having younger boys to mentor and support, but this year things did seem to settle down remarkably quickly and so it should perhaps not be a surprise that the undoubted highlight of the Lower School year (and possibly of my entire teaching career to date!) came after only a few weeks of the new term with the annual House Singing Competition and a superb demonstration of teamwork and commitment from the boys. Having chosen a song that was well-suited to their voices in the form of *A Million Dreams* from *The Greatest Showman*, we used every musical trick in the book (soloists, antiphonal sections, and even a high-soaring descant sung by the Lower School members of Chapel and Gospel Choir). Every single boy played their part in the final performance and many of them even managed to smile and look like they were enjoying themselves (no mean feat when you know that all the older boys in the school are watching you) and there was unrestrained joy when the judge announced that Lower School had won for the first time in the competition's history. It was the perfect

example of being the best you can be.

As the year went on, the first years quickly adapted to the expectations of life at secondary school, impressing their teachers with their commitment in the classroom, and the second years really started shifting up through the gears as they were faced with more and more challenging work. The boys were also involved in a really wide range of Other Half activities and the introduction of the new Other Half Praise system led to recognition of these achievements on a regular basis during morning registrations. The boys also showed that they were always up for a bit of healthy rivalry and the inter-tutor group competitions in the first half of the year (rugby, the Lower School Challenge, cross country and chess) were all fiercely contested.

The Lent Term ended rather abruptly due to the school closure but we did manage to fit in the inter-tutor group hockey tournament, won by 2G and 1H, and hold an end of term assembly in which we were able to celebrate the fact that members of the second year had done very well in the various scholarship examinations with awards going to Sean Hanlon, Aluinn MacDonald, Roddy McVie, Arthur Robertson, Thomas Wilson (music

exhibition), Lachlan Keene (music), Finnbar Scott (art), Tristan Clark Lam (academic), Jack Veal and Oliver Veal (academic and sport), and Rupert Mathieson (academic, drama and music exhibition). The usual residential adventure trips could not take place in the Easter holiday, but, to keep the boys occupied over the break, they were offered a range of challenges by their tutors and senior members of staff including baking an Easter cake, designing a water feature, coming up with kitchen chemistry experiments, and playing a tune on glasses of water. There were lots of excellent entries, with Oliver Sherratt, Finn Walsh (joint runners up) and Sam Wormald (overall winner) doing particularly well.

The Summer Term was a term unlike any other but, despite all the difficulties involved, it was great to see how well the boys adapted to online learning, managing to keep on top of their lessons and taking the opportunities offered by a rather different range of Other Half activities. It wasn't always easy and it was undoubtedly the case that many of the boys really missed the hustle and bustle of being in school together, but they will definitely have learnt a great deal about themselves and what really matters to them over



the course of this period and that can only help them in the future.

A sense of house identity was maintained through inter-tutor group competitions including the completion of the Public Speaking Competition, where 2G, speaking against animal testing, narrowly defeated 1C who discussed the dangers caused by bushfires, the Countdown Challenge which saw 1J beat 2P by being slightly quicker on the buzzer for the final crucial conundrum, and the Virtual Garden Games, won by 2P and 1J, where the boys were spurred on in their sporting endeavours by a message from Olympian Paula Radcliffe. A fantastic Lower School Gala Concert saw lots of the boys showcasing their musicianship in a compilation of recordings made at home, and over 60 Lower School families competed against each other in an online quiz night. Creativity flourished as well with lots of imaginative entries for the weekly taskmaster challenge (Josh Bromley's large cardboard x-wing fighter was a particular highlight for the Lower School Housemaster!) and the art lockdown challenge, with Samuel Price, Lucas Sammartino and James Wakefield all producing winning entries.

The annual Be the Best You Can Be Celebration evening took place as usual in the last week of term and we were very pleased to welcome back Mike Mullen, former BMX half-pipe world champion who had given a superb display of his skills at the start of the academic year, as our guest speaker over Zoom. He reflected on the importance of showing resilience and learning from failure and shared his secret to success: knowing what to do when you don't know what to do. His words seemed particularly relevant given the events of the term. After presentations from each of the second year tutor groups, the end of year prizes were awarded as follows:

Academic Prizes: Philip Ashton (2P), Henry Drake (2G) and Lachlan Keene (2M)

Baker Awards: Philip Ashton, Bertie Bellman, Shaun Gregory, Rupert Mathieson, Pranit Narain, Matthew Stone, Harry Vinall and Thomas Wilson

The Cooper Cup for excellence in reading: George Coombs

The Dillon Cup for service: Hamish Bloom

The Woodgett Cup: Harry Winsey

In the Lower School end of year assembly on the last day of term, the first year prizes were awarded with the academic prizes going to Mark Hanlon (1J), Samuel Price (1H) and Sam Wormald (1C), and The Broadbent Cup for all-round sporting excellence being presented to Charlie Sutton.

We say goodbye to Mrs McRae after 10 years as a Lower School tutor. She has always set the boys under her care very high standards and pushed them to achieve, particularly with the sponsored challenges she has set them at the end of their time in Lower School, and has always led by example. We wish her well as she leaves Abingdon for a new job.

We also say farewell to the 68 second years and wish them every success for the move to Middle School. They have achieved great things during their two years together in Lower School, both as individuals and as a team. You can say it all sounds crazy, you can say that I've lost my mind... but I know they are going to achieve even greater things as they make their way up the school.

*Adam Jenkins*

---

# Staff Farewells

## Ailin Wang

Ailin Wang graduated from Northwest Normal University in 2017. While she was pursuing her Master's Degree in Comparative Literature and World Literature, Ailin joined us as a Chinese Language Assistant through the Chinese Hanban and British Council programme. Despite the different educational and cultural context that Ailin was familiar with back in China, she quickly adapted to Abingdon's way of life. She soon became integrated into the department and her contribution was much appreciated by boys and colleagues. Ailin helped to create Chinese teaching resources and provided oral lessons to our Chinese GCSE pupils, as well as helping fourth year Chinese boys to prepare for the British Council Mandarin Speaking Competition. Ailin has found that during her time at Abingdon, she has developed many transferable skills and appreciated the care and help from colleagues, especially when she first arrived in the UK and also during lockdown. Ailin's unforgettable moments at Abingdon include enjoying plays performed by Abingdon boys, teaching second year students to sing Happy Birthday in Mandarin in a taster lesson, capturing the beauty of nature in the Jekyll garden, sipping English breakfast tea with colleagues in the common room whilst sharing the progress boys had made in their oral practice; having fish and chips on sunny Fridays, and learning to cook western food during lockdown - at the end Ailin's salmon omelette was winner of the Abingdon School Master Chef competition! Ailin will return to China to complete her master's degree and we wish her all the best for the future.

*Alexandra von Widdern*

## Marine Puioux

Marine comes from Reims in France,

which is a university city known for its famous cathedral where most of the French kings were crowned. She came to the UK hoping to improve her English skills and to gain good experience in working with students as her professional aim is to become an English teacher in France. Besides, she wanted to know more about English culture, landscapes and architecture. For her, the two years as a French assistant at Abingdon have been an amazing experience that strengthened her desire to teach teenagers in the future. She found Oxford very beautiful, and every visit to the city made her feel like she was travelling through time. She also visited London, Bristol, Bath and Brighton. However, her favourite trip was the four days spent at the Lake District. Her favourite moments at Abingdon are the Cheltenham and Marlborough College debating competitions for which she helped prepare the boys, as well as the Griffin Ball at the end of the school year. The one thing she will not miss about the UK is the traffic on the road. However, she will definitely miss the pubs! Marine will go back to university in September to complete her Master's degree. We are incredibly grateful for her professionalism, great generosity and all she has done for the boys and for the French Department.

*Alexandra von Widdern*



## Emir Kovacevic

Emir Kovacevic is a Bosnian native who moved to France at the age of ten. He lived in Reims for more than ten years where he learned French as a second mother tongue. His love for languages led him to study French literature before selecting the English Language, Culture, Civilisation and Literature degree. During his university degree Emir took part in a two year educational programme allowing him to work part-time as a teaching assistant in a primary school where he acquired the basics of teaching. Emir joined us after his graduation in September 2018.

Emir adapted very quickly to his new environment. His previous experience in teaching gave him enough confidence to work efficiently and autonomously from the beginning which made the whole process a lot easier for the boys, his colleagues and himself. He greatly helped the department by creating or adapting teaching resources and by providing oral lessons to our sixth form, fifth and fourth year pupils. Emir was always keen to accompany groups of pupils to languages days at Bath University or to Cheltenham and Marlborough College for French debating competitions. Emir took his role of debating coach very seriously and the boys who took part in these events did this with panache and remember the events very fondly.

There are too many unforgettable moments to list for Emir, but, if he had to select a few, they would include the black-tie dinners with boys and colleagues, attending the Christmas dinner and the Griffin Ball with his assistant colleagues who became very close friends, the singing competition between the different houses that were always incredible to watch and to listen to, and the various school plays where he saw pupils' amazing talents. Even more unforgettable are all the amazing people he enjoyed working with. He will

always be thankful for all their help and support.

Emir will return to France to complete his master's degree. We wish him all the best for the future and hope to see him again soon!

*Alexandra von Widdern*



## James Taylor

Whilst James Taylor has only been at Abingdon for one year it seems much longer due to his previous ties with the school as an OA and Head of School House. James joined Abingdon following his Physics degree at Warwick University and quickly grew into the role as a confident and inspiring teacher. The demands on a new teacher cannot be underestimated - balancing lesson planning, boarding duties and Other Half commitments -but James has taken these in his stride and always been an excellent role model for the pupils in his care.

James leaves Abingdon to return to University and complete a Master's Degree in Data Analytics and I have no doubt that he will very much enjoy going back to play University Ultimate Frisbee. If he decides to return to teaching in the future he will always be very welcome in the Physics Department.

*Ben Simmons*



## Alix Merrifield

Alix Merrifield joined the History Department in September 2019 on a part-time basis to cover for Lucy Moonen's maternity leave and Helen Wenham's departure. Alix arrived at Abingdon with a wonderful range of experience both at prep schools and primary schools; this allowed her to offer interesting and varied lessons that were pitched very well to the boys' interests and abilities. I would suggest that it is accurate to argue that by the end of the year Alix's name has become a byword for creativity and innovation in the classroom.

Although I would usually prefer to avoid cliches, her energy and enthusiasm have genuinely pushed her colleagues to adopt new and exciting ideas. Whether orchestrating a reenactment of the Battle of Hastings in the Charles Maude Room, adeptly carrying out an alliances mission game on the causes of the First World War with the third year boys, or adopting creative role cards to enable first year boys to understand the nuances of the Medieval feudal system better, Alix has always sought to foster the pupils' enthusiasm and historical imagination. She has also invigorated the Lower School History Club - I have seen cakes and models representing Medieval battlefields, pupils dancing to historical themes, history based songs and raps, digital simulations and so much more that I will ensure future pupils benefit from. She has left a genuine legacy for this club - an

impressive feat to achieve in such a short time-frame. I would like to thank her, and a few others in the department I am sure would too, for helping us to hone our own ICT skills, too!

Alix is a respected practitioner, and her kind and calm manner has made her a much-liked teacher and an incredibly easy colleague to work with. Nothing has ever been too much to ask. Tim Chase mentored her this year and he attests to her unstinting desire to continually improve her practice. Tim has thoroughly enjoyed their weekly mentor meetings, and says how much of a privilege it has been to discuss educational research, pedagogy, and contend with different schemes of work in the classroom together. Tim has often said how much he has been challenged as a teacher through their conversations, and has been inspired by her meticulous planning, and the admirable care and concern that she has for each and every one of her students.

I hope Alix has enjoyed her experience working in the History Department and with the wider school community. Whichever school she next works for will be incredibly lucky to have her.

*Nick Knowland*

## Pete Summers

The national shortage of physics teachers meant that Pete Summers' plans for enjoying retirement never even got off the ground. Following his 'retirement' from the role of Head of Physics at Lord Wandsworth College in Summer 2018, Pete did a term of physics teaching cover at Radley in Michaelmas 2018. In the final week of that term he kindly agreed to come and help us out for two terms at short notice from the start of January. This in itself was a big commitment with a daily commute from Andover.

Within a matter of days it felt like he had been in the department for years, cementing himself with the reputation of an excellent teacher and trusted colleague. His friendly and kind nature meant that teachers of all levels of experience have drawn upon his advice, from how to solve difficult physics

---

problems through to setting up a firefly page. We liked him and he liked us so much that he gave us another year of his time.

In retirement Pete is looking forward to spending more time out sailing as well as continuing to train and walk his dog Rosie - although I suspect it won't be long before another school is tempting him back with a further offer of work.

*Ben Simmons*

## Helen Wenham

Helen Wenham joined Abingdon School in September 2014 directly from the International School of Paris. Swapping the glamorous left bank of the Seine to the right bank of the Thames may have come as a shock but she quickly adjusted to life at Abingdon. I was not surprised as she had been extremely accomplished at interview. In fact making a short list on Skype of potential applicants for the post was the first time I had interviewed someone online or used video conferencing (something we are now all wearily familiar with) and I was not sure how it would work but Graeme May and I both agreed we could have probably appointed her just on the strength of her online interview. This was confirmed when she arrived at the school the next week. She gave the best interview lesson I had ever seen and was appointed.

Helen had done lots of interesting things before arriving at Abingdon. After studying History at Cambridge University she had taught for a couple of years and then worked as Schools Officer for the Museum of London before moving to Paris to teach there. She rapidly established herself as a popular and engaging teacher with lots of interesting ideas about how to liven up the curriculum and teach the skills that she felt our students needed to become better historians. She taught across the year groups but her particular expertise was teaching the American Civil Rights course to the sixth form and she managed to cajole even our most socially unaware students into enjoying some fairly niche topics from the course over the years she taught it.

As well as teaching Helen threw herself



into the Other Half. She set up a Gospel Choir society that met on Friday afternoons and performed at various school functions in a scarily professional way and also got involved in coaching football and running the Eco-Committee with genuine enthusiasm (something I do not feel she felt for the charity walk she organised a couple of times). She also joined the department trips to the Battlefields and Berlin which I think she enjoyed on everything but the dietary level. In fact, she would often complain vocally about the lack of salads and healthy food on offer as we tucked into another meal of chicken and chips. Helen had a very wide range of snack options for all occasions and we as a department were very much involved in the whole process of Helen's consumption of them - I will miss hearing her contemplating them on the long bus journeys to Ypres or Hampton Court Palace. Her children Holly and Edward (or the 'goon squad' as she fondly titled them) were also lively and regular visitors to the department and I am sure are still keeping her busy, especially in lockdown.

Helen always had something of a restless spirit and clearly wanted to try other types of schools and jobs rather than just settling at Abingdon School for the duration (unlike some of us). She applied

for one of the ADTL positions as soon as they were advertised and enjoyed it, but I think was sometimes frustrated by the various limitations of the role at Abingdon. She decided to take a gap year to see what she wanted to do and at the end of it has decided not to come back. This is a shame as she is a natural teacher and was great to work with. However I am sure she will end up coming back into teaching in one way or another as I believe she will miss it - until then we wish her all the best in whatever she does.

*David McGill*

## Victoria Griffiths

Victoria Griffiths joined the Physics Department in 2013 from Our Lady's, Abingdon. She is hugely hard working and has always put in more hours than being part-time requires due to her caring nature and always wanting to do the best for the students. Over the past seven years she has inspired many boys to continue with the subject at university and they look back fondly on her lessons.

Whilst the pupils are grateful to her, the rest of the teachers in the Physics Department will miss her the most. As Second in Physics, she has helped shape



optimistic and humorous in her approach, both qualities that are very useful as one navigates a long career in teaching.

We wish her very well as she now moves into retirement and focuses on the many interests that teaching has not allowed her to pursue fully until now.

*Graeme May*

## Olly Deasy

There was never a quiet moment during Olly's time as a member of the PE Department at Abingdon. Whether leading the Hockey Club, teaching year group games, trying his hand in the OA Office or more recently putting his Master's in Business to use, he did everything with energy and a smile and was always great company. Passionate and driven, not just for sport and education, but for bettering the lives of people, he regularly went out of his way to help and support others. Many a business venture was investigated, and even he couldn't have imagined his Abingdon onesie would have been such a promotional hit with the 'boss'! The PE office will no doubt be a safer place next year, but his camaraderie, enthusiasm and supply of chocolate will be missed.

Olly had worked at the school for a number of years before making the courageous decision to break out from his PE comfort zone to also start teaching A Level Business in 2017. It would obviously have been easier for Olly not to do this but it really typifies his character that his desire to continually improve as a teacher meant that he put himself forward for this role despite all of the hard work it would require for him to start teaching a different subject (it certainly increased his marking burden!).

Olly proved an instant hit as a Business teacher. His boundless energy and enthusiasm meant that boys really engaged with the subject like never before and the results that Olly achieved were exceptional. His own entrepreneurial spirit and use of relevant examples really made the subject come alive. Those taught by Olly were genuinely lucky and privileged to have had someone so talented and committed as their teacher.

Nicky King, Olly's first Business Head of

the path of the department in recent years and provided an unprecedented level of help and support to all of her colleagues.

Victoria has always given a huge amount to the school on top of teaching her physics lessons. She helps out on DofE expeditions, bakes for and visits the elderly, assists with Young Enterprise and runs the Blott Matthew's Engineering competition.

Victoria leaves Abingdon to enjoy retirement and I am sure that she will make the most of it with a diary full of committee meetings, riding for the disabled events, and, most importantly, her bustling social calendar.

*Emily O'Doherty*

## Deb Bennison

Deb joined Abingdon in September 2011, looking for a new challenge after a lengthy period of time at Didcot Girls'. That challenge was in the form of starting up a new subject for Abingdon's curriculum, namely psychology, the demand for which had come about from the boys themselves during the previous year.

Deb certainly brought a huge amount

of experience with her and the subject was quickly up and running. Deb quickly showed that, despite her experience at another school, she was willing to rethink her approach for Abingdon boys, even moving from a specification she knew very well to a new one because she thought it would be more of a match for boys' interests. Alongside building the A Level, Deb sought to promote her subject with lower year groups through her Other Half psychology clubs (aka 'Brain Awareness' in the third year). She also contributed to teaching in the Physics Department and was one of the first teachers to be part of the new computing course that we put into the third year following the national move towards getting more coding into schools. On top of this, she was a valued sixth form tutor (latterly in Border's) and, a keen runner herself, she helped out with athletics in the Summer Term. In short, then, she got stuck in and was keen to contribute as fully as possible where the school's need matched her talents and experience.

I always enjoyed my meetings with Deb, largely because I could always rely on her to get directly to the point and to express her opinion with a refreshing tinge of 'northern bluntness' (she hails from the north east). She was also unfailingly



opportunities on offer thanks to her as she set up clubs for podcasting, croquet and pilates. Behind the scenes Su worked tirelessly on health and safety and school trips administration. It is a good indicator of how hard she worked on this that Abingdon has managed to run such a range of trips and visits for its pupils.

During her time at Abingdon, Su looked after no fewer than five Lower School tutor groups, helping many Abingdonians get their time at the school off to a great start as a result. Su was an excellent tutor, always putting a lot of time and effort in to ensuring that her boys were achieving as highly as possible from an academic point of view. Su realised the importance of helping the boys develop good study skills at a young age and she always put a real focus on helping them to be organised and to prepare well for tests and exams – her beach ball revision technique is an absolute winner!

Su's approach to tutoring was about much more than the academic however and she was always keen to get her boys to think about the sort of person they wanted to be, encouraging them to develop their personal skills, work well as a team, think about others, and push themselves outside their comfort zones. As a key element of this, each of her tutor groups were challenged to take on a big sponsored event at the end of their time under Su's care and many thousands of pounds were raised as a result – and, knowing the importance of leading by example, Su always joined in the challenge herself whether walking laps round Tilsley Park all through the night, taking on 24 sports in 24 hours, or getting on her bike to cover enough miles to symbolically get all the boys back to school during lockdown. It is undoubtedly the case that she helped her boys “be the best you can be” by doing that very thing herself.

We will be sorry to see her go. Let us not forget that Mrs McRae is one of only two staff who have had Biology Department animals named after them (Mrs McRaefish) and we wish her every success in her new post teaching A level biology in Oxford.

*Simon Bliss and Adam Jenkins*

Department, described him as a genuinely good friend whose passionate and lively presence in the department was fun and energising. We couldn't agree with these sentiments more. He has been a fantastic colleague who we will miss greatly. He leaves to take up an exciting role as Assistant Head at Cranford House School. This is clearly an excellent opportunity for Olly and we have no doubt he will prove a great success in his new role. We wish him the very best of luck in his future career.

*Pete Bignell and Adam Hepworth*

## Su McRae

There seemed to be lots going on in the world back in September 2009. There were earthquakes in Sumatra and Samoa, tropical storm Ketsana hit the Philippines, there was flooding in Turkey and Mrs McRae started at Abingdon. She joined a Biology Department that was, at the time, very different both in terms of staffing and

in its location in the school. There will be fewer and fewer pupils who will remember the old Biology Department which was located where James's and Border's house rooms are now located.

Su quickly established herself as a hardworking and competent classroom teacher who was always willing to go the extra mile to get the best from the pupils she taught. She was comfortable teaching across the age and ability ranges and could be relied upon to try things in different ways, often involving a more “hands on” approach in lessons. She was also happy to get out of the classroom and regularly went on the A-level field trip as well as one of our major overseas expeditions.

Of course, it wasn't long before Su was getting involved with a wide range of things in school where her leadership and enthusiasm will have helped a whole load of pupils develop in areas beyond the academic. She will be leaving a school that has a greater breadth of Other Half





## Ian Fishpool

Ian arrived at Abingdon in 1985, taking up the post of resident boarding tutor, which was to mark the beginning of a long, varied and successful career spanning 35 years, during which he combined a busy family life with an impressively active role within many areas of the school community. Whether as a boarding tutor, Head of Geography, head of a dayboy house, Senior Teacher, or contingent commander in the CCF, he enjoyed the respect and affection of those he worked with, his personal touch, ability to listen and empathise, and his down to earth professionalism enabling him to establish a close rapport with many people across

the full spectrum of school life.

As a boarding tutor, in what was then Waste Court, Ian quickly impressed his Housemaster, Munna Mitra, with his ability to relate easily to the boys, fellow colleagues and the domestic staff, often showing a wisdom beyond his years, and a talent for dealing with difficult situations in a sensitive and effective manner, all attributes which were to become a hallmark of his future career. He was able to see everything in its proper perspective when working with the boys, and he earned their absolute respect as they felt he had their interests at heart, and that they were treated fairly, and were well cared for. His loyalty, reassuring presence and constant support were greatly appreciated by his Housemaster, and

it was clear that he made an invaluable contribution to the successful running of the house.

There followed a nine year spell as a dayboy housemaster where he displayed the same light but firm touch and the same degree of enthusiastic commitment and engagement which was evident as a boarding tutor. His door was always open to both boys and colleagues alike, and he always found time to listen sympathetically to those in the house who wanted to voice their concerns, offering no nonsense, practical advice. He was a constant source of support and encouragement to his tutors, and played down his rank which allowed open conversations of a personal or professional nature. However, one area which was not an unqualified success story was the House Singing Competition. Ian was reluctant to get involved in this activity, passing the responsibility on to either an unsuspecting pupil or colleague and was not unduly concerned when we were ranked near the bottom, or even disqualified - as happened on two occasions...

Having made a significant impact as a dayboy housemaster, Ian then turned his talents to the post of Head of Geography where again he made his mark and provided a steadying hand during a period of considerable change. Passionate about all things geographical and with a profound knowledge of his subject (he had an article published in the prestigious journal *National Geographic*) he oversaw the education of generations of Abingdonians and undoubtedly helped promote the careers of many of his colleagues. He appeared at his happiest when getting his hands dirty on one of the countless field trips he organised – whether sipping a gin and tonic in a parador or walking the dog whilst the sixth form manfully measured dune succession. Many of us non-geographers will also look back with fondness on those fourth year field trips to Bristol. He was instrumental in the success of the department, maintaining the high level of popularity of geography throughout his tenure, and was not content to let the department rest on its laurels. A good example of this was his determination to introduce and develop the GIS facility, which is normally the preserve of undergraduate

departments.

With his willingness to find time for others regarding both personal and professional matters, he was ideally suited to his final role, that of Senior Teacher. Capable of viewing and judging issues from different angles and responding sympathetically when giving the necessary guidance, his contribution was very much appreciated by those in senior management – and not forgetting all those years of organising the daily cover arrangements, a thankless task which became increasingly complex and time consuming. He was very supportive behind the scenes of many colleagues and those in the wider school community who have been most grateful

for the considerable time he has found to help them; his genuine care for the welfare of all those at school will be sorely missed.

A long standing, loyal servant of Abingdon, Ian has finally decided to step down from a school career he has so wholeheartedly and energetically embraced for so many years, to spend more time with his family and indulge in his love of travelling, especially if it involves a nautical theme. His deep interest in his subject and teaching has been clear from the moment he arrived at Abingdon, and it must be a source of pride and satisfaction that two of his sons have decided to pursue careers in education - one as a geography teacher. Obviously not all of

those impassioned talks on 'soft and hard' engineering down on the Hampshire coast fell on stony ground...

I am sure he, along with Jenny and the 'boys' will be keen to keep in close contact with their friends and former colleagues at school and will always be made to feel most welcome whenever they wish to visit. All the best for your retirement Ian, but I am sure you will be back soon, if only to have sneaky look at that 'live' screen in the Geography Department showing the current activity of the world's shipping lanes...

*Nick Reville*







---

ABINGDON

---