



The Abingdonian

2021





The Abingdonian

2020 – 2021

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Editorial



It would be far too easy and far too trite to say that this year was ‘unprecedented’ - a word which is thankfully used only twice in this issue of *The Abingdonian*. Despite the truly unprecedented (three times) circumstances, it was a year which I myself thoroughly enjoyed, and a time in which all the individual year groups became, involuntarily, much more closely bound together due to the need for year group “bubbles”. The sense of community, which was thus created and which had been somewhat lacking since the first lockdown in March 2020, was fully embraced by the student body and was a reassuring presence throughout the various trials which we all faced as the academic year went on.

Our collective spirit of determination is on display throughout the pages of this magazine. From the fantastic unveiling of Faringdon Lodge to the continuation of drama productions, music concerts, science projects, and sporting pursuits, the year was filled with impressive displays of talent and optimism.

The Abingdonian did not escape the upheaval of such a turbulent year either! The departure of several supremely capable Upper Sixth students led to a personnel vacuum quickly filled by a group of four inexperienced, but very eager, students. We have learnt a lot along the way and have greatly enjoyed reliving the past year’s exploits as we have edited and designed the pages of this publication.

My grateful thanks go to the many students and staff who have contributed articles and the editorial team, Ainesh Jamuar, Henry Roseff, and Joshua Walker, as well as Mr Jenkins, the lead editor, without whom this issue would not have been possible.

Freddy Chelsom, 5DLJ

Head's Foreword



The academic year of 2020-21 will go down in record as a year like none other for Abingdon.

It was a relief for many of us to be able to return to the School in person in September after the previous pandemic lockdown, though we missed the company of a number of our overseas boarders who were unable to travel to the UK. We rapidly got used to a host of Covid-related changes - year group 'bubbles', face coverings, mixed-mode teaching, lateral flow tests - but inevitably missed some aspects of school life that we could not run as normal, such as fixtures with other schools, trips and visits.

All of us had to adapt to dealing with an abiding sense of uncertainty as we watched case numbers fall and rise and governments around the world respond.

It was remarkable to watch how students and staff responded to the challenges of Covid, especially the second complete lockdown during the dark days of January 2021. Our school community pulled together to take on the difficulties of Teacher Assessed Grades and mixed-mode teaching, displaying formidable resolve and resilience. The Giving Day in February 2021 saw the wider Abingdon community overcome the physical distance that lay between us in order to raise funds so that we can meet the demand for bursary places in the future.

It is testament to the ingenuity and commitment of staff and students that so much still took place in 2020-21 despite the many blocks and restrictions that were in place. I am grateful to everyone - students, staff, parents, governors, OAs and friends of the School - who played their part. In a year of adversity, the strength and resolve of our entire community was undaunted.

I am grateful to Adam Jenkins and his editorial team for all their work on this edition, which has been particularly challenging in the context of Covid. This magazine is a record of a memorable year - though one I hope not to repeat!

Michael Windsor

Michaelmas 2020



Faringdon Lodge

Faringdon Lodge was originally intended to be just another section of the Yang Science Centre which was completed in November 2015 but, for various reasons, it was not built at that point. The Faringdon site footprint beside the completed Yang Science Centre was then used for several years to house the Estates and Facilities Department in portakabin accommodation until the team were relocated to the purpose built Estates Hub located beside the north corner of the sports centre.

In 2018 it was agreed that a new building was required in the vacant location beside the YSC and so the new Faringdon Lodge project design and planning started in earnest. Although the build phase of the project was carried out during the covid lockdown period, the contractor continued to operate and deliver the project with minimal delay achieving handover in July 2020. The new building was opened in September 2020.

The new Faringdon Lodge is now home to:

- A purpose built large reception with 3 separate seating areas to accommodate visitors.
- A Porters' Lodge to support the school security and portering staff office and centralise all the CCTV and fire alarm monitoring equipment.
- A Second Hand Uniform Shop, relocated from a very hard-to-find location in Greening Court. It now has a front-facing shop window to a visitor accessible car park.
- A dedicated computer study facility.
- Day houseroms for O'Doherty's and Donnelly's. These were relocated from The Barn and Mercers' Court respectively.
- A new Economics Department on the second floor with a dedicated social learning zone. The Economics Department previously shared space with the Maths Department on the second floor of Big School.
- A viewing platform over the Waste Court 1st XV pitch.

There are several interesting features of this project that are worthy of note. Firstly, the 1st XV rugby pitch had to be moved 10m to the south to accommodate the project. This may sound easy but the rugby posts require a large foundation of concrete which we left in the ground in case the pitch requires moving again.

Concerns were highlighted during early site investigation that the intended site may be directly over an ancient burial mound or barrow but after careful investigation this proved incorrect, although old aerial photos have shown evidence of barrows nearby on War Memorial Field. English Civil War musket balls were found in this area previously.

The project colour schemes were discussed in detail and it was decided that the new economics classrooms needed to have individual character so a very bold primary colour pallet has been utilised for the carpet and feature walls. The two houseroms are also colour schemes to match the individual house tie colours.

Martin McKenna



Abingdon School in 1870: The New School

At half past 12 on Tuesday 26 April 1870, “a large and fashionable company of ladies and gentlemen” witnessed the Earl of Abingdon, “at great inconvenience to himself, he having been suffering very severely from sciatica”, open the new school in Albert Park.

It wasn't just the fashionable company or the noble earl's stoicism that impressed the local paper, but also the magnificence of the buildings and the munificence of the town's ancient benefactor, John Roysse.

In 1563 the latter had endowed the school with two of his London properties. Their sale in 1865, following what the paper described as “the extraordinary increase in the value of property in the city of London”, enabled the School's Trustees “the opportunity of erecting the present commodious and convenient buildings.”

Roysse's properties in Birchin Lane, just yards from the Bank of England, were prime real estate. In 1866 they sold for £9,950. One shudders to think what they would be worth today, but considering it cost £6,750 to build the new school, it was a fair sum of money in 1866.

In enumerating the building's many admirable features, the journalist seemed particularly taken by the ‘cloisters’, marked ‘play ground’ on the plans, a covered area whose open arches were enclosed in 1926. The space is now the Lower School Houseroom. The “remarkably good” “internal arrangements” included “a bathroom, infirmary, lavatories, separate cubicles in the dormitories, and all other modern appliances.”

“A bathroom”, which I can't identify on the plans, in a building intended for 40 boarders seems rather minimal to us today but that's how it was in 1870. There are WCs (water closets i.e. flushing toilets) on every floor except the ground floor, and a lavatory (a



The earliest known photograph of the school



School House Refectory

washroom) with six washbasins, three WCs and five urinals in the basement. The journalist was right to be impressed by the WCs since they were a relative rarity in British homes at this time and where they did exist, they were often outside.

A careful scrutiny of the plans shows that there were fireplaces in every room in the Headmaster's house, the Second Master's and the matron's rooms, and the infirmary but none in the boys' dormitories or the washroom. It goes without saying that there was no central heating. Nor was there any electricity. The buildings were lit by gas until electricity was installed in 1926.

The plans throw an interesting light on health care at that time. Matron has a large office in the basement. At the back of her office there is a door to a spiral staircase going straight to her room on the first floor before continuing to the infirmary on the second. In this way all

access to the infirmary was controlled by Matron; a wise move since isolation was really the only way to control the spread of infectious diseases.

So, what did the journalist mean by, “and all other modern appliances”? He must have been referring to the basement kitchen with its two sculleries – one for washing up and one for food preparation – and its pantry, grocery, china and store cupboards. Today, Boarders' Hall occupies most of this space, but in those days cooking took place in the huge fireplace and a lift in the north east corner took the food up to the refectory (dining room) on the floor above.

All this was paid for by the School's Trustees but in January 1870 applicants for the vacant Headmastership were warned that, “besides the necessity of furnishing a large number of apartments for boarders there are many items of expense incident to buildings entirely new which must fall upon the master

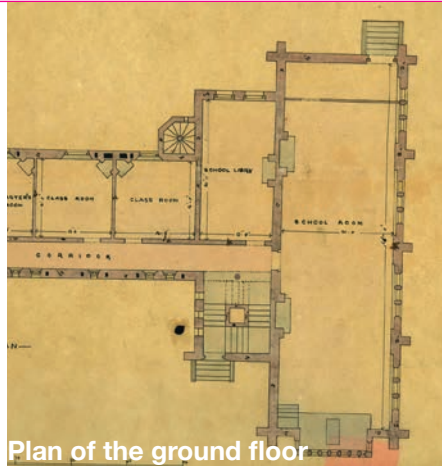
from the Trustees having no funds applicable to such purposes.” This meant that the new headmaster not only had to be academically suitable but also able to satisfy the Trustees that he had enough capital for the job. On top of this applicants were informed that the school was suffering from having had no Headmaster for the past eighteen months, and from an outbreak of scarlet fever in December that had greatly reduced the number of boarders.

The man who assumed this unpromising prospect was the Revd Edgar Summers, who came from Brighton College with a first in Classics from Trinity College, Cambridge. His new school, although built for 120 pupils – 40 boarders and 80 dayboys – opened on 26 April with only 45. There were still only 74 on the roll when Summers left in 1883. But it is to his generosity that the School owes the tower bell, inscribed with the invocation, *Cum voco venite* – come when I call – and Lacies Court, which he bought when it came up for sale in 1879 because the Trustees either couldn’t or wouldn’t, realising how important both house and land would be for the future of Abingdon School.

Sarah Wearne



The Revd Edgar Summers,
headmaster 1870-1883



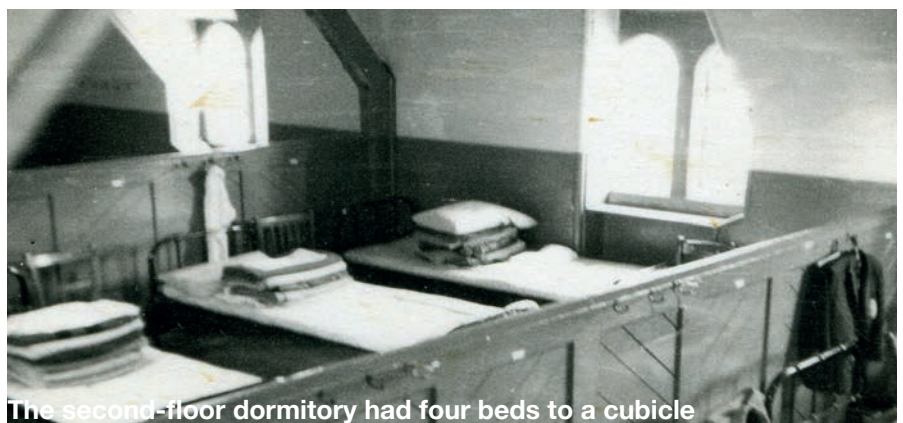
Plan of the ground floor



The Schoolroom in 1894



In the first-floor dormitory there was only one bed to a cubicle



The second-floor dormitory had four beds to a cubicle



The whole school in 1870

Be More Griffen

Be More Griffen was introduced this year into the Lower School curriculum, replacing the Be the Best You Can Be scheme. As someone who has experienced both of these, and designed the logo for Be More Griffen, I am going to write about what qualities Be More Griffen encourages and how this new scheme has benefitted Lower School.

When Lower School heard about this new scheme, we were tasked with designing the logo for it. Be More Griffen sounded very interesting, so I decided to try my best thinking up a logo for it. It had a well-thought-out name, so I wanted it to have a well-thought-out logo. The Griffen part of it actually symbolises seven qualities: G for Growth-focussed; R for Responsible; I for Independent; F for Flexible; another F for Fearless; E for Empathetic, and N for Nurturing.

My first thought for the logo was to have a Griffen climbing up a mountain, because mountains symbolise life's problems and having a Griffen climbing over it would symbolise us using all the qualities of the Griffen to climb over them. The logo symbolised almost every aspect of the Griffen: it was Growth-

focussed, Responsible, Independent, Flexible and Fearless. I also used Abingdon colours, namely black, white and cerise to make it exclusive to the school. I thought it was good, but there was something missing. So I went back and made a new one, this time a Griffen helping a schoolboy up the mountain. I liked this idea much better than my initial one, because it symbolised Empathy, Nurturing, kindness and thoughtfulness as well as all the qualities demonstrated in my first design, completing the whole Griffen acronym. It is much nicer to see people using the qualities of the Griffen to help other people. Something I didn't do was write all the characteristics in the logo, because I thought it was preferable to represent them in a picture.

I submitted it, excited to see any other logo ideas. Then, in a Friday assembly Mr Jenkins revealed that mine had been chosen. I felt very honoured that my design had been chosen for a Lower School scheme, and when the actual logo was produced, having been sent off to a professional design company for their advice, I was shocked to see that my design had been mostly untouched. The only thing that had changed was the font of the writing.

At the start of the second year, we had our very first Be More Griffen lesson, and

I was very excited, because it was a very new lesson that no one else had had before. It was a lesson on teamwork, and it was really fun, because we played some team-related games. One I liked in particular was where we were given a list of equipment and had to individually rate how important each item was in a certain situation, and then repeated the process by discussing things in a team – we discovered that the team approach led to a much better decision. We also learnt that there are different jobs in teams, which we should assign to one another. If we do not each have a job, then there is not enough organisation going on in the group.

Something I like in particular about the Be More Griffen lessons is that they are very structured and it is easy to remember what we have learnt. There is a word for every lesson, using the Griffen acronym, and we learn about a certain aspect of it. There is never something we learn twice.

Overall, Be More Griffen has made a very strong impression on me and I will strive in my next years in Middle School to realise the qualities of the Griffen.

Samuel Price, 2RHH



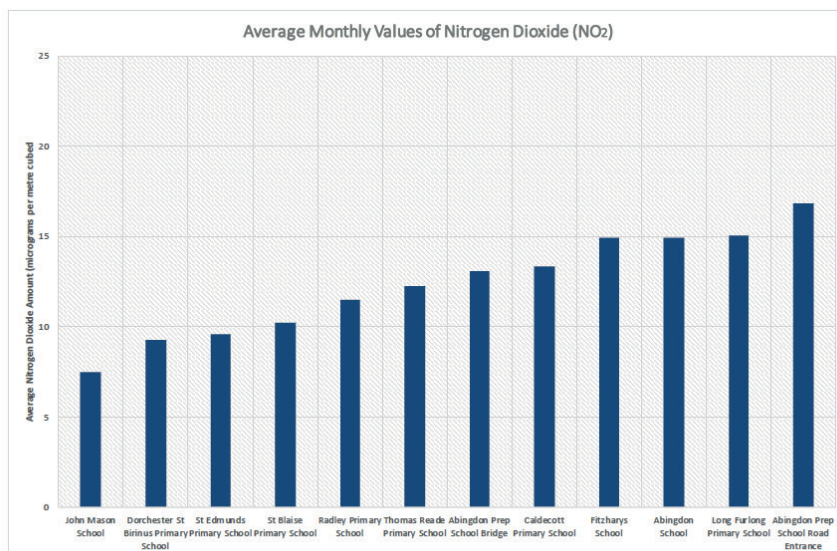
SCAMPA

This academic year has seen the start of the Schools Clean Air Monitoring Project in Abingdon (SCAMPA), an Abingdon Science Partnership project sponsored by the Royal Society of Chemistry. So far, the project has incorporated outreach to thirteen local schools which have set up particulate matter sensors and diffusion tubes which detect nitrogen oxides. This has resulted in comprehensive coverage of the air quality in Abingdon and the surrounding areas.

A-level computer science student Jake Wallis wrote a handbook for the schools explaining how to log particulate matter data in each location to an Open Environmental Data platform, called Luftdaten, which allowed them to view their measurements in real time. The diffusion tubes were left out for a month at a time at twelve sites, including the Yang Science Centre, the APS bridge and the APS road entrance. After analysis at a lab in Winchester, results were then shared with all the schools for pupils to comment on.

The SCAMPA team has faced the challenge of making this outreach project possible without actually being able to visit the network of participating schools. This has involved providing information sheets to help primary schools set up the Raspberry Pi and particulate matter sensors, understand how diffusion tubes work, and inform a younger audience on how air pollution happens. Caleb Majeh wrote some very clear explanations of air pollution chemistry and Edward Saunders and Oliver Kirk worked on explaining the health effect of air pollution.

Additionally, John Bonchristiano has written software to automatically record graphs of the data from each location, and Will Haynes and Noah Macer have made a website mapping the diffusion tubes from the project. This project has encouraged the team to use communication and other skills to complement school studies in the form of independent research, essay competitions, and EPQs. Results of the work have even been presented at three scientific conferences.



The outcome of this student-led project has been to raise awareness amongst young people of environmental issues associated with air quality, through promoting science in the community. The team has built a collaborative

platform that engages students in an original piece of scientific research and inspires enquiry skills and curiosity in local environmental issues.

Dominic Wood, 6PDW

Other Half Computing

The scope of the projects undertaken by students doing Other Half Computing (OHC) has grown over the last five years. It's gone from individuals getting teacher support for their personal computing projects to students producing several custom systems now used by the School.

A long term project that OHC has been working on has been the Photo Booth project, initially intended to be used towards the beginning of this year. The project involved a touch screen kiosk which would be used by students in order to allow them to update their photographs within the school's student management system. The photos would then go through an approvals process involving tutors before being submitted to the student management system. Unfortunately, due to the ongoing COVID-19 situation, it was not possible to deploy the photo booth at the start of this academic year. The photobooth project required a wide range of computing skills ranging from database management to HTML, CSS and JavaScript front end development. For the backend we used Flask, which runs

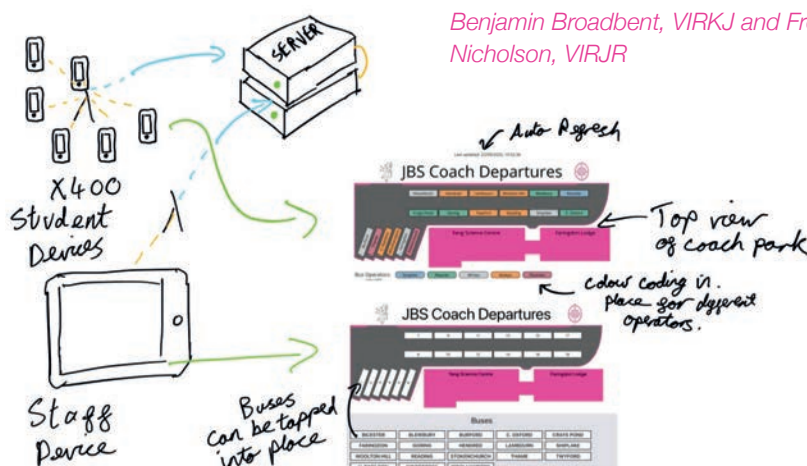
inside of Python - this handled all of the requests to and from the database.

In preparation for the start of this academic year, the school's IT management team reached out to us to develop a system that would allow students to use a mobile device to display the location of their evening coach in the coachpark. This was important because overcrowding needed to be avoided to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission between pupils. For this project we had to develop the system quickly, so opted to use the open-source Django Framework for the database management, which would allow us to easily store the locations of each coach. We used a vector graphic for the front end, which represented

the coachpark layout and showed the location of each coach.

Following on from the implementation of the coachpark system, we realised that a useful addition would be the implementation of a signage system for all of the School's TVs, as currently users were having to take out their phones to check if their bus had arrived. We tested products from several different vendors to find one which was both affordable and full featured. The system we decided on, currently in deployment, uses 27 signage boxes across the Abingdon Foundation, allowing for engaging, synchronised content which is both relevant to the area the viewer is in and offers streamlined communication for members of staff.

Benjamin Broadbent, VIRKJ and Freddie Nicholson, VIRJR



Inter-House Public Speaking Competition

The Inter-House Public Speaking Competition is a new event for Abingdon which was designed to involve the whole community in an inter-house event whilst maintaining social distancing. Every boy in every house was invited to learn and declaim a speech from history, film or literature and each house whittled down the entrants to a single boy who would represent them in the final broadcast from the Amey Theatre stage. By fostering powers of memory and recall and focusing on oratorical skills rather than composition it established a level playing field across year-groups. It is an opportunity for every boy to share a speech, chosen by himself, that moves him, his peers and the Abingdon community.

The standard of the inaugural event was spectacularly high and the panel of judges - Miss Triona Adams, from St Hilda's Oxford, Mr Hindley and Mr Taylor - had a difficult task in selecting from the speeches, which ranged from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, through Gloria Gaynor's *I will survive* to Winston Churchill's "we will fight them on the beaches". The winning speech came from Lower School, with Harold Lethaby's rendition of JFK's "we choose to go to the moon" speech. The trophy is a bust of Sir Winston Churchill who overcame a significant speaking impediment to become one of the 20th century's most celebrated speech makers. This new Abingdon tradition will return next year.

Richard Jackson

When I first heard that there was going to be a public speaking competition that Lower School was allowed to enter, my mind started racing. I love public speaking and I wanted to prove to the rest of the school that I was a contender in the realm of this very wide and open playing field of oratory skills.



When I was deciding on a speech, one thing in particular that led me to choose the JFK moon speech: it was politically neutral. I was performing in a time of notable political unrest with polarised views stretching far around the world: the US election, Black Lives Matter protests, and many other things. The moon speech is not on either side of politics because it is a matter of science. With any speech, the view that you are putting across will be magnified, but science is not subjective.

I did have my doubts, though. Making the speech sound good without a heavy American middle-class Boston accent wasn't going to be easy. It was written and designed to be spoken by a man with a distinct voice and style. To add to this, I was not performing in front of a full audience, just a camera. Mr Jenkins managed to book me a slot on Friday lunchtime in the theatre so that I could get a feel for the space and - most of all - the lectern microphone. I can not thank him enough for this. It helped tremendously.

When I was learning the speech I used the same technique as I would in music - never get anything wrong. I know from my experience in music that if you get something wrong in the early days of learning it, it will never go away. The things I was tripping up on hours before the performance were

the same things I had struggled with at first. Music also helped me understand when to speak loudly and to not start too loud. Otherwise when you want to really project you don't have enough volume left. There were then two final nights of learning and then polishing the performance from there on. One thing that helped a lot was sticking a printout of my speech above my bed so, as I drifted off to sleep, the words of the speech were bouncing around my head.

Overall the whole experience was absolutely amazing and I could not have done it without Mr Jenkins, Mr Chase at the Lower School Debating Club, and my parents.

Harold Lethaby, 2RHH



National Poetry Day

National Poetry Day was marked this year with a Virtual Open Mic which featured students and staff from across the school community who had recorded themselves reading their favourite poems.

There was a record number of entries for the annual writing competition. The winning poems are printed below.



Lower School

Song of the Choir Boy

In school I met a choir boy,
Singing in the hall.
His voice was gentle, full of joy,
T'was like an angel call.
I walked, then strode, then ran, entranced,
Right across the hall to him.
As he changed the tune I danced
Apart from his song, all was dim.

He looked at me with his bright blue eyes,
A thousand glittering stars within,
They had seen so much, so very wise,
One look at them and the world started to spin.

When I woke up, he was gone
And I had never felt so outcast.
I looked at the place that he had stood on,
Weeping and crying in the hall so vast.

Days, weeks, years went past,
Everything was normal,
And I'd forgotten the past
But I never forgot that quite abnormal
Song of the choir boy.
I was in bed
when the choir boy came.
His cheeks were sunken;
His eyes were hollows;
His hair bedraggled;
His skin a ghostly white.
He sang, and I covered my ears.
It was horrible, ghastly, and so sad,
It was a wailing, moaning cry of help.
It suddenly stopped.
I looked up, and the choir boy was gone.

The Rock and the Knife

Where the sun is bold and the red bed of flowers dance;
When the harmony of tweeting is loudest but most calm;
A swift movement the trees are moving
And they look, watch over the wood.
A tall stone standing in the blood red flowers.
He is tall as rocks can be.
Fine fingers of light hit the barrier of grey as it glistens;
The red flowers hide the shadow it brings.
The innocent grass does not say a word.
An angry red is splattered on the green, and next to it a glint of light.
Embedded in the heart of a soldier, a knife, oh! What a vile pointed thing:
Triumphantly shining, blinding.

Sun Stood Up

Sun stood up
Beckoning to the water
Light dancing back at her.
Water, her good friend
Rolling his body over

Two beach chairs sat
Gazing into Sun's face
Light reaching into their eyes
Squinting, trying to make out
Her face shifting majestically

Poor Parasol
Protecting her friends
Standing up tall and proud,
Trying desperately to be noticed —
But all in vain

Samuel Price, 2RHH

Middle School - Cold Water

Metallic water beneath a heavy sky,
Fragments of blue ice float on the swollen waves.
Beneath the surface, there is a low throbbing.
Something is approaching from far away.

The air is charged with electric fields of dark anticipation.
A hidden mass of life moves, panicking, unseen.
The sea is cold, colder than the soul of a drowned ghost,
But in the impenetrable depths, something moves.

The movement is pulsating and brief,
Like little bursting showers of silver rain,
Or an enormous flock of starlings.
This is a flock, but not of birds.

Thousands of diminutive sprats,
Driving their way towards the surface.
The cloud of fish is never still: it splits and changes direction,
Silver-spun sides convulsing and shimmering.

In the oppressive skies above, a single frigate bird wheels.
Its paper-cut silhouette cuts a stark image against brooding clouds.
Far to the West, an army of seabirds approaches
Like scraps of ash tossed on the wind.

They draw nearer with harsh cries and below,
A host of black shapes cruise beneath the shoal of fish.
From far away the scene is peaceful,
The sea's surface is smooth but for a rolling swell.

Like a pan brought to the boil, that glassy surface begins to bubble.
The sprats seethe and writhe under the waves and
Birds arrive and plummet from the sky
Their sickle-curved wings bend as they stoop to deliver death.

The silky surface of the water parts like a flowing curtain
And pours off the immense grey shapes that break the surface,
The humped backs of whales, smooth as polished stone,
Rolling, huge and steady, among the breaking waves.

In the endless green sea below, there is chaos as the rich seams of
Silver fish are mined and plundered into oblivion. All that is left are the
Scales that fall like scraps of glitter, swirling, into the dark abyss.
But while the surface is suddenly devoid of fish, the main shoal slips away unseen.

Into the deep sea.

Alex Heffernan, 4RJ

Upper School - Vision

Do flocks of birds,
Which wheel across the sky
In broken patterns
High above the prairie,
See the air?
As time flows like water,
We cling onto altars,
Do we really know
What it is?
Do we live in Plato's cave,
Watching shadows dance on the wall,
Enthralled?
Or do we sit in the dark,
Blind and scared
While the unknown shrouds us?

Cameron Eilbeck, 6DE

Maths Week England

Most people are appalled at the idea of maths in general, let alone being subjugated to a week long celebration and promotion of the subject. However there are some of us, rare though we may be, who love maths and were delighted to have the opportunity to express our enthusiasm and further our interests in the subject over the course of Maths Week England in November.

Maths is an integral part of society, especially in the modern era where understanding computers and concepts such as probability is a fundamental component of a graduate's arsenal. The aim of Maths Week was to broaden our knowledge and understanding of the subject but also to kindle our enthusiasm.

Our tutors did this by engaging us in activities such as maths crossnumber puzzles and exhibiting the numerous applications of the subject. My tutor, being a maths teacher, decided to take it one step further and taught double digit mental multiplication, a very quick and steadfast technique which allows one who is proficient in the method to get the answer in a split second. After a few goes most of the tutor group managed to employ the technique to great effect.

Furthermore my maths set was fully engaged in Maths Week by, funnily enough, our maths teacher. We were tasked with researching and creating a presentation about an unsung hero of mathematics. I researched Sofya Kovalevskaya, who was successful yet relatively unknown. Sofya was an aspiring mathematician who grew up in Russia which was at that time, in the 1850s and 60s, discriminatory towards women in education. Sofya was lucky that her parents provided her with an early education via governesses. In addition, fortunately for Sofya, her father recognised her precocious talent and in 1866 allowed her to be tutored by Strannoliubskii, an advocate of higher education for women. However, she faced further challenges, as women were not permitted to attend university in Russia; nor were they allowed to



travel without the consent of their father and husband. Through her talent and dedication to the subject, Sofya overcame these and many more setbacks and achieved great success. Sofya became the first woman to study mathematics at Heidelberg University; the first woman to gain a doctorate in mathematics in modern Europe; the first woman to be appointed to a full professorship in northern Europe; and the first woman to win first prize in the Prix Bordin at the Academy of Science in Paris. Yet she remains largely unheard of even after achieving all these

extraordinary feats, because most significantly she was a woman.

When researching Sofya, the lack of information and the number of conflicting sources was extraordinary. This legacy reinforces the accomplishments of her journey to succeed against discrimination and sexism. For me it highlights how fortunate we are today that so many of us are able to access the wonders of mathematics; and shows how much we should appreciate the opportunity.

Archie Leishman, 4CAM

Pink Mist

During the summer, with lockdown in full swing, it looked doubtful that we would be back at School in September, let alone planning to put on a play. Despite this, the hard work of Mr McDonnell, and the whole of the Drama Department, as well as dedication from the cast, meant that the dream of a pandemic production became a reality.

The first rehearsals were cautious, with all of us unsure of what the play would end up looking like, and whether it could even go ahead. But after a couple of weeks, our uncertainty was replaced by excitement for the production we were going to put on, and a drive to work hard to create something brilliant with our limited rehearsal time.

Pink Mist is a moving drama in verse written by poet Owen Sheers, and its style lends itself well to both radio and stage performance. The story follows three young Bristolian men who are deployed to Afghanistan to fight in the war there.

Throughout the play, we are presented with harrowing scenes of pain, guilt, and loss, reminding us of the human cost of conflict, which often goes far beyond the initial pain of battle. It seemed a daunting task to represent such themes in a respectful, impactful, but above all engaging way.

To achieve this, the set and costuming were pared back, and the focus placed on hyper realistic acting, which drew attention to the turbulent range of emotions that each character experiences throughout the play. Particularly impressive was Rory Kind's unenviably long opening monologue, delivered with skill and clarity to create a real sense of story and place.

With nine of us, and many scenes having only one or two speakers at a time, an emphasis was also placed on ensemble work, and I think that we all learnt a lot about working together to create a coherent story. Throughout the play, effective and impressive imagery is created using simple movements on a larger scale, an elegant solution to the problem of depicting dramatic events such as explosions and battles. I



enjoyed working in a way that I haven't done in previous plays. Social distancing meant that there was a greater focus on individual physicality, as opposed to lifts and complicated choreography, which meant that we all greatly developed our ensemble acting techniques.

Our costumes were cleverly constructed by Miss Fever to mimic the uniform of a soldier when studied closely, and at other times to blend into the background which together enabled fluidity in the ensemble.

Due to restrictions, we were unable to perform to a live audience; instead the show was recorded and then edited, before being broadcast online. In a way, this allowed for a more effective presentation of the play, because we were able to use multiple camera angles, close-ups and audio effects to create a more immersive and succinct production. Do not, however, imagine that we became like a Hollywood film set! We recorded the entire play in one go, without stopping and going back to change little details, so the experience was very similar to that of performing normally. Having done this several times,

recordings were then spliced together to create a final version. Thanks to the tireless efforts of Mr Lloyd, Mr Killick, and the whole Tech Crew, the final outcome was impressive in both quality and detail, with the lighting and audio creating an amazing backdrop which complemented and enhanced the work of the cast.

Through spending many months working closely together to reach a common goal, as a group we have had, perhaps, an insight into the common bond that exists between the soldiers in the play, and in the field today. At times, it can be hard to relate to situations which at first seem so remote from our own lives. But, through this production, I think that we were all able to feel real empathy for the thousands of young men, and women, whose lives have been utterly destroyed by war - something that I believe was Owen Sheers' intention when he created the play itself. I hope that those who were able to watch the play were similarly impacted, and came away more mindful of the many sacrifices that have been made to allow us all to live so peacefully.

Freddy Chelsom, 5DLJ



Rugby

Although this rugby season has been affected by COVID-19 there are still many positives that we can take away from it. For example, we have been able to have the inter-tutor group rugby tournament which was very close between the teams and a great way to interact with new people at school.

On the sports pitch it is always good to get away from any doubts or struggles, and just relax and play with your friends. When we joined the club we felt welcomed by the coaches, and throughout the term they have helped us improve massively with great advice and techniques that we can use to get better. This has been a great way for the people who haven't played as much rugby before to learn and play the game.

As well as trying to improve and having a bit of fun with friends, we have also enjoyed the competitive aspect to the game. We have played some game based matches during every lesson. This has been really fun and it has helped to get used to some game situations that we might face in the future. We did a lot of good exercises and drills that introduced new aspects of the game for us. Ball handling was also a key part of the drills as we couldn't do contact at the start of term. During the last few weeks of the season we were lucky enough to do a bit of contact against pads, sharpening our skills.

In conclusion, I would like to say thank



you to all the rugby coaches that have helped us during this very difficult period. This has been especially difficult for rugby, which normally involves so much contact with other players in the game! We all hope that we can get back to playing fixtures next season.

Henry Golding and Finley Hoy, 1PCWM

In the Michaelmas Term, we were finally allowed to play rugby again as a team and a year group, with some restrictions in place. After being in lockdown for the previous term-and-a-half it felt nice to be able to get exercise along with your friends and have fun while doing so. Contact was limited to fifteen minutes a session and matches were cancelled but the coaches and staff did incredibly well to work around the restrictions in

place and allow us to safely play rugby together for the first time in a while. We had a lot of fun and I felt that I might have learnt more than I would have if matches were on and contact was unrestricted, which was a bonus!

In each training session there were three groups, which meant you could choose where you wanted to be resulting in individuals being able to swiftly and fluidly move between groups. This made the training sessions feel more flexible and made us all feel more comfortable about what level we were playing at. Various different drills and exercises were set up each time, which helped us all adapt and learn skills that we did not have previously. These ranged from passing drills to tackling drills, and even in rare cases a couple of kicking drills, making the sessions versatile and different every time. The benefit of this was that we had more time to practise as a team and improved significantly more than we might have if matches were on, simply due to the more training sessions we had. On a Wednesday afternoon each week we travelled to Tilsley Park and trained there, which also benefited us hugely as we got a longer training session on a high quality pitch. On a Friday afternoon in most cases we played matches; this was a lot of fun, and we got to play as a team against our friends, which was incredibly intense most times, with nobody playing half-heartedly!

I think that I learnt a lot from the



Michaelmas Term, and we definitely benefited from the high quality of coaching and the opportunity to practice contact and play matches amongst ourselves. As a team, we managed to progress massively; at the beginning of the term it was clear that we hadn't played in a while, but we quickly transitioned into playing better and more sophisticated rugby, greatly aided by the coaching staff. By the end of the term we were playing some very high quality rugby. Furthermore, we made the most of the term and the restrictions that were imposed on us and managed to play rugby almost as normal.

To conclude, I think that rugby in the Michaelmas Term was enjoyable and beneficial to all of us, we all progressed and advanced our skills dramatically, even under the COVID-19 restrictions. The coaching staff enabled us to work hard but stay safe at all times and at no point did I feel unsafe or unsure about anything. As a year group we definitely made the most of it and we hope that next year we can learn even more.

Morgan Phillips, 4MRG

Whilst this year's rugby season has not been what anyone was expecting or hoping for, it has nevertheless been another great experience in its own unique way. Having no fixtures was something that no one foresaw, and whilst that may make it sound like the season was pointless or not really a true season, I would have to disagree. Whilst we cannot measure the success of this season in the usual way, it has still been a great year of rugby throughout the club.

The main success story that has really come out of the changes brought by the pandemic, particularly in the upper years, is the increased number of boys we have had playing week in, week out, even though there were no competitive matches. This was great to see, as rugby is a game that should be enjoyed by everyone - no matter their ability - and that is something we have really tried to work on over the last few years: making the rugby club bigger and more inclusive for all. This gave the season a different feel to usual, as instead of training in teams, whole year groups played touch



games and trained together - something that everyone loved. This allowed the boys who had historically been in the higher teams to improve their game by trying to help improve the skills of those around them, having to explain their thought process and decision-making to others in a less competitive environment. This benefited everyone involved, as the lack of games allowed for an atmosphere in which no one was competing for places, so everyone could just enjoy each other's company, play fun games and have the opportunity of being with friends who they might not usually train with. This combining of whole year groups allowed us to build a greater sense of community between teams within the club; even though this is something that has always been part of the club's culture, spending a year playing together as a collective has definitely made this even stronger.

Maintaining the same level of interaction between year groups has been particularly difficult due to the bubble system, a lack of 1st XV games for younger boys to watch, and the sixth form not being allowed to go into the younger year group bubbles during the week. Despite this, we have still managed to provide the interaction between year groups that is a crucial part of creating a lasting culture for the club. One of the main things we did this year was have the Sixth Form help coach the Lower School and third years on a Saturday, assisting with touch tournaments and taking a team each. This was great for all involved as it allowed the sixth-formers to try and pass on their knowledge to the younger boys, and also allowed the younger boys

to interact with the Sixth Form players, something that would otherwise not have been possible.

The biggest disappointment for many of us as an Upper Sixth, is that we haven't been able to play with the Lower Sixth and represent the school in our final season. Despite that, as a year group we have enjoyed our final year of rugby and have managed to stay in good spirits throughout the season. We managed to get a turn out of 50 boys every week, a much larger number than usual, which allowed us to play competitive but light-hearted touch tournaments every week which were enjoyed by all. Whilst we have not had the opportunity to show our strength as a year group this season, it is safe to say we have managed to achieve this over all. During our time at Abingdon our C and D teams went unbeaten over a two-year period, whilst our A and B teams managed to put together many good performances over the years, maintaining a comfortable record of winning.

Whilst competitive fixtures are a key part of what rugby is about, the main thing that we will take away as a year from our rugby at Abingdon is the many memories. These range from small things, such as travelling to games on the coach as a team, to the more notable memories, such as the tours we have been on (especially to South America) and the many great moments experienced in games and in training. It is this part of the club that we will all miss the most: this is the true testament to the club as a whole and to all the coaches and staff that make it possible.

Toby Hindley, VIALD

Christmas Concert

A highly anticipated event taking place at the end of every Michaelmas Term is the Christmas Concert. It is a high point of the year, where musicians from all year groups come together to showcase the product of their hard work over the term. The start of this school year has arguably been the strangest in living memory. We returned to a place we recognise yet were confined to a single building for nearly all of our lessons. The ensembles and orchestras reduced numbers this term to reflect Covid arrangements and make it possible to produce a Special Recorded Christmas Concert. Rehearsing for this concert was a big change from the end of 2019. Although we were still not back to normal, it was a relief to practise live rather than in front of a screen – and to play together once again. Although these arrangements inevitably reduced the effectiveness of our time together, the school devised several methods to allow rehearsals to continue.



A tuneful and uplifting start to the concert came from the First Year Choir singing *Kings Came Riding* by Kevin Stannard. It was great to see the newest members of the school come together as a whole year group.

The younger boys were followed by the opposite end of the school, with

five of the senior pupils recorded in the chapel singing two popular tunes - *Waterloo Bridge* and *Somewhere over the Rainbow* in Abingdon's own close harmony group, the Abingdon Academicals, directed by Mr Treadaway.

Next we had as the first of three orchestras playing, the Chamber Orchestra, led by Ashwin Tennant. We were provided with an excellent rendition of two movements from the *Holberg Suite: Prelude and Rigaudon*. Solos by Nicholas Raptakis and Ashwin Tennant were well accompanied by the rest of the orchestra.

Although there was no Big Band this year due to Covid measures, several members came together to form a Jazz Ensemble that, with little rehearsal time, delivered an upbeat rendition of Herbie Hancock's *Chameleon*, with each member producing an improvised solo of technical finesse.

You can always count on the Gospel Choir. Once again they did not disappoint with a cheerful performance of *Feel it Still* by Portugal the Man, and *Good News*. As usual, participating in the choir was mathematics teacher, Mr Poon.

To avoid mixing too many year groups, musicians from the Third and Fourth Year banded together to form a bubble orchestra. Accompanied by our very own, multi-talented Headmaster, Mr Windsor, on double bass, this brand new



orchestra produced a well coordinated performance of *Melodies* from Verdi's *Rigoletto*, the *Can Can* by Offenbach and Charles Woodhouse's *Rustic Dance*.

This term, the First Orchestra faced many challenges performing. Our numbers were significantly reduced after being unable to take on any new members to replace those who left the school at the end of last year. For the first few weeks, social distancing forced us into sectional rehearsals rather than playing as the full orchestra which prevented us from knowing what our final performance would sound like. Nevertheless, Nicholas Raptakis still produced an astonishing and virtuosic performance of the 1st movement of Schumann's piano concerto. This was an inspirational rendition and certainly lived up to the standards of past soloists. Alongside the piano concerto the first orchestra also played the *Radetzky March* by Johann Strauss and Arturo Marquez's *Danzon Number 2*.

Finally, in the school's first music partnership, the Chapel Choir joined Brass for Africa to play *Away in a Manger*. Brass for Africa is a charitable organisation based in Uganda, Rwanda and Liberia that delivers music education with an integrated life skills programme to over 1,000 disadvantaged children and young people. Their local team of teachers who have all taken part in the course in the past work with more

than 20 communities to teach life skills such as confidence, perseverance and concentration through music. While the Chapel Choir sang the lyrics, a band from Brass for Africa played an excellent accompaniment online and even joined in with the words in the second verse.

Despite all of the difficulties presented to the Music Department, our music teachers, together with the Amey

Theatre Tech Crew, managed to once again produce a hugely successful Christmas Concert, even if it was online. The concert can still be watched on Youtube for those who missed it or simply want to re-watch it. All the same, let us hope that next year our Christmas Concert will take a more traditional form.

Josef O'Connor, 5VP



Lent 2021



Languages in Lockdown

Modern Language lessons changed dramatically with the introduction of the lockdown. Before, every lesson had focused on honing speaking skills, partner work, and practising new phrases out loud. Remote learning made that much harder. Patchy internet signals combined with the inability to look other people directly in the face doesn't improve the speaking side of French or Spanish!

For every problem, though, there has been a new and previously unseen solution. Some of these solutions have raised questions about the way learning takes place. For example, at one point during the remote learning period I was working, in a group of three, on a presentation about the French Fête du Travail. Coinciding with International Workers' Day, La Fête du Travail is usually celebrated in France with a national holiday, and the selling of homemade goods without taxes. Lily-of-the-valley, a plant grown in southern France that symbolises love, family and

the rights of workers, is traditionally worn by the men on the fronts of their jackets.

How does this relate to the challenges posed by lockdown this term? In the lead-up to our presentation, everybody in my group was able to edit the same online presentation simultaneously. This is not something that anyone would attempt in a physical classroom, especially under COVID-19 restrictions.

Does this really mean that the lockdown has enhanced our learning? It is certainly not an opinion that is voiced very often around school. After all, everyone's experience of the lockdown has been different. For some it has been more bearable than for others.

But we should ask ourselves, how often in the past have we been able to travel to school (and back) at the speed of light? How often have we been able to get feedback from our teachers instantaneously, at any time of day?

These things have not just made our lives easier, they have changed the way we learn, presenting both new challenges and opportunities.

Alex Heffernan, 4RJ

French lessons were fun and varied this term! We started out back in lockdown and we participated in lots of different activities - some independently and some in breakout rooms - where we discussed new topics and went through answers to the exercises we had been working on. We covered more advanced grammar techniques and revisited tenses, like the conditional, to improve the quality of our writing and our understanding of the language.

In lockdown, a real highlight of my French lessons was working remotely in a group and creating a presentation about French festivals to give to the class. This was a really enjoyable activity, despite the challenge of not being able to see my classmates in person. My group did a presentation on La Fête Nationale. We spent time planning and allocating roles in our breakout rooms. Our presentation covered the history of the festival, which was fascinating, as well as the foods associated with it and how the different regions of the country celebrate. We discovered that the celebrations include a large military parade, dancing in the streets and a spectacular fireworks display on the Eiffel Tower to mark the national holiday and



the storming of the Bastille. This must be incredible to experience. Maybe I will have the opportunity to visit the festival one day with my family!

Towards the end of the term, we returned to school and our French lessons returned to normal. We continued with our topic of festivals and then moved on to eating healthily. To round off the term we had a reading and oral test to see how well we understood the module throughout lockdown and back at school. All in all, I really enjoyed French lessons this term - both online and face to face.

Quinn Miell-Ingram, 4JHT

During the lockdown, our teachers made us do a lot of interesting things to keep our spirits up while learning. All of the different things that we did stuck in my brain because I have never had so much fun! However, one special thing was something that we did in French. We did a crime solving mystery on who stole the Mona Lisa. Qui a volé la Joconde?!

The people in our class were all suspects, with each of us having a different story. We each had an identity card which said our whereabouts during certain times, our clothing, where we went after the Louvre and what kind of transportation we went by. There were many clues that were set out for us to help us narrow things down to a few suspects. An example is the fact that the director of the Louvre last saw the Mona



Lisa at 10:00 AM but at 11:00, the Mona Lisa was gone! The clues also included the clothing of the robber and a ticket for some type of public transportation.

The police had reduced the potential location of where the painting was hidden to just a few places, such as the Catacombs or the Eiffel Tower, and gave ideas on the types of transportation that was possible. After being given all this information, we were put into breakout rooms, where we asked each other questions and then gradually narrowed

our suspicions down until we found the perfect match!

Towards the end, suspicions had evolved to the point that either myself or one other classmate was the criminal. However, fortunately Madame Middleton finally revealed that the robber was my classmate and so I was innocent! This activity lifted all of our spirits during lockdown and it was one of the best learning experiences I have ever had.

Dhruv Lakhani, 2RHH

During the challenging remote learning period of lockdown, the Modern Foreign Languages Department had to adjust their plans slightly, in order for them to work online. Luckily, with the vital presence of high quality software, first year French lessons here at Abingdon could be almost as educational and enjoyable as usual, despite COVID-19 restrictions that meant students could not attend lessons in person. Not only could we learn about French culture, through, for example, a crêpe-making challenge, but we could also learn about its pronunciation. Zoom was used throughout all our lessons, enabling us to hear teachers speak and talk about the language.

Our very first French homework was crêpe-making, with a particular focus on imitating the incredible, open-air flip of a professional chef. Our instructions were to pour homemade crêpe batter, made either from own knowledge or with the aid of a recipe online, into a frying pan, and when it has cooked on one side, ask for the assistance of a member of our household to take a picture, or better still, a video of us flipping the pancake. Whilst this action was often heavily glorified, it was extremely satisfying and created great pictures to put up on the school website.

Unfortunately, the period of remote learning lasted so long that teachers needed a way of testing pupils' progress in French speaking. This potential problem was unique to languages, as some sort of mid-term oral assessment was needed; in a language where pronunciation differs significantly from English, this was vital to make sure students were making progress. Had it been possible to go back into school, this could have been done informally and quite easily in class, but this was sadly not possible at this time. This was why teachers sometimes made use of another piece of software called Flipgrid, where pupils could straight-forwardly record and upload presentations of themselves speaking for teachers to see, so that teachers could ensure our pronunciation was correct.

Having not used Flipgrid before we were told to practise using it for a homework and the way it functioned seemed quite self-explanatory to me. It was cleverly

designed so that all videos would be uploaded into one class, and when one was posted, the teacher would be emailed, be able to listen to it, and send feedback to the pupil. I managed to open up the application, record and upload a presentation in just a few clicks. Perhaps one downside to this was that one could actually see the presentations of the whole class. However, this did not cause much of a problem, and for other things this feature would have been incredibly useful and it meant it was especially easy to use.



First years all study German in the first half of the year, and French in the second half. This meant that German was taught almost entirely in person and a decent amount of the French course was taught online. As someone who is serious about learning both languages to a high level, I enjoyed the experience of learning French just as much as the experience of learning German.

Edmund Kimber, 1SHS



Lockdown Rainforest Projects

During lockdown, first year pupils were set a geography homework task on tropical rainforests. The homework was to make a 3D model of the rainforest showing the layers and adaptations in whatever way students wanted. Here are Bertie and Casper's reflections on how they made their models:

I decided to make a tall structure, almost like a building, with different layers. I used painted shoe boxes for each of the layers, which varied in colour based on the amount of light that got to that layer. I labelled the different layers so there would be no mistaking the four layers of the tropical rainforest (the forest floor, understory, canopy and emergent layer). I added plastic animals on to the different layers to make it more realistic, and to show which animals lived where; for example, the spider monkey living on



the emergent layer, due to its climbing ability.

I stuck a map of the world onto the back of the model to help identify where the tropical rainforests of the world are located. They are found near the equator, inbetween the tropics of Cancer and Capricorn. I based my model on the Amazon rainforest, which is found in the north of South America.

Bertie Smith, 1SHS

For this project, I wanted to achieve a balance between a model that looked good and one that accurately reflected facts we were learning in class. I created plants and trees of different design and sizes using rolled up card and paint to reflect the different rainforest layers. I used dried soil for the forest floor. I also included epiphytes (organisms growing on the surface of other plants) to add a more specific example of plants within the rainforest. I researched the various animals living in each layer and then stuck pictures of them in the layer of the rainforest that they lived in.

Finally, I produced a fact sheet for each of the rainforest layers. These included the height of the layer, flora and fauna in the layer, the microclimate, and how the trees and plants have adapted to surviving in that layer. This was an enjoyable and entertaining piece of homework and the best we have ever been set.

Casper Whitfield, 1PCWM

Abingdon 150 Giving Day

At 10am on Wednesday 3 February Abingdon launched its first ever Giving Day. The day was originally planned for March 2020 but postponed due to the national lockdown.

Our Giving Day was a 30-hour digital fundraising and awareness campaign setting out to tell as many people as possible about Abingdon's ambition to fund more bursary places. Our global Abingdon community came together across our online channels throughout the 30 hours to help spread the message. Demand for bursaries at Abingdon is increasing so we need support from our community to ensure that we don't have to turn applicants down in the future.

The Giving Day coincided with the School being on this site next to Albert Park for 150 years - hence calling it Abingdon 150 Giving Day. The School site was closed, but pupils and staff participated in 150 themed activities throughout the 30 hours wherever they were.

The Headmaster kicked off the day by ringing the iconic school bell 63 times. As all Abingdonians know, this number has had eternal meaning for Abingdon ever since our re-endowment



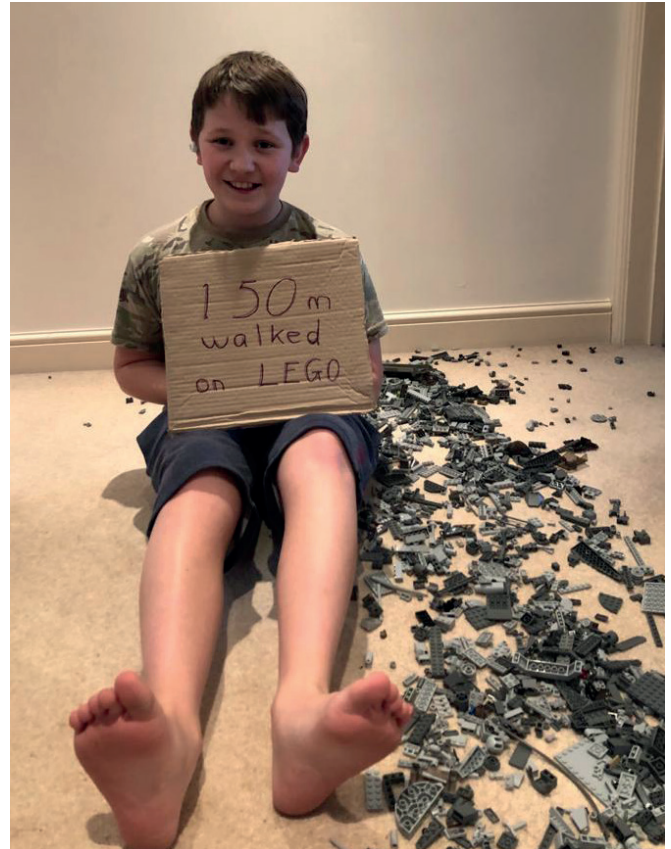
by John Roysse in 1563. Lower School Housemaster Mr Jenkins then took over and brought the bell count to 150. Mr McDonnell, Mr Golding, Mr Birkbeck and Mr Davies embarked on a 150km indoor cycling challenge and Mr Gold ran 150 lengths of the rugby pitch.

Mr Fletcher-Campbell and Philip Kimber played the chapel organ for 150 minutes continuously, an excuse to get rid of the dust and mice as it hadn't been played for 10 months! At 7.45 am on Thursday 4 February Director of Sport and PE Mr Bignell hosted a mass 'make breakfast in 150 seconds' with over 200 boys taking part, cooking omelettes before embarking on their remote school day.

Lower School pupils came up with a variety of 150 challenges, including 150 kicks into a football goal, popping 150 water balloons whilst bouncing on a trampoline, throwing 150 basketballs into a hoop, and many more. There were many more challenges throughout the day - too many to mention. Pupils and staff rose to the occasion and even though we were all remote from one another there was a real strength of community as everyone strived to keep the momentum going across time zones and countries.

Social media was awash with images of our pupils and other members of our community coming together to raise





awareness and funds for our bursary appeal. Donors, parents and bursary recipients spread the word about why they felt bursaries are so important to Abingdon and why they believe we should be raising money to ensure we don't turn down any boys in the future who require financial assistance.

Our international Abingdon community also rose to the challenge so, whilst the UK community slept, challenges and fundraising carried on overnight.

We couldn't anticipate how successful the day might be with the School operating in remote mode and the country in lockdown, but we were overwhelmed with how the Abingdon community came together to raise nearly £150,000 from over 440 donations in our 150th anniversary year. Thanks in part to this strong show of support, 11 boys were offered a bursary place enabling them to take up a place in Abingdon in September 2021. In total there are now 70 pupils attending Abingdon with the help of a bursary. This wouldn't have been possible without the generosity of our community, for which we are very grateful.

Harriet Alderman, Development Manager



Kitchen Chemistry

As we return to school post-lockdowns and find ourselves back in the familiar settings of our own classrooms it is worth looking back to those lengthy periods of Zoom lessons and remote learning and marvelling at how we managed it. Not only that, but how we adapted our teaching. Science is a practical subject and Zoom lessons almost precluded this, especially in Chemistry, but we found a way. In most cases it was successful and put the fun back into learning after a period of staring at screens endlessly. Kitchen Chemistry came to the fore here.

Given that the level of chemical reactions that can be carried out in a kitchen is generally quite basic we looked initially at the lower reaches of the curriculum and set the first years to the task of gathering up material, ready to give it a go. As we hit the acids and alkalis section of the course our first foray into the kitchen was easy - get them to make an indicator from red cabbage. The vast majority of the students took the shopping list we posted on Google Classroom and went for it. At this point we prepared ourselves for the potential wrath of parents as their sons wreaked havoc in their kitchens but as the sessions progressed we spied on Zoom the cameo roles that mums and dads were playing whilst mucking



in too. Indeed we were thanked many times by email and at Zoom parents' evening soon after for giving their sons something different to do. Lots of photos of the outcomes were sent to us and accompanied the screenshots we had of 20 boys on Zoom all mashing red cabbage and then mixing the resultant solution with vinegar or bicarb.

Buoyed by our success we wrote a new topic on colloids and set the first years off again, making suspensions of milky solutions to observe the scattering of light, blowing bubbles with detergent and stabilising a mixture of oil and vinegar with mustard to make a rudimentary mayonnaise and confirm the assertion often made by the Physics Department that Chemistry is just cooking.

We thought we were done with it but then the second lockdown came and the creativity of the Chemistry Department blossomed as we found ways to carry out experiments in the home with Middle and Upper School students too. They were slightly less enthusiastic but even when not participating, they watched as others left their desks and got stuck in. Surprisingly beer-making with the fifth years was less popular than anticipated or maybe the students saw through the ruse when it appeared that it would involve little more than fermenting sugar solution. At least one student persevered for a few days with his brew until he found out that mildly fermented sugar

solution is in no way a substitute for a glass of Abingdon Bridge and tasted worse than Coors Lite.

Sometimes a lesson was simply one of us demonstrating an experiment to the students as is common practice in the school laboratory. It's not so simple when you cannot get to the laboratory and are stuck at home, but you improvise. Cola can calorimeters are a good example.

Even the sixth formers got in on the act when they were challenged to make models of complex ions and molecules using cocktail sticks and suitable atom substitutes. These ranged from grapes to cheese and fruit pastilles and various vegetables and slices of meat. This eclectic mix of objects served the purpose of illustrating in three glorious dimensions the structural shapes that would have been hard to visualise otherwise.

These are just some of the examples of the vast array of methods that Abingdon staff devised to put variety into their lessons during the weeks when we were working from home and the students were using Zoom for remote learning. We are very fortunate to have the marvel that is the Yang Science Centre for us to do what we do in and, having been away from it for those two long periods, we were very glad to be back in our laboratories.

Richard Fisher

CREST Science Project

During the Lent and Summer Term, Charlie Scott and I have been working on a CREST science project about filtering dirty water into clean and consumable water. During the project, we have mainly tried to use cheap and common resources such as gravel and sand to see if this method of water filtration can be used in developing countries.

As a majority of the Lent Term was in the national lockdown, we had to start our project online via Zoom. It was tough at first and provided us with many challenges, though we got quite used to it and were able to communicate with each other successfully. The toughest challenge about being on Zoom was doing the practicals together, as whilst one person was doing the practical outside, the other person had to give guidance and tips.

Throughout, it was mainly Charlie that did the practical work and I did the guidance and the writing up, and after we did this process many times we got the hang of it and it started to become less hard to communicate. When the government eased the lockdown restrictions and schools were opened, Charlie and I were able to meet up in person again and continue with the work we did in lockdown. It also meant that we were able to complete the practicals to a higher quality now that we were next to each other rather than on Zoom.

We did four practicals overall. Three of them were done over the course of lockdown, and the final one was done at school where we tested those results. The first practical I did at home was unsuccessful, as I had attempted to use household objects such as a tea towel and a cloth. I then poured dirty water onto them, before they were filtered and poured into a bucket. However, when I poured the dirty water onto the objects, the water would slide off the edge of them instead of going through them and being filtered. We then did our second practical by resolving this problem. Charlie did a practical where he poured the dirty water onto a tea towel,

but strapped the tea towel around the bucket to ensure the water would go through the tea towel and not down the sides, as in my practical. This proved much more successful, but it was clear from the end result that we needed to have more layers to filter the water. We then decided to use the biosand filtration method where materials such as sand, gravel and cotton wool buds were used. This method proved more successful compared to the previous two and was an overall improvement and success with not too many flaws. By the time we finished the third practical, the Government had eased the lockdown rules so that schools could reopen. For our final practical, we used the biosand filtration method again but this time we tested the results to see how clean and well filtered the water was.

After we completed the final practical at school, we ordered some test kits online

and were able to see how successful our method of filtration was. After we measured and recorded the results of the tests, we began writing up our report for the whole project we had done during lockdown and in school. We have now finished writing our report and have sent it to the CREST judges to see if we will get a silver award for our project.

Prior to doing this project, I did a CREST project in the Michaelmas Term on mousetrap cars for a bronze award. I was successfully awarded it, which is why I decided to continue with CREST Science Club for a silver award. This proved to be very useful as I was able to add some valuable experience in writing up the CREST report. We both worked together to complete our project, and it has been a joint effort between us in making this project so successful.

Balraj Purewal, 1SHS



Design and Technology

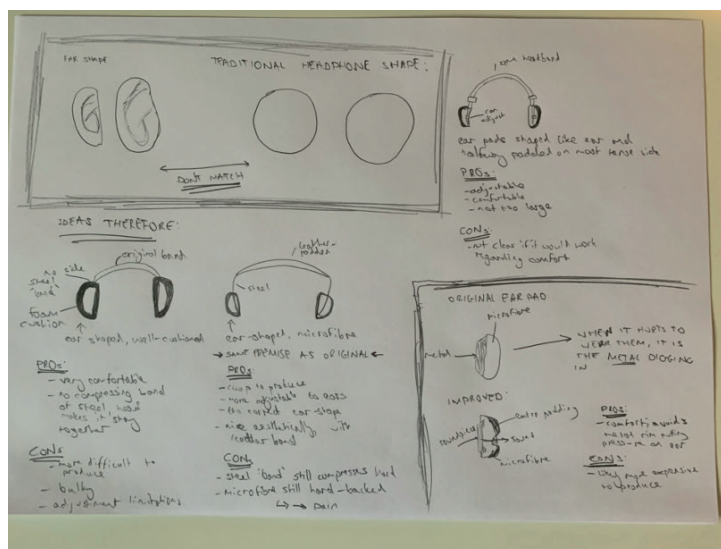
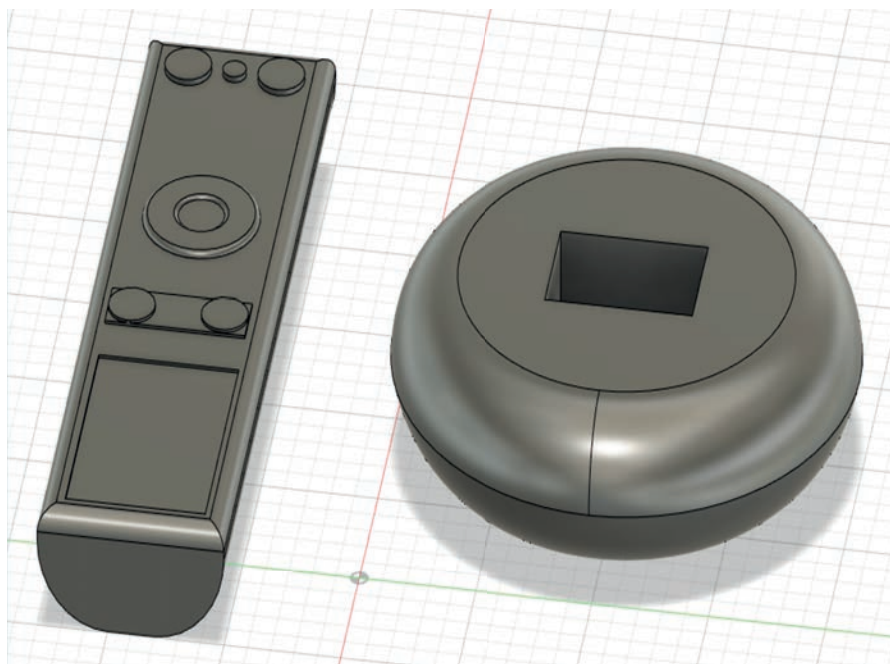
The delivery of Design and Technology during the period of lockdown provided many challenges to our students as, under normal circumstances, they are able to work in a variety of materials and have access to a hugely diverse range of manufacturing opportunities. But as always, the Abingdon student was quick to adapt and overcome, making the best of the remote learning opportunities.

One of the first challenges that we set was a product redesign task. Students were tasked to look at the products that they and their family use every day and take for granted. They were challenged to see if they were able to identify any potential weakness or opportunity to improve the product.

Many chose products that they were familiar with, such as TV remote controls and scissors, but some identified more challenging contexts and started to show empathy with users other than themselves.

They looked at the product's function, how it was held or stored, and even started to consider whether the material that it was manufactured from could be replaced with a more environmentally friendly solution.

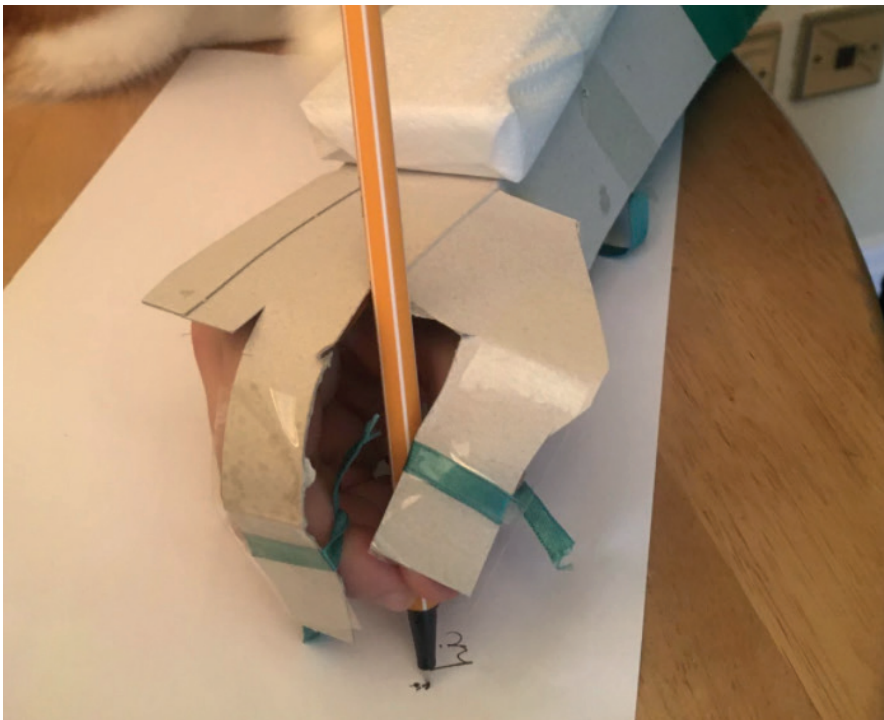
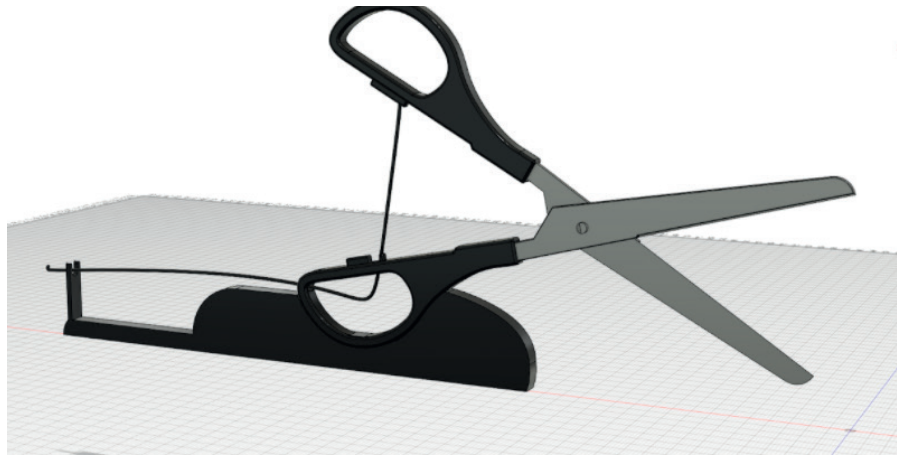
Once they had identified a product, they started to think of design improvements and sketch up these ideas. Some decided to move their concept into 3D using cardboard, while others used



our CAD (Computer Aided Design) software to represent their ideas. It was also hugely encouraging to see how many of our students have 3D printing technology at home, developing more refined design solutions.

It was a challenging period to be away from the practical environment of school, but with greater exposure to identifying and improving products, I am confident that the students' design awareness continued to develop.

Dan Hughes



20 Minute Meals

During the Lent Term I looked forward to Wednesday afternoons as this was the day that I would get to eat very well following the Other Half live cookery session with Mr Bignell. My mum persuaded me to give 20 minute meals a go when the time for selecting Other Half activities came around. Lockdown was taking its toll on her desire to cook any more meals and our menus were in need of a few new ideas. I think she was pleased to hand the task of at least one meal over to me.

We received the recipe a week in advance, allowing plenty of time for me to make sure that Mum had included the items on her online shopping list. I wasn't completely independent yet! On the day I would lay the ingredients and equipment out so everything was easily to hand allowing me to concentrate on Mr Bignell's instructions.

Mr Bignell would take on the role of Master Chef and shout his commands over Zoom - it sounded like he was shouting because I had to have the volume turned up full due to the noise of the cooking. It definitely added a sense of realistic urgency to the proceedings in the kitchen. Occasionally technology



would let one of us down and Zoom would drop out, resulting in a barrage of panicked boys questioning if they had missed a step. Mr Bignell remained calm and repeated his instructions as many times as requested.

Through the experiences this Other Half activity gave me and the skills that I picked up along the way I now feel confident enough to prepare meals for my family. I was able to try foods that I had not eaten before or which I had previously avoided as I thought I wouldn't like them.

My favourite of these was the creamed spinach we made with our steak and chips in the final week which was the best meal I've ever cooked for myself. It was a bit ambitious for only 20 minutes so we did run over that week. Another really tasty dish which we prepared (and which is an easy meal to cook for the whole family) was the glazed salmon with rice and bok choy - we all thought this was delicious.

The activity demonstrated cuisines from various countries adding much needed variety to my personal repertoire. We started week one simply with a bacon, cabbage and pasta dish served with garlic bread which was very tasty. We stuck with pasta the following week but with a more authentic pasta puttanesca, an Italian dish containing olives,

anchovies and capers (which I would usually avoid). It was a pleasant surprise and I ate the lot.

One week Mr Bignell handed over to sixth former Tom Long to run the cookalong and he directed us in cooking up a lovely Lebanese dish of lamb tabbouleh. I had never had the ras el hanout blended spice before. Tom did a fantastic job of answering all the questions being fired at him such as when the honey should go in and whether or not we were allowed to use a garlic crusher. The spiciest dish by far was the Thai green prawn curry - it smelt delicious but was a bit hot due to me being heavy handed with the chilli flakes.

We also got involved in the School's 150 Giving Day Challenge activities when Mr Bignell ran a cookalong for 150 breakfasts in 150 seconds, the challenge was to make a three egg omelette with your choice of fillings in two and a half minutes. This caused a somewhat frantic start to the day, but once completed I was all set after such a hearty breakfast.

Even during lockdown the Other Half continued to provide new experiences and skills - the only bad thing about the 20 Minute Meals activity was the washing up!

Josh Bromley, 2SJC

Bridge Club

Despite the challenges that Covid has brought, the Bridge Club has continued to be a place where students get to stretch their brains. They have also had to stretch their arms because, in order to keep Covid safe, we now play on giant tables wearing masks and liberally applying hand sanitiser.

To be good at bridge, one needs to silently deduce which player holds which cards using a combination of memory, maths and intuition. Or it would be the case, if you played in an ordinary bridge club. At Abingdon, especially among our younger players, we have a decidedly noisier version where each hand dealt is met with air punches, deep sighs or cackles of mirth at your opponent's misfortune. It is a lot of fun and a chance to relax and let off some steam in the middle of a busy week.

This term we said goodbye to Thomas Roskell, Joe Nicholas, Alexander Billington and Dmitry Drugakov. The Lower Sixth has been represented by Ediz Hunter, Leo Sinclair, James Healey and earlier on in the year, twins Ivan and Isaac Tan - who seemed to employ telepathy to great effect. Afternoons have been spent enjoyably and the group have upped the ante by introducing 50 bonus points for courageous bids and instituted a punishment for pathetic bidding which involved running up and down three flights of stairs. They might not be the most competitive group but they have certainly enjoyed the afternoons and I look forward to the 'modifications' they make in the future.

The fifth year table has played together for several years - Philip Grotjahn, Nick Chorbadzhiev, Dheeraj Kollanthotahil and Alex Pavides play viciously contested games while engaging in random and often bizarre conversations. They invented their own "Nick Trick" which no one but their table understands. During lockdown, they played together on Bridge Base Online and rather overreached themselves by signing up as Grand Masters, believing they were playing robots. It was a great surprise to realise their opponents were real grandmasters and even more of a



surprise when they managed to take a game off them!

The 'Noisy Bridge Club' meets in Period 8 and it has been a real delight to have so many Lower School students learning bridge this year. Some of them arrived having learned the basics at their last schools so were quickly able to progress on to the intermediate room with Mrs Coull. In all cases, it is really

impressive to see how quickly they begin to put their brains to work and become engrossed in the game. We look forward to them developing into strong and silent (or at least a little softer) players.

We thank Mr Williams, Mrs Sabah, Mrs Coull and Ms Lee for their patience and good humour.

Katy Lee



Abingdon Film Unit

Filmmaking with the Abingdon Film Unit was by far my most formative experience at school. Making a film is not easy. It's mind-bogglingly technical, extremely personal and above all, it is an intellectual exercise that demands an understanding of nearly every creative discipline.

Film is a very closed industry and particularly hard to get experience in, especially as a young person. The AFU has an impressive retinue of tutors who have spent many years working at the heart of the industry. They teach you how to use specialised equipment such as microphones, professional cameras and editing software. Touchingly, I always felt that every one of the tutors who came to work with us had a genuine interest in the films we were making, and would mull over our projects in their own time and make suggestions and edits.

material experience for your films. After my initiation by documentary, I got into the deeply abstract - perhaps to see how insane my filmmaking could go, and how far I could stretch the medium to fit the phantasmagoria I envisaged. I've seen other filmmakers at the AFU write scripts, and act in other people's films, so it's a very malleable artform, and I think in a way everyone drops into their own niche. I've known of very few members of the AFU who, once they've started, do not continue until they leave school, and I know that many of them,



A director should understand acting, since they have to know how it feels to be on the other side of the lens. They should understand music, in order to control the pacing and rhythm of the film. They should understand artistic composition and light, in order to frame the scene correctly. Finally, they should understand narrative, since every film is composed like a short story or novel. It is a very challenging frame of mind, and not to be taken lightly. School is good at giving you a very clear cut understanding of particular academic subjects on their own terms. Very rarely does it allow you to apply your multiple abilities to form a cohesive project of your own. Making a film is ultimately a very liberating process, and, trying not to sound too banal, extremely introspective; you cannot really make a film about something that does not begin with you.

Since the AFU's founding in 2003 by documentary filmmaker Michael Grigsby and Jeremy Taylor, it has produced several international award-winning films and has fulfilled its purpose by 'passing on the torch' from its founder to the younger generation. For their first film, students are encouraged to make documentaries, often with astonishing results. Documentaries may be the film format most obviously grounded in reality, yet they are also perhaps the hardest genre to get right. At the same time, they are an excellent gateway to other genres of filmmaking. Once you've interviewed people and edited their contributions, you cannot help but pick out striking snippets of conversation in the quotidian, or notice a certain light or colour, and wish that you had a camera to hand. It's inescapable. Subconsciously, you begin to collect

myself included, are inspired to pursue filmmaking as a career.

I would like to end with a message for my film tutors: even though I could never meet a deadline, and occasionally failed to show up to the sessions because of my general fecklessness, I did live and breathe my films. I would often spend hours walking and thinking about concepts and images I wanted to create. I would listen and search for hours through bizarre genres of music, or sit down at the piano to try to bring to life in music an atmosphere in my head. The AFU taught me to love film, and I am sure it will continue to teach many ensuing generations of Abingdonians to do the same.

Kit Matthews, 6NSH

UK Linguistics Olympiad

I have always found linguistics interesting through my study of classics but it wasn't until I discovered the Linguistics Club in the Lent Term that I began practising puzzles. It was a club hosted by Mr Franklin at 4pm on Mondays, in which we attempted linguistics questions in preparation for the UKLO (UK Linguistics Olympiad). The UKLO is a national paper split into an initial qualifying stage, and a second stage in which the top eight candidates are selected to represent the country in the international olympiad. The puzzles in the first stage of which consisted of a few styles of question.

In the first and most common style of question we were given around ten sample sentences from an obscure language like Georgian and a translation of each sentence was provided. With this information we could deduce which foreign word corresponds to each word in the English translation, as well as a basic sense of the grammatical structure e.g. word order and tense markers. Using the information that we just learnt, we were then given five untranslated sentences of the foreign language which he had to translate into English, and

five English sentences which we had to translate into the foreign language.

The other most common form of question was focused less on translation and more on transliteration (denoting sounds from a foreign writing system with the Latin alphabet). We were given a set of words from a foreign writing system (such as kanji or sanskrit) each with a transliteration into the Latin alphabet. Using similar deduction skills as in the first style of question, we had to discover which symbol represented which sound - sometimes made difficult by the fact that some foreign sounds aren't accounted for in our alphabet! - and had to transliterate into English and sometimes into the foreign writing system as well.

Armed with half-a-term's worth of practice questions, I sat the first stage of the UKLO, hoping for perhaps a silver medal. The typical style of questions came up ranging from an old Chinese language to a native Ghanian one, as well as an interesting problem on a New Guinean counting system, which involved cube numbers. I, along with Joseph Betts and Charlie Franklin, received a gold medal which qualified us for the second round of the Olympiad.

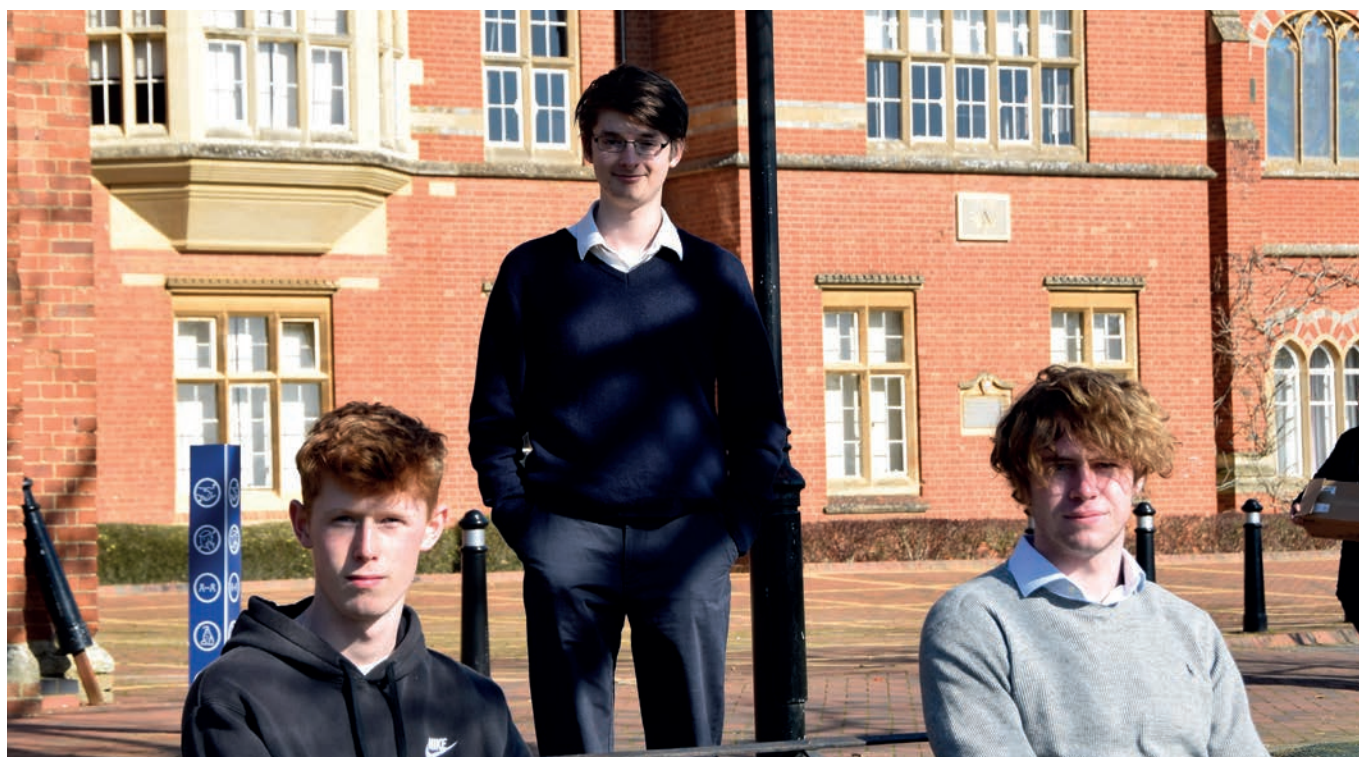
Those who qualified were offered three free lessons by the University of Edinburgh over the course of the three

weeks leading up to the second round. They took place on Microsoft Teams and in these lessons we learnt some general techniques for solving linguistic problems and were given practice questions which we went over in the lessons. The major difference between the first and second round, aside from a step up in difficulty, was that we not only had to solve the problem, but provide an explanation of how we thought the language worked grammatically.

And so, in mid-March, we sat the second round of the paper. The questions certainly seemed more difficult than the first round, and I was immediately stuck on the first question which involved deducing the metre of a Javanese poem (a language spoken on the Indonesian island of Java). The puzzles that followed ranged from native African languages to a northern Japanese dialect (which contains a similar particle system to modern Japanese).

Charlie Franklin received a merit for his efforts in the paper, and I received a distinction, placing me in the top twelve candidates nationally. Although I just missed out on making the international team (top eight), it was still a very enjoyable and interesting experience and I eagerly await next year's competition!

Ethan Walker, 6RP



World Book Day

This year, World Book Day looked a little bit different, with students participating in a variety of virtual activities from writing workshops to scavenger hunts!

In a book cover design competition, we asked the students to design a new book cover, either because they fell in love with the book, or because they just couldn't stand the way it currently looked. The winning entries were Ari Ioannou, Dhruv Lakhani, Samuel Price and Alex Leech.

Lower School pupils were also given a literary themed scavenger hunt. They had to look for 10 objects around their house that linked to a particular book, then send a picture of themselves and their guess for which book it was. The first years were hunting for Alice in Wonderland themed items, and the second years got into the world of James Bond. Great fun was had all round, with Frederick Mellor and Charlie Taylor winning the prizes for fastest completion of the task.

The winning entries in the book review competition are printed below.

Katyana Rocker-Cook



Robin Hood by Robert Muchamore

Robin Hood is an amazing book by Robert Muchamore (author of the *Cherub* series) about a 12 year old boy who, along with his friend Maid Marion and his brother John, attempts to rescue his dad who has been arrested by corrupt cops. The characters may sound familiar, but this is a modernised version of the classic tale.

Robin is no ordinary kid; he is incredible with a bow and arrow, a talent that gives

him an edge over his enemy – who happens to be the most powerful man in Nottingham – The Sheriff. Can Robin free his dad? Or will Robin never see his dad again, except behind bars. Read it to find out...

The author keeps his usual style of having children as the main characters in his books, which captures the imagination of his teenage readers. Muchamore's spin on the well known tale means that anyone who likes adventure books or other books by this author will not be disappointed – it is a thrilling read, and I would definitely recommend it!

Ronnie Bellcourt, 1HFCP

A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens

For many, just seeing the name Charles Dickens on the cover is enough to send them far away from anything to do with it. But ignore the label screaming "DANGER OF DEATH: DAHL'S CHICKENS DETECTED": *A Christmas Carol* is different. It is lightly humorous and very easy to read, as well as having Charles Dickens' style.

A Christmas Carol is about a miserable man, Scrooge, who hates Christmas and helping the poor, transforming into the exact opposite after he is visited by three ghosts. The first one reminds him of his past relationship, which ended when his greed overtook him. The

second shows him how everyone else celebrates Christmas merrily, and then the third foreshadows what happens if he does not change.

I especially like the way the language is ingeniously put together. The way Dickens creates moods, so immersive and real, seems like pure genius, but when observed closely you find only common techniques like listing, similes and metaphors, just extended slightly and used with the frequency of the RPM readings you get with a jet engine.

The long, dreamy yet vivid descriptions that could be found on every other page of the book were also fascinating. They describe everything from food to dead bodies, all so vivid that you see it in the back of your mind as you read the book.

I would recommend this book to everyone, even people who don't like Charles Dickens, as *A Christmas Carol* is different and a good place to start reading Charles Dickens's works.

Kevin Rao, 1HFCP

The Book of Dust: La Belle Sauvage by Philip Pullman

La Belle Sauvage is a book from the world of His Dark Materials and it is set before those novels when Lyra was just a baby. The book features Malcolm Polstead, a normal boy who works in The Trout pub, in Godstow, his father being the owner, and a baby, Lyra Belaqua, daughter of Lord Asriel Belaqua and Marisa Coulter.

Gerard Bonneville, a researcher who had his research taken away from him on account of his questionable actions, wants to take Lyra hostage. Lyra is a very special child and Bonneville wants to take her hostage so that the Magisterium, the all powerful church organisation, will let him continue his research into Dust, the particle of the Rusakov field. When the Great Flood hits, Malcolm takes Lyra and Alice (a girl who works in The Trout) in his canoe, *La Belle Sauvage*, and they try to bring Lyra to her father.

The book features the League of Alexander, a group of children who report to the Magisterium, who end up getting Lyra taken to a priory, where Malcolm and Alice try to rescue her.

Bonneville and the Magisterium are all after Lyra, and so are the good guys, Oakley Street. The witches have foretold a prophecy which says that a boy will help her on her journey and they question that that may be Malcolm. Lyra in the end is taken to safety.

I enjoyed the book and I thought that it was good, although there wasn't much of a plot - Lyra is just taken back to where the book started, in Oxford. I think that this book was more for information as background to the *His Dark Materials* books rather than to be its own story. Philip Pullman has commented that

"La Belle Sauvage is not a prequel or a sequel, but an equal." It does have lots of spoilers for the later books like Lyra's heritage which in *His Dark Materials* is a very important thing. Gerard Bonneville gives the book a villain to work against, always chasing them, but his research is very important for the rest of the series.

I would recommend this book to someone who has read *His Dark Materials*. For a rating out of 10, I would give it a 7/10.

Mark Hanlon, 2AJ



Page To Stage

I signed up for Drama Page to Stage in lockdown, not knowing what to expect, but as the sessions with Mr Phillips went by, I discovered that it was a really fun opportunity to create a great piece of drama.

We started off by studying a comedic play called *Neville's Island* which is about a group of men who go on an expedition but get lost and end up on a deserted island. The rest of the play is about the funny situations that they get into and their not so great team-building skills.

Inspired by *Neville's Island*, we started to create our own storyline helped along by Mr Phillips who gave us lots of inspiration to build our piece off. We decided that we would create a play about four boys in home learning (which was quite relatable!) who were unsuccessfully creating a drama project and constantly fighting.

Throughout our time on Zoom, we worked collaboratively in breakout rooms creating scenes and putting together our ideas and experiences into quite a realistic comedic performance. The characters that we thought of during the sessions included a clueless teacher called Mr Whetty played by Mr Phillips. We took the role of the students: the sarcastic one, the posh and geeky one, the slightly odd one, and the plain dumb one.

As anyone who's ever used Zoom will know, it was challenging at times but we all worked hard to make the performance as good as it would have been if we had been in a room together.



And we did get in a room together in the last three weeks of term after a Boris Johnson announcement telling us that we could go back to school, which made the process of production a bit easier because we could all interact again without any distractions.

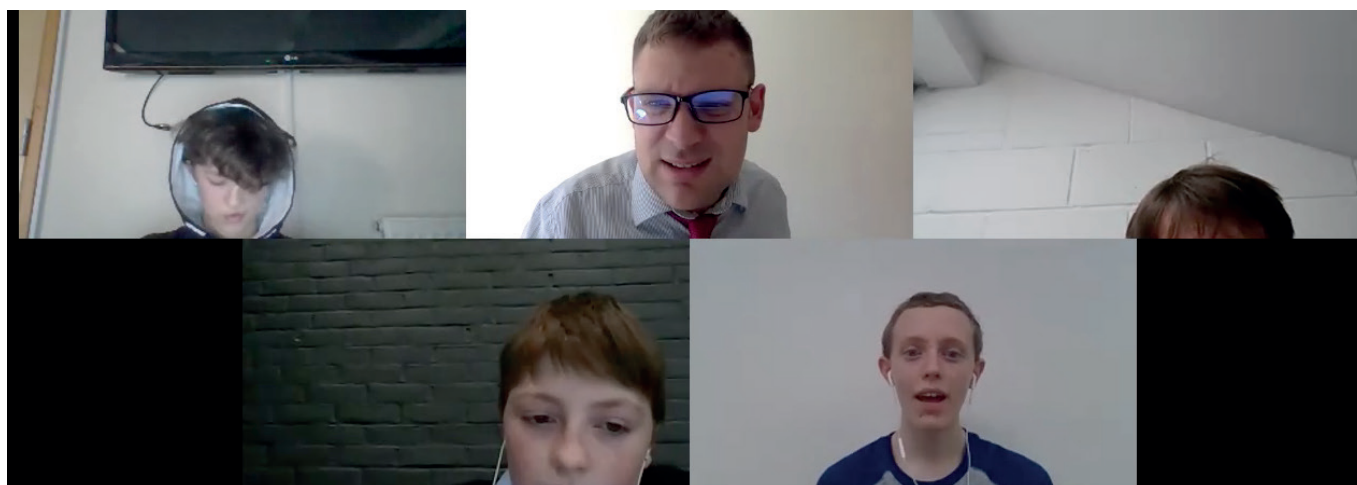
So back at school, we continued to Zoom Mr Phillips since he wasn't back at school yet and we added a few final scenes, did some editing and then it was time to perform...

On the final Wednesday of term, we all went in with a change of home clothes because for most of the term we had prepared for it over Zoom and so, from a continuity point of view, it wouldn't have looked very realistic as a play about students in home learning without home clothes. As it neared the performance I became nervous because we had worked really hard all term, had a great

script and I really didn't want to mess up.

Luckily, the play seemed to go well and we felt that our hard work had paid off. We want to thank Mr Phillips for his brilliant guidance, as we wouldn't have been able to do it without him or his great patience with Zoom. I would definitely encourage fellow pupils to sign up for any future performances because it was a great learning experience and was just as fun as drama in usual circumstances. I look forward to doing more like this in the future and would be open-minded to doing something Zoom related again because it's such a great tool to use. The performance was available to watch in the Summer Term's Celebration of the Arts. I'm now ready for some more fun Page to Stage!

Hamish Bloom, 3ACT



Football



Joining Abingdon School as Director of Football during this current time has certainly been challenging, however it has been an exciting time and highlights the exceptional work of the staff and students at the school.

Starting in January to online classes it was fantastic to see the work the staff had already put in place to give the students variety in lessons. It was a strange introduction to the students but it was brilliant to see so many taking part in the circuits/lessons and online activities throughout this difficult time.

Finally in March we were able to get back to school and actually undertake some sporting activities. With only three weeks of the football term left it was excellent to see so many students getting involved and playing football over this short time.

With the main focus just to get everyone out playing we managed to get some internal games, tournaments and matches taking place. Not only did the students compete during their PE lessons but also showed great commitment for Saturday sessions. It

has been amazing to jump into football life for these three weeks and it has certainly got me enthused to plan the 2021/22 season.

I want to thank all the staff and students for an extremely warm welcome to the school and look forward to building on the great work of Mr Donnelly to progress football at Abingdon School.

Stephen Mills



Summer 2021



Athletics

In a season like no other, there has been much to celebrate within the Athletics Club.

The pandemic forced many competitions within the first half of term to be cancelled, postponed or moved to a remote format. This presented challenges but also opportunities for those wishing to test and improve their athleticism.

With travel impossible and facility restrictions, remote competitions were a great success with the opportunity for more pupils to take part against a wider audience of schools. It also enabled pupils to find their feet in new events without the added pressure of face-to-face competition. There were a number of fantastic performances recorded against the clock at Tilsley Park which were then submitted to the remote competitions organised by Trinity School, Radley and Abingdon. Stand out performances in the 4 x medley relays (100m, 200m, 400m and 800m) from the inter (3 mins 49s) and senior teams

(3 mins 47s) saw them both take the gold medal position against some high calibre schools such as Eton, Radley and Bedford.

As restrictions eased the club was able to resume their normal roster of competitions during the second half of term with the County Championships, English Schools Track and Field Cup, Achilles Relays and Marlborough Invitational Meet just some of the highlights.

County Championships

There were a number of brilliant performances at the County Championships which resulted in several PBs and pupils being crowned county champions. Notable performances included:

Chigoze Oge-Evans – U17 - Shot Put – 12m15cm (County Champion).

Oliver Thompson – U17 – 100m – 11.70 (silver medalist)

Henry Channon – U17 – 400m – 52.30 (County Champion)

Will d'Arcy – U17 – 1500m – 4.18.80 (County Champion)

Olly Carrington – U17 – 800m – 2.16.10 (silver medalist)

Quinn Miell-Ingram – U17 - 1500m – 4.22.80 (silver medalist)

Luke Skates – U15 – 300m - 40.80 (County Champion)

ESAA Track and Field Cup

Due to the pandemic, this year's English Schools Track and Field Cup Competition was competed for via one regional round which produced a national ranking. Abingdon welcomed schools from Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire to Tilsley Park. After such a long time without competitions being able to take place it was brilliant to see a full grandstand cheering on athletes giving their best effort on the track and in the field. Stand out performances included Oliver Thompson winning the 100m in a time of 11.80s, Elliot Broadbent winning the 200m in a time of 25.2s, Quinn Miell-Ingram winning the 1500m in a time of 4mins 26s, Willam Lyon winning the junior 100m in a time of 12.8s and a thrilling victory in the inter boys 4x100m relay. Both the junior and

inter team competed superbly well, with many of the younger athletes competing for the first time. The teams finished on 250 and 271 points respectively.

Achilles Relays

The squad made their annual journey to the Sir Roger Bannister Track on Iffley Road in Oxford. Being able to run at a track steeped in such great history is inspirational for all involved and the event never fails to attract the best school talent. The senior boys did tremendously well to reach the 4x100m final and finish just outside the medals in fourth place, but the performance of the day came from the inter 4x800m team consisting of Johnny James, Will d'Arcy, Thom Denning and Benjamin MacLennan. The quartet blew the field away to win the Christopher Chataway Trophy in a time of 8.40.8, and retained their title from the previous year.

Notable performances

Rowan Miell-Ingram won a bronze medal at the U20 National Championships in the 3000m. He recorded a time of 8 minutes 35s, just 4 seconds behind the winner. In a thrilling last lap Rowan battled for second place and closed in on the leader with 200m to go. This is a remarkable achievement considering



he has only recently turned 17. Just a few weeks later Rowan competed at the English Schools Championship in the 3000m, recording a personal best time of 8.25.88 to finish fifth.

Thom Denning also competed at the English Schools championships, running an outstanding personal best of 1.56.4 to finish eighth in the 800m. Although relatively new to the sport Thom shows huge potential and raw talent in the middle-distance events.

Occurring on the national stage, these are both remarkable performances

which cement their place among the best schoolboy runners in the country.

One of the biggest highlights for the coaches this season was the camaraderie and support the boys showed each other during both training and competitions. Without their positive attitude, enthusiasm and resilience to challenging times none of the achievements of this past season would have been possible. Congratulations to all involved.

Elliot Birkbeck



Diary of a Drama

Working on *Diary of a Drama* was a unique experience - something the likes of which many of us had never done before. In this article, I will take you behind the scenes to reveal how the *Diary of a Drama* was made.

The sessions leading up to the summer term were all about figuring out what we could do for our play amidst all the uncertainties and restrictions of the pandemic. We explored many ideas, and everyone in the group suggested different books, films or short stories we might perform, but towards the end of the Lent term Mr Taylor decided to combine our suggestions in one script to reflect the challenges of making theatre during lockdown. The final script included extracts from Jewel Parker Rhodes' novel *The Ghost Boys*, Graham Greene's short story *The Destructors*, Salman Rushdie's play *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, Robin Stevens' *Jolly Foul Play* and a Michael Rosen tale about a very strict teacher. The first and second years in the cast also contributed material they had written during the period of remote learning, and in the final script the scenes alternated between the two year groups.

In its final form, *Diary of a Drama* told the story of fictional Abingdon drama teacher Nigel Nixon, played by OA and professional actor Alex Mugnaioni



(whose previous job had been acting in the National Theatre's acclaimed film production of *Romeo and Juliet* opposite Josh O'Connor, Jessie Buckley and Tamsin Greig!) and his attempts to put on a Lower School production in the middle of a pandemic. After all of his attempts to come up with ideas have failed, he gives up entirely, and his students are left to try to salvage the show.

In the first session of the summer term we looked over the script. By that stage, we knew it would not be possible to perform in front of a live audience, so everything would have to be filmed, either on the stage of the Amey Theatre, or in one of the drama classrooms. Over

the following sessions, we either filmed or rehearsed scenes. In the final week of filming, we used the weekend to get the longer scenes done. These included *The Ghost Boys* and *The Destructors* extracts. The filming took a lot of patience and perseverance, and we did many takes as we realised we would have to adapt the plan Mr Taylor had so carefully set out. It was very different to how it would have been if we had performed 'live', and it certainly didn't allow much time to practise!

I was apprehensive about how it would look, but when I watched the finished film, I was amazed how well it had turned out. The technical crew worked incredibly hard to make it look





effective and I was really impressed by everybody's performances. The longer scenes filmed in the Amey theatre took a lot of time and effort. A lot of us, including me, had never done anything like this before, so it was a real challenge. I think everyone did really well in the face of difficult circumstances.

One of my favourite scenes was *Jolly Foul Play*. From my point of view, this was very embarrassing and made me laugh so hard when I saw it for the first time. *Jolly Foul Play* was the murder

mystery scene suggested by Dhruv Lakhani. It was set in a girls' boarding school, so we all dressed up as girls by putting on a variety of ludicrous wigs as we read an extract from the book. When I came through the classroom door wearing a girl's pinafore and blonde wig with pigtails, it was very hard for me to keep a straight face when met by the hysterical reaction from the rest of the first-year cast.

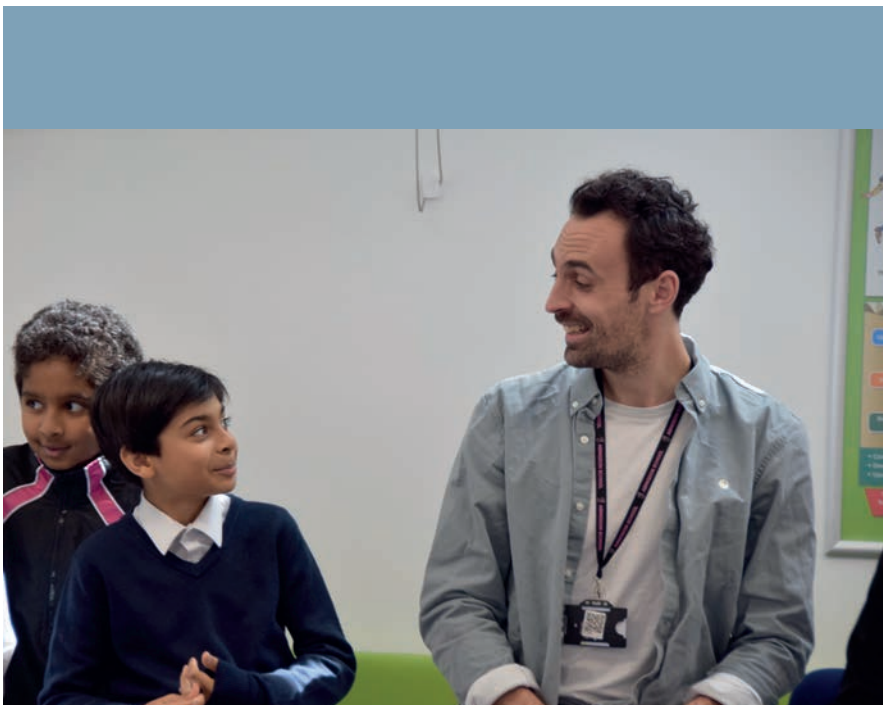
A key highlight of the play was working with professional actor and Old

Abingdonian Alex Mugnaioni, and the huge fun it was to act with him. We were all so grateful that he gave up his time to take part in this joyride of a play and he will be remembered in my eyes as one of the greatest inspirations I've ever had.

What I loved about this play was the fact that it was basically what happened in real life, apart from the fact that our teacher stormed out and then had to self-isolate. We went over many different possibilities for the play with Mr Taylor, including trying things out on Zoom during the Lent term. I initially thought we were just going to do *The Destructors* until Mr Taylor told us that he would be combining everything we'd explored into one script. I love the fact that we got to be ourselves in the classroom scenes and the play itself was absolutely hilarious and lifted many people's spirits.

The pandemic hasn't been easy for any of us, and I am really grateful that we were able to put on a Lower School Drama Production this year. Everyone involved worked so hard to make the play work, and our thanks go to Mr Taylor and the outstanding production team behind the scenes for making all of this possible.

Ashwin Chandrasekaran, 1PCWM



Duke of Edinburgh's Award Expeditions

I knew it was a low moment when I was carrying two bags, someone else was carrying two bags, and Jack was carrying Dhruv. Literally carrying him. Piggyback. For a kilometre.

However, that moment, for me, summed up DofE perfectly: rewarding teamwork and a massive sense of accomplishment that is rarely encountered elsewhere. It was insane, but it was also wonderful.

We walked the first few kilometres with another group along a ridgeway, turned right, and promptly got lost. After wading through overhanging trees and desperately avoiding crops, we finally realised we were a kilometre south of where we were meant to be. Kudos to Jack for recognising where we were. However, he never shut up about it for the entire day! We continued along our route, and found that what the OS map suggested would be a perfect picnic spot on top of a hill was actually a mud track used by tractors and the occasional quad bike. We found one of them broken down about 100 metres from our picnic spot. Suffice to say we moved on. Fueled by energy bars and



words of encouragement, we passed some teachers, who told us we only had twenty minutes to go. Forty minutes later, we arrived. Tents put up, we fell asleep after a relaxing evening.

We agreed to get up at 5.55am to get walking early. However, we had no idea about the light shining through the tent, and by 5.30 we were all up. I think it's the earliest I have ever woken up naturally since I turned ten. However, as we set out, it became clear that Adam was struggling. I honestly don't know what it was, but it wasn't good. Walking 20km with a stomach ache is something incredible. I took his bag off him, and we

met up with the other group. The rain started. Cold and wet, we set off up a hill, hoping to see the carpark beyond, only for a kind member of the public to tell us that we were, in fact, on private land. Mass groaning erupted and we set off back down the hill, me with two bags, and Dhruv, the other group's slowest person, being given a piggyback up the correct hill. No-one said anything, the ridiculous situation exemplified by the swirling rain.

It hurt, all of it, but I looked around with shining wonder. It was hard, but we were equal to it, all of it.

Jasper Furniss, 4RSS

Over the weekend of 20-21 June, eight fourth-year students completed their Bronze DofE canoeing assessment on the Thames. In preparation for this, we completed our training day on 4 May. That day, the teachers talked us through our required kit, we paddled a 6km return trip to Culham through driving wind and rain, and we learnt campcraft cooking.

On the Sunday morning of the expedition, we went as a group to the Abingdon Tesco to buy our expedition food, which we planned in advance alongside our route. We started our expedition at the School boathouse and paddled up the Thames against the strong current and northeasterly headwinds. We passed through the Abingdon, Sandford and Iffley locks, the



last of which featured 'rollers' over which we hauled our canoes so that we were able to bypass the lock.

On the first day, we moored at Lock Wood Island for lunch, a third of the way to the campsite. Located around a mile south of Radley, the island is densely covered with tall trees and sits on a sharp bend of the river. In the 19th century there was a thatched cottage on the island linked to the bank by a rustic bridge.

Artificial influences on the island survive to this day; we were struck by creamish brickwork embankments and a shallow stone bed interspersed with algae as we approached the narrow channel that ran to the right of the island, and there was a more modern abandoned black plastic chair in the clearing where we had lunch. We were gravely reminded of our duty to protect the environment, when we saw a charred landscape of woodland scarred by deforestation or wildfire near where we moored.

After a 15km paddle we reached our campsite on the southern outskirts of Oxford, where we cooked a well-earned dinner and spent the night in two-man tents. The next day, we paddled up the Hinksey Stream. We turned back when we discovered a fallen tree obstructed the path, and cruised the 12.5km with the current downstream back to Abingdon. Leadership and navigation, particularly along narrow river channels not as obvious on our OS maps, were key skills which our team members displayed with flying colours.

Our aim was to photograph weirs and other water features and investigate their uses. There were a few weirs in Oxford where we disembarked and dragged the canoes down or up the weir. We also passed quite a few ornate boathouses, culverts under roads or railway tracks, and the recently constructed hydro power plant near Sandford featuring three massive blue Archimedes screw turbines.

The highlight of the trip was of course campcraft cuisine. As drinks we had tea, hot chocolate and powdered soup. On day one, we had ham and cheese sandwiches for lunch, and pasta bolognese for dinner, whilst on day two we had tinned sausage and beans for



breakfast, and pot noodles for lunch. Bourbons and crisps were favourites for snacks.

Despite the rain and wind, we all enjoyed our expedition, and would like to thank Mr Johnson and Mr Bliss for all their help in organising and running the expedition.

Boco To, 4HMAB

This year I took part in the Silver Duke of Edinburgh expedition. From the mesmerising views, clambering on and over every unique rock on the ridge, to the aching legs from scaling Jacob's Ladder, DofE truly has it all.

The experience begins well before the long minibus journey to Hope in the Peak District. Route planning, food planners and preparation for the trip are when the excitement all starts. Our team - consisting of five Abingdon fifth-year students - split up to tackle the

challenges we would shortly face. Two of our team members tackled the route planning joining the various checkpoints located on different mountain peaks, while the others made a kit list and food planner for the expedition. Despite many small disputes over whether sushi was a good idea, we eventually settled on our plan.

Upon arriving in the Peak District and seeing the ridges towering above me as we set up camp on the foot of the first mountain, I started to wonder how physically strenuous the following days would be. However when we had figured out how to build our tents and had the Euros on a portable radio, our spirits lifted.

We cracked open noodles on the first night - cooking on one of the two Trangias (a portable stove) we had brought. Despite the questionable



cooking of our dinner, they were divine. In our tent that night I distinctly remember the conversation we had about sticking together until the bus pulled back into Abingdon. This talk having given us a sense of reassurance, we couldn't wait to head off the following morning.

The beaming sun woke us up bright and early and we five, now fluffy-haired, boys set off into the wild. As we left the camp and waved goodbye to the teachers we made our way to the foot of the first mountain. Climbing the towering hill facing us and making friends with the people in my team whilst anticipating the mesmerising views that were soon to come was one of the many highlights of the trip.

After a long morning of fast paced walking along the Peak District ridges we settled down on God's Seat to make our, not so gourmet, lunch. Through the midday heat we set off once again, our legs definitely starting to ache. Spirits were high as we gained sight of the camp in Edale and our next challenge, Jacob's Ladder. Climbing down arguably the steepest path in the Peak District was great fun and our a capella "singing" showed our close proximity to the camp. Little did we know we would climb back up this the following day.

We had arrived at camp! Setting up our tents with aching shoulders and learning a new card game were prequels each night to our delicious dinners. After setting up the trangia again and waiting for our green thai curry to cook, we reviewed the walking that was ahead of us. We then settled into our sleeping bags and laid down our heads for a good night's sleep.

The morning sun woke us up bright and early at 6am the following morning. We set off on day two with 20km more ahead of us. So we packed our bags and got on our way straight after breakfast. We looked at the maps and set off dreading climbing back up the sheer face of Jacob's Ladder.

We walked and talked for an hour before reaching the foot of Jacob's Ladder. Step by step we pulled ourselves up the slope. Everyone breathed a sigh of relief when we reached the top. Despite the endless blisters and shoulder/hip pain



we decided to walk constantly along the ridge of the mountain making our way to our lunch stop. We stopped for lunch on the edge of a cliff with many interesting rock formations. After our sandwiches we continued to push on to the last camp. However, after a mild dispute over where we were on the mountain top, we took a wrong turn, leading us to the middle of a swamp. After the swamp had dried out we took a bearing and finally made our way to the farm - despite adding 3 km to our route.

When we reached the farm I honestly think I've never seen more midges in

my life. Following the rain of the evening before and the scorching sun, at our campsite there were mosquitoes galore. Therefore we spent the majority of the evening in our tents, talking about our experiences over the past few weeks. We slept rather early on the final night with the passion to get up early and walk our socks off the following day.

When we woke up in the morning we were covered in bites. However after eating the rest of our food for breakfast and setting off with the lightest bags we had seen in days, spirits were high. We walked along the peaceful river for



a mere 2km before one of our team's blisters popped and he struggled walking. We distributed some of his weight around the team and gave him some motivation to carry on with the journey.

To our surprise he kept on walking and pushed on until we reached the famous Dambusters dam. We rested

here and changed the dressings on our teammate's blisters. He struggled to walk for the final part and therefore, wanting to cross the finish line with a high team spirit, one of our team offered to carry his bag - as well as their own - for the final 2km.

Walking down the final road into the camp we felt a great sense of

accomplishment and were happily welcomed back to the base by the teachers. To conclude our Silver DofE expedition we packed up the minibuss and fell asleep on the drive back to school.

Oliver Pritchard, 5VP



Science Communication Club

This year saw the launch of the Science Communication Club. The main aim of the club is to provide an opportunity to talk about science with others. In order to introduce people from Abingdon and other local schools to current ideas and topics in different areas of science, the club invites external speakers to talk about their work remotely (as was the case for most of this year's talks) or in person.

After a few weeks of planning and organising, the club invited its first speaker, Dr Fleming, who gave a great introduction to atmospheric chemistry. Throughout the year, striving to represent all areas of science, we organised talks from engaging speakers from various scientific domains. On the physics side, Mr Scantlebury-Smead offered a fascinating insight into gravitational waves and, in biology, Dr Bartington talked about air pollution and its impacts.

on health. Additionally, Dr Parnham and Dr Fairbrass from Oxford Biomedica spoke about cell biology and gene therapy. In chemistry, the club had the chance to welcome Prof Anderson in person and he shared some truly interesting ideas from his work on carbon allotropes. Finally, Ms Nunn from

Polar Network gave insight about science communication on a broader scale. As you can see, a fascinating range of subjects was covered during this first year!

Alexandre Peuch, 6OTL



Cricket

After the disappointment of the 2019/20 summer, it was lovely to start the 2020/21 year with some cricket in the first few weeks of the Michaelmas Term. It was then an awfully long wait until we arrived at Saturday 24 April 2021, and our first fixtures for well over a year, against Berkhamsted School. Playing in year group bubbles, it was a great way to kick off the season with a century by Liam Hilditch in the U18/1st XI side, the incredible feat of six 6s in an over from Todd Stanmore, and 131* from Jamie Firth in the U16 side.

In stark contrast to the previous summer's weather, the start of the 2021 season was one of the wettest on record. Whilst the outfielders were given the perfect conditions to recover, it was not conducive to cricket and a number of early matches were lost to the weather. That said, the attitude and application of the Abingdon cricketers was not dampened over the season, with huge numbers wanting to train and represent the school, particularly in the sixth form.

The U12 sides made a solid start to their Abingdon cricket careers and showed plenty of promise. Many will benefit from greater exposure to the game in the coming years, whilst Henry Golding, Max Sheriff and Finley Hoy all represented the county over the summer. The U13 sides worked hard on their game throughout the season and reaped some just rewards in the latter weeks. Charlie Sutton captained the U13A side well, and special mentions go to Jack Watson, Samuel Grocutt and Jacob Kind for some telling contributions.

The Abingdon U14 sides were a very strong group of players. The A team was a talented unit, with all of the players involved in either Oxfordshire or Berkshire age groups, and Thomas Hughes and Connor Lamsdale making 1st XI debuts later in the season. They had their inconsistencies, but when on song, they blew opposition teams away with either bat or ball. The U14B team almost went undefeated, losing just one game in a rain-affected encounter. Arlo Hyman was top wicket-taker with 12 wickets at an average of under 8 runs



per wicket, whilst Finn Gregory and Matthew Stone were the top run-scorers over the season.

The U15 sides showed plenty of potential with the bat over the course of the season with lots of players across all three sides scoring half-centuries. It was a lack of wickets that made it difficult for the A team in particular. Todd Stanmore's 54* from 14 balls in the 15Cs, including his six 6s in an over, was one of the performances of the season. The U16 side started the season together as a year group, before they were integrated into the senior sides. Beating Dr Challoner's advanced them to the regional stage of the cup, a year later than planned due to COVID. They faced a very strong Tonbridge side on their home turf, which proved a step too far, but it was a considerable achievement all the same.

We had a great number of cricketers available for selection in the senior sides this year, with the option of a 4th and sometimes 5th XI. Sadly the weather interfered with many of the fixtures, but it was always a wonderful atmosphere at senior training sessions. The 3rd XI always scored runs at a healthy rate and were involved in some exciting games, Nathan May leading from the front with an aggressive 107 to finish the season. The 2nd XI played some excellent cricket, led by Charlie Hobbs and Alastair Gray with the bat, whilst Thomas Sherwood proved the most consistently reliable wicket taker with the ball.

The 1st XI finished the season with a record of 7 wins, 3 losses, 1 draw and 3 abandoned. Leading the way with the bat was captain Freddie Smith (397 runs at an average of 49.62), Caspar

Mannix (241 runs at an average of 102.5 as he was only out twice!) and Liam Hilditch (238 runs at an average of 39.66), with both Freddie and Liam making match winning centuries against Berkhamsted and Magdalen College School respectively. With the ball, Freddie Merrett spearheaded the attack with 15 wickets at an average of 15.53 (including a hat-trick against the MCC!) and Rory King took 12 wickets at 10.16 with his off spin.

The end of the season saw us bid farewell to a large number of key performers and contributors to the Cricket Club from the Upper Sixth. We wish them all the very best and hope that they continue to enjoy their cricket at universities and clubs in the years to come. A special mention goes to Freddie Smith who broke into the Sussex 2nd XI, scoring 167 versus Durham 2nd XI in the summer.

James Golding



Charities Committee

Though our ambitions were certainly tempered by COVID-19 on the Abingdon School Charities Committee we gave it our all this year. We managed to raise a resounding £16,925, a total especially impressive given the fact that we endured both a lockdown and limits on physical handling of cash due to social distancing restrictions.

In the Michaelmas Term students had, for the first time ever, the opportunity to vote for the charities which they supported. Moved by personal stories from members of the school community, ultimately SSNAP was selected as the School's charity. Supporting Sick Newborns and Parents is a charity local to Abingdon, which provides funding directly to the John Radcliffe's neonatal care unit. In addition to this, SSNAP also provides counselling, accommodation and other forms of support for parents whose newborn is ill, helping them along every step of the way. These factors made SSNAP a top pick for Abingdon students, and one the Charities Committee is proud to continue to support well into the twilight months of 2021.

In addition to this, Abingdon School is continuing its partnership with the Moldovan charity Agape. For almost 21 years Abingdon has maintained its commitment to helping to provide educational opportunities within Moldova. Even though Covid-19 has prevented the usual sixth-form trip to Moldova in both 2020 and 2021, we look forward to future opportunities to work with our friends and partners in Moldova. As an example of how our support makes a big difference in Moldova, Agape used a donation made at the end of the Summer Term to buy much-needed school supplies and equipment for children from 50 families in villages near Ialoveni so that they could start the new academic year with everything they needed to learn effectively in their lessons.

We have cast a broad net in terms of charity events undertaken this year, with the staple non-uniform and Christmas



jumper days being complemented by a plethora of new events. An example of one such experiment this year was an e-sports tournament, which pitted students from across the year groups against each other in a friendly competition which benefited charity. A further example of a new event was a joint quiz with the Abingdon School Parents' Association (ASPA), which saw sixth-form students create and run a quiz for ASPA over Zoom, with the proceeds from the small entry fee going towards charity.

Perhaps most inspiring this year, however, was the individual charity work undertaken by students and staff at Abingdon. Max O'Brien, for example, was able to raise £1,442 for the

Alzheimer's Society, with his excellent campaign to run 100 miles in 3 weeks or fewer.

Miss Pottie, one of the School's geography staff, raised a whopping £2,498 for charity by completing cycling between and then climbing the Three Peaks in record time. She and two friends completed the challenge in 67.5 hours which was more than 20 hours fewer than the previous women's record.

The Charities Committee has certainly enjoyed meeting the challenges presented by Covid, but looks forward to a return to more normality in 2021/2 and the excitement of the biennial sponsored walk in September.

Charles Maddison, 6MTJ



Chapel Choir

We are both first years who have started singing in the school's Chapel Choir and are very much enjoying it.

The Michaelmas Term was very different for all of us this year, and unfortunately due to the covid restrictions, we did not get to have an evensong, or even sing live at the school's Christmas Concert. However, there was an awful lot we did manage to do during this term, thanks to the help of our choirmaster, Mr Treadaway, and a charity you will read about in a minute.

One of the pieces, or anthems, we sang this term was *Sleep, My Little One* composed by one of the school's piano teachers, Mr Hansford. It begins and ends with a solo tenor part that was sung by a sixth former, Owen Ravden. We all very much enjoyed singing it, and were very grateful to our accompanist, Mr Fletcher-Campbell. As well as *Sleep*, we also sang a traditional Christmas carol, *Coventry Carol*, over Mr Fletcher-Campbell's piano. All of our peers in Lower School heard us perform these in the Lower School Carol Service.

We also sang *Away In A Manger* and were lucky enough to perform it with people from another continent, in spite of the pandemic, thanks to our ability to record over their music. A charity and music group, Brass for Africa, agreed to record *Away In A Manger* for us to sing to. It was difficult to sing in time with them as we were not able to hear their accompaniment whilst we recorded it, so we are very thankful for our choirmaster who conducted us all the way through the piece.

It was extremely successful, and we (mostly) managed to stay in time. All of us enjoyed the experience of singing to their recording, and were especially impressed when we saw it come together for the recording of this year's Christmas Concert. Seeing this in the Christmas Concert was a good end to our first term at Abingdon.

After another period of lockdown in the spring, finally in the Summer Term, we sang in an evensong at St. Helen's Church. Neither of us had sung in an evensong for Chapel Choir



before, but it was a great experience for all choristers, regardless of their previous experience singing in choirs, especially since we could now sing in front of a congregation. However, some precautions had to be taken and we were sorted by bubbles and not by voice. This was a challenge, as we were both used to singing next to choristers who sang the same voice part. In the service, we sang the John Stainer *Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis in B Flat*, and an anthem by S.S. Wesley called *Thou Wilt Keep Him In Perfect Peace*. It was not only enjoyable to be singing, but also a valuable learning experience for both of us. This was hopefully the first of many evensongs we will sing as part of Chapel Choir, and it will help us expand our choral abilities in the future.

Chapel Choir has been great for both of us. Our school is extremely fortunate to have a big enough space to sing with people across the school. Although singing as a choir has been harder lately, we have found it an enjoyable learning experience. We have considered it a highlight of our week, precisely because we got to be around people higher up in the school.

I, Edmund Kimber, did sing alto at my church choir, which I started at the beginning of the pandemic, but was only able to attend for a few months. I got used to singing beside all the altos in one pew. However, seeing as there are not many altos in the Lower School bubble, I could not sing beside an alto at Chapel Choir practices, and it was a challenge at first for me to ignore the masses of trebles around me. If it weren't for Chapel Choir, I would have had almost no singing opportunities for several months.

I, Henry Styer, used to sing in a choir back in California. Chapel Choir has been one of my favourite things in the school because it has helped me settle into a new school in a new country. In California, I used to be one of the oldest boys, but in Chapel Choir I am one of, if not the youngest, which means I have a lot more people to look up to and learn from, and I am very grateful for that. All in all, Chapel Choir has been my favourite thing I have done so far at this school.

Edmund Kimber, 1SHS and Henry Styer, 1HFCP

Library Service at Abingdon

On Wednesday afternoons, when many are out on the rugby pitches, shooting documentaries or getting to grips with the CCF flight simulator, the school library is bustling with action. Every week, a carefully curated team of up to twelve students, representing all years of the school, assembles to aid the librarian and assistant librarians in meeting the many demands of staff and students.

With over 16,000 books in the library and hundreds more arriving each month, we have our work cut out! In the past, we spent a substantial amount of time at the beginning of each session navigating the numerous shelves in order to return books to exactly the right place.

Now, with the slightly shortened period 7 plus COVID-19 precautions, our focus tends to start and end with the dozens of new books that arrive in the library each week. As we aim to turn around student and staff book requests very quickly, we end up with a lot to get done in a short space of time.

Our 'production line' is an intricate, rigorous and involved process, requiring a great deal of attention to details

and close coordination between team members. Spreading ourselves over the whole of the library's central seating area, we stick all manner of labels and stickers to each book, before finishing it off with a protective cover - and of course checking the quality of all of these jobs! Woe betide anyone who positions bookplates anything other than perfectly straight and centred.

The relative complexity of what outsiders might imagine to be a straightforward process opens the way for the development of 'specialist' roles within the team. Covering hardback books with clear plastic is particularly involved, so we are pursuing a creative solution to automate it (the necessary hardware has twice been turned back by Customs, but we live in hope).

Some of the jobs within the production line are more favoured than others, with everyone competing not to have to do paperback covering! Nevertheless, everything has to get done, thanks to an ever-evolving organisational structure which veers between the opposite extremes of absolute autocracy and communalist hyper-syndicalism.

Naturally, an Other Half activity consisting of people who enjoy spending their afternoon putting stickers and covers on books might seem like not

that much fun. But as it happens, it's surprisingly exciting and well-enjoyed by all involved.

Whilst some would joke that we're only there for the confectionary reward at the end of the session, there's a definite satisfaction in helping see more books purchased, processed, and put onto the shelves each week and knowing that your efforts are having a positive effect.

A more-than-cursory glance at the team might also surprise you - we are by no means the stereotypically quiet, bookish people many would expect of student librarians. On the contrary, our favourite pastime, it sometimes seems, is talking, and discussing, and arguing, on every subject under the sun, from the design of school ties to the electoral geography of the United Kingdom. In moments of reflection, we like to think that we're recreating the spirit of a seventeenth-century coffeehouse... (our members are often keen debaters and / or involved with Model United Nations). Forget any thoughts of monastic silence; while we are small in number - a dozen students in a facility that will comfortably seat 180 - Wednesday Period 7 is often the loudest and most argumentative the library gets.

Philip Kimber, 4CB



Equality Diversity and Inclusion Committee (EDI)

The Equality Diversity and Inclusion Committee is a new group, established in 2020. Our aim is to develop a greater understanding of how equality is realised at Abingdon School and encourage an inclusive environment where everyone feels welcome and valued. In our first six months, we were ably led by Mike MacLennan with assistance from Durotimi Adebutu, Andrey Gerasimov and Karum Sangha. The reins have now been handed over to Joshua Massey-Thompson, Ianto Brewer and Matthew Johnson.

Our mission statement is to:

Create an environment where equality, diversity and inclusion are valued, understood and promoted

Raise awareness about unfair discrimination and addressing potential bias

Implement effective strategies and activities to help forward this vision

Work to create an inclusive environment where all students and staff feel valued, accepted and understood



This year we split into three focus group, events, curriculum and communications, to help make tangible progress in reaching our goals. Below you can find out more about what each group did and the different projects we have undertaken.

In the communications section of the Equality Committee, we have had eight articles published in school publications over the year. We launched an Equality Committee Twitter and Instagram as well as an Equality Committee email for any queries or concerns students

may have had. A page on the school website has been created providing information on the committee subgroups as well as articles written by committee members. Finally, a survey was posted in the last week of the Summer Term in a bid to gauge the type of discrimination experienced by students outside school as well as inside the school. We aim to send this survey out on a yearly basis allowing us to see issues and address them, and hopefully, we will see that the EDI is making a positive impact on our community.

Our first assembly was put together by Durotimi, Karum and Mike with reflections from Mr Windsor. It examined the killing of George Floyd, the removal of Colston's statue, our own unconscious bias and the small microaggressions we may make, which might seem trivial, but to the person on the receiving end can accumulate and build up to a sense of being singled out. They put together another assembly on International Women's Day on the topic of Gender Equality. In the Summer Term, the events group produced a Head's Assembly on the topic of Black Lives Matter and our response to the killing of George Floyd one year on. We challenged the students and staff to reflect on where we should go next as individuals. This was presented



to the school and received positive feedback from members of staff and students. LGBTQIA+ History Month was marked with an assembly by Mr Windsor. To mark Pride Month in June two assemblies were put together, for the sixth form and Middle School. These focused on why it is important to celebrate Pride and contained contributions from a number of staff and students within the school. The English Department has supported us by putting together brilliant reading lists for Black History Month and Pride.

Over the course of the year, we have examined the Middle School curriculum and fed back our comments and suggestions to Reverend Gooding and Ms Hunt. This term we have been focused on the Lower Sixth and Upper Sixth Mindsets enrichment programme, analysing the Mindsets booklets and discussing all parts of the curriculum. In these discussions, we focussed on the teaching styles, and sensitivity necessary around certain subjects, resources to be used, the phrasing of teaching points and the actual content covered in the course.

As well as reviewing the Mindsets curriculum we have shifted part of our focus to Pride Month. We spent time brainstorming ideas for Pride Month such as the flying of a Pride flag at school, the development of an English Department Pride competition, the use of student and teacher voices in the Pride movement at Abingdon and the



introduction of speakers for next year's Pride Month.

In just one year on the EDI committee we believe we have made a positive impact on our community. We hope that this will be the start of a long-term engagement. Our plans for next year include the introduction of a Junior Equality Diversity and Inclusion Committee (the JEDIs).

Anyone who has an interest in creating a community that makes everyone feel welcome and comfortable at Abingdon should consider joining our group.

Ianto Brewer, 6DE, Matthew Johnson, 6OTL and Joshua Massey-Thompson, 6TJG



OA Penpals

As part of the third-year Service and Citizenship Scheme we have been exchanging letters with a group of five Old Abingdonians who had left school in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. We learnt of their lives before, during and after their time at Abingdon and about the school system they went through. I find it amazing how the people we wrote to lived in such a different time from ours, when coming from all over the globe and travelling for weeks to get to the school was commonplace for some pupils. Our world has shrunk a great deal in terms of travel times since 1950 when Major Hamer, the OA that I was writing to, left school. He had been to Africa and Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) and lived in India. He lived on a tea estate called Devarshola, 3000 feet up in the foothills of the Nilgiri Hills, which was on the edge of a game reserve where there had been sightings of tigers and panthers. There he went to a school called the Sir Henry Lawrence Memorial Royal Military School for the sons and daughters of British soldiers serving in India. His travels were very extensive and took place mostly during war time so he was used to taking part in boat drills.

Abingdon School was much smaller in 1950 than it is now, in terms of both the number of pupils and the school site - it owned Lower Field, Upper Field, Waste Court and Big School. There were boarders from across what was then the British Empire. Some boarders used to live in Larkhill House which meant



that they had a bit of a walk to get to the dining hall which was in what is now the Lower School Houseroom. The school used to be a Direct Grant school - meaning lots of the boys' fees were paid by the government. 11+ exams determined both which schools would allow you in and whether you would continue with your school education past 14 years old. Instead of GCSEs they had something called the School Certificate and in order to pass it you had to pass six subjects at the same time, including maths, English and science. If you failed any subjects you would have to resit all of the papers again. There were better results called credits and if you got five

credits, including maths and English, you were said to have matriculated and could progress to the sixth form and work towards the Higher School Certificate.

There were fewer core sports to choose from each term. In the Michaelmas Term there was only rugby, in the Lent Term there was rowing or hockey and in Summer Term there was cricket or rowing. Most rowers now have to run down to the boathouse, but back then they were allowed to use bicycles, as there was less traffic. Also there were a few rarer sports back then. For example, Rugby Fives was a game where two players would play against each other in a Rugby Fives court, which was very similar to a squash court, and it was played like squash, except with gloved hands rather than rackets.

The OAs that we were writing to have had lots of experiences - including going to university, travelling, investing in the stock market, and serving in the army - and it has been very interesting to hear about them. The OA penpals activity will continue in future terms and I am sure that the OAs will have plenty more tales to share. Some extracts from the letters we received this year are printed below.

Lucas Mueller-Quintino, 3SJ





In 1945 there were about 180 pupils. The School owned Lower Field, Upper Field and Waste Court. The lodge on Park Avenue was the 'home' for the young first-form boarders. Lacies Court was occupied by nuns evacuated from London. At the top of the drive where it turns sharp left was the Tuck Shop and the day boys' bicycle shed. The car park opposite the lodge was where the gardener grew potatoes! The whole school assembled in the morning for roll call by the prefects before a service in the chapel.

OA 1945

Because war was taking the young men away, nearly all our teachers were getting on a bit, in fact the Headmaster William Grundy probably should have been retired, but they all did a magnificent job even on the sports field!

In 1942 the school numbered about 210 boys including about 50 boarders who were placed in School House and Waste Court and later Lark Hill, so you can immediately see the size difference of the School when compared with today!

OA 1947

When I came to Abingdon I had already been to three other schools and was about the same age as you are now. This was because many of us had been on the move during the war years. I came to Abingdon after my fifth voyage between Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and England, taking in South Africa and India en route. Two of those were in wartime - Liverpool to Colombo, via Freetown, Durban and Cochin, in 1940, and

Bombay (Mumbai) to Liverpool, via the Suez Canal, in 1944. I had developed an interest in both geography and history during those years.

There is a book by Roger Mortimer on the history of Rowing at Abingdon (1840-1990) which contains a photo of our 1948 Coxed IV. The callow lad sitting on School House steps is me. Marlow Regatta was always great fun – little change there.

OA 1950

Rugby Fives is nothing to do with the game rugby, but is a cousin of badminton, but played in an enclosed rectangular court with a roof sloping from front to back and is played with a hard ball and a gloved hand. Points are gained by hitting the ball into the angles of the court as long as you keep the strike above a board stretching across the front wall and keep the ball in play. It is played by two players in singles, or with two teams of two, which is quite challenging as you have only a split second to decide which of your team

is best to hit a winning shot. The name arises because it originated at Rugby School.

OA 1953

The comments about your life at Abingdon take me back to 1965 when I was the same age as you. That was the year that Sir Winston Churchill died on 24 January. I can still recall the whole school being summoned to the Court Room (now replaced by Beech Court). The Headmaster, James Cobban, strode into the room, wearing his gown and mortar board, and spoke about Churchill and his greatness. You should know that during World War II Cobban was an important figure in military intelligence, so he knew Churchill well. At the end of his speech Cobban fled from the room overcome with emotion. On the way out he tripped up and landed on the floor. Such was the respect we boys felt for our Headmaster that not one titter of mirth came from a single boy's lips, although we did laugh about it afterwards. I can still recall that event clearly although it occurred 55 years ago.

One big difference when I joined the school in 1963 was that at the start of morning break the whole school would assemble in front of the main building looking out on Upper Field. In our four houses we were instructed to remove jackets and ties before being PE drilled by the prefects. This performance was conducted strictly and anyone passing by might observe all the boys covering these drills in strict sequence. I think this practice was stopped in 1965.

OA 1969



Abingdon School in Partnership

The aim of Abingdon School in Partnership is to build relationships with the local community and, in particular our partner schools, to the benefit of, and to challenge all staff and students across the town. The School has a long history of working with partner schools on a range of projects from Abingdon Film Academy in senior schools, to the primary school Festival of Languages. Over the course of this year ASiP events have seen almost 4000 student experiences from our partner schools, involving over 100 Abingdon students and almost 50 staff. Teaching staff have volunteered over 300 hours of their time, while support staff have given more than 500 hours of theirs.

As a forward thinking, outward looking school, Abingdon is keen to forge further links with schools, both primary and secondary, within the town and surrounding area.

Some of the highlights of ASiP's recent activities have included:

Peer Support Lead programme

Academic coaching

Arts Forum

Shlomo beatboxing event

Mental health and wellbeing webinars

Abingdon Film Academy

Leadership opportunities with local primary schools

Peer Support Leads

The Peer Support Lead programme is a town-wide partnership that involves sixth form students from six schools across the town providing pastoral support for younger peers. They are trained up in counselling and listening skills which help them promote positive mental health and wellbeing, and support younger students as and when needed. The role helps to place mental health and wellbeing at the forefront of all schools across the town. Below are some testimonies from two of Abingdon's PSLs from 2020/21, Hugo

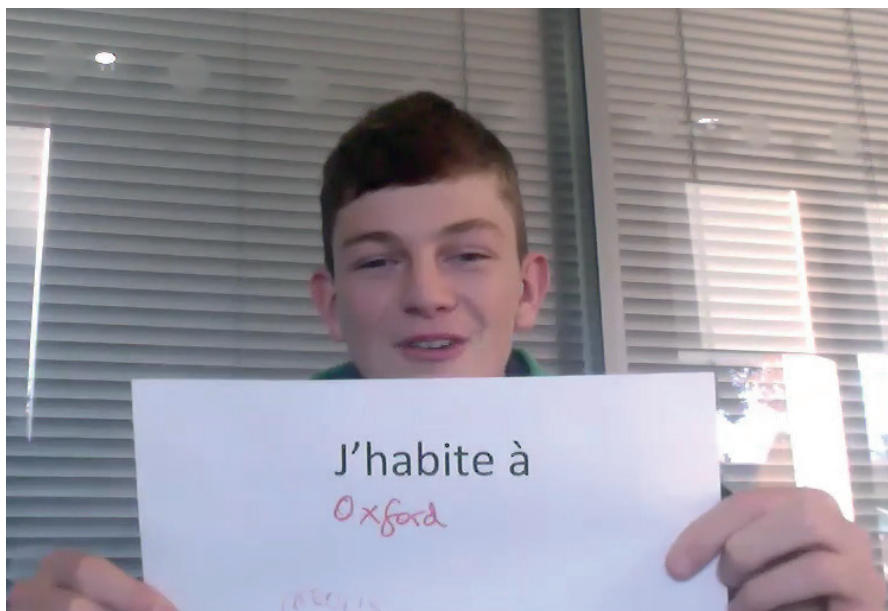


Leedham and Tom Gardener.

I was chosen to be a part of the Peer Support Lead programme (PSL) which involved learning about pastoral roles in the school as well as how to provide support for younger pupils with (as my role came to an end) more of a focus on one-to-one meetings with struggling students.

Before the start of the programme we were given specialist training by a variety of counsellors on listening skills and dealing with difficult situations students may be struggling with. This was extremely valuable to give me the necessary skills so I could perform my role effectively. I found that the one-to-one meetings with students were very

beneficial to my life inside and outside of school. Getting to know a single student and spend time with them weekly over a few months helps to build a bond and trust that I have found incredibly rewarding, as well as being an invaluable learning opportunity for myself, and how I empathise with others. By taking part in the Peer Support Lead programme I was able to develop my ability actually to listen to others. After taking part in this programme I am aware that we all spend our time waiting for someone to finish speaking when having a conversation, just so we can say what we want to get across, instead of listening to what they actually have to say for themselves. The PSL programme has taught me to respond to others about what they are



struggling with or wanting to talk with me about, rather than merely listening to them and moving onto my own point.

Hugo Leedham, VIIM

This past year I have been a Peer Support Lead, a role that involved meeting with students to discuss aspects of school life they might be struggling with as well as making powerpoints and other material to spread awareness of our role across the school. The role also required several training sessions on Zoom with experienced counsellors who taught us how to keep conversations going and how to make sure students are comfortable. Part of these sessions I particularly enjoyed were the breakout room sessions where we were able to practise the skills we had been learning in the Zoom training. This project was a fantastic opportunity for me to contribute to the wellbeing side of the school community, something that I am passionate about. It was also an opportunity to interact with students from the other year groups of the school that normally I wouldn't have got to know, which was a nice change to typical school life. Personally I have taken a lot of skills away from this project including much improved communication skills and the ability to work as part of a team rather than as an individual. I would highly recommend this experience to anyone who wants to make a difference to the wellbeing of fellow students and wants to learn important life skills that will help them even after school.

Tom Gardener, VIKJY

Academic Coaching

This new partnership programme involved Lower Sixth students from across the town who were trained in leadership and coaching before applying these skills to support the learning of others. Training was in both leadership and coaching skills, which took place over a seven week period, were offered to students through external providers including Oxfordshire Youth and Desborough College. After completing this training, with teacher support these students applied what they had learnt, and had online coaching sessions with third-and-fourth-year pupils from

schools across the town. This coaching helped pupils develop positive study habits through the coaching process which involves practical goal setting and reflective practice. It provided the Lower Sixth pupils with the opportunity to develop skills of leadership, communication, empathy and teamwork while offering invaluable support to younger students from across the town. Below two academic coaches reflect on their experience.

I was able to take part in the Academic Coaching programme, which included a six week coaching course where I learnt about the importance of listening and key skills like leadership which I would need to use throughout the programme. The first three weeks consisted of learning what makes a good and effective leader. The next three weeks taught me the different techniques that I could use while coaching such as the ability to listen carefully and not jump into providing an answer, instead allowing the coachees to find the answer for themselves. I was then paired up with a year 9 student from another partner school in Abingdon. All the coaches worked together each week to tackle some of the academic problems that the year 9s had.

The part of the programme that I found most beneficial was the fact that I got to interact with people from local partnership schools during the training who I would never usually come into contact with. Another thing that I liked

about this project was the fact that I got to help a student from another school overcome some difficulties that he had. Even after I finished my coaching conversation it was really easy just to chat with my coachee. I have also learnt some key skills that I will take away from this project with me: one of these was the ability not to provide an answer to my coachee but rather talk it through with them and let them decide the best course of action.

Matthew Jarvis, 6DE

During the Academic Coaching programme, I found the fact that as part of the programme we needed to be able to socialise and work with people we had not met before from our neighbouring schools around Abingdon very beneficial. This is because it made me go outside my comfort zone and I learnt new skills in the process, which I will use in the future. I really enjoyed working with the students from other schools, as I got on really well with them and it was great to meet new people with a different background to me. By taking part in this programme I have realised that I have become less anxious when answering questions, even if my answer may not be correct. This has helped me both inside school, especially in class, and outside school. I have also gained some social and leadership skills that will be useful in the future.

Murray Langley, 6TJG

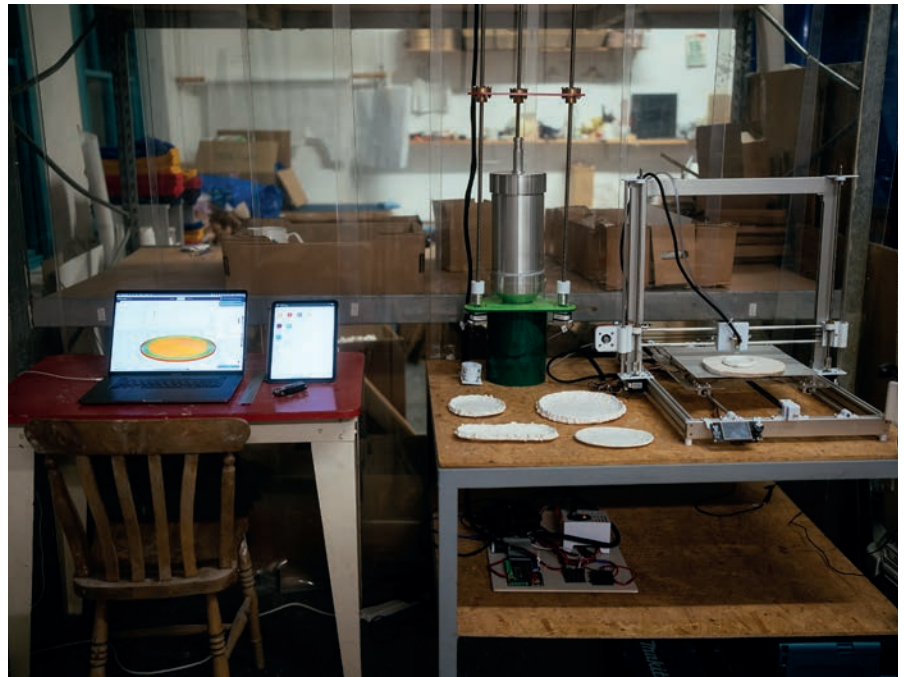


An Adventure in Design and Technology

About to start my final year at Abingdon, I find myself preoccupied not just by university applications, the prospect of A levels, and gruelling rowing sessions, but also the challenges and opportunities that come from running a global company. Sometimes I find myself wondering if I am playing a part in some gigantic simulation or a lucid dream.

Last year, along with teenagers around the country, I found myself spending long periods of time staring at my teachers and fellow students on a small laptop screen, with restrictive access to the outside world. With energy to spare, I invested time in pursuing a long-term goal: designing and building my own brand of 3D printers. I had been fascinated by this technology since my second year and had become convinced that I could fill a gap in the market. No one appeared to be offering a 3D printer that was a decent specification, affordable, and ethically manufactured.

Between the dream and its realisation, I encountered several prosaic stumbling blocks. First was the need to learn Marlin, a specialist language based on Python which is the standard language for most 3D printers (in fact all 3D printers apart from Makerbots - but we



don't talk about that). Fortunately, my path was eased by my familiarity with numerous other coding languages. Whilst applying my newfound knowledge to my own projects, I realised there was a large market for it. The same evening, I started advertising myself on Fiverr - an online marketplace for creatives: SJ-Designs was born.

Literally the next morning, I opened my inbox to find a deluge of orders for custom firmware. The next few months represented a steep but hugely enjoyable learning curve as I worked with clients from all over the world on all sorts of projects. Everything from a set of bespoke 3D printers to a sweet

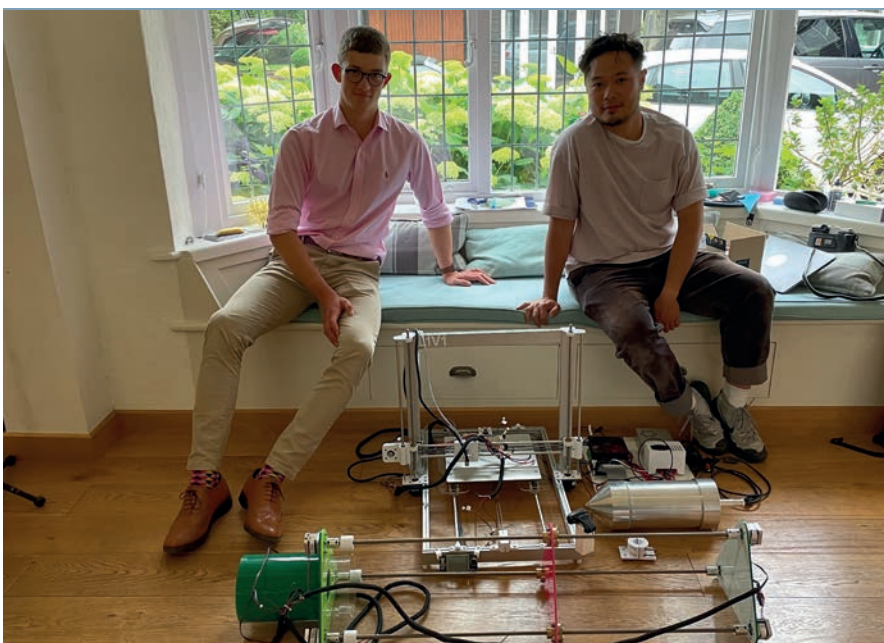
dispensary. At the same time, I was providing custom 3D design work as well as running a 3D printing consultancy where I advised people on repairs, upgrades, purchases and more.

It was through this work that I ended up with my first major client: a renowned fashion designer who was taking a masters in psychology. His plan was to create a set of 3D printers that could print using bone china as well as an accompanying exhibition. He reached out to me with his idea. It was something that had never been done before. He asked if I could do it, under the impression I was a university student. I, of course, said yes! This was the start of my business as now I know it.

This very happy encounter prompted me to carry out a long-overdue rebrand: literally overnight, I changed everything - my website, my logo, even my colour scheme. At the same time, I got rid of my Fiverr advertising and firmware design in order to focus solely on designing bespoke 3-axis CNC machines.

I am now a year into that contract and am pleased to report it could not be going much better.

The first six months were spent designing and testing the components of the machine. I had to design the whole thing from scratch whilst running in-depth testing and analysis. The hardest part was designing the extrusion system,



as no one has ever made an extrusion system for bone china before.

Designing and testing the physical mechanism as well as the accompanying electronics and then integrating that into the main machine so it all ran seamlessly was incredibly rewarding; throughout the whole process, it was down to just me to figure it out. There was no book, no video, no person I could go to. Just me.

I spent a month building the final prototype and have spent the rest of the time since then testing it and making modifications. I am currently in the process of designing and building the final set of 3D printers to be used for the exhibition.

A year of punishing workloads, slightly optimistic but achieved deadlines, and the slight challenge of fitting in four A levels along the way has led to enormous rewards. Through designing these products, I have gained a huge amount of exposure to the bespoke machining industry, which in turn has led to me being offered many more commissions and opportunities; one offer which I was sadly forced to decline included being flown to Hong Kong to build the centrepiece of a major exhibition. I have built up a reputation for quality and reliability - as in everything I do, I work, and I work, and I don't stop working until my client is completely satisfied.

Throughout the year, I have benefited hugely from the support I have received from OAs. Particular highlights include pro-bono legal advice from an IP (intellectual property) lawyer on protecting my products; guidance from the CEO of a design company on the process of getting my designs the appropriate industry certifications required for them to be brought to market; and a CCF/OA drinks event which led to an introduction to Professor Bill O'Riordan who was the chief scientist at Fujitsu and a governmental advisor on technology.

None of these, however, quite measure up to the serendipity of a meet-the-tutor event, a week after I had started developing an environmental monitoring system to optimise indoor rowing training sessions. Having completed my prefect duties I was introduced to a parent who

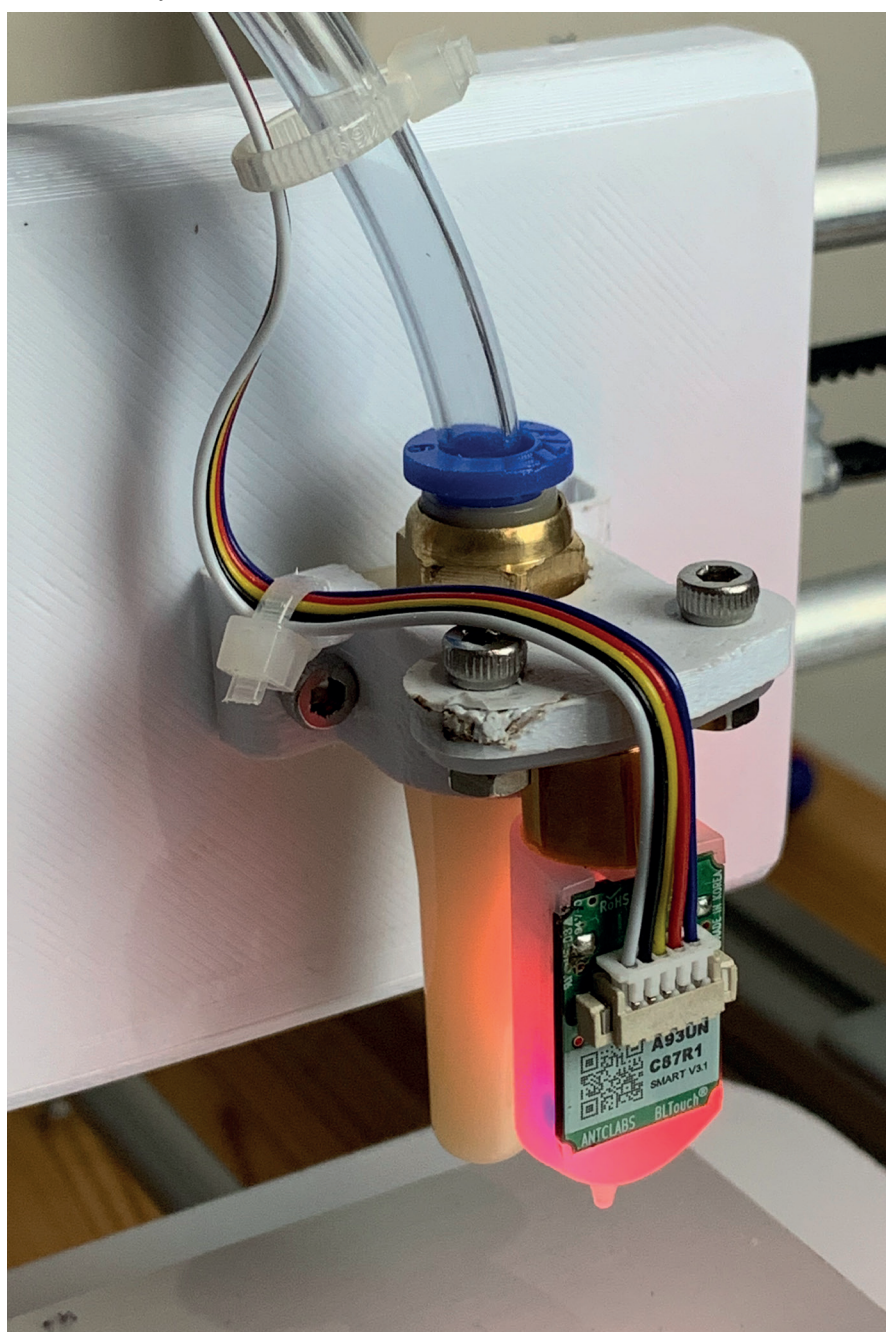
turned out to know the CEO of British Rowing and offered to introduce me to them. Hopefully, this will lead to me being able to test the new technology in collaboration with British Rowing, but we will see where that goes.

While everything I have done has been driven by a search for technological advancements which I believe fill an important gap in the market, at the same time my work has a social aspect and purpose. My team of manufacturers and suppliers, who are located all over the world, have been chosen on the basis that they are all small, people-centred operations that work in an ethical and sustainable way. I have committed

myself to only selecting work where I can help benefit others in some way. Knowing that everything I do will help someone, somewhere, gives me even more drive to succeed.

Looking back over the past year, I still can't quite believe that I am where I am, have done the things I have done, and now know the people I know. What started as a simple summer project has grown into the potential for a full-time job in which I can bring all my passion to work. As I look forward, university (I hope) awaits but equally, so do further exciting developments for SJ-Designs.

Harry Watkins, 6PDW



CCF Charity Challenge

After the pandemic prevented the 2020 CCF Charity Challenge from going ahead, Abingdon CCF was determined to make the 2021 event its most ambitious yet. The target this year was to honour the Old Abingdonians who died serving in the First World War by travelling the distance required to visit the sites of their war graves. In doing so, participants would travel from sites in Abingdon, across Europe, and finish in Basra, Iraq, covering a total distance of 8,175 kilometres.

This formidable distance was tackled in two sections. In the five weeks leading up to 16 June, senior cadets prepared for the 24-hour final push by completing half of the total distance, and in doing so, visited the war graves of 50 OAs located in France, Belgium, Germany and Italy. The goal was then to complete the remaining 4,000 kilometres within a 24-hour period on 16 June. This distance from Cremona, Italy to Basra was tackled with the combined might of cadets from the sixth form and fifth year, CCF staff, OAs, and volunteers from 3 Regiment Royal Logistics Corps at Dalton Barracks. The diverse range of participants was matched by the methods used to cover the distance, which included running, cycling, kayaking and paddle boarding. Special mention is deserved for Jasper Trilk, whose continuous cycling for the entire duration of the event led to an individual contribution of 362 kilometres, and for Edward Spackman, James Robinson, and Aidan Coster, who covered their distance by means of a march while outfitted with fully loaded bergens and webbing.

Over £3,600 was raised from the event, with proceeds going to two charities selected by cadets. The first, SSAFA, is the UK's oldest tri-service armed forces charity, helping those who have given so much to the country by offering support to servicemen, veterans, and their families. The second, the Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM), is a mental health charity, with a particular focus on men's mental health. We are proud that the money raised went



towards supporting two causes so dear to our hearts. After a year of cancelled camps, visits, and other events, it was satisfying, especially for the departing seniors, to conclude their CCF journey with such an incredibly worthwhile and challenging undertaking.

This event would not have been possible without the tireless support of everyone involved. Our deepest appreciation goes to Sqn Ldr Cottam, Cpt Edwards, and all the other CCF staff for supporting the cadets in the planning, organisation, and execution of the entire event. Invaluable help with development, logistics and

marketing was provided from many other parts of the school, including the OA Club, the School Archivist, and the PE Department. We were proud to welcome OAs and volunteers from 3 Regiment RLC to participate in the event and help us tackle the considerable distance needed in the final 24-hour period. Lastly, we are forever grateful to those who donated for making this year's event a resounding success and for empowering the Abingdon CCF to make a such a profound contribution to two incredible causes.

F/Sgt Michael Lam, VIJPT



Young Enterprise

As part of the Young Enterprise programme the students work as a team to set-up a company to market, manufacture and sell a product. Students gain an understanding of how a business works and how wealth and employment are created. They develop their ability to work in a team, along with communication and time management skills. The students also experience key business functions such as marketing, financial management, sales, customer care and personnel management. This helps build self-confidence, self-efficacy and a willingness to take on responsibility and initiative. Below is a piece from Alexander Lees on his time in Young Enterprise this year.

David James

I joined the Young Enterprise scheme in the hope of gaining an insight into what life in a small business would feel like. Some may argue that Young Enterprise is merely an after-school club, and nothing like a business. However, in my opinion, it follows the same principles and processes as a real business. At the outset, we divided up into different teams and brainstormed ideas, and over the course of several weeks, we had one ready to go. As slow as it may have



seemed initially, it made me realise that in business you have to work as a team.

Initially, we had many contradicting ideas, not seeming to get anywhere fast. In the end, we decided on customisable wooden signs under the company name of WoodStuff. Our overriding concern was that our signs had to be totally sustainable. Over the following weeks, we also spent time creating our website for marketing and selling our product. However, another lockdown meant that we experienced a hiatus in the manufacturing of our product. So, in the interim, we improvised and adapted our business to work around the

restrictions. An environmental blog was created to emphasize the importance of sustainability and social media platforms were used to raise awareness of our product. Unfortunately, the usual trade fairs did not take place but we were able to take part in both the Oxfordshire Dragons' Den process and The Young Enterprise South Oxfordshire Showcase final, albeit remotely. The online Dragons' Den style process gave us an excellent insight into responding under pressure to business-orientated questions.

Once we returned to school, we were in a more viable position to manufacture our product and accept customer orders. We generated a pleasing number of sales from the website and from promoting our product through word of mouth at school. We managed to make an overall profit from the sale of our signs and we were delighted with the extremely positive customer feedback we received. However, I was much happier with the lessons I took away from Young Enterprise. I learned the intrinsic value of teamwork along with gaining some invaluable entrepreneurial skills. As a result, I feel more confident as a person, and if I can take away one piece of advice for the future, it would be that the more effort you put into something, the more you get from it. I would thoroughly recommend Young Enterprise as an extremely worthwhile scheme.

Alexander Lees, 4HCGM



Interview with a World Champion

When former BMX halfpipe World Champion Mike Mullen visited Abingdon to run BMX workshops for Lower School pupils, he was interviewed by Dan Phillips, 2SJC.

When did you know you wanted to do BMX as a career?

I was probably about 10 or 11. I was sitting at home and I saw a BMX thing on TV, it was a bit of a craze back then in the mid-80s. It just seemed exciting for me and when I got a bike and started to try some of these tricks, it just felt in my zone and it always has. I think if you can make a career out of something that you find fun, then you put in more time and effort.

Do you do any other types of cycling?

All biking is fun but I tend to stick to BMX, just so I've got a feel of the bike. When I go to a different bike and then



get back on the BMX, it feels like I'm in someone else's shoes. BMX feels right for me.

How much does your bike mean to you?

I've got a few different bikes. There's one that I use in schools and that's quite dear to me. But I do have one that's my

competition bike and that lives more or less in the wardrobe in my bedroom as it means a lot to me, whereas all the others are in the shed. That one would be hard to replace.

Do you ever get your competition bike out?

You know, I open the door sometimes to have a little look but I haven't been on it for a long time. If I do ever ride the halfpipe again, I'll use that bike.

If you couldn't do BMX as a job, what job would you choose?

I did train as a designer and, having gone to university, I got a Master's in design, graphics and multimedia websites and things like that. So I'd probably still be doing that.

After university, I was riding BMX displays in the summer and then doing design work in the winter. I think now I'd probably rather do something active outside of BMX, maybe working with dogs or something like that. Just sitting in front of a computer all day was stressful.

How do you deal with injuries or setbacks?

Good question. It can be one of those things that knocks your confidence, especially if it's an injury where you can't carry on, like if you've broken a bone or you've pulled a ligament or something. Luckily, touchwood, I haven't had too





many in my career. I've broken my collarbone and some ribs and things like that. I actually think the mental scars are the hardest to heal. But it's just about positive visualisation - because most people will visualise everything going wrong, and see all the worst stuff that can happen. So it's just about controlling your thoughts and getting through those challenges.

What's the feeling you get on your BMX?

There is this moment on the halfpipe, where you land and you pump your legs to pick up speed. You think if I land this move, I'm going to pump as hard as I can. And if you do, you're then 12 feet in the air on the other side - it's that thrill of being on the edge of what's possible for you.

So what's the biggest mistake you've ever made? And how did you handle it?

There was one year when BMX was going well and I had lots of sponsors, and I went to the World Championships, but I didn't prepare. I was a bit overconfident and I ended up going out partying with friends the night before the competition. I wasn't fresh the next day, let's say, and I crashed and had a bad accident. I ended up losing sponsors and all sorts, but sometimes the worst accidents or the worst mistakes teach you the best lessons. The next few

competitions I made sure I got my head down and practised. I sorted out my diet and sorted out my social life, and I did then win the World Championships. So the best things come after the worst things often.

Do you have any regrets to do with BMX?

No, no, not at all, because even the bad things have shaped my thinking and direction. I guess there was probably a time when I could have gone to the States and tried to ride in the X Games and things like that and I never really just went for it, but I've no real regrets over that. It's all just learning. You can learn from any sort of setback.

What's your plan for the future?

Now I'm retired from the competition, I plan to share the excitement of brand BMX with as many people as possible. Just like we've had with the second years today, getting you on the bikes and trying out some of these tricks and realising how much fun it can be. And also learning how you can build your confidence by challenging yourself, not just on the bike, but in using that same way of thinking in other areas of life.

Dan Phillips, 2SJC



Hampton Court Palace Trip

Hampton Court Palace was the home of Thomas Wolsey, Henry VIII and then his royal successors, but for one day in July it was ours. After watching a short documentary on the palace and on its history at school, we took the hour and a half trip to Surrey. The whole year group was excited - most of us hadn't been on a trip like this for over a year.

There it was. The palace in all of its glory. As soon as we arrived the competition had started. In our groups, we were set a task to see who could take a photo with the most people in and then another where we had to take some photos of certain things we would see walking round. As always this was bound to be extremely competitive amongst the groups but we actually started the day with lunch (we were starving) which left us the afternoon to go and explore the rest of the palace.

Time for exploration! We started in the courtyards and answered some questions about them in some booklets we were given by our teachers. Henry's State Apartments were up next. At this point, I (and others in the other groups) had to make a short speech on Henry's divorce from Catherine of



Aragon and thus his 'Break from Rome'. The State Apartments were elaborate and beautiful, especially the Great Hall's 'Abraham Tapestries'. This was followed by another talk about Henry's early life by another second year in our group. We were also spoken to by a member of the Lower Sixth (three came with us) about this topic. It was followed by a visit to the 'Gold & Glory' exhibition. This was fascinating as it focused on the 'Field of Cloth of Gold' which took place in 1520

and gave a real insight as to what it would have been like living as a courtier at that time.

In the documentary we had seen at school, we learnt about how a newer, baroque section of the palace was added by William III and Mary. This is where we visited next starting with another talk by a member of the Lower Sixth. It seemed a completely different place with a different style of architecture. This was very interesting because of the paintings they had which were of a Renaissance style - and there were a lot of them! There were none of these in the Tudor section, just images of Henry and his parliament.

Finally my favourite part of the trip - the kitchens. I loved how there was still a smell which could be ever so slightly reminiscent of their former glory. I also liked the setup showing what it may have previously been like. For me this was by far the best bit.

Souvenir shopping and ice cream rounded off an excellent day. I would like to thank everyone involved for making it so good, especially Mr Chase. For us second years, this was the first and last day trip which all of us attended in Lower School.

Sam Wormald, 2SJC



Prize Giving

Professor Stevens, Governors, Headmaster, members of staff, prize receivers, parents and the class of 2021, Good morning.

It is certainly a great pleasure for me to speak here in person to many of you on this Amey Theatre Stage for the first and the last time this academic year. For once, I am confident that no poor internet connection would lead either Freddie Merrett or myself to disconnect from Zoom like in one of our Head's Assemblies. To many of you who have watched those presentations, you will also be pleased to know that I have taken an invaluable lesson on elocution and hopefully won't be butchering the pronunciation of people's names.

Firstly, I would like to congratulate all winners on receiving their prizes today. This again serves as a testament to the determination and diverse abilities of Abingdonians, ranging from academics, to sportsmen, musicians, artists, writers, and many more who are being recognised despite the pandemic. Now I would like to take a few moments to address my peers, the graduating class of 2021. I want to start by commending the 188 Upper Sixth students. Our year group was able to survive a global pandemic, two tough lockdowns, and the difficulties of remote Zoom lessons. The bouncebackability is phenomenal,



and it has also prompted many of us to invest time in accomplishing things we usually wouldn't have the time to. Just to name one or two, Owen Ravden decided to record an album; Freddie Merrett was to start a cricket coaching company; and Morgan Atkins honed his cooking skills through the joys of Instagram.

58 years ago, on this very day, US President John F. Kennedy spoke to the citizens of West Berlin. Apart from his famous remark of "Ich bin ein Berliner", his speech brought about a sense of optimism and hope for people in West and East Germany, and the endless

possibilities that could exist without the Berlin Wall. Yet the quote that struck me the most was this: "You live in a defended island of freedom, but your life is part of the main." Although being said under very different circumstances, I think this quote fits in well with our leavers today.

Our "defended island" isn't freedom but safety, and how we have been living under this close-knit community of support and guidance for the past few years. However, we are now about to move into adulthood, which may be more exciting yet also unpredictable. Although there is no doubt that we will continue to face countless obstacles and challenges along the way, we should be optimistic and resilient, as we have been throughout our school careers.

Our past few years of Abingdon life have also been accompanied by the growing calls for equality. Exactly six years ago on the 26 June, the US Supreme Court ruled that same-sex couples had the fundamental right to marry under the Fourteenth Amendment to the US Constitution. James Obergefell's fight has led all fifty states of the US to establish same-sex marriage and moved the country one step closer to becoming a more accepting society. Last year, George Floyd's death sparked the Black Lives Matter movement around the world, prompting politicians to address the urgent need for racial equality. Knowing that there are still





immense challenges facing the world, we should feel fortunate to have been a part of the Abingdon family that celebrates diversity and inclusivity, not least shown by the establishment of the Equalities Committee and for the first time, flying the LGBTQIA+ flag during Pride Month. Moving forward, I hope that apart from the determination we have in our respective fields, we can walk in the footsteps of Mr Obergefell and have the same grit to contribute to a more progressive and equal world. We, the Class of 2021, are now in a better position to make critical contributions and improvements, wherever life takes us, in whatever way, large or small.

I must acknowledge that it is unsettling to have spent our last year in school under Covid restrictions, not to mention having to take online lessons for a term, but I want us not to dwell on these uneventful memories, but those that have made us laugh and ponder from time to time. I urge all of us to remember the friendships we have moulded along the way; the achievements we, as a year group, have pulled off; the daily jokes that have been circulating around school; and the many more memories we have created throughout our two, five or even seven years at Abingdon.

I want to thank the Headmaster, Mr Dawswell, the academic, pastoral and support staff for their continuous support and guidance throughout our journey of becoming the fine adults we are today. Former Prime Minister of Turkey Mustafa

Kemal Ataturk once said, “A good teacher is like a candle – it consumes itself to light the way for others.” Therefore, thank you to our teachers, for passing on the “light”, not only of knowledge, but of virtue and integrity as we move on to our next steps of life.

As a boarder, I must thank our wonderful matrons, our boarding tutors, and the cleaners for enduring our messy rooms and for their thoughtful care over the past few years. And I want all of us to give a round of applause, to thank our parents, who have given their unconditional love and encouragement throughout our entire lives, for we couldn’t have made it this far without them. To the Prefect Dream Team, thank you for enduring the additional duties, occasionally under torrential rain, while also not losing motivation despite the complete lack of tours and social events. I am grateful for having such a great partner-in-crime, Freddie, for constantly supporting me and for sharing the load from time to time. Last but not least, I want to thank my peers for a fruitful five years here at Abingdon; I certainly would not have had such an exciting journey, albeit with the occasional spatter of embarrassment, to fondly recollect without you all. Thank you for entrusting me to take on the most honourable role I have experienced so far.

So, I wish every one of you all the very best in your future endeavours, and I can’t wait to meet up with you one day

to see what life journeys we’ve taken. I now and forever will proudly say “I am an Old Abingdonian”.

Andreas Lo, VIBDS

Good Morning,

I can’t quite believe that I am here, at prize giving today, saying goodbye when in truth I really feel as though I have only just said hello. Delivering this speech this morning evokes a confounding array of emotions, not just melancholic, but also an overwhelming sense of jubilation because since that first day, bonds have grown stronger; minds have grown sharper; and hair has certainly grown



longer – Aidan, Chobbs and others, bravo.

My time here and all of our sixth form lives have undoubtedly been impacted by the pandemic, with countless cancellations of fixtures and concerts; uncertainty over exams and the next chapter of our lives; and most of all, something we can never get back, time together lost.

As I reflect back over our experiences during the last few months this quote from the 17th century poet John Donne seems so pertinent: “No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main”.

Our year group and indeed the school is blessed with a real depth and diversity of talent - in our time here we have graced fields with national and international sportsmen; classrooms with human calculators and erudite scholars, and theatre halls with extraordinary musicians and thespians. So, as we venture beyond this world of cerise and white, let this same curiosity and endeavour that has created so many successes to date, be combined with the mental fortitude gained over the last two years. It is the coalescence of resilience, diligence and talent that sets the year group of 2021 apart.

It would be an impossible task to try to encapsulate and crystalise all the memories of our time here in this short piece. The school, like us, has evolved since you and even I took our first steps around the site, although the essence of Abingdon endures. We have also witnessed immense global change: the UK finding its feet post Brexit, progress in the ongoing battle for equality, and of course the pandemic which has challenged science and society in so many ways. I believe we are truly geared up to face these changes, in no small part thanks to the education we have received here.

To our teachers, we owe a great debt to you all. You went above and beyond, welcoming us virtually into your homes, ensuring that we kept up the pace with seldom few hiccups. Throughout our time here, be it two, five or seven years you have challenged us, questioned us and yes, at times, assigned us a little

more prep than we would care for. This has helped to shape, challenge and inform our views of the world around us and laid the foundation for a successful transition into the next chapter of our lives.

To Mr Windsor and Mr Dawswell, thank you for guiding and supporting Andreas and myself over the course of the last year. Mr Dawswell, I aspire to be half as organised as you at any point in my life and Mr Windsor, your approachability, calming manner, and assuring influence has been just the antidote to these unsettling times.

To all of the support staff – the unsung heroes who kept Abingdon functioning; it is work that is hugely appreciated. Your efforts have helped to get us back to and keep us in school so that we could enjoy these last few months of learning and friendship in relative normality.

And to our parents who have undoubtedly made many sacrifices in allowing us to attend and maximise our time at Abingdon - thank you.

Finally, my peers. It has been a true honour to have shared this experience with you all; it was surreal that some of you felt I had what it takes to carry out this role. I owe the greatest debt of

gratitude to you all for welcoming me in the school, spurring me on to become the best possible version of myself and for making this whirlwind experience so enjoyable that the lost time from the pandemic pales in comparison to the time spent with you all. I only wish I could have had longer.

We are a year group and a generation that will have to front up to and solve many challenges, but that also brings immense opportunity. If this year has taught us anything it is to take nothing for granted and to savour every moment. And in the words of Stephen Hawking:

“Remember to look up at the stars and not down at your feet. Be curious. And however difficult life may seem there is always something you can do and succeed at. It matters that you don't just give up”.

So the very best of luck to you all as you leave the safe haven of Park Road, I look forward to catching up with you all in the not too distant future and hearing about all of your endeavours, but of course in the meantime, please heed the immortal advice of Mr Southwell-Sander, “Don't do anything that he wouldn't do”. Thank you.

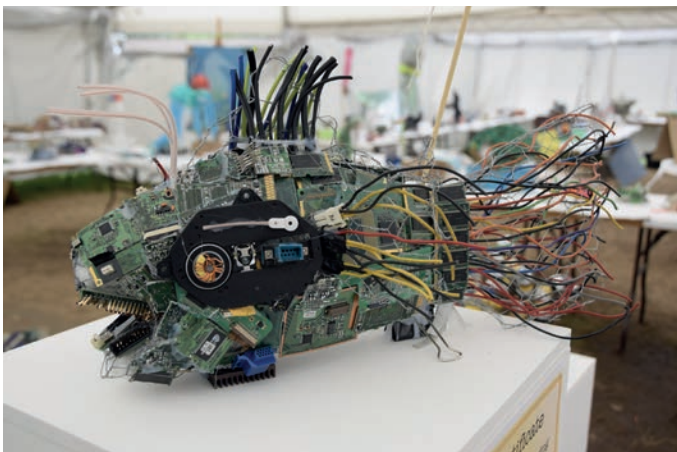
Freddie Merrett, VIALD



Recycled Sculpture Festival

As part of July's Celebration of the Arts, pupils were challenged to create an animal from recycled materials. The results were truly spectacular!





Second Year Adventure Weekend

On Saturday 10 July, at 8:00am in the morning, 58 members of the second year left the coach park for a weekend away from home. Our destination was PGL Liddington, just outside Swindon. Once we had arrived, we dropped our belongings off in our dormitories and then split up into our 5 activity groups. There was a wide variety of activities on offer at the PGL centre, all challenging in different ways, some challenging our fears and some challenging our skills. Each day, we took part in 4 activities.

A real highlight was the giant swing, where we were pulled up very high on a swing, and then dropped and left to swing back and forth. This really made your stomach jump, but after the initial shock and fear of the drop, it was really enjoyable. We were, of course, held in by harnesses and on the second run our legs felt like they were on fire due to the harnesses digging in. I have to say that this was my favourite activity as it was fun, helped me conquer some fears, and was a great experience to share with friends.



The trapeze was another activity that looked terrifying to start with, where we had to jump from a platform to grab hold of a metal bar. I remember the fear I felt before I jumped off, as launching myself from a wooden ledge about 5 metres up into thin air seemed to go against all of my primal instincts, but the sense of elation when I caught hold of the trapeze was amazing.

Another activity on offer was Jacob's Ladder, which was an activity where teamwork was developed and more fears overcome. We had to work in teams to climb a massive ladder where the gaps between rungs were smaller at the bottom and greater at the top. This meant that the higher you went physically, the greater your fears were challenged emotionally. Teamwork was developed in this activity as we relied on our teammates to give a helping hand (or knee) when needed.

On the Sunday evening, the night before we departed from the centre, the final of Euro 2020 took place and we were able to watch it all together in a theatre room on the big screen. Everyone was dressed up in their England attire, with shirts, hats and flags. The room was laden with snacks and a tense atmosphere. After the early England goal, there was a sonic boom as we all screamed in joy. Then came the long wait to the end, as we tried to hold on to the 1-0 lead. Everyone in the room wanted England to win and the atmosphere was very intense. However Italy equalised and at once all our hearts sank.

When the final whistle blew and it went to penalties, we were nervous, knowing England's history of penalties. When the penalties were over, the whole



room and England fans worldwide were disappointed beyond measure. Plenty of post-match analysis then took place once we were back in our dormitories. Despite the result, it was certainly a great communal experience to watch the game together.

After both of the Easter residential trips that are usually part of the Lower School experience had been cancelled for our year group due to Covid, this trip was a really nice way to round off the great two years we had had in Lower School, almost providing one last dance before we took the leap into the great abyss of Middle School, and made up for some of the time we had lost with friends because of lockdowns. The trip was great as it made us face our fears, shattering our expectations of ourselves and each other. It challenged us both physically and mentally, as we had to believe in ourselves and each other, fostered teamwork, and cemented friendships. It was a great experience that I, and many others I expect, will cherish.

Mark Hanlon, 2AJ



The Road to Henley

Henley Royal Regatta, one of the most, if not the most, prestigious rowing events in the world. There was a lot of pressure on the nine boys chosen to represent the school after not rowing for over 12 months.

The road to Henley started off rough, at a time when uncertainty related to lockdowns and Covid-19 was at an all time high. The journey all began back in March 2020 when the Prime Minister announced that we would be placed under lockdown. Within the first few days it became very clear that we would not be able to compete for the rest of the season with both National Schools and Henley Royal Regatta quickly being cancelled. With no more racing in 2020 we began to focus on the 2021 season by training throughout the summer on our ergos, bikes and homemade weights. Slowly restrictions were eased and we began to go out again in small boats and row within year group bubbles in bigger boats as the new school term began. We had a very productive Michaelmas Term with great progress made on and off the water with big ergo score improvements and great technical leaps whilst racing each other in mixed 8s.

Just as we felt we were really building up momentum for a very exciting and promising season ahead we were once again submerged into another lockdown and hopes of a racing season started to fade as we took back to our bedrooms and garages to train in some very dark and bleak winter days. The camaraderie of the whole squad really shone through during those months with training everyday being hosted on Zoom, making us really feel like we were all going through the pain of the tough sessions together as a group, and this definitely made us stronger as a unit.

Again there were massive improvements within the squad on the ergo and with weight lifting and news started to emerge that National Schools was planning to go ahead but in a “behind closed doors” event with a reduced number of races. This sparked a fire



within all of us and our momentum began all over again with everyone very excited at the prospect of being able to race again and show off all the hard work and progress we had all made through such unprecedented times.

Slowly, British Rowing began to allow people to start rowing again in bubbles and schools reopened with lots of precautions being taken to make sure Covid could not infiltrate our squad. So we went to Goring Gap and began seat-racing for the 1st VIII positions in April after another intense training camp. For over six hours over the weekend we did nine races to decide who would make this year's top crew the fastest, with day one being accompanied by a backdrop of snow and freezing cold temperatures. Once the 1st and 2nd VIII had been decided we immediately started preparing for the National Schools' Regatta as it was a mere five weeks away, plus we had never rowed together yet!

At the National Schools Regatta we grabbed fourth place in the A final of the Championship 8 competition (the flagship event of the whole regatta), this solidified us as one of the quickest schoolboy crews in the country at the time. This put us in a good mindset to prepare for the massive project that stood ahead. Due to the lack of racing because of the pandemic we took every opportunity to race, so we also attended Metropolitan Regatta and

Marlow Regatta, both at Dorney lake and both “behind closed doors” so no one could spectate. Racing in silence was an experience that will not be forgotten anytime soon as we needed to be significantly more mentally resilient. Marlow was a big challenge and lesson for the crew as we had an amazing time trial but seemed to lack the same speed we had earlier in the day. The whole crew was upset, so we tried something different with motivation for winning Henley increasing daily.

We then reached the end of the Summer Term and started taking training to a new level: five to six hours a day, six days a week, for six weeks of the summer before Henley. This was a period of time that truly tested how much the crew wanted to do well with one of our most difficult training blocks, amounting to over 200km of rowing, multiple land sessions and a long cycle ride in the space of 12 days with no days off. However with our great camaraderie and love for the sport the six weeks went past as though it was a holiday. Everyone completely believed in one another and we were all aiming towards one goal - it's an experience we will all remember very fondly. On top of the stress of training us to win the regatta our head coach Mr Copus was also planning his own wedding which would take place on the Saturday of Henley!

In case we hadn't been together enough, we chose to live together

for the last week before Henley for the convenience of training and team morale. This really helped to settle the nerves of the whole race, but knowing that we had trained through three lockdowns, chosen to ignore countless opportunities to go out, and lost nearly our entire summer for this one event really built up the tension. We set out on Monday for our first proper training session on the historic course and the pressure started to build even more as the 450 other crews racing at the regatta began to arrive too.

Due to our result at the National Schools' Regatta the Henley Stewards decided to give our crew a seeded status meaning that we would receive a bye on the first day of the regatta so our first race would be on Thursday. If that wasn't enough the Upper Sixth had exam results given out the day before the regatta started. This was a challenge which we had to try and deal with even though it meant two major moments in the Upper Sixth's lives were occurring simultaneously, doing nothing to help the nerves. We went for our final training session on Wednesday evening as the first day of the regatta had come to a close and the atmosphere off the bank was electric with music blaring everywhere and countless pleasure boats speeding up the river making the water very tough to row on, a sign of what was to come and a real staple of the joys of Henley.



Then came Thursday, the big day. Lining up against Bedford School in the Princess Elizabeth Challenge Cup at 12:20, the last race before lunch with the busiest crowds of the day. We boated from the competitors' enclosure and carried out our warm up on the way down to the start line, at this point it all became very real. The cheers from the bank were unbelievable and we felt so pumped up and ready to show our true colours. We then got ourselves lined up on the stake boats and came under the umpire's call.

"Abingdon, Bedford, When I see that you are both straight and ready I shall start

you like this: Attention, go, get ready please".

At this point the adrenaline was pumping and we were ready to give it our all, all 8 pink and white blades locked in the water.

"Attention, go!" and the flag dropped.

We were off at one of the first major sporting events in the UK since lockdown had been lifted. We had a very fast start out of the blocks and continued to extend our lead to the Fawley marker (around 1000m into the 2112m course). Although we were all zoned out during the race, the noise from the bank was





indescribable and the support for us throughout was overwhelming. At this point we began to bring our rate of striking down as our lead extended to 4 ½ lengths as we crossed the finish line. We crossed the line as the quickest schoolboy crew to the barrier and the Fawley marker on that day.

This however meant we had big opponents the next day in the quarter finals of the competition. St Edward's had, like us, been consistently in the top four or five crews in the country all year, so we knew that this would be a close race.

Sadly, even though we left everything out there we didn't come out on top. After leading St Edward's by a length to the barrier they unfortunately managed to claw back past us and win by a margin of two lengths. This was a very emotional moment as, although we were devastated that we couldn't quite reach the semi finals, we knew we had given it our all and looked back at the last year with real pride, seeing that we had finished our Henley campaign as one of the top crews in the country and realising the progress we had made. We then went and thoroughly enjoyed the rest of the regatta as a crew without the stress of another race to put ourselves through.

A massive thanks must go to all of our parents for their unbelievable dedication to ensure we could be ferried to and from training everyday as well as our coaches Mr Copus, Mr Earnshaw, Nick and Jonny for their rowing coaching

wisdom and enthusiasm through both the lockdowns and throughout the summer holidays. They made it a really fun and enjoyable project that we will all look back on with pride. Finally a massive thanks to everyone in the crew for making it an unbelievable year and crew to be a part of as through all of the hardship our friendships and humour always shone through. These will be memories that we will all cherish forever.

Abingdon School 1st VIII 2021

Cox: Edward Peacock

Stroke: Daniel McNamara

7: Steffan Conway

6: Ben Crofts

5: George Beer

4: Daniel Woodrow

3: Christopher Fry

2: Charles Symonds

Bow: Sam Hayes-Newington

Coaches: Rory Copus, Mark Earnshaw, Nick Strange

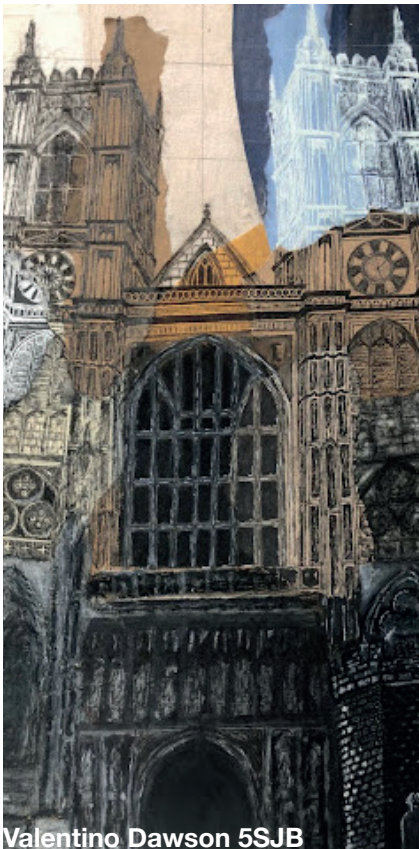
George Beer, 6NDB and Sam Hayes-Newington, 6DTP



Art Gallery



Oliver Glover 5RFM



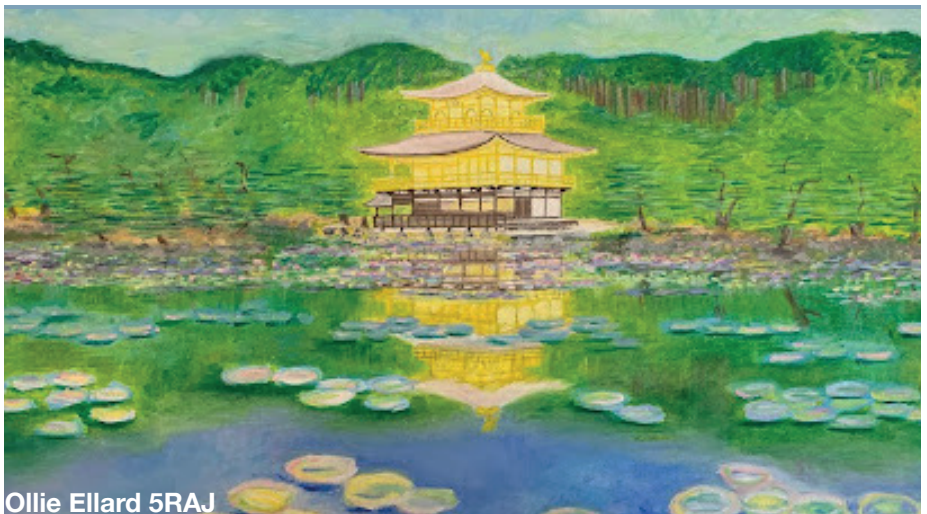
Valentino Dawson 5SJB



Sacha White 5PRB



Alfie Marshall VIEMH



Ollie Ellard 5RAJ



Sam Penrose VIBS



Toby Hammond 5TASC



Freddy Chelsom 5DLJ



Xander Orchard 5AJM



Archie Wood 5RAJ



Theo Shorrocks 5MRW



Jamie Wright 5CR



Batur Gunen 5RFM



Alex Cooper Marcos 5CR



Hugo Leedham VIIM



Oliver Pritchard 5VP

House Reports

Austin House



This academic year has been one of the strangest and most unsettled years for the students in the house. There was undoubted excitement at the return to school and some sort of normality in September, but we were still under very different circumstances to the normal and, in particular, it was an unusual start for many of the new students in the house.

Throughout the difficulties and changes, Austin House students conducted themselves incredibly well and should be very proud of the pragmatic way in which they went about their school lives.

September saw the Austin House building become the home for all

the School's Upper Sixth boarders, welcoming students from School and Crescent House.

Whilst this presented a huge change to the students' previous experience of living in a boarding house of multiple year groups, it was a chance for them to work collaboratively and they deserve great credit for the way in which they adapted with such positivity. In the same regard, our new third and Lower Sixth students started their time as members of Austin House accommodated in Crescent House, whilst our fourth and fifth year boarding students got to experience life in School House for the majority of the year.

In a year that we felt rightly confident about our chances, we missed our opportunity to claim the coveted House Singing crown due to the cancellation of the event, and our performances in inter-house sporting events ranged enormously over the course of the year!

We will undoubtedly miss the 2020/21 leavers, who, despite being physically absent from the building for the majority of the year, continued to make some fantastic house contributions – they have been a wonderful group of young people to get to know and you would struggle to find a more committed and loyal group of house members. Mattie Hardman and Ben Kiraikou, our Heads of House, were



always fine role models amidst difficult times and we wish them all the very best with their future endeavours.

Sadly, we say goodbye to Miss Rocker-Cook at the end of this year. As she moves to America with her new husband and we wish her the very best

of luck with the next chapter of her life across the Atlantic. We look forward to welcoming Mrs Moonen to the tutor team and Miss Stringer to the boarding team in 2021.

Throughout the 'bombshells' of the year, the students and staff have been

truly incredible and I am hugely thankful for the resilience and adaptability that everyone has shown over such a tumultuous period. Here's to a more 'normal' 2021/22...

James Golding



Crescent House



The 2020/21 academic year was almost certainly the most unusual in Crescent House history. With the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, many changes took place that affected life in Crescent, and in boarding in general. I am mindful that one of the roles of *The Abingdonian* is to record school life for posterity, and readers in the future may well be interested in what these changes were.

Before the school year even started, the decision was made to introduce year group 'bubbles' to the school,

to help avoid students from different years mixing together, and hopefully reduce the possible spread of Covid. For boarding, this meant reconfiguring the three boarding houses to be based on horizontal year groups rather than the usual vertical third year to Upper Sixth structure. This meant that no matter which of Crescent, Austin and School House boarders were a member of, they would be living with their year group peers from the other two houses. In Crescent House, the Crescent and Cobban buildings were used to

accommodate all Lower Sixth boarders, while Glyndwr was used for all the new third years. Fourth and fifth years were housed on separate floors of School House, while the Upper Sixth relocated to Austin House.

There were certainly benefits and downsides to this system. One of the principal reasons for implementing it was the requirement for a whole 'household' to self-isolate in the event of any member of that household displaying symptoms of Covid. This happened on two occasions for the Lower Sixth bubble and once for the third years, and led to boarders having to stay in their rooms to remote learn while food was delivered to the buildings.

Luckily, on each occasion the Covid tests came back as negative within 36 hours, and I was impressed with the positive spirit the boarders showed each time they had to do it.

Putting on activities and organising meal times for separate year groups was a challenge, but I was ever thankful for the hard work of the house tutor team and matrons in making it work as well as it could. The boarders themselves enjoyed the camaraderie of living with





their friends in their year group, but on balance they also missed the sense of living in a community of boarders from different years.

The other significant effect that the changes led to was that Crescent day students were no longer able to come into the house, and had to remain in their year group bubbles. This leads of course to a philosophical question which is, how much of being in a 'house' is related to being in the buildings, and how much is it part of a sense of community spirit?

This spirit was tested throughout the year, both in school and during the Lent lockdown. A notable consequence of this was the Michaelmas Term inter-house sports tournament. With so many Crescent students remote learning, Crescent and School House teamed up to form a combined team - possibly for the first time in history! This combined team did very well, and went on to win the badminton, chess and squash tournaments, as well as the overall competition (with Crescent students leading the way, almost certainly!).

Throughout the year, I was particularly impressed by the positive spirit and enthusiasm of the Crescent Upper Sixth, who, despite being in exile from



the house, never wavered in their commitment to it. As things started to return to greater normality in May 2021, one of the highlights of my year was a barbecue at Cobban for the departing Upper Sixth. I wish them all the best for the future, and they will always be welcome in the House.

We said goodbye to Mr Ball as a boarding tutor after four years, although he remains a tutor in the house. Mr Axon, who teaches geography, will be joining 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 Mrs Deaves-Small as Matron.

Noah Chakravarti, Jacob Drew and Finn Wilson will be school prefects for 2021/22, and I am confident that they and the rest of the Upper Sixth will lead the house ably, in what I hope will be a much more normal year for Crescent House.

Matthew Kendry

School House



2021 was a strange year to be part of School House, not least because many of the students didn't physically set foot in the building throughout the whole year due to Covid bubbling restrictions.

For most of the year the house was home to the fourth and fifth year boarders from all three boarding houses. Having said that, the spirit that permeated through the house was extremely buoyant, due particularly to the efforts of the tutors, Storm (our matron), the leading sixth formers and the chance to participate in restructured house events.

In September we welcomed Old Abingdonian Mr Hird back to Abingdon as a teacher of Classics and to School House as a tutor to the new third years. Also joining the house, but as it turned out just for the year, was Dr Justice, who showed great imagination when running boarding duties. It was a real loss when she was tempted by the

chance to teach English at Marlborough. We all thank her and wish her good luck for the future.

In a typical year, the first whole house event is house singing, and this year's cancellation was disappointing given the tremendous musical pedigree of many students in the house. In the vacated slot emerged a House Public Speaking Competition, which involved intra-tutor group heats, and a whole house run-off via Zoom - where Hamish Bloom, portraying Winston Churchill, overcame William Wilberforce (Rupert Mathieson), JFK (Jim Allen), Henry V (Arlie MacPherson) and Emperor Hirohito (Leon Guan) to qualify for the final. Although magnificent in the final, Hamish's impassioned call 'to fight on the beaches' just lost out to JFK's promise to get to the moon.

In the run up to Christmas, with many of the overseas students returning home, a School House/Crescent House

coalition (effectively an opportunity for us to run an outreach programme for Mr Kendry and Crescent!) entered the Michaelmas house sport competitions. There were swathes of victories from the Upper and Lower Sixth (table tennis for Jacob Hobbs and Steffan Conway, the Lower Sixth rugby captained by Caspar Mannix, chess featuring Dashiell Hathaway, and badminton featuring Tiger Wang and Head of House Gavin Lam), as well as a memorable victory in squash for fifth former Max Struthers.

There were very few sports fixtures against other schools at the start of the year, although this changed in the Summer Term. Caspar Mannix excelled with the bat on many occasions for the 1st XI, whilst it was great to see Steffan Conway finally rowing for the 1st VIII at Henley, who got through to the Friday.

The end of the school year provided a real highlight with a revamped House Athletics Competition; deprived of many



students who had already returned home, all three of our teams were depleted (the Lower Sixth had just 7 athletes), meaning that people could do as many events as they liked and so the resulting pace of the event was frenetic. Harvey Bell excelled with his enthusiasm and athletic performances, managing to win in three events, along with Matthew Jarvis (javelin), Yuhao Liu (discus) and Tlmi Babajide, who won the shot put for the third time and so remains unbeaten in his time through the school. Further down there were also successes for Rafael Collier (800m), Scott Wentworth (100m) and Matteo Bignone (javelin) from the fourth year, whilst Hamish Bloom was victorious in the 800m.

Heads of House Steffan Conway and Gavin Lam were excellent ambassadors

for the other pupils and did all that was asked of them and more; a highlight was Gavin acting as a virtual dragon for a fourth year Dragons' Den being held in School House, via Zoom from Austin House. Both Gavin and Steffan's efforts were hugely appreciated by their housemaster and the other students.

To show the depth of talent in the leavers' year Anton Glotov, Durotimi Adebutu, Morgan Atkins and Tom Gardener were all Peer Support Leads.

Durotimi Adebutu was also a School Prefect along with Brian Lim, and Andreas Lo was superb as Head of School (even running the lunch queues from his home in Hong Kong).

A lot of the departing Upper Sixth came back for a final social involving rounders

and pizza just before the end of term, and it was nice to see many of them at the rescheduled Griffen Ball.

Lots of them made their offers for university, and those who didn't have a very decent alternative lined up.

I wish them all the best for the future and thank them for their efforts and good spirits in their final year at Abingdon.

Finally, over the summer Mr Jackson was married to Siena and we wish them both every happiness together in the years to come; who knows what 2022 will bring them...

Mike Litchfield



Border's House



This was a year unlike any other at Abingdon with wholesale changes to the school structure and routines in response to the pandemic. Whilst it was clearly strange for staff and existing students alike, for our new joiners they had nothing else to compare it to. As such I could think of no one better to give their take on it all than our third years. With thanks to them and their tutors, here is 2020/21 from their perspective:

"Joining the third year in 2020 was good as the previous term we were in lockdown and going into it I hadn't had face to face contact for 4 months, which had taken its toll on my sanity! I believe that it went well and I transitioned smoothly to my new school, especially with only having to move around a small area of Greening Court."

"Although coming from Lower School, going into the third year felt like a whole new challenge as almost everyone was new to the school and making new friends was something that would have to be done. The tutors made this process very easy, and gave a warm welcome to everyone which was very

much appreciated as everyone had been through a difficult time throughout the lockdown. A special memory that really sticks out to me was in the second lockdown where in tutor time we made cakes and pancakes.

As I hadn't done much baking before, it was a new experience, however what made it so special was the fact that it was over Zoom and we could share the experience even though we were all so distant from each other. This highlights just how much the tutors made lockdown bearable and as fun as it could be. I think the year really brought everyone together especially in Border's House and was a very enjoyable year."

"I joined Abingdon in the third year and didn't really know anybody at all. When I joined I immediately was put into a really kind, friendly and encouraging environment. I really enjoyed Border's as I had brilliant tutors and friends around me for support if I was struggling with anything, whether it was homework or friendship problems. In Border's we also had many fun activities that we all took part in like kahoot quizzes and, especially in lockdown, we made loads

of cookies and cakes on Zoom with each other. I enjoyed all of my subjects as I had great teachers who were supportive and helpful. Finally, one of my favourite things that I really enjoyed when I joined the school was the variety of activities, especially sport options as I found the sport very absorbing and fun."

"2020 was not the perfect year to be joining as COVID 19 meant that we were in and out of school throughout the year. Luckily my house was warm and accepting. As I was in Lower School I already had some friends but made more in the new pool of boys joining the school. My favourite memory of lockdown was when we did tutor group cooking. We cooked cakes, rocky roads and pancakes; all equally delicious. Overall the third year in Border's was very engaging and enjoyable."

"To begin with, I wasn't sure what to expect from Middle School. However, we all fitted straight into the regime easily, and quickly too. Of course it was difficult to learn online again, but our tutors were great and we got to do some good activities like cooking from home, which was good fun. It made

the whole process very smooth and easy, making new friends and making the most of the time. Coming back to school was great, as it allowed us to do everything from before, and more. House sport meant a time to challenge ourselves but try something new, and gave a sense of pride for our new house. Overall joining Middle School and Border's was a really good time."

"I very much enjoyed my first year at Abingdon School. Despite the lockdown, and the separation from other year groups, I was able to easily settle in with the help of the Peer Support Leads, and wonderful tutors I had. Even in lockdown Border's was a great house to be in: Wednesday tutor periods would be sprinkled with tutor group baking, and fun activities."

"The new year in bubbles meant that we had to build an identity for the new third years. They all embraced the opportunity and chose a group ethos, wrote haiku for National Poetry Day, recorded house values presentations

with the Lower Sixth mentors, discussed everything from the First World War to climate change, with some healthy debates on diversity, positive masculinity, mental health issues and our favourite meals all thrown in. Then came lockdown again. They read, they baked, they listened to their favourite songs, they invited their pets to registration and Mrs Preiss-Chapman's chicken nearly flew out of the room. They did quizzes, they shared screens and most importantly they supported one another with one-to-one chats, break out room groups and lots of positivity even in the cold, dark days of January and February. Sam Siriwardene showed us an experiment with a candle, Felix Diamond introduced his brand new kittens, Mrs Preiss-Chapman was on crutches and Mrs Ley's children joined in our live bake off where Mr Border covered his kitchen walls in cake mix! It was a challenging but ultimately a memorably fun time."

David Border



Donnelly's House



Whilst it wasn't the grand new houseroom opening that we had hoped for to kick off the 2020-21 academic year (in fact it was used for the fourth year bubble!), it was great to welcome the house back onto the school site for the start of the Michaelmas Term.

With third year induction complete it was the inaugural Inter-House Public Speaking Competition that got the year underway, replacing the annual House Singing. Fourth year Harry Litchfield gave a gripping version of Emmeline Pankhurst's 'I Incite This Meeting To Rebellion' speech, doing the house proud with his performance. The rest of the Michaelmas Term went by in a flash. Toby Hindley was appointed Rugby Club captain in what was a frustrating, fixtureless final year for him and his peers, whilst Will Shorrocks filled the same role in the Shooting Club.

The second half of term saw the return of inter-house sports competitions. Felix Loeffen led the way, winning the fourth year squash competition whilst the fifth year team of Ben Desmond and Peter Harris came second in the badminton. Jasper Rolls, Frederick Stacey, Andrei Roberts and Rory King more than held their own in the pool, finishing second overall, whilst the Upper Sixth continued their record of retaining the house rugby

trophy! The term came to a close with our house virtual Christmas Quiz, in which the Upper Sixth showed their dominance and breadth of knowledge to take first place.

The Lent Term is always a busy one, and whilst our return to online learning did its best to dampen spirits in the house, the online House Challenge Competition brought a sense of normality with both the third year team (Oliver Matthews, Fab Dal Ben, Philip Ashton and Henry Drake) and fifth year team (Peter Harris, Barnaby Hindley, Rohan Chandrasekaran and Theo Shorrocks) drawing on a broad range of facts and knowledge as they fought their way to the semi-finals. This was quickly followed by the House Debating Competition where my thanks must go to Peter Harris, Fab Dal Ben and Oliver Clark for their time creating the Donnelly's entry under the guidance of Johan Nerlov. With house pizza socials on hold the third years instead took on the challenge of making their own at home as they set about cooking up Abingdon themed pizzas from scratch under the guidance of Mrs Cottrell and Mr Stockdale!

The Summer Term was another successful one for the house, and it was not only great to have everyone back in

person, but also the houseroom back as our houseroom, bringing our community back together. Over the course of the term Will Shorrocks and Oscar Bennett represented England B and C shooting teams respectively, whilst Edward Bennett performed exceptional solos in the end of term recorded Summer Concert.

Summer inter-house sports brought a great deal of success! The fourth year endzone team secured first place, whilst the fourth year rowing relay team (Thomas Jackson, Oliver Clark and Alex Mapplebeck) and third year tennis players (Ben Morgan and Jake Sharff) also secured gold. The return of inter-house athletics allowed the athletes to strut their stuff, with first places for Joseph Conway, Fergus Chettleburgh, Archie Leishman, Alexander Darbishire (x2), Joshua Jackson and James Wilson. The fourth year all played their part to win their age group.

We were extremely fortunate this year to not only have one of the two Heads of School, Freddie Merrett, but also four school prefects, Toby Hindley, Johan Nerlov, Will Shorrocks and Ben Crofts, the last of whom put in a very commendable display at Henley at the end of the summer. As we transition and look forward to next year I was delighted



to be able to congratulate Callum Ryall, Rory King and Freddy Selby-Lowndes on their appointment as prefects for 2021-22.

The departure of the Upper Sixth was an emotional one. They are a fantastic group of young men that I have every confidence will go on to achieve highly and have a positive influence on society. It was a pleasure to share a drink with them at our house leavers BBQ and I am sure they will have many a fond memory from the Griffen Ball (some more than others!).

The Upper Sixth house prefect team have led from the front in what has been another turbulent year, and so my thanks must go to Charlie Hobbs, James Daly, Max Williams and Henry Fitzpatrick - they have been a pleasure to work with.

We now look forward to see what 2021-22 has in store.

Tom Donnelly



Franklin's House



Heads of House for the year were Lachlan Jones and Samuel King, with Euan Baldwin and Nicholas Skelton as their deputies. The house prefects were Max Hems, Matthew Hout, Ollie Martin, Seb Watkins and Daniel Woodrow. Max Hems was also the Peer Support Lead.

This was a vintage year for us with such a team of talented, committed and friendly individuals. My only regret is that the Covid lockdown prevented them from running the house as visibly well as they normally might, but they and their Upper Sixth peers were a quite brilliant bunch, and I thank them all.

The Inter-House Athletics Competition was a hugely welcome return to house sports. Franklin's did extraordinarily well, winning the Golden Mile among several other events. The third years came fourth overall, the fourth years came fifth, and the Lower Sixth came second; this meant that overall we came in third out of the nine houses, an excellent podium result. As always, the

great results were achieved not only by the performances of our individual stars, but also by everyone turning up and competing hard for every place in their event.

The subsequent inter-house sports competitions went astonishingly well. There was a plethora of brilliant results, and we emerged the outright winners in squash, basketball, rowing and tennis; and although the cricket competition was cut short by rain we were joint winners there too. This was beyond doubt our most successful day of competition ever. I think my favourite moment out of many was seeing our senior rowers advising and then cheering on our younger competitors to victory.

There were many individual achievements over the year. Nicholas Skelton won the Chester Cup for swimming, and the Slingsby Cup for outstanding sporting achievement. Lachlan Jones won the Judge Medd

prize for his legal brilliance, and an ASPA/OA Club travel award. Samuel King won the school prizes for English and drama, and the Drama Cup. Matthew Hout won the Giles Lewis Memorial Cup for his woodwind contribution. Seb Watkins won the Greek prize and the King Trophy for his tremendous contribution to school chess. Max Hems won the Freeman Prize for service as a great PSL. Daniel Woodrow won the Keith and Audrey Hasnip Prize for outstanding service. Ashwin Tennant won the Mercers' School Memorial Prize for overall academic excellence, as well as the maths prize and the Music Society prize for strings. Johnny James continued his amazing progress as a triathlete, and has now established himself on the national stage. Christopher Skelton is pursuing his stunning swimming career at the highest level. Benjamin MacLennan has supplemented his brilliance in fencing by earning England selection for his shooting.



I was very sorry to say goodbye to Mrs Moonen, who was such an enthusiastic member of the house as well as a friendly and efficient sixth form tutor. She has moved on to the different challenge of Middle School tutoring, but fortunately we will see her in school and she remains an honorary member of Franklin's.

After this most strange and difficult of years, I would like to thank all my tutors for their hard work, resilience and cheerfulness in the face of adversity. I very much appreciate their time and effort on behalf of Franklin's boys, ensuring that the year was in so many ways still a great one for us. Well done, last but not least, to the Franklin's boys themselves for their amazing good humour and determination to pursue their progress in academic work and their Other Half.

David Franklin



James's House



In the opening pages of *Intimations* – Zadie Smith’s essay collection written during the pandemic – we find Smith poking her head through iron railings, looking at a tulip in an enclosed garden: it was “a few days before the global humbling began,” she writes, “when we would all be looking through barred windows, yearning for tulips.” For some reason it’s an image which has popped into my head as I’ve sat down to write my *Abingdonian* review of 2020/21. I guess because it’s so evocative of quite a lot of last year. I’m sure for many of us, time was spent yearning for simple things which not too long ago we’d taken for granted. Maybe the house system as we’d come to know it was one of those things.

In many ways the stratification of the school into year group bubbles in Michaelmas 2020 represented as much of a threat to the notion of a house as did the lockdown which followed in January 2021. The house, to my mind at least, is about verticality and about the older pupils being role models and helping the younger ones. It’s about those small conversations which happen in the houseroom and the building of relationships. This becomes incredibly difficult when we are not permitted to be in the same physical space as one another. I would like therefore to extend my great thanks to the James’s tutor team and to the pupils – especially the house prefects, mentors and Peer Support Leads – who worked incredibly

hard to keep things like mentoring and intra-house competitions going and ensured that a sense of house spirit endured.

As indicated September 2020 began with year group bubbles and James’s houseroom being used as a third year common room. This had the unexpected benefit of me being able to get to know our new intake very quickly, so I’m really confident in saying that they have been a great addition (as too have Mr Hack and Mr Brittain who joined at the same time).

This year group are perhaps most characterised by looking out for one-another but it turns out they are also pretty sporty! Indeed in the inter-house sports events in December our third years won both the bike challenge (Jamie Halliwell and Luke Remmington) and table tennis (Oliver Sherratt and Alfie Smethurst) and placed second overall in their year group. With solid fourth or fifth place finishes in all of the other year groups and an overall victory in the swimming pool, James’s finished in second place overall – probably our best Michaelmas performance for five or so years.

And so into 2021 and the announcement on the eve of term





starting that we would be teaching and learning remotely once more. I was incredibly proud of the can-do attitude and staying power shown by staff and pupils alike during this period. I'm sure that Abingdon earned a reputation for having given outstanding online educational provision, but I think something that's overlooked is the pastoral work which continued too. Tutors took time out to check in personally with their tutees and mentoring continued online through break-out rooms on Zoom. People looked out for each other. I was also glad that we'd begun a Fantasy Football League, something which became somewhat of a talking point and led to Friday breaktime Zoom calls between our most obsessive FPL managers (Mr Poon and myself included).

Having returned to school, one of the highlights of the Lent Term was that we were able to run some of the more cerebral inter-house competitions. First came the House Challenge where we won both the fifth year (Freddie Stanford, Matthew Rolfe, Mark Taylor, Ollie Sutton, Oliver Smith and Samuel Dominic) and Lower Sixth competitions (Ted Smethurst, Sukrit Kaul, Angus Fenton and Isaac Mortiboy) keeping alive a strong tradition in that competition. This was followed by the performance of our inter-house

debating team. James Kilroy, Dheeraj Kollanthothathil and Ted Smethurst defeated Border's and School House on the way to the final where they proposed the rather fitting motion "This house believes that in the future the lockdown of 2020-21 will be seen as a positive event." Speaking via live Zoom link broadcast to the entire school, the team did a great job of appealing to both hearts and minds, and were judged to be the winners. This was a wonderful end to a tough term.

The Summer Term saw an easing of some restrictions which allowed us to have a leavers' BBQ with the outgoing Upper Sixth. They were a year group who had given an awful lot to the house and the school, something which was reflected in the number of them picking up end of year prizes: Charlie Franklin (Chemistry and St Catherine's Prize), Thomas Rolfe (Latin), James Gibson (Physics and Mitchell Seward Debating Cup), Christopher Fry (Martin Cup for Rowing), Freddie Nicholson (Mervyn Gray Prize and Farmington Prize), Karum Sangha (Rotary Citizenship Award), and Hugo Leedham (Older Cup for Initiative). Karum and Hugo's prizes were linked to their roles as Peer Support Leads, a role that I feel they both developed during their time in office, doing an awful lot of good for individual members of the house,

but also directing the School's moral compass.

As well as being the time for us to wish Mrs Bridgeworth all the best for maternity leave, the final week of the school year saw further sporting success with our third/fourth year team winning inter-house cricket, and the third years the rowing event. Inter-house athletics was even more successful with the third years winning eight different events (including both relays and both shot-put competitions) on their way to overall victory in their age category. Strong performances from our fourth years saw them come third overall and a severely depleted Lower Sixth, who to a man did a wonderful job of completing as many events as was necessary, came fourth. This led to James's winning the overall competition, which was quite pleasing and went some way to justifying my significant outlay on James's branded sweatbands! In all seriousness the most pleasing thing was that we were able to do these events at all, that the students were able to play on the same cricket team as each other or share the same track. One of those simple things that we ordinarily take for granted, that back in January we were yearning for, and that makes being at school so great.

Simon James

O'Doherty's House



This was another year that brought challenges and changes to O'Doherty's House. In September, we welcomed the new third year intake and Mr Gray as a Lower Sixth tutor. Unfortunately we were not able to gather together as a house in the new houseroom but we did not let this ruin our sense of community and it was great to see the usual teamwork displayed in the various inter-house events that were held during the year.

There were mixed feelings at the news that the House Singing Competition had been cancelled but this was soon put to the back of people's minds as a new Public Speaking Competition took its place. We invested in some purple t-shirts for the sports events and these worked wonders, especially during the athletics competition, as it is not easy to spot people at a distance and at speed! I think we will see other houses following suit next year!

As soon as the bubbles burst and the houseroom was opened up again in the summer we quickly made the most of it.



There was table football galore and the first ever House Chess Competition was a roaring success.

It was, as always, sad to say goodbye to the Upper Sixth. They had a tough deal and did not even get to see the new houseroom until our leavers' social. They did not complain though and

I am super proud of them all and the resilience and maturity they displayed. I know that they will make a positive impact on the world and I wish them all the very best.

We also said goodbye to Ms Byrne. She will be missed but I know that her guidance and care will have a lasting impact on all her tutees and I also wish her the very best for her next adventure.

Thank you to all the students and tutors for making the last year a positive experience despite everything. They contributed to events when they did not always feel like it, they were positive and motivated when they were tired, and they put up with my Zoom assemblies from the attic! Some might not want to remember 2020-2021 but I think we can look back and be proud of what we achieved in O'Doherty's and how we clubbed together to make the most of things.

Emily O'Doherty



Pygott's House



At the start of the Michaelmas Term I drew on the life of Robert Baden Powell, founder of the scouts and one time national hero, to urge the house to be good citizens. The essence of good citizenship, according to Powell, is to think of others and the greater good of society before yourself. "We are like bricks in a wall" he said, "we each have our place, though it be a small one. If one brick falls out of place it puts undue strain on the others." The motto of the scouts is, of course, "Be Prepared." What Powell meant by this was that we should be prepared in mind and body to be able to follow instructions and put the best interest of society first (rather than say carrying a pen knife!). This was our challenge then, to be able to follow a huge number of complex and restrictive rules in school that were against our own self-interest, but in the interest of wider society. From a house perspective these rules reduced much of what is wonderful about Abingdon's house system to a minimum – we had no in person assemblies, no mixing of year groups, no houseroom and much reduced house competition. Instead of wallowing, however, we needed to adapt ourselves to our new situation and make the best of it. Marcus Aurelius, one of our house's great heroes, wrote in his meditations "the impediment to action advances action; what stands in the way, becomes the way" – in other words, when something gets in the

way of your plans, you should see it as an opportunity and adapt and make the very best of it. This is a convoluted way of saying that, despite the obvious challenges that we faced, the house met this challenge with all the enthusiasm of the scouts and the stoicism of Marcus himself and I could not have been more proud of everyone.

With house singing cancelled, we had an impromptu House Public Speaking Competition. Pygott's house had an internal competition to pick our representative. Robin Collins, Kit Matthews, Thomas Harding, Alexander Lees and Alexander Woolmer all produced excellent speeches with Robin being chosen after a tie break to represent the house. He did an excellent job of it and very bravely went totally off-piste with a splendid rendition of Gloria Gaynor's 1978 smash hit *I will survive*.

House sports went ahead in a curtailed fashion. The third year came a very respectable third and there were notable performances from Will Simpson in the squash and Harrison Cruikshank and Harry Wildgoose in the badminton. The fourth year did us incredibly proud and brought us famous victories in the bike competition (Philip Kimber and Alexander Lees) and in the rugby (Alec Farr, Foon Chan, Luca Zurek, Ted Carter + Christmas jumper, Alec Knox Clarke, Daniel Zhang and Archie Williams). Alexander Fleming and Aarav

Tanguturi came an excellent second in the badminton too. The fifth years, now they have made it a decent way up the school, embodied the house spirit of mid-table obscurity and battled their way to a hard fought fourth place overall (out of 8). The pick of the fifth form performances was Tom Wormell and Nick Staroske in the badminton and Marc Sheriff in the squash. The Lower Sixth did us proud overall, and, although we came last in the rugby, there was a huge amount of team spirit on display from the merry band of sloths (Rex and Murray Langley, Thomas Long, Ben Dray, Tom Henderson, Edward Saunders and Joe Turner). We gained a very important victory in the chess (Leo Sinclair and Ross Tselos) and also performed well in the squash (Jai Biswas Gladwin) and badminton (Nicholas Owen and Naoki Parker). The Upper Sixth showed huge amounts of enthusiasm, but struggled to perform on the day coming seventh. Overall, however, we came second, which may be a best ever performance!

Academically, the Michaelmas Term was extremely successful. There were 17 HoD's Praises for the house, including six for Philip Kimber alone! There was a cornucopia of Other Half Praises as well, with Justin Sheriff getting the most with five.

Other great works included Daniel Zhang coming third in the senior

solo competition and Oliver Simpson coming first, Ross Tselos and Edward Saunders winning prizes for their STEP research projects, and Freddie Knott delivering a house assembly on how to make an Ecosphere. There were some sensational reports at the end of that term as well, with the best report prizes going to Joseph O'Sullivan, Philip Kimber, Oliver Simpson, and Will Taylor.

We needed every ounce of stoicism in the Lent Term when we all went back into lockdown. Various competitions went online and I was pleased to see us come second in both the third and fourth year House Challenge. House debating (led by Philip Kimber, Alexander Woolmer and Robin Collins) continued online as well, and we were absolutely robbed of victory (as usual) by a partisan judge (no names).

The Upper Sixth got their university offers in the Lent Term and they all did incredibly well in trying circumstances. We were particularly pleased for Will Taylor and Joe Nicholas who got offers (and made them) to go to Oxford to read Physics and Classics respectively,

The spring produced some fabulous levels of work from the house and we amassed a huge 36 HoD's Praises. The Other Half suffered somewhat, but Ted Carter still managed four Praises in the term! The term ended with a sad farewell to Dr Jeffreys after many years of sterling service to the house. He will be sorely missed.

The Summer Term saw a relative return to normality and there were lots of successes. I was very grateful to Philip Kimber for his wonderful assembly on map projections, there were some excellent recycled animals created by the house for the Celebration of the Arts (and three winners – Will Simpson, Oliver Smeaton and Daniel Chamberlin), and we had a large number of boys who made prefect and Peer Support Lead, as well as our first head boy in Joshua Massey Thompson.

House athletics was a triumph of mediocrity – the third and fourth years both came sixth and the sixth form fifth. There were however some victories – Ted Carter in the long jump, Joshua Massey Thompson in the 100m and demi-god Flynn Walker in the discus. In Pygott's however, we celebrate those who reach the pinnacle of mediocrity more than the winners, so the 'real' winners (those who came fifth) were William Nall, Ben Knight, Harry Vinall, Jonny Noctor, Archie Williams, Tom Woodrow, David Bassett-Jones, Thomas Long, and Ediz Hunter.

House sports were a surprising triumph – the fourth year won the basketball (Ruairi Tilley, Foon Chan and Alexander Lees), we won the croquet (Thomas Long and Alcuin Wright), and there was victory in the golf (Finnian Leigh and Nicholas Owen). We had a crisis in the fencing but up stepped head boy and all round top chap Joshua Massey

Thompson and David Bassett-Jones – two of the greatest sloths ever to represent the house.

Finally, in academic terms, this year was fabulous. Many boys made it to the coveted 30 commendations (gold certificate) with three even making it to the super rare 'green' certificate (50 commendations). They were James Clarke, Ted Carter and Alexander Lees. Head's Praises were given to Alexander Lees for his excellent documentaries, Philip Kimber for his St Edmund's College Maths Prize, and Joe Turner for his biology Olympiad gold medal. The winners of the HoD's Praise tally for the year were Philip Kimber (13) and Edward Saunders (6) and the prizes for the best exam results went to Joseph O'Sullivan, James Clarke, Philip Kimber and Tom Henderson. The most improved awards went to Harry Wildgoose, Will Simpson, Alec Knox Clarke, Ioan Glyn Jones, Jai Biswas Gladwin and Thomas Long. A final award was given to Joshua Massey Thompson for his winning of the coveted 6TJG prize for quizzing and gambling (!), which was 3D printed by Mr Goodman.

A final thanks to the house tutors – and the two heads of house (Kit Matthews and Oliver Paton). Well done! Marcus Aurelius would have been exceptionally proud of the house this year, as was I.

Richard Pygott



Lower School



Michaelmas 2020 was a rather different start to the school year with the introduction of bubbles, outdoor dining spaces, and bucketloads of hand sanitiser, but, due to the decision to keep Lower School as one bubble, things were not as strange for the younger boys as they were for Middle and Upper School and the houseroom was able to operate reasonably normally. This meant that everyone was able to admire the superb logo for our new Be More Griffen course, designed by Samuel Price, which is now prominently on display at strategic points to remind the boys of the values that we hope to instill in them through their regular Be More Griffen lessons and presentations. The new year saw the second years step up and act as excellent mentors to the new first years who, perhaps helped by the fact that they were not having to move round the school as much as usual, seemed particularly quick to settle in.

Covid led to the cancellation of the House Singing Competition, denying us the right to defend our title, but its replacement event just meant we could prove our dominance in another area instead with Harold Lethaby pulling off a bravura rendition of JFK's "we choose to go to the moon" speech

and winning the inaugural Inter-House Public Speaking Competition for Lower School. Several of the usual internal Lower School competitions did happen as usual with the charity pool doubles tournament, in which first years and second years paired up to form teams, being won by Henry Pinnington and Yasin Saoudi and the Lower School Challenge on the last day of term giving teams from each tutor group the chance to show off their general knowledge skills. In the closest contest in living memory, 2J (Adam Andrews, Peter Fleming and Mark Hanlon) were victorious by just one correct answer.

January brought another lockdown but Lower School boys were quick to take this in their stride and adapted very well to another period of online learning. Creativity really flourished during this period as teachers looked to give the boys opportunities to get away from their screens and, whether it was rainforest projects in geography or performances of Roman senator speeches in Latin, the results were always impressive. A sense of house identity was kept going through a series of events to bring the boys together even though they were physically apart: a wintry weekend gave the chance to have an impromptu snowman building

competition and the School's first Giving Day saw Lower School boys throwing themselves in to a series of 150-themed challenges from parkour runs to penalty kicks (with the prize for most painful enterprise going to Maxwell Robinson for walking over 150m of Lego barefoot!). The inter-tutor group chess tournament and the termly lunchtime concert were conducted over Zoom, as was a Friday evening Crime Solving Social in which the boys worked in teams to solve a murder in an online escape room – whilst it is safe to say that not all of them seem to have the natural skills needed to become the most talented of CSI investigators, a good time was had by all.

The return to school in March coincided with a period of glorious sunshine, allowing team sport, which had been greatly missed during lockdown, to restart with lots of boys turning up for football and hockey training sessions on Saturdays and a very successful charity football tournament. £250 was raised for the Meningitis Research Foundation by the latter and, after an afternoon of stiff competition, the trophy was awarded to 6 Guys (Alex Drake, Finley Hoy, Riad Kapetanovic, Tommy Lane, Theo Payne and Guy Vivian). Although numbers in the Amey Theatre still had to be limited

at this stage, we were able to hold the grand final of the Public Speaking Competition live with 1P (Frederick Mellor, Shrish Gupta and Ari Ioannou) taking on 2H (Tom Saunders, Dhruv Lakhani and Harold Lethaby). Mr Hindley narrowly gave the win to 1P who had addressed the issue of racism as their topic. The end of term assembly that followed had a slightly different feel to usual with Lockdown Hero certificates being handed out to acknowledge those boys who had done particularly well during the period of school closure either with their attitude and application during online lessons or by giving back to their local community in some way.

The summer saw the welcome return of sporting fixtures against other schools and it was great to see the boys competing in athletics, cricket and tennis over the course of the term. Creativity was also much in evidence with a very inventive drama production that, since it was filmed rather than performed live, gave the cast of real feel for what Hollywood movie stars do to earn their money, an excellent Gala Concert, and the inaugural inter-tutor group music competition. The latter saw each tutor group perform an item that had to include vocal and instrumental elements – rarely has the Amey Theatre witnessed such a wide range of instruments on display with everything from an electric violin to the bagpipes being used to make an impression.

Despite 2J's best efforts to stand out with some amazing choreography in their rendition of *In the Jungle*, 2H were crowned the winners for their tuneful rendition of *Levitating* by Dua Lipa.

Several second years rose to the challenge of the various scholarship processes in the first half of the Summer Term term and particular congratulations go to the successful candidates: Benedict Donald (academic), Xien Hu (design technology), Dhruv Lakhani (academic), Harold Lethaby (music exhibition), Edward Millbourn (music exhibition), Samuel Price (academic, art and music), Jeetu Raj (art) and Tom Saunders (academic)

A relaxation of restrictions meant we could welcome two inspirational individuals to spend time with the boys in the final weeks of term. Mike Mullen, former BMX half-pipe world champion, ran a series of workshops which meant every single Lower School boy got the chance to challenge himself with an increasingly difficult series of stunts on a BMX, while Al Sylvester, who led the RAF's first unsupported attempt on the South Pole, gave the second years a lot to think about when he spoke to them at the Be More Griffen Celebration. Al also presented the second year end of term prizes as follows:

Academic Prizes: Benedict Donald (2C), Tom Saunders (2H) and Benjamin Byrne (2J)

Baker Awards: Callum Alderman and Sam Wormald

The Cooper Cup for excellence in reading: Luca Centazzo-Hammersley

The Dillon Cup for service: Noah Coombs

The Woodgett Cup: Mark Hanlon

The first year academic prizes were awarded on the final day of term to Guy Vivian (1M), Shrish Gupta (1P) and Jonathan Watcham (1S), while Finley Hoy was the winner of The Broadbent Cup for sporting excellence.

2020/1 was undoubtedly an academic year unlike any other, but Lower School boys rose to all the challenges, supported each other every step of the way, and seized every opportunity. The first years have made a great start to their time at Abingdon and are definitely ready to take on the responsibilities of being the senior boys in the house, while the second years have put down excellent foundations for life in Middle School. The strong friendships formed among the latter group during their time in the house were very obvious to see on the Adventure Weekend at PGL Liddington at the start of the summer holiday and I have no doubt that these friendships will stay with them as they move up the school.

Adam Jenkins



Staff Farewells

Victoire Perdreau and Laura Lambert

It feels appropriate to write this farewell piece for Laura and Victoire together as they really have been a double act as our Language Assistants in the French Department this year. They joined us in September 2020 from Reims, a beautiful university city famed for its cathedral, the site of countless coronations of French monarchs throughout history.

The pair were friends before arriving in Abingdon, and it is safe to say they are closer now than ever after a year involving quarantine, lockdown and post-Brexit immigration rules which have kept things interesting. Despite the challenges, they have found the pupils at Abingdon fun to teach and have said on a number of occasions how much they valued seeing the progress they made over the course of the year. What they are grateful for at Abingdon is how they learnt that teaching is not simply a matter of transmitting knowledge, but learning from your pupils and forging good relationships. This has indeed been their legacy here, even among the fourth years whom they have only seen for four weeks and who have expressed how they will miss their lessons when they leave. The sixth form showed their thanks in creative ways. A highlight for Laura and Victoire was when the Lower and Upper Sixth pupils made their own Christmas cards at the end of the Michaelmas Term for the assistants, who were particularly touched by the questionable puns and unique approach to arts and crafts.

Despite Covid's best efforts, the duo were still able to make the most of the tourist attractions in the surrounding area. Although the local Wetherspoons was an oft frequented public house at the weekends (nicknamed HQ), Laura and Victoire have enjoyed visits further



afield to Oxford, and London, mainly to satisfy Victoire's long standing love for Gordon Ramsay at The Narrow, though I am assured there were plenty of museum visits, too! As an English student and rather serious Jane Austen fan, Laura came into school one Monday buzzing after their visit to Bath, which she now says is her favourite city in England.

Both Laura and Victoire have made an excellent impression on the staff and pupils here, and have found the experience of working in an English boarding school both stretching and rewarding. They return to Reims to finish their studies and to one day teach English at school or undergraduate level. We in the French Department are incredibly grateful for their hard work, professionalism and good cheer this year and wish them all the best for their future as teachers.

Nathan Brittain

Becca Justice

When looking through English teacher application forms in early 2019, the name 'Dr Justice' - surely one of the most powerful teacher names out there - leapt at me from the page. With academic credentials, professional experience and a strong overall application befitting her name, she was immediately shortlisted and invited to teach a lesson at the school. On the day of the interviews, expecting the

stern and daunting Dr Justice of my imagination, I was surprised to greet the pleasant, cheerful, unassuming Becca. Her lesson and the subsequent interviews were excellent, and we happily appointed her that day.

Despite her formidable name, Becca soon became warmly regarded by colleagues and students alike. A stickler for organisation and detail, she planned dynamic lessons with great care and thought, always having the students' learning uppermost in her mind. She also threw herself into the collaborative culture of the department, sharing ideas readily and working hard on curriculum projects and shared planning. In the Other Half, she was a great asset to the AFA Creative Writing course, helping a group of budding writers produce the creative writing collection 'Moving Faces, Static Places'. The AFA cohort's 100% A* pass rate is a testament to her expertise and high expectations. She also hoovered up books: always with a couple of novels and an audiobook on the go, her 'What I'm currently reading' email signature changed with every email she sent. I thank her for shaming me into reading more fiction in term time.

Having joined Abingdon in September 2019, Becca's two years with us were obviously dominated by Covid. Despite lockdown and school closure, she was unflappable in her commitment to work, even as her home internet connection died a slow death and she was forced

to relocate to the badlands of the Economics Department. When Becca told me her dream job at Marlborough College - which offered a boarding culture and a return to teaching girls - had come up in December 2020, I knew she'd be their first choice at interview. Mere weeks later, she had been awarded the job.

Although she knew she was leaving us in August, Becca continued to give her all to Abingdon throughout the second lockdown and the tribulations of TAGs in the Summer Term. I thank her for two superb years of service at Abingdon and wish her every success at Marlborough.

Matthew Coolin

Katyana Rocker-Cook

Katyana joined Abingdon in 2018, arriving as an NQT fresh out of her PGCE at Oxford and a summer spent performing at the Edinburgh Fringe. She took to teaching at Abingdon seamlessly and with energy, always thinking of creative and innovative ways to explore different texts and with an incredible level of organisation (and lightning typing speed to match). In the dark depths of term as other members of staff began to wilt toward the holiday, Katyana would often be done with her marking or reports and preparing the



next lesson, display, drama club activity, or getting Christmas decorations in order. The days of a full height Christmas tree in M108 will be sorely missed!

She was a key member of our AFA team, a creative writing course for sixth form students. She was confident and creative with her own writing, and the boys completed the course with excellent marks and a thorough knowledge of different genres and critical skills in evaluating the work of others. She also took part in boarding for two years, and was an integral member of Austin House. Her easy going and bubbly personality made her very easy to talk to, and she never tired of engaging with students and the issues that were important to them. She headed the new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee with intelligence and sensitivity, but, given her stellar singing ability, it seems the narrow window (interrupted by Covid) for Austin House to win house singing with her help has unfortunately passed!

She leaves us to move to sunny Los Angeles to pursue her acting career, and we will struggle to replace her energy and insight and creativity. I'm sure she will take to the world of acting just as seamlessly as she took to teaching, and we look forward to seeing her on the silver screen!

Rena Papadopoulos

Caroline Taylor

Caroline retired in 2021 having spent three years in charge of University Applications. She joined Abingdon from previous careers in marketing, garden design and, more latterly, in Career Guidance in schools. Her dedication and

professionalism were plain to see for all and she quickly established a well-deserved, stellar reputation.

Students were at the centre of everything that Caroline did. Sixth formers have a tendency to work late into the evening when approaching key deadlines and it was common for them to receive replies to their last minute pleas for help well after 10pm. Caroline was known for her attention to detail and also her comprehensive and wide-ranging knowledge of the university sector. Many students are now studying courses that suit them better than the ones that they had originally thought about because of her nuanced advice which was always based on careful due diligence. Caroline modernised our UCAS systems, introducing Unifrog, the UCAS Toolkit and the inaugural Universities Fair. She is wise, diplomatic, calm under pressure and possessed nuanced analytical skills as well as great humanity. She will be missed by everyone that worked with her.

She leaves Abingdon to pursue a characteristically busy retirement which is likely to involve a lot of gardening, service to the community and some extreme physical challenges (probably involving wild swimming).

Nick O'Doherty

Harry Williams

Harry joined Abingdon School in September 2017 to teach mathematics. He has been fully involved in the enrichment activities on offer in the department, running the UKMT individual Maths Challenges. These have been organised efficiently with Harry often going

the extra mile to ensure certificates were correct and students given every possible opportunity to sit the follow-on rounds.

Harry's energy and enthusiasm for maths has shone through his lessons which the students have greatly enjoyed and also during the weekly sixth form enrichment sessions which he organised. These have included sessions exploring what it would be like to study maths at university, trying out some university maths and completing some interesting, tough problems. These students have enjoyed taking part in other national and international competitions to test out their mathematical thinking. Last year Harry promoted Maths Week England across the Abingdon community and it was great to hear of many non-mathematicians investigating mathematical ideas too.

Beyond his maths teaching Harry has contributed to athletics, cross country and bridge. I know the Lower School students always enjoy partnering Mr Williams in the latter. He has also been a Middle School tutor, supporting and caring for his tutees and organising tutor activities for them, both in school and online.

It is very evident that Harry enjoys maths and is always on the lookout for new and interesting resources to encourage his students to think mathematically. He has adapted his lessons to online learning and this is now the direction his career is heading in. Harry will be very much missed within Abingdon and we wish him well as he embarks upon an online teaching role with Harrow International School.

Samatha Coull



Kate Byrne

Kate joined Abingdon's Art Department in September 2011 as our 3D specialist, taking up residence in the ceramics room and taking on the 'Mistress of the Kiln' role for the duration of her time here. She approached her teaching with a ready smile and dedication to the development of students' individual approach to their art, never wanting there to be a recognisable "Abingdon brand" except in the sense that all her students would show themselves committed to creative and rigorous exploration.

When the department knew it would be moving to the newly-designed Beech Court, she worked with the whole team to design spaces that would fully facilitate this approach, thankful to be leaving the somewhat cramped conditions of their wing of the Amey complex.

Over her last few years with us she took advantage of some slack in the art timetable to launch an Art Partnership with many of our local primary schools, happily packing up boxes of materials and driving them over to schools to deliver a really exciting, creative and much-enjoyed series of lessons. We wish her well as she moves on from us and thank her for the ten years of service she gave us.

Graeme May

Rob Jeffreys

At time of writing the School is in bubbles and we are about to embark on another round of grade awarding in place of external examinations. Perhaps September will be "normal" for us? One thing that certainly won't be normal is that the long-term occupier of S101 will not be there.

Rob Jeffreys has been with us since 2008 having joined us from Monkton Combe School. It was a very different Biology Department in those days both in terms of location (biology used to be where James's and Border's are now with a pond in the front) and staff (I am the only other member of the department who was there at the time).

Rob brought so much to the department as well as to other areas of school life. His



subject knowledge was always been an asset to the department especially in all areas biochemical. He has always been at home teaching all ages and all abilities within the school and has undoubtedly inspired countless pupils to go on to study the subject once they had left: he was always very keen to make sure his students were all "happy bunnies"! Outside of timetabled lessons he would always be willing to go the extra mile with revision sessions and went on every departmental field trip.

Rob has always has other passions in addition to biology. He was responsible for bringing gardening and dancing to the Abingdon community, arguably one more successfully than the other. Gardening is now a regular Tuesday service activity and the pumpkin harvest would always be a highlight of the departmental calendar.

Sport was also something that Rob was fully involved with during his time with us. A keen hockey and cricket player, he has coached numerous players over the years. Top "Attitude To Learning" grades must also go to his commitment to the departmental road relay teams in the past, although in recent years he moved more into coaching the departmental squad.

He will be a tough act to follow and we would like to wish him every success as he takes up his new role at the Oxford International College.

Simon Bliss

Jenny Fishpool

Jenny has been a linchpin of the Abingdon community since joining the school as head of Classics in 1988. In over thirty years she has been an exemplary teacher with a masterful knowledge of both classical languages and of the ancient world, an innovative head of department, a deeply caring tutor, and a member of staff enormously cherished by boys and staff alike.

The school she joined in 1988 was a very different place to the one she leaves, although she enjoyed it none the less for that. Munna Mitra, who was stepping down as head of Classics to become a boarding housemaster, Hugh Randolph and John Griffin, the other full-time members of the department made their new, young female Head of Department very welcome, in spite of such a figure being a *rara avis* at that moment of Abingdon's history: indeed, Jenny was then one of only a handful of female teachers in the common room.

I encountered her for the first time towards the end of her 11 years as head of department, when I was a visiting speaker at the school: Jenny was a larger-than-life figure in, as I remember, a very bright red outfit which stood out in the drab beige surrounds of what was then the Amey Hall. However, over those years as well as running a thriving department, Jenny had already achieved several other Abingdon innovations. The first of these she could only claim half the credit for, as she and Ian became the first members of the teaching staff to marry, after a careful courtship which demanded romantic dinners in Oxford as a safer bet, away from the prying eyes of Abingdonians, and whose culmination was celebrated by the then president of the Common Room - and their dear friend - Keith Hasnip, presenting the staff's celebratory gift to Ian and Jenny by referring to the bride-to-be as 'the herring in the penguin pool'!

It is perhaps unsurprising that Abingdon had no policy for maternity leave at this point, and it was the arrival of Jenny's remarkable and dearly loved three boys (Tom, Rob and Harry), which led the school to develop one (Has thirty years ago ever seemed such a foreign land, or was it ever thus?). It was typical of Jenny's



boundless energy that while blazing this new trail for the school, she was able to lead such a successful department.

Jenny stepped down as head of department with the arrival of Harry, but in the many years since, when first Shaun Hullis, and then I, were heads of Classics, she has always been the most stalwart of supporters, the most utterly reliable of colleagues and the kindest of friends: it is too easy to take for granted people who go the extra mile and who always do what they say they will do. This was borne out most recently when Jenny very generously in the first term of her 'retirement' agreed to teach my sets during my sabbatical. The peace of mind of knowing that every set is being taught better in one's absence is an additional tonic to the ordinary benefits of a sabbatical term.

Jenny has always been a tireless support and a wise counsel on the annual Classics trip to the Mediterranean, and she was the driving force behind Abingdon's uniquely exciting range of Classical lands visited: a trip to Libya during a sabbatical of her own led to an unforgettable school trip to the same destination, under the auspices of the local guide, Abdul, whom she had befriended on her first visit. In school she was the first person I would consult to sound out any new idea, and she was always the most generous listener for when I needed to get something off my chest. She was a stickler for accuracy in everything she did, and this very magazine will surely be the poorer in the future for the fact that Jenny will not be proofreading it. Nor did she tolerate fools gladly (but who does, as Eddie Izzard so memorably observed? And Eddie Izzard during a Ghibli enforced delay at Benghazi Airport will always remain a precious

shared memory!). Yet kindness and generosity were always her watchwords, especially towards the great numbers of newly-qualified teachers who she guided so expertly and supportively in her role as professional tutor.

She has been a towering figure at Abingdon over the last thirty years, yet mucking in to every aspect of school life: helping out with badminton, tennis, serving as a boarding tutor under Munna Mitra in Waste Court, and then as an exceptional sixth-form tutor in the day house of Tom Garnier, Kris Spencer and most recently David Franklin. We have been hugely lucky that Jenny has chosen to spend and dedicate so much of her life up to this point at the school, having previously led a more peripatetic existence with stops at the Isle of Wight, Brasenose College, Oxford and Eastbourne among others. We all hope that she now enjoys an equally long and active retirement with Ian and their boys: she has been hitting the road again in a new camper van, and as I write this Ian and Jenny are walking the coast-to-coast path.

But rather than end on a note of such ill-concealed jealousy, I think it is only fitting to quote the thoughts of an ex-pupil when he heard of Jenny's impending retirement: 'It was the kindness with which you taught that really remains strongest in my memory. That and your ability to connect with us students at every age throughout our school careers, from the youngest to the eldest. It created a fantastic learning environment that was not especially common, and which I now recognise required an incredible talent.'

Chris Burnand

Nick Revill

This past year has presented teachers with a number of challenges, but there is perhaps no greater challenge than trying to do justice to the towering figure that is Nick Revill. Appointed to the MFL Department at Abingdon in 1984 when the school was only around 700 strong, Nick quickly gained the respect of pupils and staff as one of the few members of the department to expertly teach both French and German from first year up to Upper Sixth. Indeed, what Nick doesn't know about French-speaking culture is simply not worth knowing: mention a remote village in Picardy or an unfamiliar regional dish and Nick could win Just A Minute hands down.

Nick's long-standing relationship with the school extends far beyond his work as a teacher and tutor. He met his wife, Christine, here at the school in the early nineties, when she came to work here as a French teacher. Unable to resist the charm, infectious sense of humour and the beard, Christine decided not to return to Canada and she and Nick were married, holding their wedding reception here at the School in the then Senior Common Room.

Nick's accomplishments over the years have been many and varied. In addition to his role as classroom teacher, Nick was Head of German for a few years, and was responsible for the organisation and smooth running of the German exchange to Bielefeld, an exchange which he accompanied for more than 30 years; his arrival each year was looked forward to not only by his German hosts but also by the local food suppliers, whose sales rocketed during his visits. Nick's contributions to the Other Half over the years include table tennis, hockey and golf away fixtures, and he was always willing to get behind the wheel of the minibus to escort pupils to matches and MFL events.

It is of course in the classroom that Nick has made his greatest impact. It would be impossible to be bored in a Revill lesson, not least thanks to his now famous and inimitable drawings. Generations of Old Abingdonians would be forgiven for thinking that France and Germany are populated by armies of stick figures carrying out household chores or buying

train tickets. This has endured right to the end; while the rest of us scramble to find last year's worksheet on the perfect tense for our third year lesson, Nick is busy assembling a series of hand-drawn cartoons that would give Tony Hart a run for his money. His drawing skills are of course rivalled only by his musical stylings. A number of former colleagues have variously commented on Nick's unforgettable Mick Jagger impression, his incomparable photocopier dance moves and his hilarious imitation of Led Zeppelin which accidentally found its way onto a GCSE listening recording...

Testimonials from Old Abingdonians show just how revered a schoolmaster he has been over the course of his time here. One OA (1993) wrote to me recently to speak of his fondness for his post-GCSE French Language at Work course, which involved developing an extensive knowledge of the Saint Maclou carpet factory, something that Nick approached with great enthusiasm and no small amount of trademark sarcasm. The OA in question, also one of Nick's sixth form tutees, remembers tutor periods were a happy mix of entertaining discussion, witty repartee, and a little bit of serious reflection on academic progress. You'll have to ask Adam Jenkins (OA), now Lower School Housemaster, if he still has recourse to those lessons on the Saint Maclou carpet factory, but he is

certainly indebted to Nick for writing his UCAS reference (apparently the first he ever wrote). Other tributes poured in: "I remember a lesson in Lower School where he turned up having 'wrestled with a razor and lost' with half shaggy beard, half clipped and trimmed" (one William Stockdale, OA and current common room). It is precisely this mastery of the art of self-deprecating humour which has allowed Nick to lighten the mood of many a classroom and MFL meeting over the years.

Nick will be remembered for his rich and generous legacy, for sharing his love of languages, travel and gastronomy with generations of school pupils over the decades, and for being such a fun, warm and supportive colleague to so many during his time here. It will be hard to imagine Abingdon School without him. However, in place of remote Zoom lessons and navigating Google docs, I am sure Nick will embrace retirement, no doubt keeping the departmental WhatsApp busy with news of the latest wine/pork pie/Belgian bun offers from Waitrose or sending photos from Chamonix while we are knee-deep in mock exam marking. However, as the French say, *ce n'est qu'un 'au revoir'*, and we hope that he continues to be a frequent visitor.

Nathan Brittain







ABINGDON