

the Abingdonian

august 1999

The Abingdonian
August 1999
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I should like to record my thanks to all pupils and colleagues – too numerous to list – who helped with the magazine this year. As always, this was a team effort. I must however express my special gratitude to M. Brewer 6JEF, M. Brown 6JFH, C. Dugan VINMR, P. Gardner 6CMM, J. Mearns 6CMM, and S. Woodcock 6JEF, whose hard work commissioning and writing articles is clear from the sections to which they contributed.

My thanks go also to those colleagues and readers who wrote so kindly in appreciation of last year's magazines.

Once again, illustrations of sport do not necessarily show the team whose article they accompany.

As usual, the amount of material received exceeded the space available; my apologies to anyone whose worthy contribution has been sacrificed.

SH (editor)

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St Mary's Church,
by W Hatt, VISCW



Sir James Cobban

James Cobban was a man of many remarkable achievements, but it was his personality, still more than his policies, which impressed all those who came into contact with him. Indeed, it might be said that his regime at Abingdon resembled a benign, schoolmasterly version of the personality cult so prevalent in the politics of the mid Twentieth Century. And yet, for a man whose character invariably struck those whom he met by its compact unity and vigour, he embodied and personified some remarkable contradictions.

**an obituary of
Sir James Cobban,
CBE, TD, DL,
Headmaster of
Abingdon School
1947-1970,
by the Headmaster**

A dynamic, driving leader, he was nevertheless kind to weakness and sometimes seemed positively indulgent of failure; a fine classical scholar, he gave science pride of place in the Abingdon curriculum; a barking autocrat in public, he was privately shy and easily wounded; although his career lay entirely in masculine institutions, the accidents of family life contributed to make him exceptionally sympathetic to women and to feminist causes; always a passionate exponent of education as a means of self-improvement, he was also a fastidious observer of social niceties and distinctions. In short, he was simultaneously an enthusiastic radical and a staunch conservative, and very much a man of his times.

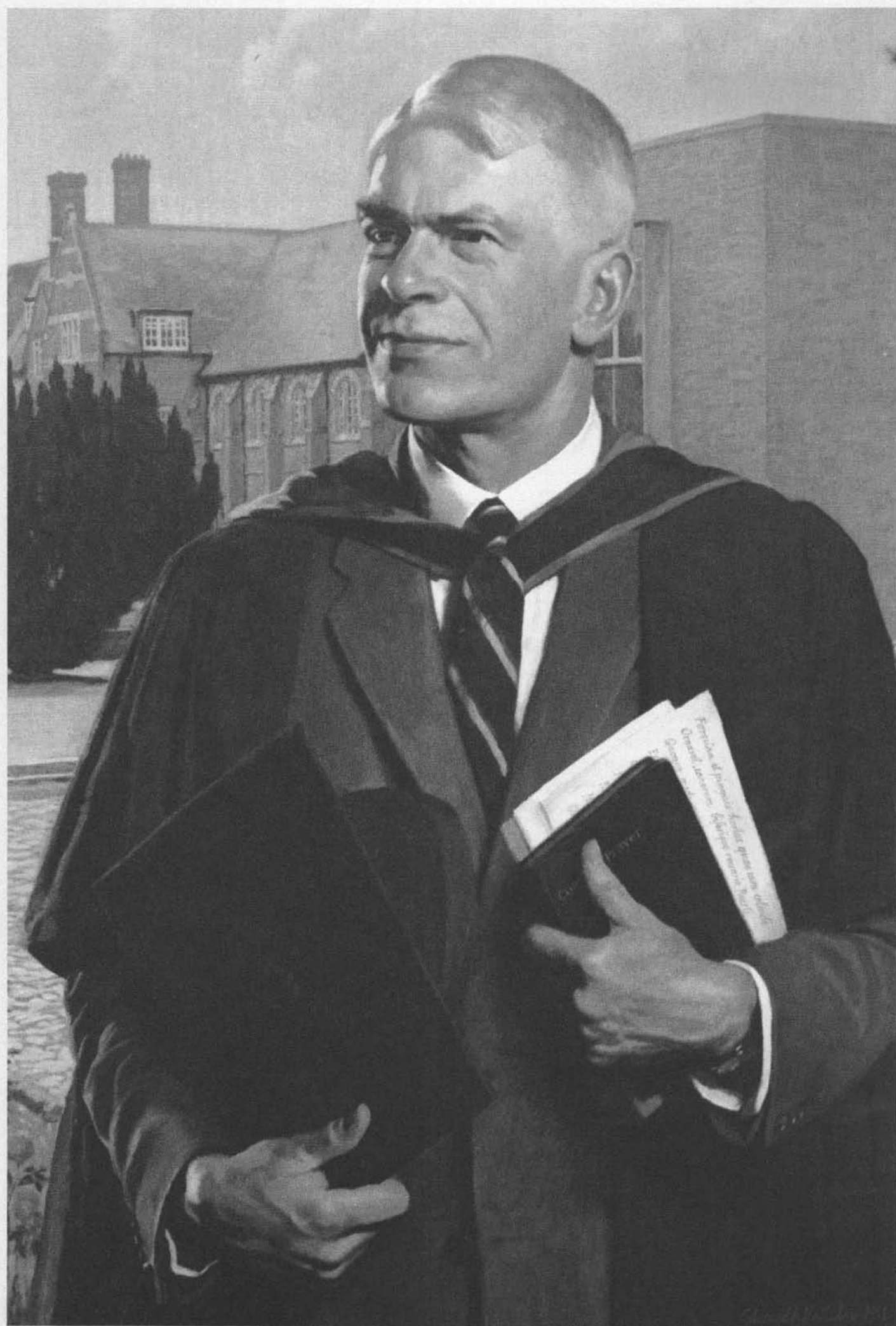
James Macdonald Cobban was born at Scunthorpe in Lincolnshire on September 14th 1910. He was descended on his mother's side from good north Lincolnshire farming stock, and on his father's side from a Scottish family which claimed connection with the Jacobite Flora Macdonald. His father was a self-taught civil engineer in a modest way, and JMC used to remark of his childhood that he was "brought up either in indigent gentility or in genteel poverty". He won a scholarship to Pocklington School in Yorkshire, where he successfully endured a rigorous regime and acquired a style well suited to his later rôle at Abingdon, which he described as "a bizarrely similar school". Next came a scholarship to Jesus College, Cambridge, where he was perhaps less happy but worked exceedingly hard to achieve a first class degree, the Thirlwall Medal and the Gladstone Prize, and a post-graduate studentship tenable in Vienna and Rome. Photographs of him at this stage of his life give an unmistakable impression of a diminutively pugnacious meritocrat, stubbornly determined to make his way in the world.

His chosen way was schoolmastering – not the most remunerative profession, perhaps, but a recognized route to positions of influence, and highly esteemed as such in those days. King Edward VI

School, Southampton provided what was in effect an apprenticeship from 1933 to 1936 – and the opportunity to collaborate with another young man, Ronald Colebourn, in writing a Latin text book for the publishers Methuen, which, under the title *Civis Romanus*, sold nearly half a million copies during the authors' lifetimes. Next came an appointment as classical Sixth Form Master at Dulwich College; this was a worthwhile promotion in itself, and, what was more, it meant that as the clouds of war gathered over Europe, JMC was in London, close to those centres of power which strongly attracted him all through his life. Already something of an amateur soldier, he particularly enjoyed a magical opportunity of drilling the First Battalion of the Grenadier Guards at Chelsea Barracks, one day in the summer of 1939.

For JMC, as for many other young Englishmen of his generation, the war was a formative experience, gruelling and unwelcome but not unprofitable either. He was fortunate in that his particular talents were promptly recognised, and from 1941 to 1945 he served in the Directorate of Military Intelligence, ending as a Lieutenant-Colonel on the Staff of the Control Commission in Germany. The experience provided an incomparable training in the disciplined application of method, in the art of management, and in the exercise of power – and it suited JMC very well indeed. It was no accident that letters addressed to "Colonel Cobban" continued to arrive at Lacies Court well into the Nineteen-Seventies – and the headmagisterial filing system is still based on that installed by lames, and allegedly copied from the pattern of the German General Staff.

A brief return to Dulwich in 1946 to 1947 was the prelude to appointment as Headmaster of Abingdon in 1947, and the commencement of his life's work. The school which JMC inherited from William Grundy was well established in point of tradition and morale, but backward in almost every technical respect, and in an alarmingly weak financial state.



Sir James Cobban (continued)

With the over-simplifying benefits of hindsight, it might be thought that it was a situation merely ripe for improvement, but at the time it must have seemed at least equally ripe for disaster, and JMC had to act with brisk resolution from the very outset. He was not much aided by the fact that his hugely influential, rather idiosyncratic predecessor was living in retirement in a cottage which he had been allowed to build for himself in the School's grounds (this cottage is now Heathcot, the sanatorium).

William Grundy, a genial autocrat and charismatic character, had commanded success during his thirty-four year reign essentially by maintaining a high level of personal contact with every boy in the School. This was just practicable while the number of pupils was around 250 or less, and JMC quickly showed that he could be at least as personal, not to mention autocratic and idiosyncratic, as his predecessor. In later years, as the numbers grew, he had to resort increasingly to impressionistic devices in order to maintain the illusion of personal contact, but the gift of an amazing memory for names and faces, in combination with inexhaustible energy, ensured that he remained within reach, at any rate, of the high standards that he set himself at the very beginning. Like Grundy, he saw himself first and foremost as the master of a boarding school, individually directing large numbers of boys as their housemaster, and acting *in loco parentis* with an intensity of commitment which might nowadays arouse the disapproval of Children Act inspectors, but which in its time evoked the very proper esteem and affection of his charges, for whom he veritably became in many cases an alternative father-figure.

The associated problems of financial security, numbers of pupils, and standards were simultaneously addressed by a successful campaign to enrol Abingdon on the Direct Grant list in 1947, and the School embarked almost immediately on a period of growth and development. Much of this growth took place on the day boy side, and was associated with the expansion of the Atomic Energy Research Establishment at Harwell, followed in due course by its various offshoots. Numbers increased every year, to a total of 630 in 1970, the year of JMC's retirement, and the staff grew more or less *pari passu*. Property, particularly the War Memorial Field, Lacies Court, and the houses round the north eastern side of Park Crescent, was acquired as opportunity offered, and new classrooms and laboratories were erected in an ever-quickenning scramble to accommodate the surging hordes. It would be easily possible to be critical of JMC's buildings, but the nature of the School's growth imposed a hand-to-mouth style of development, and the conditions of the time – endemic shortages of building materials, together with

grievous planning restrictions and, inevitably, a shortage of finance – were not conducive to the creation of quality in the physical surroundings. The fact remains that the School did grow, physically as in every other respect, during JMC's Headmastership, and attained high levels of efficiency despite what we should now consider serious weaknesses in its equipment.

To many who knew him as Headmaster, JMC's defining characteristic was his energy: constantly on the move, he was a galvanizing, almost ubiquitous presence, at least in the earlier years before the School had grown and his own extra-mural commitments had multiplied. The insistent quick-fire of his conversation, punctuated by fierce, staccato bouts of laughter, dominated every occasion at which he was present. He seemed to need little sleep, and found it convenient to do much of his administration by way of midnight notes requiring action, and often personal attendance on his presence, before the start of morning school the next day. He was as prolific on paper as in speech, as a whole succession of secretaries could wearily testify (though the frequency of their comings and goings owed more to the avidity with which they were snapped up in marriage by bachelor members of staff, than to any dissatisfaction with their employment); he wrote in what the Eighteenth Century would have called a polished, nervous style, expressive both of his rigorous classical training and impetuous personality, and well suited to a wide range of subjects – he liked to think of himself as a journalist *manqué*. He sometimes suffered from the delusion that he was capable of delegating authority, but his subordinates generally knew better than this, and were prepared to wait for the instructions that were never long in coming.

All this might suggest something of a tyrant, and JMC was certainly capable of giving a passable imitation of a martinet. But his courtesy towards all and sundry, young and old, great and small, was as unforced as it was unfailing and elaborate, and his gentleness with the distressed or the inadequate, though often very private, was legendary, and won him the unstinted devotion of many. The tragic deaths of his little son, at the age of two in 1947, and of his dearly beloved wife Lorna, in 1961, had the effect of intensifying his emotional responses, and it sometimes seemed in later years as if school and family had become fused in his devotions. During the earlier part of his reign, at least, it was still possible to run a school such as Abingdon at that time was along familial lines, and JMC thoroughly relished his rôle as the patriarch; he taught his boys Latin, instructed them what to wear and how to behave, imparted moral guidance, steered them towards careers, and joined in their end-of-term festivities – all with electrifying gusto.

The post-war growth of the nuclear research establishment at Harwell was, perhaps, the prime stroke of good fortune which enabled Cobban to turn Abingdon School into something more than a small local grammar school dependent on the personal qualities of its Headmaster – a state of affairs which had prevailed for all of the preceding seven centuries or more. With characteristic pragmatism, he adapted the classical curriculum to meet the preferences of the scientific families who flocked into the neighbourhood during the Nineteen-Fifties, and established Abingdon as a school with something approaching a scientific speciality. Neither the theory of the curriculum nor the methodology of teaching were matters of particular interest to him in their own right; himself a brilliant natural teacher, he was concerned above all with bringing up young men in the way that they should go, and was quite undogmatic about the means to be used for this end. It was of far more importance to him that the opportunity of education should be made available to those who could really benefit from it, regardless of their social or economic condition, and the Direct Grant system which under-pinned Abingdon's prosperity during his Headmastership commanded his unwavering and ardent support.

Running all through both his professional and his private life was a deep religious conviction, expressed in terms that were often earnest, in the Evangelical Anglican style of his upbringing, but never fanatical or intolerant. He entered readily into the quasi-clerical aspect of the Headmaster's rôle, directing the arrangements for worship in chapel, and preaching with masterly vigour. The serried ranks of clergy who attended his memorial service attested to the

effectiveness of his influence over individuals in the matter of religion – but the School as a whole was not made unduly pious.

During the later years of Cobban's Headmastership, he became heavily involved with the politics of education, defending the Direct Grant system, and endeavouring to maintain bridges between the maintained and independent sectors, during a time when confrontation was more popular than collaboration. His committee memberships multiplied, and the name of Abingdon was bruited abroad – at some price, as he himself admitted, in terms of personal contact with the School, which was perhaps becoming a little ragged in its continued growth.

It was characteristic of JMC that he should attempt to deal with incipient disciplinary difficulties by taking the problem cases into his own household, so that, by more than one account, Lacies Court became a hotbed simultaneously of high politics and low life.

His retirement came in 1970, but that did not mean inactivity for a man like JMC. He was soon to be busier than ever, governing schools, presiding over the local magistrates' bench, serving on – and, for a time, chairing – the General Synod of the Church of England, and, not least, working for the introduction of the Assisted Places scheme, which replaced the Direct Grant system after the latter had been abolished in 1975.

He was made CBE shortly after his retirement, and was knighted in 1982 for his work on the Assisted Places scheme.

James Cobban died in Yeovil, Somerset, on April 19th 1999. He is survived by his four daughters, Mary, Diana, Hilary and Helena.



School notes

Beginnings and endings

The academic year 1998/1999 saw a dramatic fresh start in the long history of Abingdon School – the merger of Abingdon and Josca's, and the creation of a new Foundation embracing both of the predecessor institutions. By a curious symmetry, the same year witnessed the death of James Cobban, and thus, in a sense, the end of an earlier era of expansion and development, which is described and applauded elsewhere in this issue.

an overview of the implications of the new Foundation, established on September 2nd 1998, comprising Abingdon School and Josca's Preparatory School, by the Headmaster

Untitled, opposite, by C Campbell VIJRWB

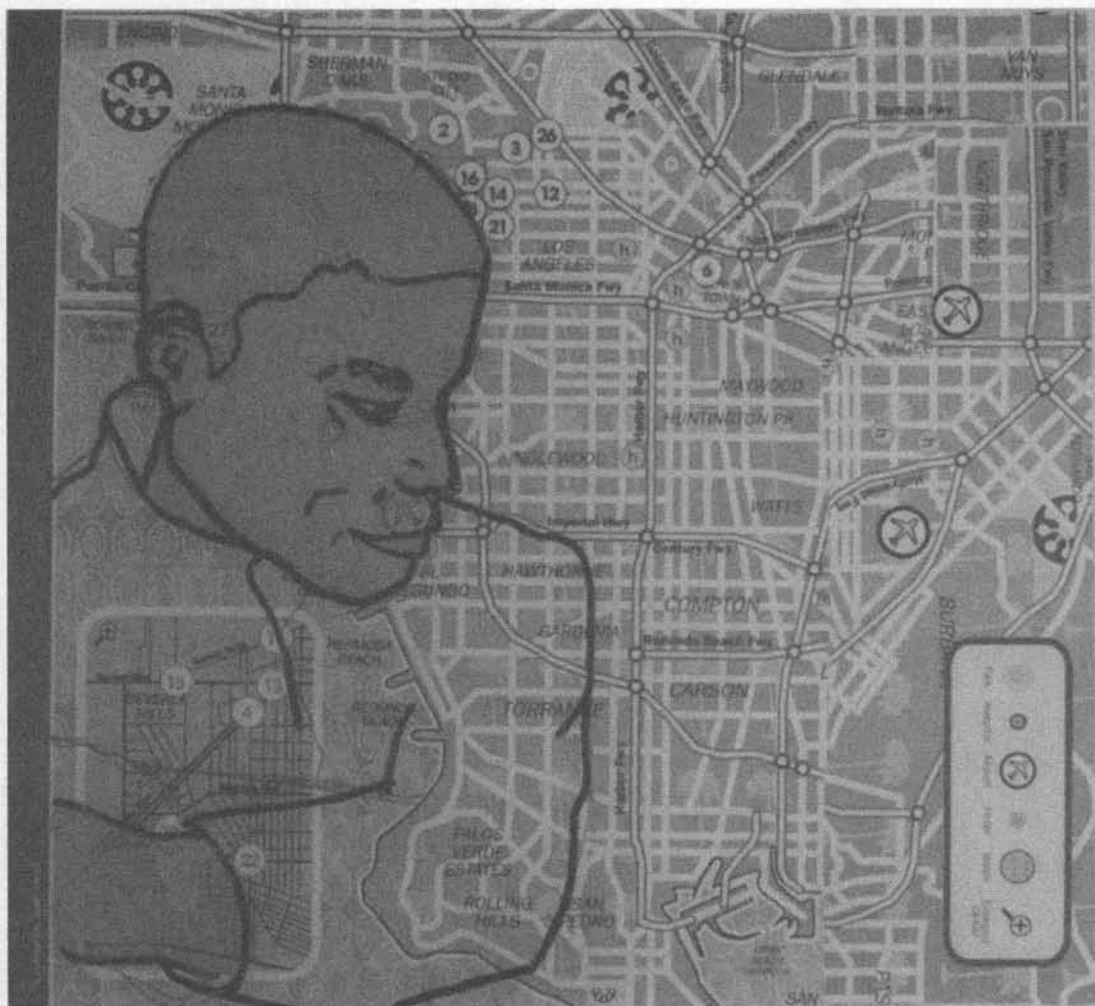
The union with Josca's was no hurried affair. Rather, the idea had been matured over several years of discussion and planning, involving steadily wider circles, before a detailed proposal was placed before the two Governing Bodies and received their provisional assent in the Spring of 1997. Then the really hard graft began, and joint working parties of Governors and professionals settled down to the business of hammering out the practical arrangements for every aspect of the new Foundation's business; the Charity Commission was brought into the picture, first to give its assent to the principle of the merger, and then to authorize and legalize a new constitution; and, not least, opportunity was seized by the forelock, with the purchase of a fine new field alongside the existing Josca's ground at Frilford – this through the good offices of Richard Cox, OA.

Trustees and administrators, lawyers and financiers, all completed their work in time and with no more than a healthy minimum of disagreement, with the desired result that Abingdon and Josca's Schools both extinguished themselves voluntarily on August 31st 1998, and – after a curious and rather disconcerting interlude of twenty-four hours during which everything was, apparently, in limbo – were reconstituted as one Foundation on September 2nd. The people least affected were the pupils and parents, and the two teaching staffs probably felt equally untouched, to begin with at any rate. All things considered, it was a very smooth process – and not a penny changed hands, in either direction, by way of purchase or compensation.

As a matter of deliberately settled policy, the first year has been taken quietly. The long-serving Headmaster of Josca's, Mr. Tony Savin, has finished his distinguished reign of thirty-six years in the style which he has made his, and his school's, own; his achievements were happily crowned with a final round

of academic and sporting successes, and he has left a school filled to overflowing. Increasing quantities of preparatory work have been done. The new field, Cox's Field West, has been levelled and prepared for use as Abingdon's principal location for internal, and some representative, games. A handsome and substantial pavilion, capable of providing changing facilities for up to ninety boys, has been built and supplied with a coach park off the Wantage road, so that teams from Abingdon can be taken out with their kit, change, play, shower and change again before travelling back in comfort. Work has also begun on extending and improving the teaching facilities of the prep. school, with the provision of a new laboratory and classroom at the back of the main building. Finally, not least, Mr. Savin's successor as Headmaster has been appointed; he is Mr. Christopher Davies, at present the Housemaster of the junior house at Highgate School, a historian, aged forty and married with two children.

Those are the salient features, at any rate. There will be a lot more than that for the historians of the future to get their teeth into, and some of it has been quite arduous. What is there in it all which will make it worthwhile, for both parties and not just for one or the other? The essential point is all about economy of scale. When Abingdon was inspected by a Government Commission of Enquiry in 1818 it was discovered that there were three scholars on the Foundation, and six boarders who were private pupils of the Headmaster – a narrow base from which to achieve excellence, or finance improvements. 180 years later, the number of pupils on the combined roll was 976, of whom 126 were boarders – a formidable body, generating seven and a half million pounds in fee income, backed by seventy acres of land, several million pounds' worth of buildings, and a substantial invested endowment. A charitable organization of this



size can achieve quality in its activity as well as quantity in its benefactions, without suffering the constraints of government interference which were the unfortunate accompaniments of the Direct Grant scheme, and, to a lesser extent, of the Assisted Places scheme which succeeded it.

The teaching staffs of both schools stand to gain immeasurably from a broadening of professional horizons, and possibly in due course also from an exchange of resources and activities. Individual subjects at Josca's will be able to draw on the expertise, and the apparatus, of their bigger cousins at Abingdon, and the activities of the Abingdon Lower School could benefit from the amplifying effects of association with a thriving prep school regime. Music offers particularly exciting prospects for growth and development, at both ends; we could be on the verge of a dramatic new phase in the growth of Abingdon's reputation as a musical school.

Boys from Josca's will still have to win their places at Abingdon on equal terms with candidates from other preparatory schools, and it is envisaged that the proportion passing from the junior to the senior school will remain broadly similar to that of recent years, that is to say, approximately 60% of the prep school total. Others will leave Josca's in the future, as they have done in the past, for a range of destinations, and thus the Abingdon formula will be extended to serve the locality even more broadly than it does at

present. Boys will not be allowed to leave Josca's for Abingdon at eleven, but nor will candidates be directed from Abingdon to Josca's at that age; instead, the preferences of parents will carry their sons to whichever junior section seems most attractive and appropriate. In due course, perhaps, the advantages of the longer run at Josca's may draw away some who at present proceed from primary school to Abingdon at age eleven, and thus there will be some easing of the over-crowding which is an undeniable feature of life on the Abingdon site in 1999. There is room for plenty of development yet at Josca's, and it will be in the interests of everyone connected with the Foundation that the junior branch should thrive as vigorously as possible in the years ahead.

Senior independent schools up and down the land are seeking to strengthen their bases by acquiring, or merging with, preparatory schools in the way that Abingdon has done with Josca's. This is a sound policy, whether measured in economic or in strictly educational terms, and the general experience of its results has been highly favourable. Certainly, vertical combinations of this sort have a far better track record than the alternative, horizontal formula which can throw senior schools together into often incongruous association. The year of the new Foundation may well be seen in the future as the beginning of a whole new era of growth and achievement for the broader establishment which is now Abingdon School.



“Josca’s, c’est moi”?

**an appreciation of
Mr. A Savin,
Headmaster of Josca’s,
who retires this summer
after thirty-six years of
service to the School,
by Mr. P Dewhurst,
a long-time colleague**

**Study for still life, above,
by T Smith VINAF**

I first met Tony twenty-nine years ago when I came to Josca’s to be interviewed for a job. While interviewing me, he asked what I thought about boys calling the teachers by their first names. This was the first that I had heard about this, of course, and I fairly naturally replied that I thought it might give boys the opportunity to be cheeky and so on. Tony replied rather drily that it was perfectly possible for a boy to address a teacher as “sir” in a fairly rude manner. He was right, but I had not thought about it. This was to be the first of many times that he would make me think “That’s right. I never thought of that.”

After the interview I was taken round the School by Brian, the Deputy Headmaster. While this was going on, Tony came across my wife, who was sitting outside – it was a sunny day. Pat said to Tony, rather snootily (like many shy people she can sometimes give that impression), “Oh, do you work here?” Later, while driving home, she told me this and I thought, “Oh well, there goes another one.” In fact, I got the job, but ever since Tony has insisted – on frequent occasions – that Pat thought that he was the gardener.

My next impression of Tony came after I had started at the School; during breaks, Tony always sat in the staff room. This was quite a surprise after the last

school I had worked at, where the Headmaster had been most elusive.

I vividly remember the first School camp. I had never camped in my life and had borrowed a beautiful tent with sewn-in groundsheet for the occasion. Tony had an old army tent; no sewn-in groundsheet, no zips, no airbed, no luxuries of any kind. I felt somewhat – well, you can imagine how I felt. It was here, too, when talking after the boys had gone to bed that I found that Tony knows an awful lot about wine; later he introduced me to it and I am very glad he did.

Just two other impressions: I do not think that I have ever known Tony be unkind to a boy, however irritating or naughty the boy was, and I have never known him interfere with one’s teaching unless, of course, something was going wrong; what an excellent trait in these days when practically everybody seems to know how to do our job better than we do.

It was before my time here but I know that when the School went through some tough times, and had to move from Oxford to Frilford, if it had not been for Tony’s determination the School would not be here at all. Louis Quatorze once said, “L’état, c’est moi.” Possibly true. If Tony ever said, “Josca’s, c’est moi,” then certainly true.

Staff leavers

When Janet Boulton first arrived at Abingdon, an interview with her in the *Abingdonian* discussed her rôle as an artist within the School. "How would you like to be seen to be making a contribution as an artist to Abingdon School?" she was asked. She replied: "If I could make any contribution apart from my teaching, I should like to be helping towards a greater understanding and appreciation of the artist as a thinking person." There is no doubt that Janet has realized that significant achievement. She is respected for both her intellect and her work. A great friend to her colleagues, she is one of those teachers whom pupils lucky enough to be taught by her will never forget. Janet cares passionately about art education and the context of our learning. She commits as much to teaching as she does to her own painting: the same discipline, the same standards, and above all the same integrity. Principles are never compromised. She works hard to get to know her pupils, to identify their potential and to realize it. Her huge knowledge and experience command immediate respect. She is a most distinguished teacher and artist; we are lucky to have worked with her, and, as she will continue to be close to the School, we look forward to many more happy associations ahead.

Donald Crowther came to us three years ago after an interesting and varied career which included a stint teaching Classics at Kamuzu Academy in Malawi. During his time here, he has done much to inculcate his genuine love for his subject in his pupils, and they have been fortunate to benefit from his scholarship. Donald also ran the hockey at Abingdon for the past two years, very successfully. He is leaving us to take up his new post as Classics Subject Officer at the OCR examinations board in Cambridge, from which position he will influence the future of Classics teaching in schools throughout the country. We wish him and his family success and happiness.

Richard Damerell spent two terms teaching Russian and French at Abingdon covering for Vicky Evans' maternity leave. As an OA, he was very quick to make himself at home; his enthusiasm was apparent to both colleagues and pupils, and despite the temporary nature of his appointment, he exhibited enormous commitment, working all hours. It was typical of his dedication that he travelled to Moscow with the exchange group despite having officially finished working at the School, and that he also accompanied the Second Year trip to Rydal Hall. We are very grateful to Richard for having stepped into the breach so energetically and wish him good fortune.

Vicky Evans is leaving us to devote more time to her family. The "blonde bombshell" made an immediate impact at interview and it soon became obvious that the right person had been appointed to

help implement the new policy of language diversification, with Russian occupying a more prominent position. Within a short time Vicky had established such a rapport with the Lower School boys whom she taught and tutored that she came to be regarded as the fount of all wisdom in matters relating to Lower School language teaching.

Her subsequent appointment as Lower School Housemistress seemed to be no more than official recognition of that expertise. When the firm, but fair, Mrs. Bradshaw (later to become Evans) was in charge, the boys knew who was boss. Colleagues would watch in wonder as normally querulous mobs queued neatly and quietly outside the hallowed portals of Room Six. Once inside there was eagerness to earn the right to answer the question. Lessons were conducted at a brisk pace with plenty of oral participation and numerous fun but instructive games, effective in reinforcing recently-covered material. The alarming thing about working with Vicky was the feelings of inadequacy induced by the briefest glance at her planner. There is no truth, however, in the rumour that on deciding to quit teaching, at least for the time being, she has had to consign the next three years' lesson plans to the bin... All are sorry to see Vicky go, but at least we know that in baby Elizabeth she has the best of all reasons for leaving, and that her link with Abingdon School is anything but severed.

Yelena Moukhina, or Lena, as she was more familiarly known, was with us as Russian assistant from mid-January to late May 1999. A student of English at Moscow State University, she had a strong command of English but was always willing to speak Russian with staff wishing to keep in practice. Her assistance was appreciated above all by the Upper Sixth in the run-up to the oral examinations. We wish her every success in her studies and future career.

When Nicola Tönnissen arrived here, it was soon apparent that she was determined to make the year rewarding for herself and the School. With her brisk, cheerful, friendly manner she settled in quickly as the German assistant. She enlivened the Modern Languages department through her resourcefulness, dynamism and outgoing personality, participating whole-heartedly in a range of activities and readily making new friends in the process.

We have been most fortunate this year to have the services of one of the most dedicated and hard-working *assistantes* in living memory, Gwendoline Wikart from Normandy. When the oral paper grades are published the boys concerned will surely have a lot to thank her for. She became fully involved in the life of the School, and everyone was struck by her friendly and outgoing nature. We wish her every happiness and success in the future.

**appreciations of
Janet Boulton, Donald
Crowther, Richard
Damerell, Vicky Evans,
Yelena Moukhina,
Nicola Tönnissen,
and Gwendoline Wikart,
all of whom have left
the School this
academic year**

Mathematical challenges

Once again, the School's mathematicians have shone at all levels in the United Kingdom Mathematical Challenges.

**a report on the School's
repeated successes
in these national
competitions,
by DJD**

Congratulations go to the forty-seven members of the Sixth Form who participated in the UK Senior Mathematical Challenge. Over 40,000 pupils in Britain took part. Abingdon pupils won sixteen gold, twenty silver and eight bronze certificates. Of the sixteen gold winners, ten qualified for the next round, the International Mathematical Olympiad: M. Abdullah, S. Brooks (a Fourth Year), P. Gardner, A. Leung, W. Lui, M. Kom, T. Mak, M. Pagett, B.K. Teh, and A. Wilson.

S. Brooks went on to qualify as one of the twenty finalists in the UK, and attended a four day "training session" at Trinity College, Cambridge, in April. At the end of this came the final selection test, which was intended to pick out the top eight to form the national "squad" for the international part of the competition. S. Brooks made it into the squad, and then took part in a correspondence course to select the six who would form the actual team. Unfortunately, despite having come so far, he did not win selection and so stayed in England as a reserve whilst the team went to Romania for the competition itself. Nevertheless, this remains a remarkable achievement for a pupil of his age.

In the Intermediate Mathematical Challenge, fifty boys achieved gold standard, of whom sixteen qualified for the next round, an improvement on last year's results. They were S. Allen, G. Bailey, S. Brooks, Y. Dong, M. Gray, J. Herbert, M. Hylla, B. Lo, J. Mak, M. Nowotny, D. Procter, C. Smith, M. Stockwell, P. Vasudev, D. Walford and B. Wall. There were also thirty-seven silver and fifteen bronze certificates for pupils in the School.

The whole of the First and Second years took part in the Junior Mathematical Challenge, the paper consisting of challenging mathematical puzzles and problems. The competition attracted 130,000 entrants nationally, and Abingdon pupils won twelve gold certificates, twenty-five silver, and thirty-five bronze. Second Year pupils who won gold awards were S. Blackwell, W. McGeehin, G. Morris (top in the School), J. Prinold, C. Steel and D. Stewart. In the First Year, A. Brown, H. Coules, C. Kennedy, C. Moger, A. Wimborne and S. Withnall also achieved gold certificates. G. Morris and A. Brown scored highly enough to qualify for the next round, the Junior Mathematical Olympiad.

Improving the town centre

**a report by CJB
on the School's
successful entries in a
design competition
held to mark National
Architecture Week,
November 12th to 19th**

The local architectural practice of West Waddy organized this competition as part of regional events in National Architecture Week. Schools from the area were invited to take part, and two teams of our Lower Sixth A level artists decided to take up the challenge.

The area concerned was the Bury Street shopping precinct in Abingdon, new in the Nineteen-Seventies but now rather drab and in need of revitalization. A detailed brief was devised by West Waddy, and one of their staff, Mr. Andrew Heason, toured participating schools giving an informative talk and advice on tackling the project.

The teams from Abingdon worked over a three and a half week period. A small amount of curriculum time was used, but the majority of the work was carried out in the boys' own time, including a lot of effort over half term. The process was characterized by excellent teamwork, effective organization and a sense of creative excitement. The results bear testimony to the quality which can be achieved when talented people work together towards shared objectives.

Both teams adopted a strategy of looking at the range of problems currently affecting the area, offering workable solutions to overcome them and presenting ideas in an accessible form, including both two- and three-dimensional methods.

Entries were submitted to a tight deadline and judged by a panel which included an architect, the chief planning officer for the Vale of the White Horse, the chairman of the Town Council Planning Committee, the president of the Abingdon Chamber of Commerce, and the Mayor. Entries were submitted anonymously to ensure an unbiased assessment. Our teams won first and second prizes.

The first prize of £225 was awarded to the team comprising N. Hayes, B. Hewett, T. Murray, T. Humi and J. Dando.

The second prize (£125) was awarded to the team made up of T. Lee, N. Moffatt and W. Smith.

Their work was displayed along with the other entries in a public exhibition in Abingdon, and all the boys involved should be warmly congratulated.

Library stained glass



In 1870 Abingdon School moved to new premises in Albert Park, and the old schoolroom, which had been home for over three hundred years, became a drill hall for the Abingdon Volunteers. In 1911 an OA, Arthur Preston, became Mayor of Abingdon and paid for the room to be restored and embellished, whilst another OA, Walter Sedgefield, commissioned a series of stained glass windows for what then became known as the Royse Room.

The windows, which detail the names of headmasters between 1563 and 1870, together with OAs who became heads of Oxford Colleges, were the work of C.E. Kempe and Co. Charles Eamer Kempe (1837-1907) had been one of the most popular and prolific stained glass window designers of his day. But the new century brought a change in taste and by the mid-Nineteen-Fifties, when Abingdon Corporation published a guide to Abingdon and its treasures, although the contents of the Royse Room were described in great detail, no mention at all was made of the windows. Thus, when eight of the original twelve panels were removed in 1966 to accommodate alterations being made to the Guildhall, there was not a murmur of protest. The windows were stored away behind a cupboard and forgotten.

Thirty years later the fact of their existence was discovered by the Headmaster and brought to the attention of the Mayor of Abingdon, Dr. Vernon Butt, who was also *ex officio* a School Governor. Delicate negotiations with the Town Council followed, resulting in an agreement whereby the windows remained the property of the Council whilst being on indefinite loan to the School, in return for the School meeting the costs of renovation.

After their thirty-year sojourn behind a cupboard, the windows were considerably cracked and paint-spattered. The restoration work was put into the hands of Paul San Casciani, Fellow of the British Society of Master Glass Painters and father of Dante Peters OA. The work was paid for by Mrs. Linda Heatley, whose son Geoffrey was then in the Sixth Form at the School, in memory of her husband Squadron Leader Peter Heatley, who had been killed in an air crash in 1996.

Now, at the end of the century, with the windows newly installed in the Grundy Library, fashions are again changing and the School has received several visitors who have come specifically to see the work of Charles Eamer Kempe, whose stained glass windows are beginning to be admired once more.

the School Archivist, Mrs. S. Wearne, explains the significance of the stained glass installed in the Grundy Library as part of the refurbishments over the past year

The Waste Court Skeleton



**a summary of the
Easter holiday
excavations
at Waste Court
and Lacies Court,
by SH**

photographs by SH

The local media made much of the "Roman soldier" discovered under the lawn at Waste Court; the *News of the World* even put it about that boys digging up the "croquet pitch" had found a human skull. Once again, the archaeologists have made some fascinating discoveries in the grounds of the School, adding to the evidence that Abingdon might be the oldest continuously inhabited town in the country.

After the success of the dig in 1997, which revealed a Romano-British grave and an infant burial of the same period, the archaeologists from York University had been trying to assemble a team of volunteers to come back for a bigger operation. The aim was to confirm both the suspected Romano-British period cemetery and the dating sequence suggested by the earlier investigation. A geophysical survey carried out in October revealed what appeared to be traces of buildings under Waste Court lawn. Only excavation could establish what these were.

Early in April, the team arrived. Led once again by Mrs. P. Excell and Mr. R. Evans, they varied in number over the fortnight, but accomplished a great deal. Within hours, Waste Court had lost its garden path, as a section was cut into the raised lawn. Quickly the archaeologists found a wall underlying the path,

though the dating of this grew increasingly problematic. Ditches and post-holes seemed to run in several different directions at once: little sense could be made of the sections.

Further trenches were opened; the first, on the upper lawn near the Day Boy Changing Room, produced finds from all periods (Roman *mortarium* surfaced in the same trowel-full as Eighteenth Century pipe), suggesting that the upper lawn at Waste Court is made up of soil dumped from elsewhere. Ditches, probably Victorian, were the only features found. Again, this trench was abandoned when it became clear that little useful could be said about the area.

Nearer to the House, on the main lawn, a trench was started to look for what seemed (in the geophysics) to be the corner of a building. This turned out to be a Victorian flower-bed cut into the natural gravel; its square corner had shown up clearly on the scans. As this feature was cleared, a large oval patch of red soil began to emerge from beneath it, again cutting into the gravel. This red soil was, during the last dig, believed to be the Roman layer, and indeed Roman pottery emerged from the top of it this time. The red patch was the right size and shape for a grave, so one of the team was set to trowelling it down carefully.

Less than six inches below the flower-bed, the eye sockets of a human skull began to emerge. Over the next week, a complete skeleton (christened "Nicki") was slowly revealed, until it was ready on April 7th for lifting under the gaze of local television cameras.

The skeleton had not been healthy even when alive; a damaged – perhaps cancerous – hip, abscesses on the teeth, rotten gums, and flattened shin bones were all apparent whilst the skeleton was still in the trench. However, on removing the skull from the ground, Mrs. Excell (a bones specialist) drew the crowd's attention to the elongated shape of the back of the skull; a deformity with parallels elsewhere in Roman Britain. The flattening of his shin bones may have been hereditary, but may equally have been occupational damage, from kneeling a great deal, or perhaps riding a horse. It was presumably from this detail that the Press decided that our skeleton was a Roman cavalryman; certainly, the archaeologists never suggested this. The skeleton is far more likely to have been a Romanized Briton than a genuine Roman.

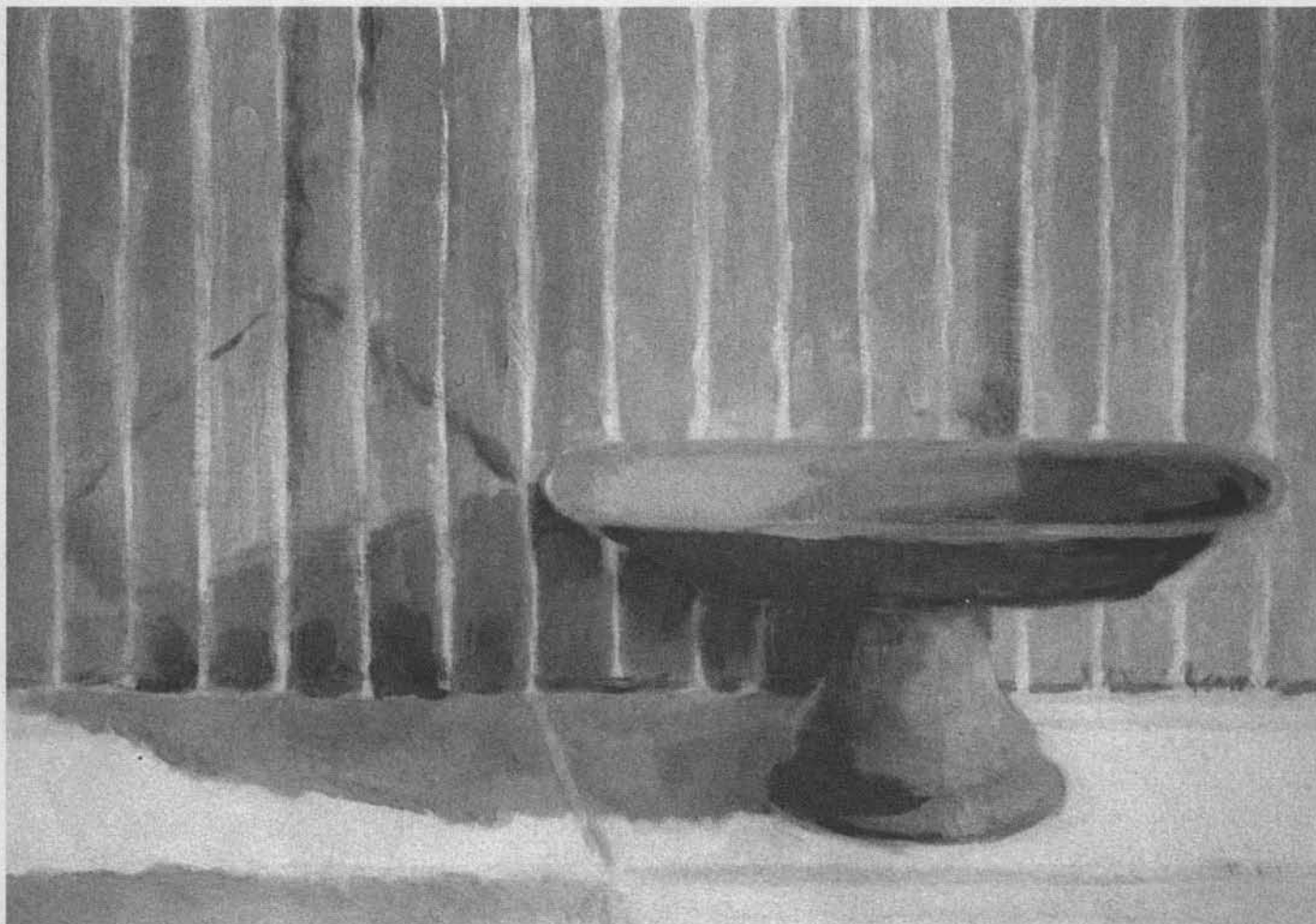
The skeleton was the most "high-profile" find, but there was much else. The same trench produced a post-hole with more Roman pottery, for example. Another trench further away from the road attempted to locate another feature shown on the geophysics. Again, the picture was complicated, with traces of post-holes, a ditch, a possible small pottery hearth, a burnt plank, and scatters of stone. The presumed ditch produced many fragments of local Roman period grey ware, and also a lovely piece of Samian ware, a glossy red pottery from Gaul which was fashionable in early Roman times. There were also fragments of human skull in this trench, widely scattered. It seems likely that the lawn at Waste Court has been heavily disturbed over the centuries, the Roman layer starting less than two feet down.

However, the most exciting find was not pottery or bone, but stone. As we dug into the fill of the ditch, an archaeologist from Reading University suddenly jumped up, shouting with excitement; he had found a flint arrowhead, in perfect condition. This was a rare find, a "once in a lifetime" discovery. The arrowhead dates from the early Bronze Age (Beaker Period), about 5000 BC. Similar arrowheads have been found in this area – for example, at Barrow Hills, in the Nineteen Forties – but not in such good condition.

In fact, the dig in the end turned up material from just about every period of British history, with Bronze Age, Iron Age, Romano-British, Saxon and Medieval pottery in abundance, as well as finds from every century until the present day.

The archaeologists were also invited to investigate a small area at Lacies Court. So much Roman pottery is coming out of the flower-beds at Lacies Court that it seems certain that a major Roman building stood there, and much remains to be done on this site. The limited excavation carried out found a Victorian rubbish dump and possible traces of earlier buildings.





Achievements

**reports of successes in
various competitions,
examinations and
elections**

**Still life, above,
by T Smith VINAFF**

C. Coventry was highly commended in the Oxfordshire Science Writing Competition for 14-16 year olds, with a piece on a great scientific breakthrough this century, reproduced opposite.

In shooting, which has benefited enormously from the arrival of the new coach, Mr. A. Smith, rapid progress is being made by pupils at all levels. Most notably, P. Wakefield is currently Oxfordshire County Junior Smallbore Rifle U16 champion, and a member of the Great Britain National Junior target rifle squad.

A team comprising T. Hester, R. Dawson and H. Watkinson won a competition in public speaking organized by the Abingdon Rotary Club.

In the WHSmith Young Writers' Competition (the "Inky Foot" Award) 1998, the School's entries received one of only twenty-one certificates of commendation awarded to schools "whose overall standard of entry is excellent, regardless of individual achievement". The judges, in a letter to the School, stated that they "would like to congratulate everyone at Abingdon School on their achievement".

The UK International Physics Olympiad saw repeated success; S. Brooks and M. Kom won silver certificates, and bronze certificates were awarded to P. Gardner, S. Smith and J. Tarasewicz.

In the UK International Biology Olympiad, P. Wesche was awarded a gold medal, and T. Mak and J. Montague silver medals.

J. Tarasewicz, S. Smith, I. Smith and N. Gray were all awarded bronze certificates in the UK International Chemistry Olympiad.

Scholarships were awarded to the following existing members of the School: C. Hall (Abbot de Blosneville), M-L. Jones (Blacknall), G. Morris (Blacknall), O. Thompson (Lady Wantage), L. Williamson (Young and Summers), B.H. Teh (Young and Summers), H. Langford (Honorary music), C. Smith (Honorary music), and N. Hawken (Music exhibition). Honorary academic awards were also made to the following members of the Lower Sixth: T. Coe, D. Cole, J. Mearns, C. Rose, R. Rothkopf, M. Spencer Chapman, P. Tolley and L. Whibley.

G. Morris played chess for the England U12 team. The School's own 1st VI won the Oxfordshire Schools Chess League.

Finally, but by no means least, Sir Peter Williams, one of the School Governors, was this year elected a Fellow of the Royal Society, before going on to be elected Master of St. Catherine's College, Oxford. We congratulate him warmly on these two achievements.

The salts of life

In the time that it will take you to read this sentence, another child will have died owing to dehydration caused by diarrhoea. This causes 19% of all children's deaths worldwide. Yet up to 90% of these lives could have been saved by a cheap, easy and effective treatment: oral rehydration salts (ORS).

Diarrhoea is normally acquired through contaminated water or food. Children are most vulnerable because they often put dirty objects in their mouths. Diarrhoea usually only lasts a few days, and is not dangerous in itself, but the rapid dehydration which accompanies it *is*, and kills one in ten children. The most vital thing, therefore, is to replace all lost water and electrolytes. But if water is drunk, it is not absorbed into the gut and passes straight through, causing even more diarrhoea. This is where ORS step in.

Before ORS, the only really successful method to rehydrate a child was to use an intravenous drip, which bypasses the digestive system altogether. Apart from costing a great amount, this was a very invasive and traumatic experience for the child.

It was also impractical, as it had to be administered by someone with medical training, while most cases of child diarrhoea take place out of range of medical attention. ORS can be made up using household materials, by parents, in the home. Furthermore a packet of ORS costs ten US cents (about seven pence) while full intravenous treatment costs US\$2,300 (about £1,500).

In 1968, researchers at the Diarrhoea Research Centre in Dacca, Bangladesh, found that if glucose (sugar) was added to water and salt in the right proportions, the liquid could be absorbed directly through the gut, meaning that anyone could replace lost fluids and salts simply by drinking the solution. The original ORS was that simple, and later versions retain this simplicity.

ORS works by enhancing salt and water absorption. Early ORS contained just electrolytes (the sodium and chloride of salt, along with potassium) and water ORS only became effective when glucose and sucrose were used to increase the absorption of sodium. Other modifications have been made at later times to suit special needs.

Each packet of ORS must contain specific quantities of several substances, made up with one litre of clean water:

Sodium Chloride 3.5g.

Sodium Citrate 2.9g.

Potassium Chloride 1.5g.

Glucose (%anhydrous glucose) 20(2)g.

The amount of glucose added proved critical. Water and sodium absorption increases up to a certain point, after which it decreases again.

ORS was field-tested during the Bangladeshi war of independence (1971) when cholera swept through refugee camps. Out of the 3,700 victims treated, 96% survived, an astonishing rate for such a simple solution. But it was not until ten years later that the World Health Organization promoted ORS, and from then on its use has increased greatly. Nowadays, oral rehydration therapy (ORT) – recommended home fluids used in combination with ORS – is used to treat half of all diarrhoea cases in developing countries, a great improvement on the 1% use in the 1980s.

Approximately 500 million ORS sachets are produced each year. Moreover, health workers show mothers how to mix the right ingredients for a home-made solution. ORS has been proven as safe for all age groups and patient conditions. Yet, despite all this, every day 8,000 children die from a condition for which there is a simple and effective treatment.

There are several reasons for this. Firstly, the medical establishment is unwilling to accept ORT as the best treatment. The simplicity of ORT confounds many doctors who believe it cannot be state-of-the-art, because it is so simple. Secondly, parents often feel that, because ORT does not cure diarrhoea, drugs are a better choice. These may stop the illness, but do not rehydrate children, leaving them dangerously ill. Also, in some areas clean water, the means to produce it or the right materials may not be readily available.

The WHO and UNICEF have set themselves targets for the year 2000. They hope to increase the use of ORT to 80% of all diarrhoea cases and therefore halve the number of child deaths which this devastating condition causes. They want to promote ORT even more, and over a sustained period of time. They also wish to break down whatever social or financial obstacles exist between ORT and where it is needed most.

Despite numerous other great scientific breakthroughs, the cheapness and simplicity of ORS, coupled with their effectiveness in dealing with one of the world's leading child-killers, must make them one of the greatest scientific innovations of the century.

In the Third Oxfordshire Science Writing Competition, for the 14-16 age group, entrants were invited to write an essay on an important development in science or applied science from the Twentieth Century. C. Coventry 4DGA was highly commended for his essay, reproduced here.

House reports

Crescent

a report by
A Hunter 6WTP,
B Wells 6WTP
and SPD

The "new-look" Crescent House, with new acquisitions Mr. and Mrs. Davies and family, Mr. Sandow, Mr. Phelps and Mr. Griffiths, got off to a running start with A. Benson as Head of School and H. Watkinson, S. Rutland and T. Hester as School prefects. A. Benson and H. Watkinson also led from the front on the rugby field, both representing the 1st XV. Elsewhere S. Perkins and J. Hayden were key members of a sensational Colts 'A' XV, videoed in glorious Technicolour by C. Fudge. H. Watkinson directed a momentous House singing effort which, against public opinion, went unrewarded; E. Allen later directed the musical talent in the House in a very successful concert. B. Wells had the unusual experience of playing himself in *Table Manners*, and Mr. Phelps shocked everyone by shaving off his beard.

The Lent term continued in the same busy vein, with B. Wells representing the 1st XI hockey. C. Fudge played 'A' team hockey, and H. Hunter captained a Third Year side which included A. Gould and A. Martin. W. Lui (captain) and M. Yeung managed yet another unbeaten badminton season, and T. Murray achieved glory (and a substantial prize) as a member of the winning team in a competition to redesign the town centre; he appeared on Central Television.

Other high points of the term were the House revue and the Charity Concert. The revue was much more than a series of cheap cracks at House staff; it involved everyone, and gave the likes of J. Bosley (surely another Crescent ginger-headed acting star of the future), A. Rowe and A. Pang a chance to show off their acting skills. At the Charity Concert, *Essence of Tumbleweed* (M. Watkinson, T. Beardsworth, T. Murray and A. Hunter), supported by N. Herbert, J. Herbert and A. Gould, played a selection of well-known songs to a packed and very enthusiastic CMR, raising £450 for the Radiotherapy Improvement Fund at the Churchill Hospital.

The Summer term produced more sporting successes. N. Andrews completed a hat-trick of 'A' team representations and took twenty-three wickets, while A. Hunter took hat-tricks alongside R. Smith in the 1st XI cricket. A. Martin scored runs and kept wicket; H. Hunter took wickets and caught out Prince Harry for the Juniors 'A' XI. A. Heather won a place and full colours in the 1st VI tennis, and T. Betteridge acquired a place in the rowing 1st VIII which did so well at Henley; despite contracting a rare tropical

disease he went on to the GB trials and a place in the Coupe. N. Betteridge and D. Easterbrook helped to win silverware for the J15 VIII, and N. Herbert for the J14 octo.

Further solid performances in the inter-house athletics and swimming competitions (M. Hylla excelling in both) were marked by real enthusiasm and a willingness to contribute from all. We must of course mention the superb win over School House in the inter-house cricket.

Earlier in the term, the Boarders' production of *The Crucible* saw A. Hunter and T. Betteridge support a gripping lead performance by B. Wells, who went on to further glory in *The Bacchae*. Musically, T. Ting and T. Murray on piano, E. and T. Allen and many, many others gave memorable performances (solo or in various ensembles) through the year. Music and drama were ably supported by a technical crew which included T. Hester, N. Herbert and S. McKenzie.

Academically the year was very impressive, with S. Rutland, E. Allen and M. Kom all receiving Oxbridge offers, and A. Alkaff, N. Betteridge, T. Gallard, J. Herbert, H. Hunter and C. Manners receiving Headmaster's commendations for outstanding reports. J. Herbert won the Information and Communication Technology prize.

On Leavers' Day, there were many prize winners, reflecting the wide range of successful involvement of boys throughout: E. Allen (Sawbridge Choral), M. Kom (Headmaster's Prize), H. Watkinson (Seward Cup, Clifford and Jane Ellis Prize for Character, and a TASS travel bursary), S. Rutland (Seward Cup and Duxbury tie), T. Hester (Duxbury tie and a travel bursary), A. Heather (Older Cup and Prize for Initiative), T. Ting (Richard Turner Memorial Prize) and A. Benson (Morland Prize for All Round Merit).

GCSE and A level examinations are finally over and we wish everyone all the best with their results and plans for the future. We also wish B. Wells success with his appointment as Head of School and M. Rees-Jones as next year's Head of House. We say a big "thank-you" and goodbye to Mr. Sandow, who is leaving Crescent, and look forward to Mr. Phelps' wedding at the end of July. Finally, perhaps it is appropriate that in the year following Sir James Cobban's death, Cobban House is to be refurbished to the high standards of Glyndwr.

Drummond-Hay's

This year has again been one of high achievement on all fronts, with a notable increase in cultural activity and individual enterprise. The impact of the "through-house" system has been very positive, with greater team spirit in inter-house competitions. Nowhere was this more the case than in athletics, where Third, Fourth and Lower Sixth all won their respective years, in what could be regarded as an embodiment of unity.

This was again demonstrated in the swimming galas, where the Fourth and Lower Sixth forms won their respective year group competitions. The House continued to maintain its competitive approach to hockey, by winning both the Senior competition and the Junior Plate final. In the Road Relay, the House showed commitment, with a ninety per cent turnout and a victory for the Fourth Year.

The House continued to provide strong, able individuals to School sport, with L. Butler, M. Jones, M. Terry and J. Gardner in the 1st XV rugby, and J. Otterburn, T. Fleming, A. Hulse, J. Gardner and (perhaps most notable) I. Downie all in the hockey 1st XI. The House entered the cricket season in confident manner with S. Dexter as vice-captain of the 1st XI, and was represented in the 1st XI squad by W. Smith, T. Fleming, I. Downie, P. Thomas and O. Thomas. In the Third Year, R. Silva flourished with the bat, scoring ninety-six against Pangbourne, under the captaincy of J. Watkins, in the Juniors 'A' XI.

Rowers continue to be well-represented in the House, with D. Wilson breaking through to the 2nd VIII and F. Hemsley providing strength to the J14s. In cross-country, all eyes were on M. Cullen, who has become Vale Champion. Badminton too remained an area of interest, B. Longworth (secretary) receiving full colours for his efforts on behalf of the club.

Academic progress remains high on the order of priority, and this has been met with consistent success by all years in the House. House academic prizes went to G. Unsworth, T. Worthington and I. Collin. W. Bowden was awarded the Mervyn Gray Applied Science prize, and J. Eighteen a Fifth Year prize for mock GCSE results. We are also proud to acknowledge the efforts of A. Hulse and J. Zwart, who have been offered places at Oxford and Cambridge respectively. The House wishes all the Fifth Year and Upper Sixth every success in their examinations.

This year saw a sustained interest in music and drama, nowhere more clearly visible than in *Jesus*

Christ Superstar, with J. Wilson's startling performance as Jesus, and T. Richards playing a supporting role as Judas. There was also a production of *The Bacchae* in which M. Terry, J. Mansfield, J. Wilson and T. Worthington gave first-rate performances.

In music, T. Richards has achieved a scholarship at the highly acclaimed Royal Northern College of Music. Members of the *Jesus Christ Superstar* band included M. Spencer Chapman, who continues to be at the musical forefront, retaining the Aitchinson cup for Musical Versatility and joining J. Mearns in First Orchestra; the latter has further expanded the musical frontiers with a place in the TVYO.

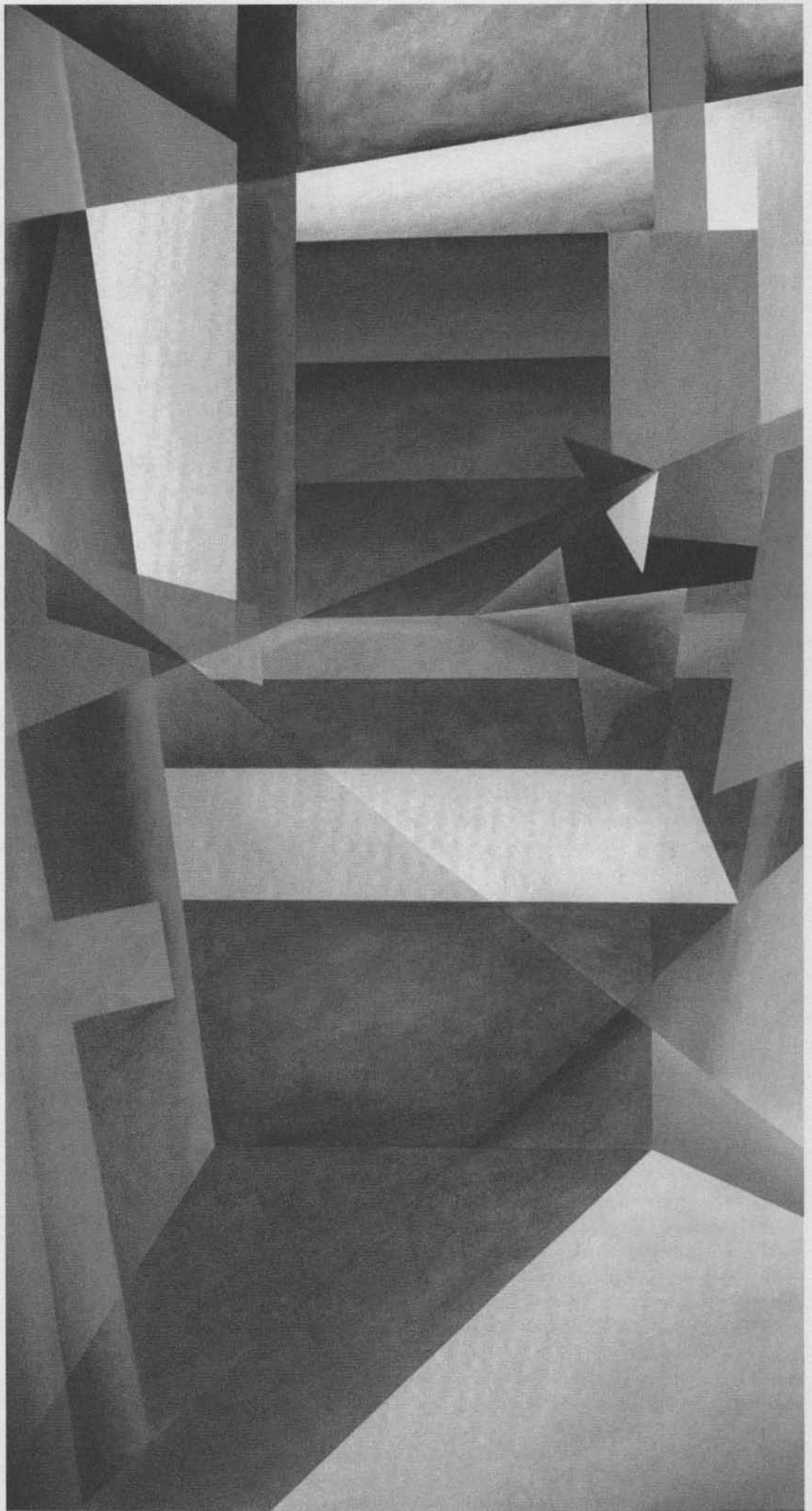
Service activities have grown considerably important to the School in recent years, and hence there has been a continuing growth in interest and participation in these fields. In recognition of their service to the School, M. Armstrong received a Duxbury tie and B. Longworth was presented with the David Barrett cup. Perhaps the most notable service activity is charity work, in which T. Worthington and R. Turnbull have played a key part, collecting for hearing dogs for the deaf. The CCF also has seen considerable interest, as well as achievement; J. Wood has won a place on a prestigious adventure-training course at Banff in Canada this summer; both he and P. Tolley have led the CCF with merit over the year.

Other field activities have also been well represented in the House, with C. Rose and J. Wood taking part in the Ten Tors expedition on Dartmoor. There has also been strong interest in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, in which T. Marsh and A. Gates are progressing strongly. In the longer term, E. Lewington and J. Holdsworth will be taking part in the Namibia 2000 expedition.

For the coming academic year, the House has five School prefects: C. Rose, M. Spencer Chapman, P. Tolley, J. Wilson and J. Wood, along with M. Terry as a House prefect. Of these, J. Wood has been invited to be one of three Heads of School for the coming year. The House wishes them every success in their duties, and aims to be supportive of them.

The House wishes to thank all its year-group tutors for their hard work and enthusiasm in promoting the interests of each member of their tutor groups throughout the year; we hope that they will continue, by doing so, to secure success for everyone in the same manner next year.

a report by
B Ashworth 6CMM



Fishpool's

This year has seen many changes after the introduction of the "through-house" system. This came as a surprise to the Lower Sixth, but despite losing their common room, most of them were happy to have access to the House pool table. The Upper Sixth did not take part much in the new system, but next year it is likely that there will be greater integration and mixing of the year groups.

Our record in the inter-house singing competition has not been enviable (disqualified in 1996, last in 1997), but this year we were bolstered by the addition of the Director of Music as a tutor, and consequently came second. I. Smith was enthusiastic in leading rehearsals of Simon and Garfunkel's *The Boxer*.

In the Lent term our pool competition was won by S. Campbell after a very tense final against L. Whibley. On a much grander scale we had a successful run during the inter-house hockey tournament, traditionally one of our stronger sports. The Senior team lost in the final, but only after committed performances from all the players, most notably P. Edwards, S. Balch and J. Mather; unfortunately we were only able to field eight players owing to illness. The Junior team won their competition convincingly; there were spirited performances from J. Farrands, R. Balch, E. Dingwall and R. Kershaw.

The inter-house athletics included the Lower Sixth for the first time; the competition at Tilsley Park led to a strong House spirit emerging on the day. The Third Year finished fourth; the Fourth Year were second, after J. Farrands, S. Evans and P. Garrick won five events between them and also picked up a number of second places. Missing last year's Victor Ludorum (N. Hambridge) the Lower Sixth drafted in S. Campbell, who impressed with his sprinting and in relay races; he came second in the four by 100 metres. Fishpool's came third in the entire competition; a very creditable afternoon.

There were mixed fortunes in the three swimming galas held towards the end of the Summer term. Our Lower Sixth team largely evaporated between the House and the pool and as a consequence we had to combine forces with Wilmore's; P. Mather and J.

Persaud gallantly represented our half of the squad. The Third Year did all compete but will need to do some more training before next year. In contrast, the Fourth Year won their gala by a convincing margin. N. Evans, a County swimmer, along with T. Stockford and C. Brookes proved to be on winning form; they were ably supported by some good strong swimming from the rest of the squad.

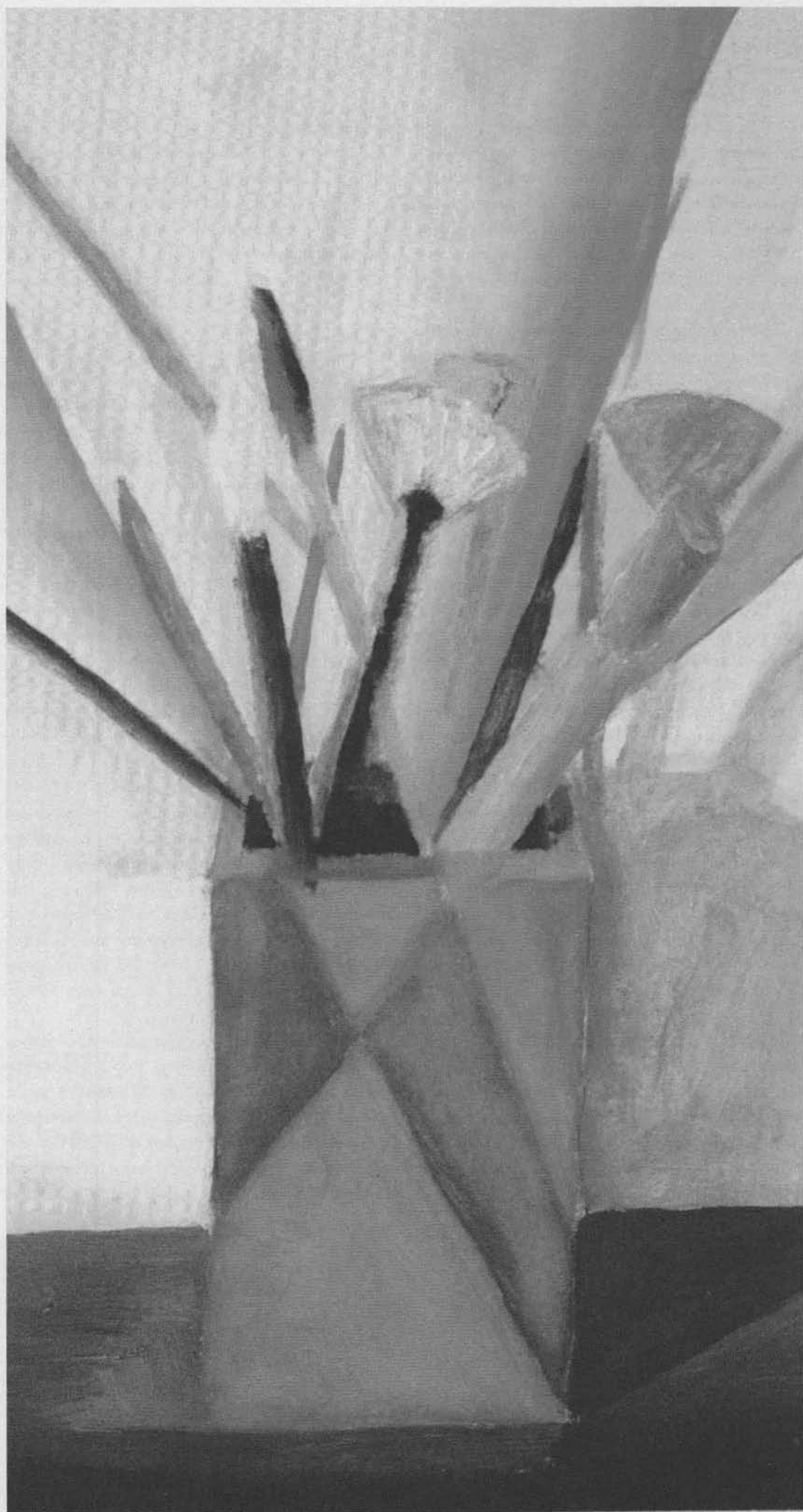
Over the year, members of the House have been active in all senses; the Ten Tors expedition saw N. Hambridge and B. Hewett competing, a growing contingent of Third Years have joined the CCF, and the House has been well represented during the year in both dramatic and musical productions. As a consequence a large number of certificates and prizes have been awarded.

Academic prizes have been presented during the year to J. Hamand and W. Richards (Fifth Year), P. Garrick, R. Balch, and L. McTier (Fourth Year), and in the Third Year T. Bandy, B. Street, P. Craig, W. Allan and A. Champion. S. Nickson was awarded the Smith Chemistry prize. At this year's prize-giving, I. Smith was awarded the Mercers' prize and J. Tarasewicz received a Headmaster's Prize for Achievement. School drama prizes were awarded to J. Eaton, who will be sadly missed by the drama department next year, and who also won the Classics prize. J. Margree and C. Dugan were also recognized for their valuable contributions to drama and the Amey Hall technical crew respectively during the course of the year. R. Bourne-Taylor, this year's Head of School, received two major prizes; the Slingsby Cup for outstanding sporting achievement and the TASS Quatercentenary Prize. In addition, P. Edwards justly received the Wintle Cup for his contributions to School sport.

Next year will see some changes to our tutoring arrangements; we say farewell to Mr. Crowther as he moves to Cambridge, and to Mr. Stinton as he relinquishes his tutorial responsibilities. In September we welcome Mr. Sandow to tutor the Third Year and Mr. Swarbrick to tutor the Upper Sixth; J. Persaud will be Head of House.

a report by
S Nickson 6MAS

Artist in his studio,
opposite, by W Hatt
VISCW



The establishment of a new House meant a new start for all, and I was obviously keen to see that it was a successful one. The first test was the inter-house singing competition. A. Holland in particular did an excellent job in rehearsals, some team spirit was generated, and on the day the enthusiastic performance was described by the adjudicator as "muscular", having something "zoological" about it. His suggestion that the House might be the one which would win all the sports competitions was, sadly, proved untrue, but not for lack of effort.

On an individual level, the House was well represented at a high level; H. Ronaldson, B. Grady and S. Curran all played in the 1st XV, and – the reason why there was a rumour that this was a "rowing house" – R. Hutchins, W. Horner, S. Curran and H. Mackenzie all rowed in the 1st VIII, winning a silver medal at the National Schools regatta and reaching the semi-finals at Henley. H. Mackenzie was invited to represent Great Britain at an international regatta in Munich, where he won gold and silver medals; he is hoping to build on this achievement by winning a place in the British team for the Junior World Championships. In cricket, A. Choudhuri played for the 1st XI, and B. Garner and J. Henley both represented Oxfordshire. Athletics saw M. Johnson set a new Third Year high-jump record of 1.65 metres and represent the County, as did B. Grady in discus. G. Sutcliffe and P. Bickerton were the third pair for tennis in the year above their age group.

There have also been some strong performances off the sports field. A. Choudhuri, A. Cooper, A. Holland and H. Ronaldson received academic prizes for Mathematics, French, Russian and German respectively; note all the languages. House academic prizes were won by H. Richards, J. Rowe and A. Eeles for their consistent efforts throughout the year. N. Moffatt was part of a team which came second in a competition to redesign the local shopping centre.

In drama, S. Mayhew-Archer and J. Sasanow (also in *The Bacchae*) starred in *Jesus Christ Superstar*, J. Buchan and I. Sanderson in *The Witches*, with R. Asher, A. Ings and L. Bridges all involved in stage management or production at various times. Musically, too, the House has had its stars; A. Thomas, J. Waldron, H. Richards and M. Gardner have propped up the brass sections of the First Orchestra and other ensembles, A. Choudhuri was one of the key string players, and A. Ings and I. Macdonald played in the Big Band.

Many have been involved in Community Service, giving up their time usefully. B. Grady was lucky enough to get his face into the local press, and J. Fisher and J. Buchan astounded all with their cabaret act at a tea party for elderly people. In the CCF, A. Warren-Upham was adjudged "most improved cadet" at Recruit Camp. N. Holman was selected to represent the ATC in a fifty-mile march in Holland.

As the year progressed, the team spirit evident in the singing competition grew, resulting in some memorable performances. The Road Relay was won convincingly by the Lower Sixth team of S. Curran (who risked all by overtaking his Housemaster in the final straight), A. Beck, B. Grady and H. Mackenzie. The hockey team, captained by S. Mayhew-Archer, reached the final of the Junior hockey competition against all the odds, including beating Mearns' 6-0 without a goalkeeper. In a closely fought final, Fishpool's took the title, scoring their three goals in the final quarter after a period of sustained pressure.

The athletics competition took place during Henley week, with seven of the more athletic members of the Lower Sixth representing the School in the 1st and 2nd Vllls. It was always going to be tough to perform in those circumstances, and seventh place was an unfair reflection of the remaining boys' efforts. The Third and Fourth years did very well in coming second and fourth respectively. There were some strong performances in track and field, such as J. Rowe (discus), J. Hedges (high jump) and victory in both 'A' and 'B' 1500 metre events by A. Beck and L. Conway. J. Henley's dive for the line in the 200 metres was unforgettable, but M. Johnson set the highest standards in winning Victor Ludorum. We were one of only three houses to have full teams for the swimming galas in all age groups: the Lower Sixth came third in their tightly-fought gala, but the Third and Fourth years came second in theirs behind Drummond-Hay's and Fishpool's. Next time...?

We have said farewell to eighteen members of the Upper Sixth and to S. Hancock in the Fifth Year, and we wish them well. Particular thanks are due to Mrs. Hogg, who took over as tutor to the Upper Sixth while NAFP was on sabbatical, and Mr. Jenkins and ADW who looked after the Lower Sixth during JEF's absence. Congratulations are due to H. Mackenzie on his appointment as one of the Heads of School. J. Lucas was an efficient and dedicated Head of House, and his boots will be filled by S. Curran for the coming year.

**a report by TJCG,
with thanks to
M Brewer 6JEF
for constant reminders**

**Still life, opposite,
by W Hatt VISCW**

Mearns'

a report by
O Varney 6WHZ

Untitled, below,
by C Campbell VIJRWB

The new year was greeted as always with a little bit of apprehension. The new House rapidly settled in, however, and cohesion was soon shown in the consolidated effort in the inter-house singing. We hoped to capitalize on the success of the previous year, and the song *Cabaret* was selected as the main piece, while *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot* was chosen for the part song. None of the outstanding songbirds of the House was allowed to go to waste; M. Hawksworth and M. Iles led the singing, and the co-ordination of the whole event was left to P. Batchelor, whilst many other members of the House added to our musical calibre. We were extremely happy to win both the part song and the main song events, and are already in preparation for next year.

The clear evidence of team spirit was a very pleasing feature of the year. Success for the House came again in the Lower Sixth Challenge, where the 6WHZ team (J. Haworth, P. Gardner, P. Batchelor and N. Hawker) defeated 6JFH in a close final (the fact that Dr. Zawadzki was the question master was purely incidental). In both the inter-house swimming and athletics events all those involved on behalf of the House acquitted themselves ably.

On the academic front, D. Mitchell was awarded both the History prize and the Bevan Divinity prize; M. Pagett carried off the Mathematics prize and a Headmaster's prize for achievement, and M. Conway won a Fifth Year prize for his mock GCSE results. At the prize-giving ceremony on Leavers' Day, O. de Wilde and R. Garside were awarded Middle School academic prizes. For Drama, North prize went to C. Mason, whilst M. Bartlett won a David Taylor prize. R. Dawson carried off a prize for debating.

As ever, the composition of the House is one of constant change, and we wish those leaving the House every success in the future, in particular, M. Bartlett and N. Grey, who, as representatives of the House, did sterling work. The time came at half term for the old Sixth Form committee to step down, and new Heads of House were appointed in the form of P. Batchelor and S. Atkinson. New House prefects included N. Hawker, P. Given, M. Hawksworth and M. Ambler.

As one of the first to pass through the new "through-house" system, I am happy to be able to report that the House still retains its customary lively and friendly atmosphere, and I hope to see it continue to go from strength to strength.



School House

a report by FCB

In many ways it has been a very eventful year, with much achieved in a variety of academic, musical, dramatic and sporting activities.

Last year's Sixth Form were noted for their adventurous nature and exciting plans for their "gap" years; an example to those coming up. We were pleased to have a fascinating talk and slide show by R. Bryniarski in November, telling us of his, and N. McConnell's, experiences on the British Schools Exploring Society's trip to Greenland. We hope that F. Malone-Lee and Andrew S. will also return to tell us of their exploits in Nepal and Brazil next year.

In recent years boarders have excelled academically. Maintaining the tradition, P. Wesche gained a gold medal in the British Biology Olympiad, and T. and J. Mak both gained gold awards in the Mathematical Challenges. All the Upper Sixth have places offered at universities, with J. Montague (Head of House), and T. Mak having offers at Cambridge, and P. Wesche an offer of a place at Oxford. K. Cheung was awarded a prize for Economics and Business Studies, C. Campbell for History of Art (the Liversidge prize), and T. Tarrell for his mock GCSE results. At the prize-giving in June, A. Fairbrother was awarded the Layng Reading Prize and J. Mak gained a Middle School academic prize.

We have had an exceptional year musically. A large proportion of the House play a musical instrument and some two. We had a very enjoyable House concert at the end of the Lent term, efficiently organised by K. Cheung. This gave boys with a variety of abilities a chance to play to an appreciative audience of parents, staff and friends, preparing for the rather more stressful grade examinations later. On this occasion we were without our undoubted star, T. Mak, playing in the finals of a chamber music competition in London. We were delighted therefore to have him and K. Cheung give a short recital to say farewell to JB at the end of the Summer term. As one would expect, these two accomplished musicians won major music awards on Leavers' Day. The highlight of the term was hearing T. Mak play the Mendelssohn E minor violin concerto with First Orchestra.

G. Whittaker has long been the unsung hero of the Amey Hall. He won a prize for service to the School. He will also be remembered as the only boy to cox the 1st VIII early in his career at the School and then row in the 1st VIII when in the Sixth Form. This year they were particularly successful, gaining a silver medal at the National Schools regatta and rowing for three days at Henley. Other rowers who have been successful this year at various levels include M. Jobling, N. Williams, J. Tarrell and C. Harris.

With the recent changes in House organization across the School, this year has seen keener

competitions for Third, Fourth and Lower Sixth forms in athletics and swimming. We put up a good challenge in all the competitions, with T. Humi, S. Chan, A. James and C. Harris excelling on the running track; N. Brewer put the shot well and C. McClements, J. Tarrell and T. Dixon were notable swimmers. However, there were narrow defeats all round, except that J. Kingsley gained the Victor Ludorum in the athletics competition.

In recent years the drama in the school has undergone a resurgence under the enthusiastic principal directions of JHT and SF, supported by BAHF and WTP. There have been several productions this year, including *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *The Crucible*, *The Witches* and *The Bacchae*. School House has provided many of the principal actors with J. Montague, D. Benoliel, D. Boswood, N. Brewer, J. Kingsley, R. Rothkopf, and T. Blackshaw all involved in various ways, sometimes in conjunction with Theatre Studies as a subject, but as often as not as an added interest and activity.

G. Whittaker has continued, unofficially, to help keep the technicians in the Amey Hall under control and to guide them. P. Luscombe is developing his skills in this direction too, together with more entrepreneurial skills, having organized a successful jazz concert in aid of Amnesty International earlier in the term. Voluntary Service seems to be "taking off" under the direction of MMH, and it is pleasing to note that more and more boarders are offering their services in a variety of ways to the community and School.

We finished the year with our usual barbecue to say farewell to the Upper Sixth. There have also been various social occasions, with the Mill House proving very popular. Although there was a successful trip – organized by TASS – to Cadbury World and the Gaydon Motor Museum, there has seemed little enthusiasm this year among the boys for more trips. One planned visit to Chessington was unfortunately cancelled through lack of support. My observation is that since boys are generally very involved in a wide variety of activities, spare time at weekends becomes precious for their own pursuits or time with the family, so that whole-house trips have limited support.

We finished on the last night of the year with a most enjoyable and spirited cricket match between School House and Crescent. Crescent were the victors by a single run, but it might have been different if we had had the benefit of a "third umpire" to spot the six rather than a four scored by A. James. O. Norman-Longstaff organized and captained the team skilfully, but J. Kingsley, T. Blackshaw, A. James, C. Harris, J. Tarrell and T. Dixon all made useful contributions, so much so that some of them have been offered "contracts" for next season by AMB.

Townsend's

a report by JT

Still life, below.
by T Smith VINAFF

The end of our first year as a new "through House", and it has been a good one. It has taken time for a group identity to emerge as, apart from the Third and Upper Sixth years, the tutor groups are made up of boys previously in different houses. Possibly the fact that we have not been conspicuously successful in any inter-house event this year has helped to generate some spirit, and this has encouraged us to value taking part rather than winning. We do however have the smartest tie and thoroughly enjoyed our rendition of our singing competition entry *I wanna be a man cub*, complete with bananas and brass ensemble. Our best result was in chess, where we came a creditable second with a talented Middle School trio consisting of S. Bough, M. Stockwell and J. Szurko; they are looking for a millennium year victory.

If we have evaded fame in inter-house activities, we have had many and varied individual successes. P. Wakefield has been selected for the British Junior Smallbore Rifle squad and A. Hutchinson has been playing cricket for the Berkshire U16s. N. Hayes won a prize as part of the team redesigning the Abingdon precinct, and C. Coventry was third in a science writing competition (you can read his entry elsewhere in the magazine). J. Rose was warmly commended for his entry for the Smith Chemistry Prize. The Middle School academic prizes were won by J. Richards and P. Vasudev. M. Walker gained a Fifth Year prize for his mock GCSE results.

In the Middle School teams, there were many notable House representatives, of whom in the Third Year J. Richards had a splendid cross-country season, supported (chased?) by the sporting all-rounder J. Calnan; A. Hough enjoyed a successful cricket season.

On the river, the Fourth Year alone could make a good crew with T. Kingham, M. Brown, T. Guiver and D. Morris. In the Sixth Form, colours went to M. Cooper for rugby and D. Pearson for hockey; P. Barry won his half-colours for hockey and came first in the senior 400 metres on sports day.

One important feature of the year has been the effort put in by many boys supporting the School's work on charities and voluntary service. Much of the impetus for this has come from MMH, supported by J. Selkirk and C. Rendell. The Third Year have been particularly active in many areas, joined latterly by D. Cox and T. Bracher. MMH also organized an outing for her tutor-group to see *Jesus Christ Superstar* at the Apollo, hopefully the first of many such outings.

This year's Upper Sixth represent the first leavers from Townsend's, with S. Nowottny, S. Smith, and B. Watts hoping to take up offers from Oxbridge. At prize-giving, A. Carnwath received the richly-deserved St. Catherine's Prize for Intellectual Initiative, and O. Horton the Ward Trophy for Musical Achievement to complement his Tonmeister Award from Surrey University. M. Cooper won the rugby 1st XV trophy, whilst the Head of House, D. Pearson, won the Freeman Prize for Service, recognition of the rôle he has played as a sportsman, musician, Head of House and School prefect. S. Nowottny won a TASS travel bursary, whilst T. Brown, the Head of House for the next academic year, won the Griffin travel scholarship to pursue his classical studies.

It has been a full and varied year, upon which we can build further. I wish our leavers, including R. Watson and C. Hughes from the Fifth Year, success, and we look forward to seeing them return to visit us.





Waste Court

a report by TLW

Landscape, below,
by T Smith, VINAFP

It has been a year of considerable change. As well as having the boarding community here, we now also house the Middle School scholars. These two communities spent this year growing used to one another's eccentricities, the arrangement working far better than even the most optimistic of predictions. Refurbishment of large areas of the ground floor in readiness for their arrival has helped to make better use of the space available and made the most of the original Regency fittings in the library/IT room.

The boarding community has been more fluid than for many years, with a large number of short-term visitors from overseas and the day side. Keeping a sense of identity in such circumstances is a challenge. Many events and trips were organised to help this. As well as the trips to Wales reported on the boarding pages, we have watched international rugby, been to concerts, plays and films, been to the local "LaserQuest", held croquet competitions, and had a number of dinners and countless pancake feasts. In addition, some of the boys involved themselves in the archaeological dig. The boys have been unfailingly enthusiastic and the year has thus been a success.

Many of our boys move on this summer. The Upper Sixth have been a credit to the House, working hard and likely to net a pleasing crop of grades. B. Adrian is set to take up a place at Cambridge next September and M. Abdullah is juggling Oxford and Imperial. A. Glick, A. Aziz and A. Blackford hold between them an impressive array of offers at other top-class universities. A. Blackford has also been particularly helpful in his rôle as Head of House.

We also lose a number of short-term Lower Sixth boys, M. Iseringhausen and C. Vogt following M.

Ederer (who left in February). They have contributed a huge amount in their year here and it is a great pity that German/Austrian university funding regulations prevent them from staying for a second year.

Our last leaver is M. Matzner, a curious mix of Lower and Upper Sixth, who has had an outstanding year, completing three A levels and one AS in nine months. We wish him all the best with his application to Oxford.

The Second Year have been a challenge, but have come round well, two years of staff perspiration finally knocking them into shape before their moves to Crescent and School, where we expect them to continue to blossom. Our First Year and remaining Lower Sixth group are making very pleasing progress so far. A lot rests on their shoulders as they help carry the House ethos through to next year; I am confident that although few in number, they will do a grand job.

On the staff side, we lost Bradley Tucker, our Australian gap student, at Christmas. He contributed a great deal to the house in his time here; my only regret was that the fickle British trout chose to be so reluctant to cooperate when members of staff tried to reward him with days beside the river. The Australian view of British trout fishing has been tarnished. In Bradley's place we have been very pleased to welcome Courtney Watson from South Africa; he has already made a great impact.

Next year should be exciting. The five boys staying with us are to be joined by fifteen or sixteen new entrants, the resultant mix containing at least eight different nationalities and three major faiths; a slight drop on our usual diversity, but making for some interesting combinations.

Wilmore's

a report by PJW

This year heralded the start of the new pastoral system and we welcomed JFH and SAE into the fold. E. Campbell and S. Hughes were appointed Head and Deputy Head of House respectively. The reduced numbers of Middle School boys, along with the tendency of the Sixth Form members to congregate in their study hall, gave the houseroom a less crowded and more comfortable feel.

The term began with excellent news, as G. Upcott, J. Florey and M. Coleman were all commended for their entries in the WHSmith Young Writers' Competition.

As usual, the rugby players enjoyed warm sunny conditions, and a number of members of the House made notable contributions. R. Holman's rise through the ranks to selection for the 1st XV was particularly commendable, and K. Shaikh gained selection for the County U16 side. S. Laurie was selected for the Oxfordshire U18 club rugby side.

Meanwhile, some of our hockey players were also making names for themselves in County circles. M. Browne, P. Peacock and P. Timberlake were selected for the County U15 side, whilst S. Allen and K. Roche featured for the U16s. B. Griffiths was appointed captain of the fencing club.

J. Dando was a member of the team which won a local architecture competition (a project to redesign the town precinct) while W. Smith was a member of the team which took second place.

SPO took charge of the House entry in the inter-house singing, and chose the famous – and somewhat mysterious – Richard Harris number *Macarthur Park*. We rather stuttered through rehearsals, with the absence of the Upper Sixth leading to reduced volume. M. O'Donovan proved to be a gem with the musical arrangement and was given excellent support by W. Bartlett. In the end on the day we managed to produce a very decent sound, but sadly we did not feature in the commended list, although we took some consolation from the fact that at least our piece lasted more than two minutes.

During the Lent term there were more notable achievements. L. Berryman, H. Feather and A. Pride won the Third Year public speaking competition. L. Berryman also raised £175 for Comic Relief and appeared in the production of *The Witches*, for which W. Bartlett composed and organized music. A. Evans gained selection for the County U14 hockey. The Fourth Year football team reached the final of the inter-house competition, losing narrowly to Fishpool's; the Fourth Year 'A' team won their year group in the Road Relay with a magnificent seventh place. P. Peacock ran the fastest time for the year. B. Warner was awarded half-colours for cross-country.

The pool competitions finished with C. Thomson and S. Higazi winning the doubles championship and R. Hamilton taking the singles trophy.

In the inter-house hockey tournament the Middle School side suffered an unexpected semi-final defeat, while the Senior side won the plate competition.

The Ford and West Biology prize was won by M. Brown; M. O'Donovan was awarded the Music prize, and S. Allen and D. Walford gained Fifth Year prizes for their mock GCSE results. J. Brockbank was awarded a prize for the best report card in the Fourth Year. D. Procter, D. Prior, S. Higazi and J. Farrant all received gold certificates for their entries in the UK Intermediate Maths Challenge.

The Summer term saw the Upper Sixth and Fifth Year prepare for their examinations and take study leave.

T. Coe, R. Holman and E. Webber were promoted to full School prefect. S. Hughes was captain of the 1st VI tennis, while C. Thomson was appointed captain of the Junior Colts tennis 'A' team and E. Webber captain of the 2nd XI cricket team; however, his appointment did not preclude him from first team selection. M. Brown qualified for the U.K. Physics Olympiad, and E. Macdonald coxed rowing crews from a number of year groups.

At prize-giving R. Cox received the prize for best academic performance in the Fourth year and J. Brockbank took the Fifth Year prize. S. Higazi, M. Browne, O. Flanagan, J. Farrant, Z. Coe, B. Habbershaw and L. Berryman all received book tokens from the Headmaster for good progress with their academic studies.

In the penultimate week we took the short journey to Tilsley Park for the inter-house athletics. Although we failed to make the frame in any of the year group competitions, there were some notable individual achievements. In the Fourth Year C. Thomson won the 'B' division of the 200 metres, W. Burdall won the 'B' division of the 1500 metres, and M. Browne won the shot-put. In the Lower Sixth, S. Martin won the high jump and M. Parker the discus.

In the final week of term we assembled at the pool for the swimming galas. Here we provided an enthusiastic, but not very competitive, contribution to the Third and Fourth Year events. Individual race winners were R. Cox, A. Evans, A. Kerr and J. Brockbank. The Lower Sixth unfortunately produced a poor response with only two swimmers at the pool, joining the two from Fishpool's.

With next year very much in mind, T. Coe was appointed Head of House and B. Warner Deputy Head. We wish them well and bid a fond farewell to all the leavers.



The Scholars

The beginning of the Michaelmas term saw a significant development in the arrangements for scholars in the Middle School, in the form of the move into Waste Court. The boys could not fail to be impressed with their new, smart and well-equipped surroundings and quickly a happy union was struck with the boarding community.

Joint activity during the course of the year served to strengthen links between the two groups, most noticeably on a number of successful excursions to the spectacular scenery of south Wales, and also at a friendly barbecue at the end of the Summer term.

Looking back on the year, it has been characterized by good-humoured, positive activity in all areas of School life. As one would expect, academic endeavour has featured high on the agenda, not only from the numerous boys taking early GCSEs, but also in the form of frequent debate in the houserooms. An enjoyable visit to Stratford to see an engaging and controversial production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* underpinned this most enjoyably for all concerned. Finally one must highlight the outstanding achievement of S. Brooks, who reached the final eight in the selection process for the British Mathematical Olympiad, as well as being the School's star tuba player.

The scholars have been very active on the games field, with many boys involved at team level. Only just scratching the surface one thinks immediately of S. Allen, W. Baker, P. Thomas and M. Hardy as key rugby players, A. Brodie, G. Coppock, N. Fuggle and J. Hedges as hockey specialists, G. Bailey and M. Cullen as dedicated cross-country runners, N. Fuggle

and P. Thomas as 'A' team cricketers, and A. Brodie, J. Wright, G. Coppock and M. Rowland as determined team tennis players; and all this is before one actually considers the hard-working rowers such as N. Evans.

Culturally speaking, one is struck by the intensity of activity throughout the year. This included the tremendous performances of many the boys in the various scholars' concerts, orchestral bands and informal concerts and services. It is invidious single out individual achievements, but perhaps I might mention two personal highlights; S. Allen's unforgettable interpretation of the rôle of a priest in *Jesus Christ Superstar*, and T. Herford's wonderful rendition of J.S. Bach's *Mache dich, mein herze, rein* at a scholars' concert.

On a more day to day level, a high proportion of the scholars have been at the forefront of a multitude of bands, orchestras, choirs and chamber ensembles, as well as leading lights in debating and drama. Many of the Third Year became heavily involved in Community Service or the CCF this year, which has been pleasing to see.

The Royse Society has been as active as usual, with speakers who have included William Thomas and Richard Ingrams. We were also proud of the contributions of P. Taylor, M. Legg and C. Rose at the Vale of White Horse Youth Forum, C. Rose's group being the winning project, which was funded by the council. In between, some boys even took Welsh lessons in their spare time...

It has been, then, a year of significant development and activity, which we look back upon with a sense of satisfaction.

a report by RSE

**Triptych, above,
by S Tompkins VIDE**



Lower School

a report by RSS

Pencil drawing, opposite,
by S Perkins 5SPD

It has been a busy and very productive year in Lower School. The boys have thrown themselves into a wide variety of sports, activities and of course academic work with their usual enthusiasm and determination, and AMB and RSS have been impressed by what the boys have achieved.

The sports season often starts at the deep end with hard fought rugby fixtures against the Dragon and High Wycombe. The Minors lost both, but this did not deter them, and during the rest of the season they won their remaining seven matches. Notable performances from T. Gater and R. Muirhead, who shared the captaincy, meant that it was a particularly successful season. Colours were awarded to H. Abrahall, J. Barclay, C. Dyer, J. Dyson, T. Gater, J. Hoyle, J. Lakin, A. Marsh, A. McKenzie, W. Poole, R. Powis, J. Prinold, D. Stalker, and R. Vasudev. The inter-form rugby competition was won by 2D.

During the Lent term the hockey season began in earnest but perhaps did not get off to the start for which they had hoped. The boys played with their usual eagerness, but perhaps lacked the basic skills of some of the other schools. However, deserved colours went to A. McKenzie, R. Muirhead, A. Nash, W. Poole, G. Potter, J. Prinold, D. Stalker, and D. Sullivan. The inter-form hockey was shared by 2D and 2H in a nail-biting final.

The cross-country was won by 2H in the Second Year and 1B in the First Year, with individual year wins for J. Bishop 2H and C. More 1A. It was also the term for the legendary Road Relay, a race around the School which attracts over 350 boys and up to thirty staff. 2H (J. Bishop, C. Hunt, D. Stalker and R. Groves) won the team competition, with the fastest First Year team coming from 1A (H. Aspelng-Jones, M. O'Byrne, C. More and M. Pinner). The fastest individual in the Second Year was R. Groves (10.50), and in the First Year M. Pinner (11.17).

However, RSS did produce the fastest time in the Lower School with 10.05; this fast time may have been due to the fact that he had been challenged by D. Sullivan, who unfortunately had to pull out of the competition at the last minute; a legitimate reason was never given...

The public speaking final was a closely-fought battle of verbal wit, but 2D (A. Nash, G. Potter and A. Macdonald) just held off 1A (T. Astley, H. Aspelng-Jones and J. Wood) to win the trophy.

During the Easter holidays the First Year went to Osmington Bay in Dorset with AMB, while the Second Year went to Rydal Hall in the Lake District with MGHD. Both trips were hugely successful and by all accounts most of the boys slept for about a week after their return; no doubt this was a welcome break for their parents.

The Summer term from the very start provided plenty of opportunities for the boys to shine, in and out of the classroom. The cricket season was reasonably successful for both years. The First Year played well but were sometimes "out-gunned" in their matches by boys from the year above. This is despite the amazing throwing ability of M. Pinner and the mature captaincy of M. O'Byrne. The Second Year had a more successful season and the following fully earned their colours; J. Brooke, A. McKenzie, R. Muirhead, A. Nash, W. Poole, and G. Potter.

The inter-form cricket was won by 2D; the swimming was won by 2D and 1B. It was especially reassuring to see 2H and 2S share the athletics (and not 2D), whilst 1A won the First Year athletics.

The Summer term saw the annual post examination field day, with a great variety of venues for the boys to select from. All the trips went smoothly and seemed to be enjoyed very much by the boys, who behaved sensibly throughout some quite long coach journeys. AMB, MGHD, GGB and IAM deserve mention for their considerable efforts in organizing the trips. The prefects were further taken on a camping trip to Durdle Door in Dorset. Camping conditions were quite testing owing to the gale-force winds on the coast, but most tents went up without too much trouble, except for the N. Patterson, A. Thompson, D. Sullivan and E. Antysz mansion, because they spent most of the time arguing. At least they remembered their tent-pegs, unlike J. Prinold and C. Ranscombe. The boys behaved well, although perhaps they might have slept for more than two hours, and we would like to thank them for all their help throughout the year.

Academic excellence is something which we try to strive for in Lower School, and this year has been a strong one in this department. There have been a number of prizes throughout the year, but the following boys have been awarded scholarships and thus deserve special mention: G. Morris and C. Hall (2D), B.H. Teh and O. Thompson (2H), and M-L. Jones and L. Williamson (2S). The end of year academic prizes for the First Year went to A. Brown (1A), C. Moger (1B), and W. Guast (1X).

It has been a rewarding and enjoyable year, and we would like to wish the Second Year success in the Middle School and look forward to seeing the current First Year in September after a refreshing break over the summer.

We would also like to thank the tutors – GGB, MGHD, AJM and IAM – for their considerable efforts over the last year, but especially the two members of staff who are leaving the Lower School: RJS and VJE (in the latter case, leaving Abingdon School altogether).

Boarding

The boarding community continues to thrive. TASS took a group of boarders to a chocolate factory and motor museum, and TLW arranged three trips to Wales. In addition, houses have laid on concerts and other events: Waste Court held a joint boarders' and scholars' concert, and Crescent ran its own cabaret.

Afon Mellte & Afon Hepste

**a report by
M McCormick 1A
on a boarders' trip
to the Afon Mellte and
Afon Hepste
on November 22nd,
organized by TLW**

At first we had a look at some small rivers which led into an underground cave. Some people had recently descended into it and never come back up again, but we were all right. We were not in fact destined to remain there long at all, and by lunch-time we were above ground again.

We then saw some kayakers (who were completely nutty) trying to paddle down some waterfalls. After half an hour of indecision they finally went for it. It was spectacular, but all over in a second or two; was it really worth all the agonizing?

Next it was our turn for a scary challenge. We were going to go in behind the biggest waterfall in the forest, the eighty-foot Scwd yr Eira (the Falls of Snow). Believe me, it was quite frightening to look at; even from about forty yards away, the spray was soaking us. When you were finally behind the waterfall it was really noisy, and if we had slipped we would have been in big trouble.

Luckily none of us died and we all came back in one piece. We had a great time and it was well worth visiting the waterfalls.

The Black Mountains

**a report by
W Blackshaw 1A
on a boarders' trip
to the Black Mountains
on January 31st,
organized by TLW**

After a long journey, we got out at the far end and my teeth were chattering because it was very cold. We went to fetch our cycle helmets and bikes and sorted out the seats and took them off for a test ride. After that we really were off, going straight off-road. It was up-hill and we soon noticed it.

At the first point there was a task where you had to cycle along and pick up a bottle of water without putting your foot down, then put the water-bottle down again.

We then went to a really steep hill, which they called "The Wall", and we took it in turns to try and cycle up it. A number of people got quite far up, but no one managed the whole way. Then we went on a little bit down-hill to a lake and had a race around it. Certain people did not think that parts of it were deep around the edges, and so they went in and got soaked.

Having stopped, we had to push off from the ground with our feet and had a competition to see who could go the furthest without pedalling. Next we got to shoot down a down-hill section and along a sort of rally track.

The next task looked really hard. There was a really steep hill with a small stream running along the

bottom. The idea was to go down using your brake. I was going to go second or third, but then Mr. Watson went down and lost control of his bike, hit the bank on the other side and went flying, giving himself a massive "wedgie" on the bike; it looked painful enough to put me off completely.

Finally, after being soaked, we returned and went abseiling and rock climbing. When we got there we took out the necessary equipment and approached the rocks. They did not look very impressive, but when we got up to the abseiling section it looked really high. I was scared at first when I had to lean over the edge, but once I got going it was fine.

When I came to the rock climbing I went on the hardest climb, because other people were already using the easier ones. It seemed quite easy at first but it became harder further up. I got stuck for a bit because I did not know how to continue, but I made it and abseiled down. I then went on the easy climb, but I still found it quite hard. We then came back down the mountain, and got in the minibus for the journey back to School.

It had been an exhausting experience! Thanks are due to all the staff who organized it.



Crescent House Revue

The House Revue was a pleasing success, and everyone had loads of fun. The evening began with an excellent Mexican meal (our thanks go to the caterers), and H. Watkinson's very witty introductory speech; here was the first of many times during the evening that the teachers got to blush.

We then moved into the CMR for the rest of the evening's entertainment. The fun kicked off with two songs from the excellent *Essence of Tumbleweed* (M. Watkinson, T. Beardsworth, A. Hunter and T. Murray), who left the stage amid shouts of "bravo" and "encore". The first sketches came from the Third Year, who performed *Blue Peter* and *Jerry Ginger*. Both were excellent and were very good starting point for the evening's sketches. J. Bosley was especially good as "Jerry Ginger".

The Fourth Year then went on and performed a piece called *Ribley*, set at an imaginary boarding school in the countryside not far from Abingdon where the exchanged greetings include "toodle-pip" and "tally-ho". One of the leading characters was the infamous Ribley school bully, who went on, we were told, to

become a housemaster at Abingdon. The Fifth Year followed with two sketches (taken from *Beyond the Fringe*): *The Great Train Robbery* and *One Leg Too Few*. Not many who were present will easily forget the slightly odd performance by B. Wall, which left everyone in stitches; what a bizarre costume.

The Lower Sixth's *Blind Date* parody was superb, and the House staff came in for yet more embarrassment. Matron, Messrs. Sandow, Griffiths and Phelps were played by T. Murray, A. Hunter, M. Rees-Jones and B. Wells respectively. The impersonations were spot on and very funny.

Tact of the Scouser was the offering of the Upper Sixth, replacing the words of the classic song *Eye of the Tiger* with some slightly more original ones.

These acts were punctuated by some hilarious interludes from A. Hunter and B. Wells. Especially memorable was their version of *Especially for You* by Kylie Minogue and Jason Donovan; everyone (including Mr. Davies) was in hysterics.

Our thanks go to A. Hunter, B. Wells and Mr. Phelps for organizing a really great evening.

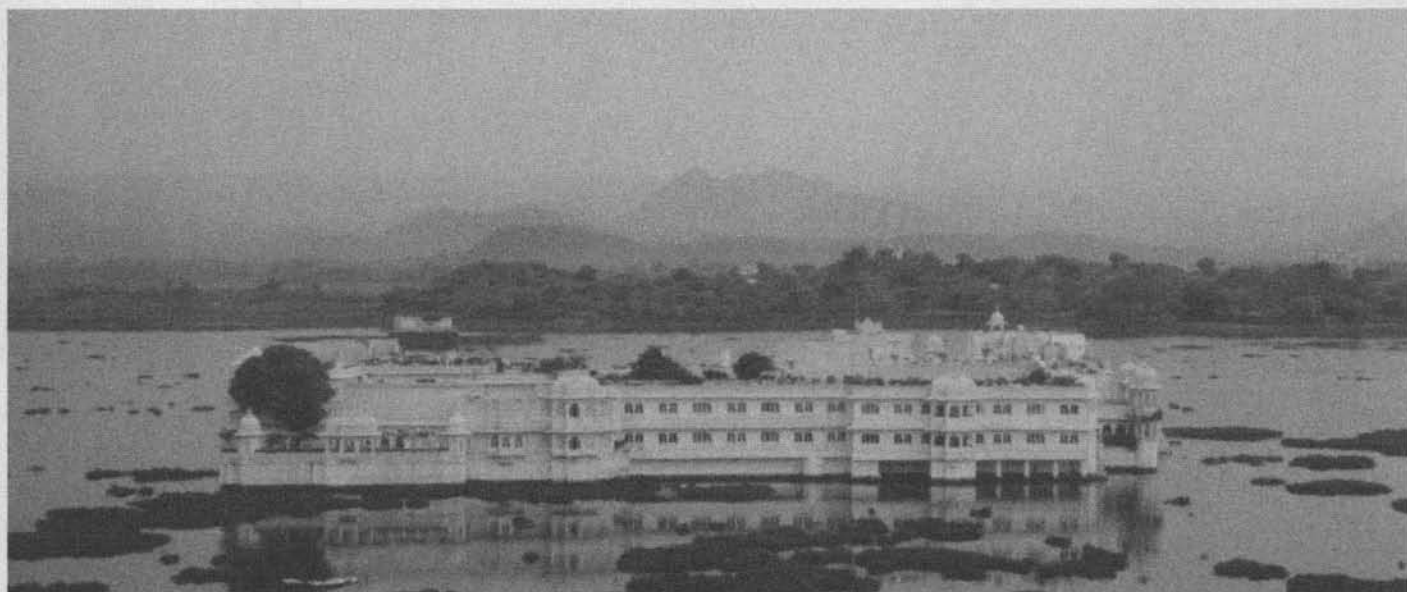
**a report on
the enjoyable revue
given in the CMR
by members of
Crescent House,
by J Herbert 5SPD**

**photograph of junior
boarders in Wales by
M Iseringhausen 6WTP**

Visits & Trips

India

Twenty-two A level geographers travelled around northern India in August 1998. Mr. and Mrs. Fishpool and Mr. Slatford accompanied us, but I am sure that they would agree that India was such a culture shock that we were all in the same boat. Therefore, we all relied on the able guidance of Adrian Mutton OA (with whose company "Asian Adventurer" we travelled), Gareth Ogden, and above all our very own "Jim'll Fix It", Udit.



**an account of the
Lower Sixth
Geography trip
to India, August 12th
to 29th 1998,
by A McTier VINMR**

photographs by ICF

The trip was first planned in early 1997, and within three days of the announcement that May all the places had been taken. Between then and day two of the trip, the itinerary was constantly being altered. The main victim was the beach resort, Goa, which would have involved a forty-hour train journey; after experiencing a mere twenty-hour trip we now know why that would have been unwise. The resort was dropped as a result of August being mid-monsoon, but, in fact, it was not as wet as I had imagined. We were only caught by the torrential rain once – at the Parliament buildings, New Delhi – but only one encounter is needed to feel the power which the monsoon holds. However, with a daily temperature of over thirty degrees and the extreme humidity, the climate was almost unbearable.

The importance of the monsoon was also highlighted to us in Delhi when we visited the Indian Agriculture Institute. There, we learned of the "Green Revolution" which has led to a massive increase in

food production, to the extent that there are some food surpluses, which are exported, bringing in invaluable money to this Third World country. However, a worrying aspect of this "Green Revolution" is that the Indian response to a population of a billion, increasing by 2.3% every year, is to maintain a 2.7% increase in food production. If the monsoon failed, the results would be catastrophic.

Whilst in Chandigarh we saw one of the catalysts of the "Green Revolution", the Bokhra Dam project. The massive dam, situated in the foothills of the Himalaya, not only provides irrigation, but, with ten turbines, also generates large amounts of electricity. The results were evident from the vast expanse of green, lush fields surrounding a village which we visited just outside Saharanapur. We were not allowed to take photographs of the dam because we would have been arrested by the Indian authorities.

Of the other geographical topics which we encountered, the most shocking and, above all,



humbling experience was our visit to two Delhi slums of varying standards. Before the trip, the slums were what I was least looking forward to, and if I had only visited the second of them my preconceptions would not have changed; the quality of life was horrific. However, the first slum (run by the organization ASHA, which was one of the charities supported by the sponsored walk in September) was totally different. Of course, the living conditions were poor; a family had to live in a hut just ten feet by eight, but surprisingly most had televisions, primitive air conditioning (which, luckily, as it was the hottest day, they turned on for us) and shelves full of icons, herbs, plates and the like. My overriding impression was how proud the residents were; for example, their extensive medical records were constantly improving. I cannot pity

them, because they have no idea what our life is like, but can only respect them.

Experiencing Indian life was for me the most rewarding aspect of the trip. Visiting the traditional, chaotic city of Saharanapur allowed us to spend an uncomfortable night at the local private school (fees of £400 a year). The connection with the school came about through Adrian Mutton having spent six months teaching there during his gap year. Their hospitality was unrivalled, giving up their beds for us, putting on a traditional Indian show, and greeting us with fanfares, though curry for breakfast was going a little too far. They also arranged a basketball match at 7.30 a.m. which we duly let them win 47-16.

As a city, Saharanapur is famous throughout India for its wood-carving market, and we took full

India (continued)

advantage of the quality and cheapness offered in a shopping spree, with chess sets and "peasant beaters" being bought. However, its road surfaces were not as impressive, as we found out with a particularly precarious rickshaw journey to the market. As ever, we "whites" were the centre of attention, but even more so in Saharanapur than usual, because our group was the largest number of whites which had been seen in the city since the Raj left fifty years ago, astonishing given the population of 750,000.

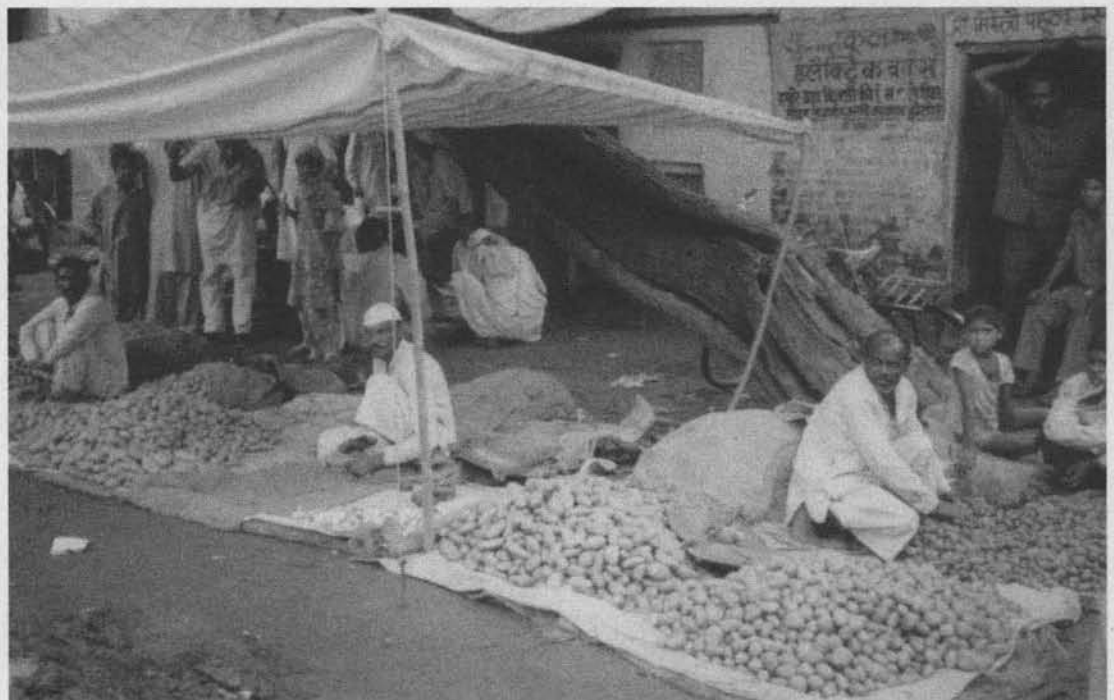
Western life, with all its luxuries, was greatly missed, and the opportunity to dine at two palaces soothed the thoughts of curry. The first, the Lake Palace (of *Octopussy* fame) in Udaipur was the reason for the epic twenty-hour train journey, but it was worth it. The meal, which allowed us to have western food as well as the local food, was superb, as was the lake setting. We found music, sofas and probably the cleanest lavatory in the whole of India, where Gareth unfortunately spent the entire evening.

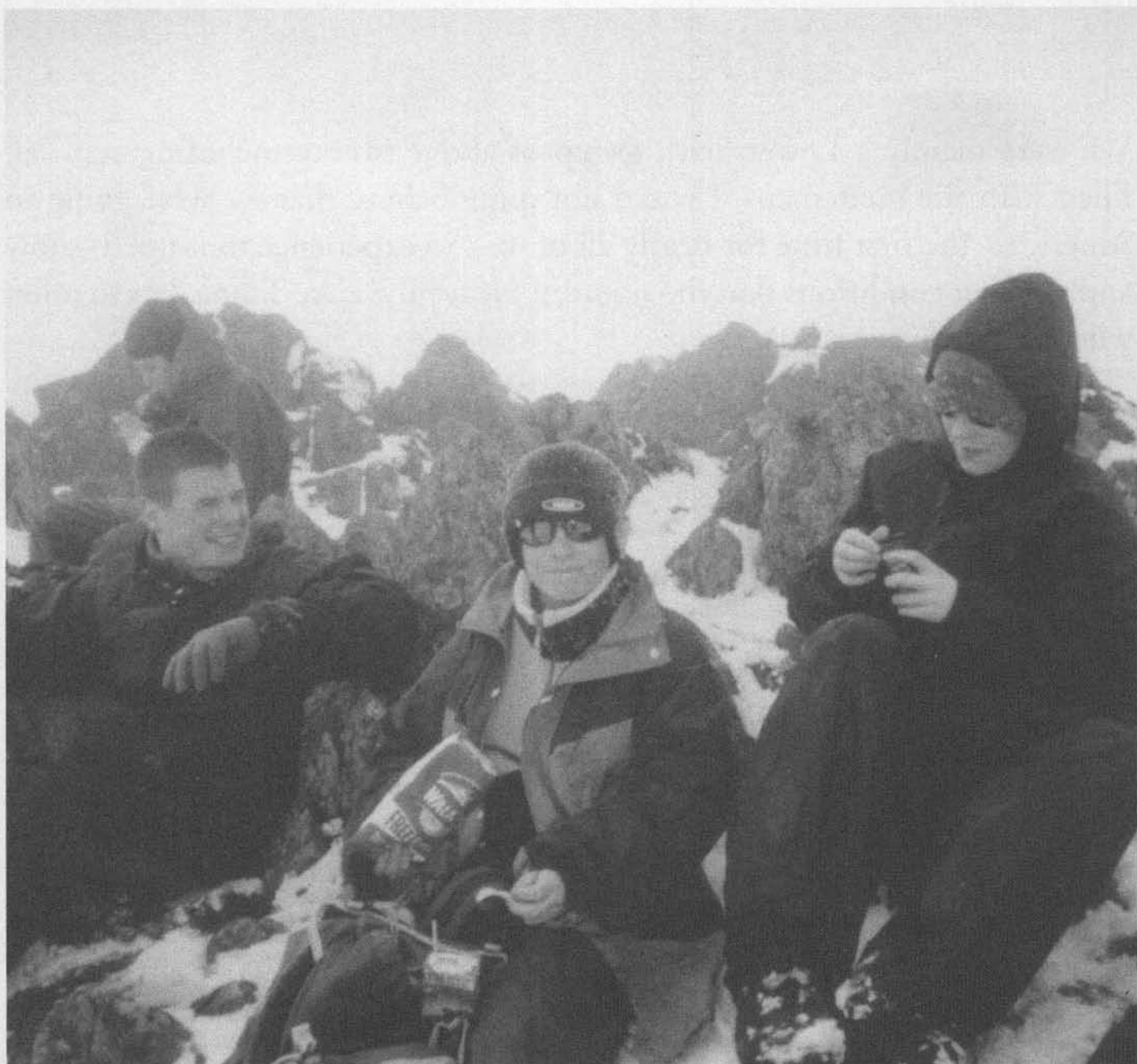
The Samode Palace, an hour's drive from Jaipur, began with an amazing "red carpet" walk up a flight of steps, lined with torches and camels standing to attention. At the entrance we were "red dotted" and had a flower garland placed around our necks. The night continued in that same superb vein. The lavatories were also of a high standard: as you left the cubicle, the tap was already running at the perfect temperature, and soap was dispensed on to your hands. Though you actually washed your hands yourself, you were not allowed to turn the tap off; the servant did that, having thrust a clean towel into your hands. The night culminated with a spectacular fireworks display on the roof which lit up the whole of the deserted valley. A night to remember.

On the tourist trail, we visited the sublime and the mad. The sublime only just describes the Taj Mahal, whose marble was so dazzling (even on an overcast day) that I had to wear sunglasses. The mad describes the bizarre rock garden in Chandigarh: four kilometres of paths set in a landscape of man-made ravines and waterfalls, or vast auditoriums of sculptured figures. This creation is still being built by one man, Nek Chand, who has been at it for over forty years. Other sites included various forts (the Amber Fort in Jaipur gave us the chance of travelling by elephant), palaces, mosques, and tombs. Of course a tourist attraction in India is denoted by hundreds of dodgy salesmen offering anything which has no material use.

Travelling around northern India to the cities of Delhi, Chandigarh, Udaipur, Jaipur, Agra, and finally Delhi again, we used a variety of methods: trains; coaches (two punctures and one broken gear box); motor rickshaws; cycle rickshaws; elephants; and ox carts. With the extensive travelling, the constant curry, and the poor hygiene, we all at some point suffered illness, either during the trip or after it. But no one was seriously ill, so we have to say that we were fortunate.

Though the trip was extremely enjoyable, we were all counting the days until the return flight. However, on the final night, five boys (including myself) were informed that the airline had overbooked the flight. At the time it seemed as though we five, along with Mr. Slatford, Adrian and the camera crew were going to try another flight. As it turned out only Mr. Slatford and Adrian did not take the scheduled flight. They subsequently returned a day later, having taken a total of four flights. Finally, though, we all returned to the civilized and highly-developed land of Heathrow, with India now an amazing memory.





Rydal Hall

As soon as we arrived we set off on our first walk of the week, up an easy mountain called Loughrigg. It was a hill with a marvellous sense of humour. You thought that you had got to the top until you got high enough to see that there was another peak.

From a distance, Striding Edge looked rocky and menacing, but worse was yet to come. Once we got to it there were sheer drops on both sides and snow flurries swirled around our heads.

As for Bowfell and Crinkle Crag, there was bright, hot sunshine to start with. One person even got into shorts. But soon the snow closed in again. At Three Tarns most people went back down, but six of us went on to the top of Bowfell and back by the Climbers' Traverse; an exciting walk in deep snow along a narrow path with steep crags on one side and a sheer drop on the other.

One day we had snow, which would have been nice had O. Thompson and Mr. (name withheld for security reasons) not led us up the side of the wrong mountain. But there was fun at the top as many snowballs were hurled. The best thing about Mr. Baker's group was when we got out the emergency tent. We were in a blizzard and needed our second lunch.

Mr. Barrett was very nice to our group by buying us all an ice cream. I cannot remember what dinner was, but it was nice, whatever it was. The food I had for supper was good, to a much higher standard than School food. I had decided by then that Rydal Hall was a really interesting and fun place to be.

And after supper came abseiling, indoor games and other activities. Some people even went swimming in Rydal Beck, despite its estimated temperature of 4° centigrade...

**impressions
of the annual
Second Year visit to the
Lake District,
April 11th-16th,
edited by MGH from
diaries by
M-L Jones 2S and
T McKeown 2S,
with contributions from
R Wyand 2D and
R Muirhead 2D**

Lake Tahoe

We were mainly a Lower Sixth group of about twenty including staff, all filled with the excitement. I could not quite believe that we were going to America – the first time for nearly all of us – to experience the superb snow and weather conditions that the resort of Heavenly, Lake Tahoe, has to offer, whether on skis or a board.

**a report on the
Sixth Form ski trip to
Lake Tahoe, California,
December 11th to 18th,
by N Moffatt 6JEF**

After a gruelling twenty-six hour journey we arrived at our hotel at about eleven in the evening Reno time. Our rooms were spacious and had comfortable beds, sofas, a couple of televisions and even a kitchen (not that any of us were likely to cater for ourselves).

Getting up early the next morning, we took the bus into the centre of Lake Tahoe, where we walked up to our group places and met our instructors for the morning lessons. We were mainly snow-boarders and were divided into two groups, depending on our experience. We cruised around for the first day and got to know the runs and the layout of the California side. The views from the uppermost areas, such as at the top of Sky Express lift and the ridge between the California and Nevada side, were staggering, overlooking not only the scenic Lake Tahoe landscape but also the desolate, dry, barren Nevada Desert.

The conditions were perfect, despite the earliness of the season; great powder snow off-piste, with well-groomed trails on the piste, and not a patch of ice in sight. In fact we had the best conditions in America that week.

Lifts ran until around 4.30 in the afternoon, and by that time we were all tired out. The jet lag wore off by about the third day. Dinners were great, with plenty of food including pasta, beef-burgers, chips, and lasagna. In the evenings we all wandered around town, seeing how long we lasted in the casinos before getting thrown out; in most places you had to be over eighteen even to be allowed in. Going to the supermarket, watching pay-per-view films and *The Simpsons* were the usual evening activities. The pool, jacuzzi, gym and sauna provided unprecedented relaxation after a day on the slopes.

For the next few days conditions remained perfect, ludicrously hot for the altitude we were at (over eight thousand feet), with clear skies and plenty of sun. The beginners started getting down runs non-stop, linking turns, and my group (J. Wilson, J. Mansfield, H. Duff, J. Wilcox-Jones and myself) went over to Nevada to ride the chutes and double black diamond bowls such as Killbrew and Mott Canyon and the Snake Pit. The powder snow there was up to a foot and a half thick in places. Surfing down through the trees in this soft spring powder

really was an awesome experience and is what back-country riding in America is all about. There were many completely covered overturned logs which made for ideal jumps with super-soft landings. Later on in the week our instructor showed us the movements of a front flip, which we practised, with some success, off the wind-lips in the thick powder off-trail between Nevada and California.

We found that one of the best aspects of American resorts are the half-pipes and fun parks; they are built with such precision, making learning quick, and great fun to have a go at. This was especially true in Squaw Valley, where we went on the penultimate day by bus around Lake Tahoe itself. Even Mr. Slatford was taking notes as the driver explained the formation of the massive high-altitude lake. The fun park and main pipe was even bigger than in Heavenly, and some of us saw some real-life professionals doing Misty and Rodeo flips and all sorts of sick spins which made our attempts look like tiny hops. Squaw Valley offered a unique experience, in that there are no marked trails. Only the lifts are named, and you have the freedom to go wherever you want in the expansive bowls. There was an incredible view from the panoramic café.

The week went by very quickly and inevitably the end to our final day came. Michelle, our instructor, presents the Heavenly resort morning television show, and by the end of the week she had decided that we were suitable material for one of her shows. So we got up extra early on our departure day to be put on show as civilized snow-boarding youths from England. It was an enjoyable way to end our week with Michelle and good fun, even at that hour.

No one wanted to go home; the beginners were hooked, as were the rest of us. I was lucky enough to go to Meribel in the French Alps with my family a week later, and it was then that I realized just how much better America can be. We only had one inch of fresh snow that week, but had perfectly maintained runs and superb off-piste powder. In Meribel, half the runs were sheet ice.

Our trip to Lake Tahoe really was a special one. Thanks to the staff who organized it all for us, especially Mr. Mansfield.



Jolie Brise

On first sight, at Hamble, the *Jolie Brise* looked horribly small for twelve people; however, she grew once we were on board. The second thing to greet us was Flint, first mate, cheerfully telling us that if we went overboard our chances were virtually nil. Introduction to our harnesses made us feel a lot better.

Later on, after a good meal and a briefing, it became evident that the week was going to be a success. Everyone got on and was willing to do his or her fair share of the work – well, *almost* everybody. Before the trip the boys had been briefed to do their fair share in the kitchen. However, to their relief, certain female members of the crew took a fairly authoritarian stance over all culinary matters and the boys were soon relegated to the ranks of vegetable chopping, though the boys did more than their share of the washing up. By the end of the trip, however, all knew exactly how everybody wanted their tea or coffee and had been educated in making Flint's cheese toasties, "the best cheese toasties in the world".

On the second day, we sailed to Cherbourg on a blissfully calm sea, coming in for dinner at two in the morning. Surprisingly, it all seemed perfectly natural and we slept until late that morning and then enjoyed a continental breakfast on deck. We spent the day in Cherbourg, scrubbing decks and polishing brass.

The crew was divided into three watches of three hours each, with all hands on deck for coming into port, an operation skilfully led by Toby, the captain.

There was time, however, to dress up in thick layers and spend hours lying on the deck, surrounded by the blue disk of the English Channel, nothing else in sight. Another great pastime was lying in the net under the bow sprit, bobbing up and down with the movement of the boat. All books, CDs and tapes on board were redundant, as there was not a moment to get bored.

The following days consisted of a leisurely sail back to Britain and along the coast. This included Weymouth, where we had fish and chips after coming in to harbour. A memorable stop was Lulworth, with the *Jolie Brise* dominating the scene in the cove.

We had spent the week with at least five layers on under huge waterproofs, chained to the kitchen units in order to make food and sailing at all strange hours of the day; the angle of the bottom of the boat was quite an amusing sight, and only those with the toughest guts could stay down there for any period of time whilst the *Jolie Brise* was at sea. These conditions we were nevertheless sad to leave behind, because the atmosphere on the *Jolie Brise* enabled everybody to be themselves. Everyone agreed that it had been the best holiday which they had had for a very long time and the journey back to Abingdon was therefore painful.

We all now have memories of a great trip, which will take a great deal to beat. The team spirit on board was excellent and the crew, who did not know each other at all at the beginning of the trip, now felt almost as though they had known each other for all their lives.

**a report on the
Lower Sixth sailing trip
in the "Jolie Brise",
April 13th to 19th,
by Maria Williams and
M Brown 6JFH**

Moscow

**a report on the
Russian exchange visit
to Moscow,
March 27th to April 7th,
by N Evans 4DJJ**

Whilst everyone else was still sleeping in on the first day of the Easter holidays, a group of pupils (consisting of eight boys from Abingdon and five girls from Oxford High School) were on their way for a twelve day stay in Moscow, organized by the Modern Languages department.

In Moscow we met up again with our Russian friends, who had already visited us in October. The thought of nearly two weeks in this strange place seemed daunting to everyone, but these reservations proved to have been misplaced.

This second stage of the exchange allowed us to make contact again with our exchange partners, but now it was their turn to be the hosts. This was a rôle at which they excelled. The way they never stopped feeding us ensured that we never went hungry and also made sure that we had put on a couple of pounds before leaving for home. Our host families went out of their way to make us feel completely welcome in their homes and included us in almost every aspect of their family lives.

This exchange visit involved many trips and events all over Moscow and the locality, including a visit to the Kremlin, the cosmonaut training centre, Red Square, a huge television transmission tower and even a mock wedding. Many other visits to famous sites gave the members of the group a wonderful and varied taste of Russian life and culture.

Along with the trips we were lucky enough to attend a performance of the musical *Cats* put on by the Russians (a unique experience...) followed shortly afterwards by a disco. We were all kept very busy and rarely had a dull moment during our stay. When we were not out on trips we were entertained by our exchange families and were often taken out in the evenings to experience the night-life of Moscow.

In all, the exchange was enjoyed by everyone who took part and we all came away with a greater understanding of the language. However, far more importantly we went away with fond memories of our stay. All those planning on going next year certainly have a lot to look forward to.

Tunisia

**a report on the
annual Classics trip,
this year to Tunisia,
October 25th to
November 1st,
by SH**

**photograph of
Thuburbo Maius by ICF**

Where to begin? Certainly not at Heathrow; better Hammamet, where we stayed the first night in semi-detached chalets with cool marble floors, amid palm trees, lilies and luxuriant gardens, cicadas chirping away. A greater contrast with England – where that weekend's CCF exercise had been a sodden washout – could not be imagined. Even the rapidly-becoming-legendary Hullis weather jinx failed to ruin things (after the first day). This was, after all, Africa.

Our primary objective was to see, as ICF always puts it, rubble; Roman remains. He and JEF had the advantage of several previous visits, and they had certainly built up the anticipation with their descriptions. How right they were; Tunisia is a classicist's dream, full of amazing Roman towns and buildings which put into the shade anything in this country.

Our guide, Hatam, was one of the highlights of the trip in a way which he would probably not have intended, with his amusing mispronunciations and subtle misinformation. The boys started to keep a list of his more hilarious mistakes.

The local cuisine was varied; at the more touristy of our hotels, enormous buffets enabled us to go back time and again for vast piles of food; the pistachio ice-cream at Hammamet remains a fond memory. Elsewhere, few dared to touch the salads, and, at Ain Draham, a Bavarian-style hunting lodge high in the

heart of boar-hunting territory, the wild boar stew was avoided by many in the light of bitter memories of a disastrous, journey-interrupting experience of food-poisoning on the previous Tunisia trip.

Some of the sites on the first day were not very exciting, for example, the hot springs at what the Romans had called "Aquae Calidae" ("hot waters"; rather literal people, those Romans). However, there were areas of great natural beauty which we visited during the week: Cap Bon, the northern tip of Tunisia, where we saw the Roman stone quarries, and the cork-oak forests around Ain Draham, in rolling countryside vaguely reminiscent of East Sussex. Lovely in a very different way were the arid plains stretching down towards Sbeitla, with their overshadowing *jebels* (mountain ridges). We drove over a mountain to get from Dougga to Bulla Regia; hard work for the coach, but providing stunning views (though rather alarming ones at times). In other places – for example, the countryside outside the holy city of Kairouan – we crossed undulating, dusty brown-grey plains, dotted with very poor-looking shepherds and semi-ruinous hovels: soil erosion and dry watercourses everywhere, and prickly-pear cactus the only healthy-looking vegetation. It was on just one such plain that the amphitheatre at El Jem appeared, standing above the horizon in isolated splendour, as though the Colosseum had been abandoned

in a field somewhere by joy-riders. Only when one got closer could one see the low modern buildings clustered at its feet.

The landscape is still influenced by the Romans. From Zaghuan to Carthage, the modern road follows the line of the Roman aqueduct, a concrete channel set into the ground, only rising up on arches as it nears the Roman city. As we drove to Dougga, the coach crested a ridge and ahead, straight ahead into the distance as far as the eye could see, ran the Roman road, which, with modern re-surfacing, is still in use.

Unlike England and many sites in Europe, where modern development often overlies Roman ruins, the sites of Tunisia are largely unspoiled. The ruins also stand to a far greater height in many places, and the result is extremely atmospheric. Bulla Regia, for example, with its fascinating underground houses built to escape the burning heat, was a late afternoon stop, and as the sun set over the ruins and the moon rose it was easy to forget the Twentieth Century – and even more spine-tingling it was when the Moslem call to prayer began over the loudspeakers on the nearby mosque. Sbeitla, with its three outstanding Roman temples, was a site where I could have sat for days; as the sun set here it picked up the red of the local sandstone and made for wonderful views.

Not all of our visits were to Roman ruins (some would say that this was a good thing); at Kelibia, we saw a small fishing port and drove through a bustling street market; at Kairouan, a tour of the great mosque, apparently the fourth holiest in Islam, reminded us of the Moslem heritage of the country (though even this was built from re-cycled Roman columns). This was followed by an hour in the *medina*, the Arab walled town, full of twisting ancient streets and somewhat disreputable souvenir shops selling items of dubious utility at a price depending on one's ability and willingness to haggle. Many boys had honed their haggling skills to a fine edge by the end of the week.

A constant theme during our visit was mosaics, since Roman Tunisia has produced perhaps the finest selection of mosaics in the world. We saw some good ones around the country, but the best was to come in the shape of the Bardo Museum in Tunis. After a morning spent touring the somewhat disappointing ruins of Carthage itself (including the circular harbour from which Carthaginian ships set out to fight the Romans, and the sanctuary where the Carthaginians sacrificed children in times of trouble), this museum provided a fitting climax to the tour. Its walls are covered floor to ceiling with mosaics: animals, scenes of farm life, the games, hunting, myths, gods, geometric designs. Almost mind-blowing and far too much to take in in one go.

It was an unforgettable experience, and writing this has made me want to go back again soon. My thanks, therefore, go to JEF for organizing such a memorable visit, which I know that the boys and staff alike enjoyed enormously.



Charities

Charities work and community service have expanded greatly this year. About one hundred and twenty-five Abingdonians have volunteered to help in schools, the community hospital, a charity shop, Abingdon Museum and a BBONT nature reserve, as well as to visit and entertain the elderly and sell charity Christmas cards. In the first contribution to this report, B. Teh explains his part in the programme:

**reports on the School's
voluntary service
programme,
by J Anderson 3SH,
W Horwitz 3SH,
J Mak 4DJD,
B Teh 6WHZ
and B Warner 6JFH,
introduced by MMH**

From the beginning of the academic year, a significant number of boys, predominantly Lower Sixth, have been fulfilling their commitment to the community by offering their services as hospital social workers. In general, the work has entailed conversation with patients, participation in minor occupational therapy and more importantly, alleviating the burden placed on the staff at Abingdon Community Hospital.

All that is required is a single afternoon each week to make a difference on a wider scale which is genuinely as rewarding as it is giving. We have received much positive feedback from appreciative patients and members of staff. On other fronts, boys have chosen to focus on assistance in primary and special-needs schools.

Speaking for all the Abingdon School volunteers, I can say that we have gained a wealth of experience and a sense of achievement. We would like to thank Mrs. Hankey, Mr. Bowley and Mr. Damerell for their organization and encouragement.

In September, G. le Tocq's enthusiasm for his work at Carswell inspired a good number of Sixth Formers to help in various primary schools with reading, computers, sports and, in one case, digging a pond.

The outstanding contribution was from B. Warner, who continued his work through the holiday, painted scenery and composed music for a theatrical production. He writes as follows:

I really enjoy going to St. Edmund's School, a local primary, and have been going there now since September. Once a week, I spend an hour and a half helping them with a range of activities, including their hockey skills, their reading, and their drawing. I have supervised their work on electric components, and we were successful in building a fairground ride, a smaller version of the "Big Dipper".

Before Christmas I was able to teach some children to play certain instruments for a carol concert. I also composed some music for a play which they were singing in.

I get a great sense of achievement through giving them the knowledge which I was lucky to get when I was their age. It is also quite astonishing to see how many things I have forgotten. The voluntary service scheme has certainly given me some great ideas for a possible "gap" year abroad.

Although the Sixth Form dominated the first half of the Michaelmas term, the Third Year were determined not to be left out. This lively bunch planned a Christmas entertainment for the residents of Cygnet Court and Old Station House, two old people's homes in Abingdon.

After long and varied discussion with Mrs. Hankey, we eventually decided that our project for the term should be to prepare some light entertainment for the residents of Cygnet Court and Old Station House. We had various ideas, ranging from ferrets to quizzes about television. Eventually we settled upon a somewhat more modest programme, consisting mostly of music. After recruiting a pianist, J. Herford, we set about practising.

About a week after our first rehearsal, we set off for Cygnet Court. Having donned our newly purchased Christmas hats, we crept into a room encircled with senior citizens. We sang several Christmas songs and hymns, read a poem, gave them a quiz and listened to an arrangement of *Silent Night* for two flutes. We then crept out again, to the sound of a heart-rending rendition of *We Wish You A Merry Christmas*. We were then invited back into the room for tea and biscuits with the residents.

On the day of the second concert, both our flautists and one of the poets were ill. Nonetheless, we carried on undaunted, and, after several alterations to the programme, we "invited" Mr. Bowley and some other members of School House to accompany us, in order to boost the volume. After narrowly avoiding tripping over the piano, we began our programme. The quiz seemed to be received especially well, and answers were flung at us from all parts of the room.



Whether they were right or not was another matter entirely. I hope that the residents enjoyed the performance as much as we did.

Perhaps the most memorable moment was when one slightly deaf lady shouted at the top of her voice to her neighbour "Where are we? I can't find the words." She was then swiftly informed that there were two sides to the song sheet.

In the Lent term, the enthusiastic Third Year group visited Lady Eleanor Court on Tuesdays to make tea, play cards and have a chat. J. Anderson is one of those involved:

Every Tuesday afternoon about fifteen Third Years, who make up our community service team, visit Lady Eleanor Court. We make tea for the elderly residents and play whist, pontoon and snap with them. We talk to them about life at Abingdon School, and hear about their amazing lives: life on the North West Frontier; diamond mining; refereeing the 1954 World Cup. We have a lot to learn from our elders, and visiting them is very enjoyable.

JGB's School House group visits Old Station House on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, as J. Mak explains:

The first time that I went to community service was on the day that I first heard about it... Well, the day when I first *really* heard about it. I had previously only vaguely known what community service was.

I was introduced to Old Station House by Mr. Bowley. Within five minutes of arriving my partner and I were sitting with a resident of the old people's home. We both had no experience at this, and despite our efforts to strike up a conversation, it always ended up in an embarrassing silence. The strange thing was that whenever Mr. Bowley came in, the old man suddenly became talkative and everything seemed very easy. As Mr. Bowley bought us some ice-creams to encourage us, I thought "It will get better."

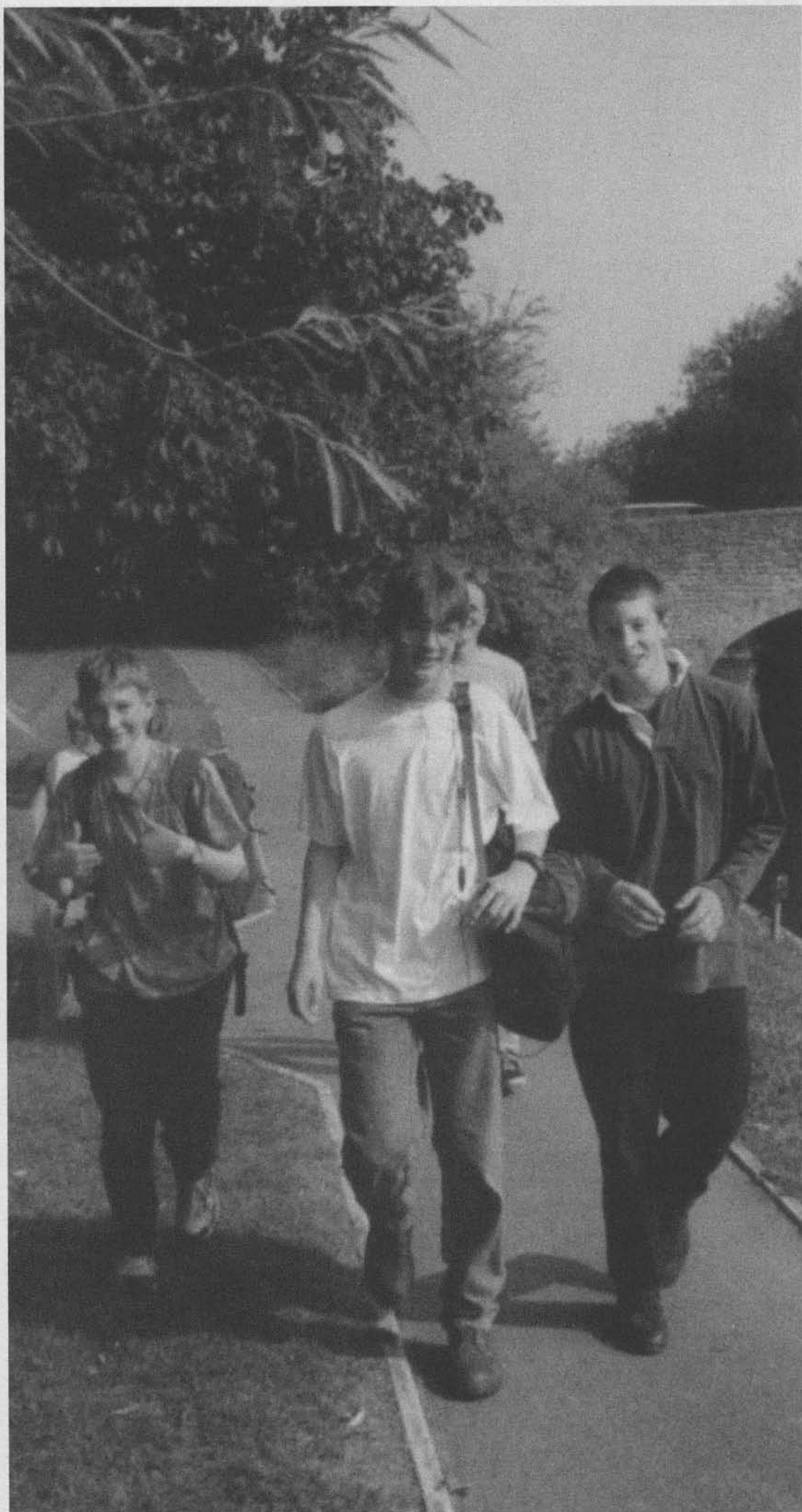
And it did. The next week we went there without fear and were more successful at maintaining the conversation. Although there were still silent pauses, we were not embarrassed anymore. Just as we were being more comfortable with talking to the old man, Mr. Bowley took us up to another room to chat to the more talkative women, which made life even easier. Now we were not feeling uneasy at all with talking to the old people.

Community service has given me a chance to meet people of a different age group, and has let me have a valuable opportunity to see the world from a different point of view.

A good number of Middle School boys have volunteered to visit the elderly in their own homes. The latest venture is for R. Lewis-Crosby, T. Webb and T. Butler to play bridge at the Stroke Club. Pupils have also been visiting Abingdon Community Hospital, where their positive contribution has been warmly welcomed by staff and patients.

above, B Grady 6JEF visiting Mrs Cecilia Wilson at Abingdon Community Hospital as part of community service

photograph courtesy of Newsquest (Oxfordshire)



Conservation

This year conservation started at Lashford Lane Fen near Wootten. The Fen is over fifteen acres in extent and is one of the most important of the wetland sites in Oxfordshire. It is run by BBONT, a local conservation charity.

Every Wednesday afternoon a group of volunteers visited the nature reserve, which is run by the wardens Mr. and Mrs. Bedford. We completed numerous tasks, including path and pond cleaning, raking grass, and moving dead wood for burning. The ponds at the reserve require regular cleaning to maintain the environment of the fen. We also made paths from

sawn logs to allow people to walk around the reserve in the very wet and muddy conditions. It is so wet in fact, that we were unable to attend twice owing to flooding. We also started work at Dry Sandford Pit. Here we removed a hundred yard stretch of unused barbed-wire fencing. With help from Mr. Burrow, we managed to take it all out in one afternoon, while another group set about clearing a stream. We also cleared overgrown paths to allow easier access for visitors to the site.

In the Summer term, work began at the Abbey Fishponds reserve in Abingdon.

**a report by
D Alexander 6JFH and
J Ma 6DH
on the conservation
work being carried out
by members
of the School**

Fund-raising

As reported in the Sponsored Walk report, £2600 of the £14,000 raised was intended for the organization ASHA in New Delhi. This programme operates in one of the slums visited by the pupils on the India trip. A letter from ASHA in January explained how they will be using the money:

"The sum... will be used for our tuberculosis control programme in various slum colonies, where suspected patients are diagnosed and treated at a highly subsidized cost or free of cost.

Their family members are also screened, and health education about the disease is given to the entire community, aiming not only to treat the illness, but to attempt to control tuberculosis in the community as a whole."

The second annual Five-a-Side football tournament in memory of Richard Anderson was held on March 24th and raised £400 for meningitis research. Thanks go to RSH for organizing the event. The winners were "Thieving Arabs" (Sixth Form), "Class on Grass" (Fifth Year) and "Keats P" (Third and Fourth Year).

A further £300 from this event went to the charity Hearing Dogs for the Deaf, which received a total of £2500 in the Lent term, over half of it raised by a Mufti Day.

SAE ran for the charity Whizz Kidz in the London Marathon in April, raising some £1500, of which £400 was contributed by members of Wilmore's. The Summer term saw collections in Chapel for Kosovo refugees, and £205 was raised.

**some of the amounts
raised for charity this
year; information
supplied by MMH**

Charity sponsored walk

Sunny skies, and not a single lesson in sight; home clothes, and the promise of a slap-up lunch upon my return. That was how the morning of my charity walk started. R. Bourne-Taylor, S. Rutland and I, being ostentatiously insane, had decided to run the ten or so miles from Dorchester to Abingdon.

Determined to get the most (unfair) advantage possible, we also wangled our way into starting with the Lower School, at around 11.30 a.m. We soon passed the prefects, dutifully marching out to their allotted posts, there to remain until the very last. After that, we were on our own. The route was beautiful, and no doubt Mr. Barrett had been very careful to select it for this reason. There was always plenty to keep our minds occupied as we trotted along the towpath. Being for the most part far away from any road, the route was also delightfully peaceful, devoid

of the all-too-familiar sounds of internal combustion engines and car stereos.

Perhaps it can be taken as a measure of the warmth of the day that even the Headmaster was to be seen wearing a polo shirt. No doubt Mr. Barrett had arranged that too.

We had a thoroughly enjoyable day out, and the grand sum of £14,000 was raised in the process. £6000 went to Farms for City Children, £2600 to ASHA (a community health programme in Delhi aiming to control tuberculosis), £2600 to Goodwill Children's Villages (who care for the destitute of southern India), and £2600 to ARCH, providing rehabilitation for the disabled in Cameroon.

Our thanks and congratulations to Mrs. Fishpool and all others who had a part in the organization of this event, which was both fun and in a worthy cause.

**an account of the
sponsored walk along
the Thames from
Dorchester to
Abingdon,
on September 24th,
by W Pank VINAFF**



Charity jazz concert

a report on the evening of jazz held in the Amey Hall on May 18th, featuring Jacqui Hickes, Phil Peskett, Tim Dawes, and Colin Greenwood of "Radiohead", by its organizer, P Luscombe 5APS

It all started back in March, when my bass teacher, Tim Dawes, and I hatched the idea of holding a jazz concert in the Amey Hall in aid of charity. I had been looking for an opportunity to organize an event of some sort for some time, and the chance to work with four of England's best jazz musicians was very exciting. Two weeks after we had thought of it, our date was in the School calendar and we were ready to go.

As we broke up for the Easter holiday, things were looking good, but what happened next was the last thing I had expected. I called Mr. Dawes to check a minor detail about the show, only to find that he had persuaded Colin Greenwood of *Radiohead* to play at our concert. I could not believe it; we had an international rock star coming to the School.

The tickets went on sale in the first week of the Summer term, and within a few days we were in profit, despite overheads of around £250. By the day of the

show, we were on course to make £500 for our chosen charity, Amnesty International. This is a non-political group which seeks to publicize and to campaign against the abuse of human rights all over the world. They are a worthwhile and effective charity, whom we had been meaning to support for a long time.

After a quick introduction by myself, and a very moving speech about Amnesty International by Charlie Milward, a respected member of Radley College, the band came on and played one of the best shows which I have ever heard.

I was amazed and gratified by the number of people who expressed their gratitude for a really brilliant evening. One of the most exciting and rewarding things about the concert was that so many people worked together to put on such a fantastic evening. My thanks go to all those who helped to raise what was in the end £600 for Amnesty International.

Debating

As always, the Debating Society has had a full and challenging year of events both inside and outside the School. The regular Friday afternoon debates discussed a wide range of motions regarding politics, with judgements being passed on President Clinton's impeachment and the duty of politicians to be rôle models; their right to a private life was quickly dismissed as "bunkum" by a fiercely partisan cross-section of the School.

Views upon society and its failings were enjoyably and easily aired, with little need for encouragement as prejudice and high-minded tolerance contrasted in lively debates upon the quality of modern music, marriage contracts, English identity, and our loyalty to the Queen and country. That is not to say that the important and deep-rooted intellectual questions of the day were ignored, however; a motion was indeed passed in favour of blondes over brunettes.

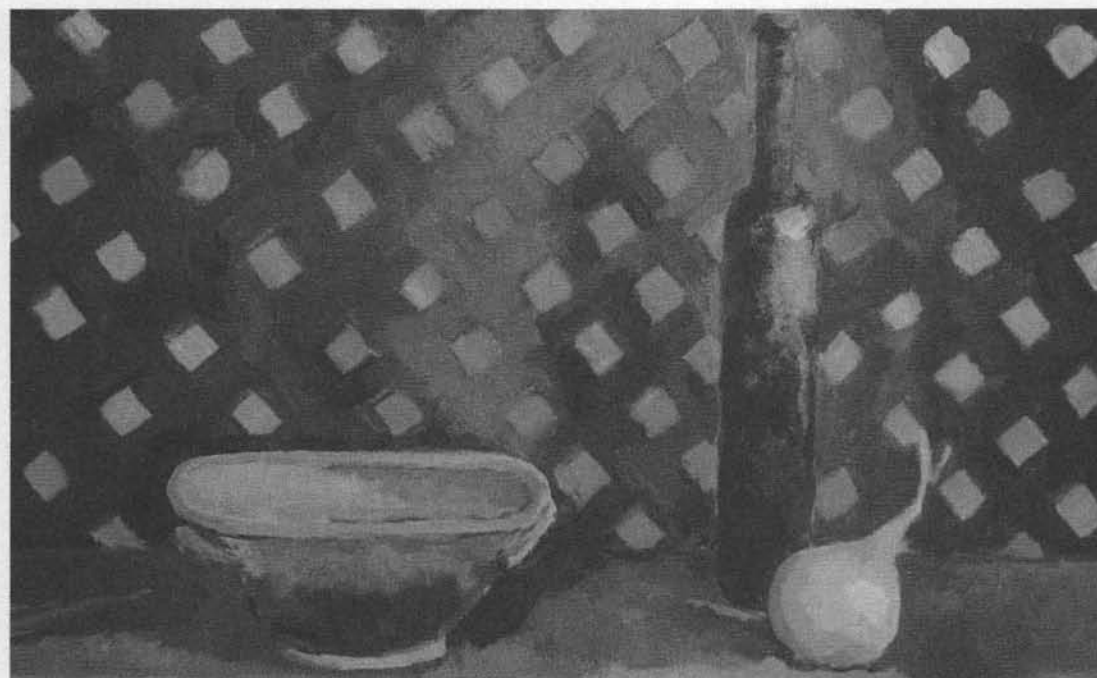
External opportunities to represent the School occurred in the Oxford Union National Schools DEbating Competition, with H. Watkinson and R. Dawson participating against leading schools from around the country, including Eton, Harrow and Radley. Two teams were entered into the senior section of the annual Rotary Club public speaking competition, and one in the junior section. The senior team – made up of H. Watkinson, T. Hester and R. Dawson – successfully proceeded to the zone final. Unfortunately, they were narrowly defeated by the reigning champions from Witney.

The School's own internal public speaking competition was a highly successful event, with entrants from all houses in the Lower, Middle and Upper schools. The quality of speaking reached a new high: at Sixth Form level, the Mearns' House team (C. Mason, R. Dawson and M. Bartlett) won; the Fourth and Fifth Year contest was won by Fishpool's (J. Margree, S. Evans and P. Taylor); Wilmore's (H. Feather, L. Berryman and A. Pride) secured the Third Year victory, and in the Lower School 2D's team (G. Potter, A. Nash and A. Macdonald) were victorious.

None of this activity could have occurred without the invaluable assistance of Dr. Zawadzki, whilst the indefatigable S. Rutland, as the Society's secretary, provided the administrative skills necessary for its smooth running, as well as for the organization of enjoyable dinner debates with Wycombe Abbey, Oxford High and St. Helen's girls schools. Our best wishes must go to N. Brewer, B. Wells and P. Batchelor, who take over the Society and should keep it in its current healthy condition.

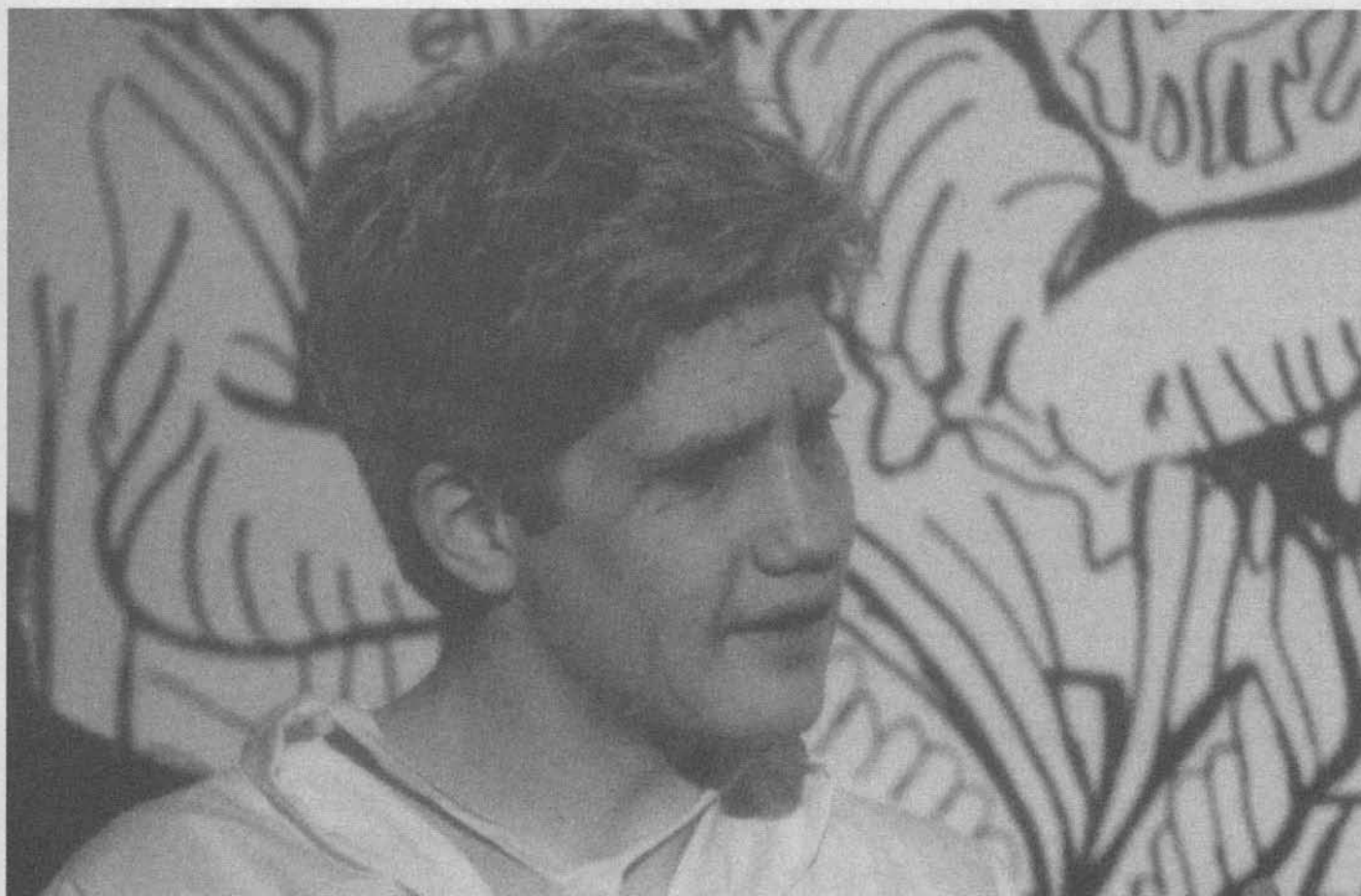
**a report on the year's
proceedings by
R Dawson VIGCR**

**Still life, below,
by T Smith VINAFF**



Drama reports

The Crucible



**a report on the joint
boarders'-St. Helen's-
Convent production of
Arthur Miller's
"The Crucible",
in the Amey Hall,
April 28th to May 1st,
by JHT**

The boarders' performances of *The Crucible*, directed by BAHF and WTP, performed jointly with St. Helen's and the Convent, took account of the style and intentions of one of the first productions of the play. Arthur Miller had fallen out with the original director over the latter's preference for an overblown production style which in Miller's eyes, "cooled off a very hot play". Miller took over the direction, got rid of the sets and played the scenes under stark white lighting that hardly changed. The result, in Miller's view, was an intensification of the already powerful material, which made the play the "burning metaphor" which he had hoped for in order to penetrate the fog of fear, suspicion and deception prevalent in America during the period of the McCarthy hearings.

There are many occasions in theatre when this simplicity of approach is not only an economic advantage but an artistic preference, and this was certainly one of them. By playing the scenes in front of CJB's simple, but beautifully painted, black and white

screens depicting Seventeenth century woodcut images of witches and biblical phrases, the directors achieved the kind of intensity Miller sought; P. Luscombe's superb lighting set-up helped immensely.

The play requires deep levels of emotion and tension, since the plot revolves around the small town of Salem, Massachusetts, in 1694, when the local population becomes embroiled in an hysterical witch-hunt which threatens to tear their community apart. The focus was always on the acting, and in particular the language of the play, which reveals most starkly the terrifying madness which can overwhelm any society if it seeks to define the path of private consciences in public. Notable amongst the many fine performances were the portrayals of John Proctor (B. Wells), Abigail Williams (Josie Pearson), Giles Corey (A. Hunter), Reverend Hale (R. Rothkopf) and Elizabeth Proctor (Rosie Emanuel). We are fortunate to have so many fine actors in our boarding community, and to have two directors of the calibre of BAHF and WTP to guide them.

The Witches

Dahl's witches do not ride on broomsticks wearing silly black hats. "Real" witches dress in ordinary clothes and look like ordinary women, but take great pleasure in squelching children and ridding their nostrils of the disgusting smell of dogs' droppings. A display witch (Marianna Hay), with her long curvy claws, bald head and blue spit, showed these repulsive features to the audience with gruesome realism.

The story centres around an orphan girl (Zoe Gray), who lives with her ailing grandmother (played convincingly by Bella Gibbons). To help her grandmother get better, they take in sea air at the Hotel Magnificent, Bournemouth, unaware that they have stumbled upon the venue for the Annual General Meeting of witches, attended by the Grand High Witch of all the world (G. Potter).

A spectacular array of magic tricks was performed as the witches entered the hotel: everything from rejoining a severed bit of string to pulling a bunch of flowers from a coat. This culminated with a wonderfully melodramatic entrance from the Grand High Witch, whose menacing Germanic tones were complemented by lurid lighting and dramatic music.

The meeting took place on a lavish set of an ornamental ballroom. The witches – initially no more sinister than middle aged ladies at a tea party – revealed their true colours, whipping off wigs to show shining bald heads. The Grand High Witch put a

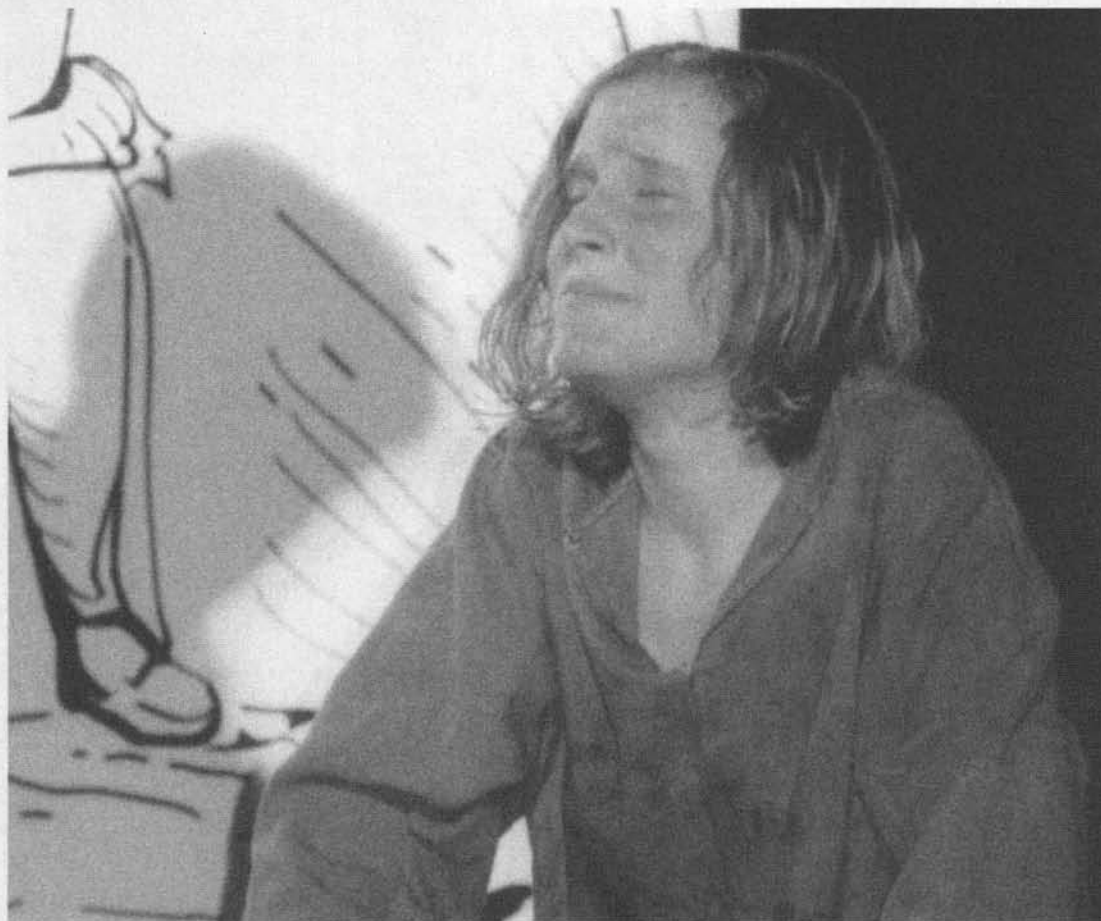
witch who dared to answer back into the sword box; a theatrical and incredibly convincing death.

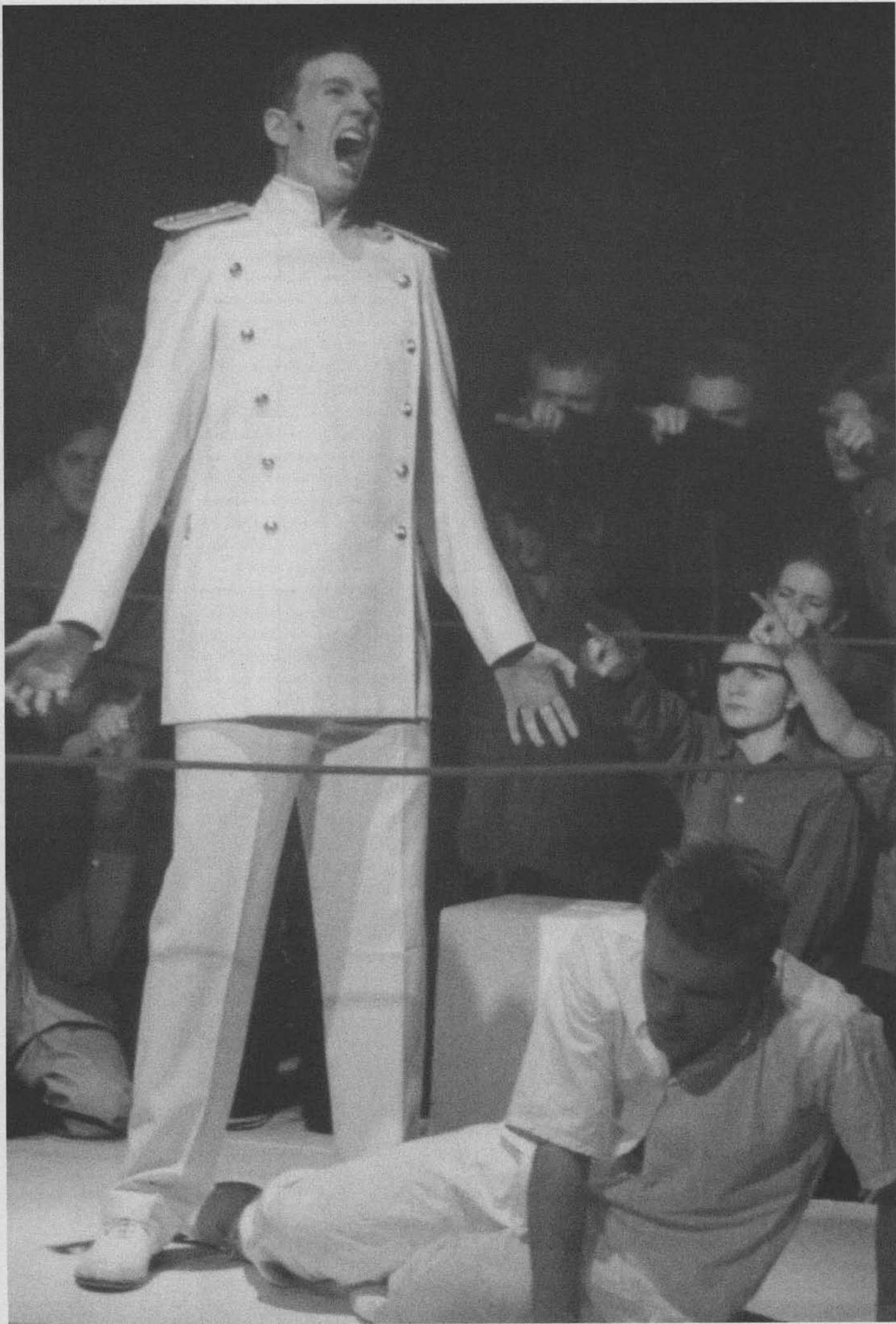
Her latest plan to wipe out children was then revealed: Formula 86 Delayed Action Mouse Maker. The "guinea pig" was to be a boy (D. Hammersley) with a rather-too-healthy appetite, to whom she gave a chocolate bar containing the potion. With sirens and screams, he appeared to turn into a mouse, closely followed by the girl who was discovered to be eavesdropping. The use of a Magic Circle illusionist in rehearsal had clearly paid off, with some extremely realistic effects. There were some brilliantly evil performances from the cackling witches (half of them boys).

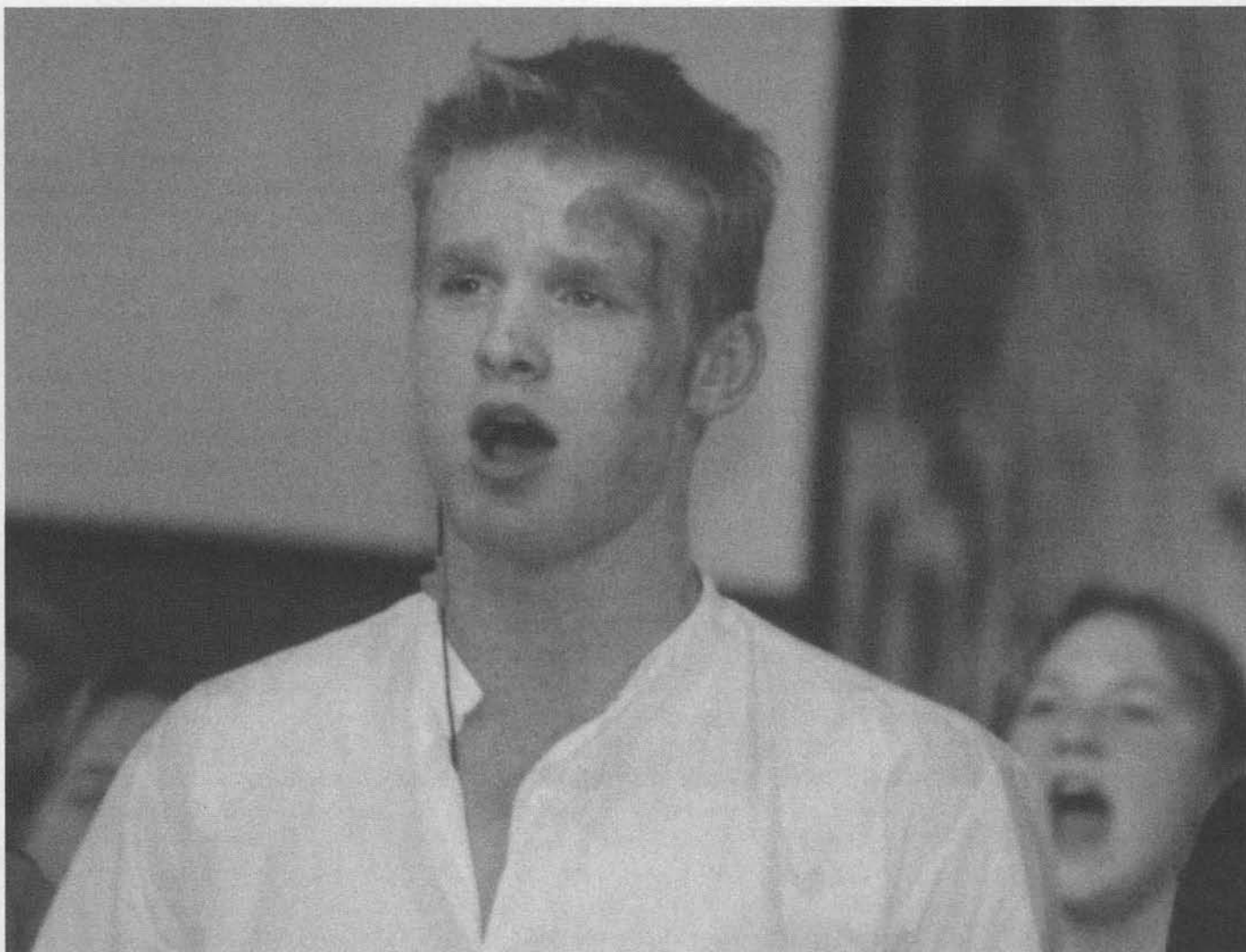
The second act contained comical scenes with "mice" trying to climb giant steps, and carry giant sweets. The girl planned to steal the potion and spike the witches' soup at dinner. The final scene was livened up by a pair of chefs cooking the meal with farcical incompetence. The grand finale took place amid sirens and flashing lights; the witches all began to die, the Grand High Witch disappearing with a large explosion, leaving an eerie heap of cape and wig.

Music provided by W. Bartlett and T. Murray helped enormously to create a very professional feel. Directed by Miss Matthews from St. Helen's (her debut at Abingdon School), it turned out to be an extremely successful production, enjoyed by cast and audience alike.

**a report of the joint
junior production
of an adaptation by
David Wood of
Roald Dahl's book
"The Witches",
in the Amey Hall,
March 17th to 19th,
by C. Dugan VINMR**







Jesus Christ Superstar

As expected, the joint production of *Jesus Christ Superstar* was a great success. On all three nights the Amey Hall was packed out, outstripping perhaps even the production of *Oliver Twist* seven years before. The audiences were not disappointed by an incredible show of a more-than-professional standard. I recently saw another show in London, performed by professional actors, singers and dancers, and I can honestly say that the Abingdon performance was on a par with that. The whole scale of the lights, staging and singing was something to which very few will ever have come close at school level.

Individually, there were some spectacular performances, most noticeably from the Almighty himself. J. Wilson stood out not only because of his rather attractive white suit and shoes, but also thanks to his incredible voice, which could, I am convinced, take him right to the top of the profession if he takes it up. Rachael Ellis (as Mary Magdalene) gave a full-bodied performance, and her voice was also of a standard which you will rarely hear. Several other performances backed these two characters up with style and vigour. T. Richards was spectacular as Judas, despite the lack

of volume from his microphone. M. Bartlett, C. Mason, J. Eaton and D. Wilberforce were all notably good, and this high standard of performance led to an excellent show.

When something of this scale is put on, there is always a great deal of work by the "back room boys", but saying this just does not do justice to the work put in by all those back-stage, especially Mr. Millard and Mr. Taylor, both of whom had lost their voices by the dress rehearsal on Monday. Mr. Taylor for one did not leave School until three in the morning on Monday, having rehearsed all day on the Sunday.

The make-up was wonderful, as always, the sound and lighting crew broke new boundaries as far as the School goes, and the band were unbelievably good, although we would expect nothing less from Abingdon's music department. All this, with the stage crew, front of house, problems with licences, rehearsals and casting, was down to Mr. Taylor and Mr. Millard. I only hope that they, the rest of the staff involved and all the cast realize what they achieved with this show, and that they know that all the hard work which they put in was worth it.

**a report on a joint
Abingdon-St. Helen's
production of
"Jesus Christ
Superstar",
in the Amey Hall,
December 3rd to 5th,
by M Terry 6CMM**

Abingdon Drama Festival

**a report of productions
of Jack Richardson's
"Gallows Humour", and
Alan Ayckbourn's
"Table Manners",
given jointly with
St. Helen's as part of
the first Abingdon
Drama Festival,
held in the CMR,
October 20th and 21st,
by C Dugan VINMR
and JHT**

Gallows Humour was the first of the two plays which made up the first Abingdon Drama Festival. The idea of this drama festival was Mr. Taylor's, and he gave invaluable support in the production of both *Gallows Humour* and *Table Manners*, which were nevertheless entirely produced by senior boys. Judging from the success of the festival this year, it certainly looks as if this will become a regular feature.

Gallows Humour is a relatively little-known play by Jack Richardson, and it proved to be one of the most memorable and original productions ever put on in the CMR. The audience was challenged not only by the black humour of the dialogue, but by the disorientating effect of having to change seats half-way through the performance. They watched the first act from one end of the room, and then returned after their glass of wine to find that the action had moved to the other end.

The set provided the perfect chilling atmosphere from the outset. The room was full of smoke, with eerie bars of light enclosing the back of the stage. Death, played by N. Brewer, opened the proceedings with a "light hearted" prologue explaining the changes in the rôle of death recently, the essence of which was explored in the two "exhibits" which make up this play; if people can never escape from a dull middle-class eternity, might they ultimately be better off dead? Although this seems unlikely material for a comedy, the two situations provided an entertaining and brilliant spectacle. The first half was set in the cell of a convicted murderer (M. Bartlett). His one moment of madness, when he killed his wife, had been a terrifying deviation from the predictable life which a lawyer should lead. Now the black walls of his cell gave him the kind of life which he really wanted.

Lucy (Rachael Ellis) was sent by the Warden (J. Eaton) to make his last hours happy ones. The stage was plunged into red, signifying his momentary temptation to venture back into the land of the "living". Finally, he succumbed.

In contrast, the second "exhibit" depicted an executioner (T. Richards) fighting to escape from the prison which his life and his wife had become. His wife (Catherine Oddie) was reduced to crying on the Warden's shoulder about all the things which had changed in her husband's life recently, everything from wearing a black hood to "bring a bit of colour" into his executions, to red socks. However, the executioner found that when he had finally decided to leave his life forever, he was persuaded instead to stay and help his wife do the dishes.

In all, this was a very powerful performance. The difficult task of sustaining the comedy without losing sight of the serious messages was carried off with a great deal of success.

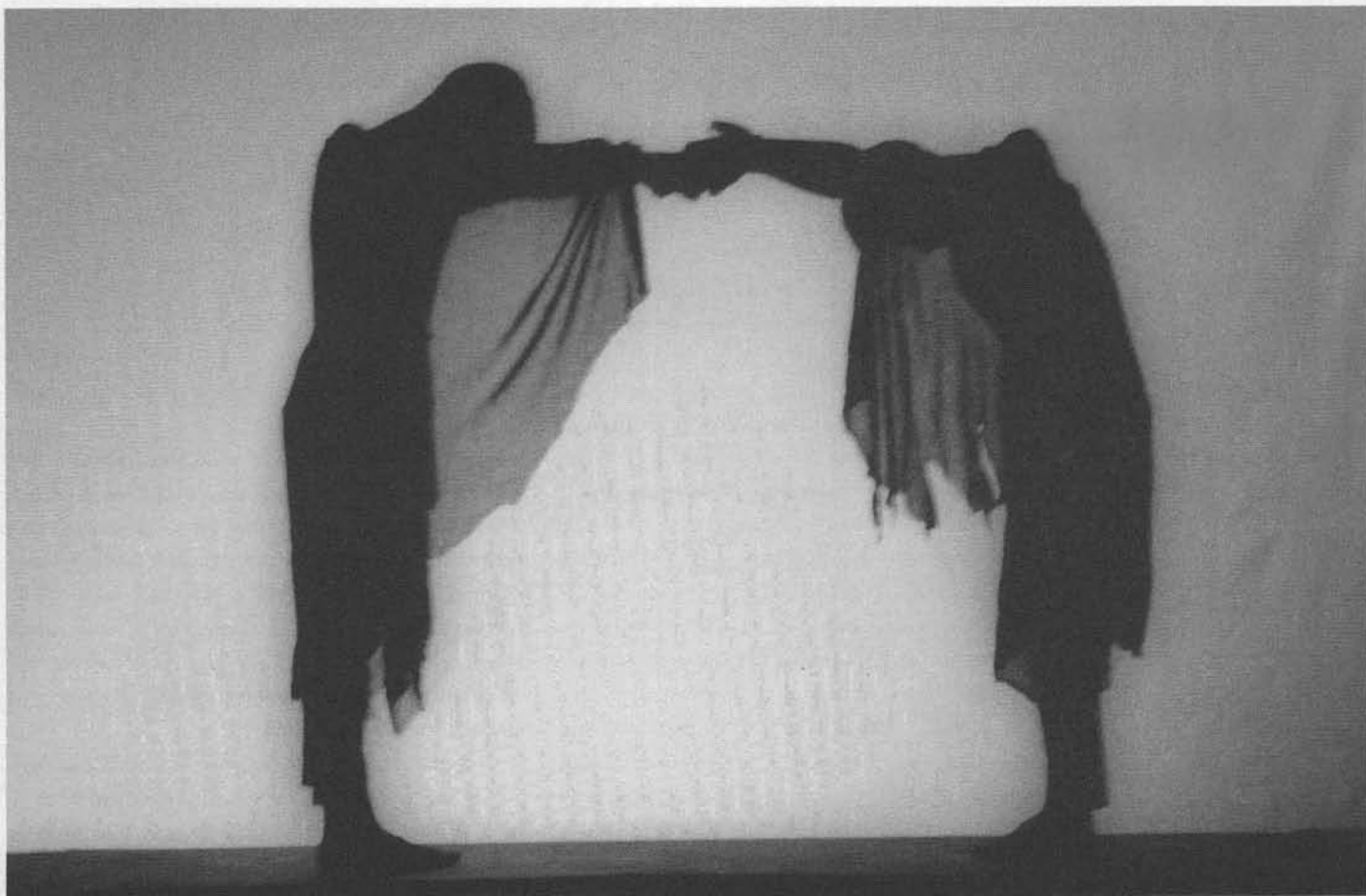
Table Manners is part of Alan Ayckbourn's popular *Norman Conquests* trilogy. The three plays depict the same dreadful but hilarious family reunion from different vantage points. In *Table Manners*, the action takes place in the dining room during a disastrous meal, as a family Sunday lunch degenerates into the bitterest of squabbling.

The CMR, with its resounding decor, was perhaps well-suited to a tale of the suburban English middle classes at dinner. If any more colour were needed, or indeed possible, then T. Hester's set certainly provided it. Ghastly beige, cream and pink striped wallpaper flats provided an appropriate backdrop for the sordid goings on, whilst W. Bartlett's original music helped to evoke an East Grinstead world of china ornaments and chintz curtains. A sense of the tensions between characters was helped by the claustrophobic confines of the acting area, in which the CMR's resident table was used to good effect, and a perimeter fence of cane bookcases and wobbly sideboards had been successfully plundered from parental attics.

The acting was very good. J. Montague's Norman – the lustful library assistant – was repulsive in all the right ways. His baggy woollen jumper, bobble hat and flared trousers made his appeal to women far from obvious, yet his outrageous garb was an expression of an outsize personality, for whom saying the unsayable or doing the "just not done" were to be expected. Thus, set against the timid conformism of the other male characters, Norman seemed positively desirable, and he was played with a combination of impressive athleticism and appalling table manners. J. Evans was very funny as Tom, the wimpish vet whose crushing niceness makes any sort of romantic excitement impossible for his girlfriend Annie, and his lanky corduroy-clad physique and bovine jutting jaw evoked the upper class twit to a "t". B. Wells played Reg, Sarah's hen-pecked husband, and perfectly captured his defining moment. As his wife droned through yet another harangue downstage, he gently circled upstage, arms outstretched, in an imaginary heaven of model aeroplanes.

The female characters were also excellently acted. Kit Mulqueen bristled superbly as Sarah, Ellen Cumber (Annie) endured J. Montague's virile pouncings with admirable fortitude, and Sam Harris (Ruth) was so unlike Norman as to be entirely convincing as his wife.

C. Mason and J. Margree both deserve enormous credit for putting on this successful production. Their choice of play was most astute (both of the evening performances were sold out), their direction of the cast was sure, and their negotiation of the many pitfalls which attend the production of a play was admirably calm and confident.



Euripides' "Bacchae"

The essential feature of the *Bacchae* seemed to be its "strangeness", a fact which may have been as apparent to the Greeks then as it is to us now, for the story deals with the impenetrable nature of the gods, and their merciless power over men; men must not question or seek to understand the ways of the gods.

With this in mind, directors and cast set about creating a world of "otherness". The director, SF, was keen to avoid an "authentic" production; no attempts were made to re-create the details of Greek theatre, or to re-locate the action in a familiar present. Regular movement work was undertaken to develop an appropriate physical language for the Chorus. Sections of text were set to improvised chants or songs in an effort to create an effectively alien "soundscape".

The results were certainly striking. CJB marked his twenty-fifth year of designing sets at Abingdon with a wonderfully abstract swirl of ramps and platforms, punctuated by jagged poles at crazy angles to give the sense of a structure in imminent danger of collapse. On the floor of the stage, three tons of sand filled a large circular pit, the arena for the Chorus' dancing. Lighting, designed by P. Luscombe and A. Ings, favoured strong colours on the cyclorama and low-angled cross-light which "sculpted" the actors in the arena. Costumes, hired from the RSC or designed by Helen Saxton, drew on Greek and Roman forbears but retained an individual style, whilst faces were adorned

with strange patterns conceived by Gwendoline Wikart and Sue Wigmore.

This rich visual landscape was the backdrop for some outstanding performances. M. Terry brought powerful vocal and physical reserves to the part of Dionysus, whilst J. Wilson produced a quieter characterization for Dionysus' human form, which emphasized his subtle and sinister strength. J. Mansfield was superb as Pentheus, the proud ruler of Thebes whose refusal to acknowledge Dionysus brings calamity. All three brought a muscular physicality to their performances which did much to persuade us that we were watching mature actors, not schoolboys. B. Wells turned in another excellent performance, as Cadmus, and M. Iles achieved a startlingly unusual and effective style as the blind prophet, Tiresias. D. Benoliel was outstanding in his delivery of the Herdsman's speech, whilst S. Evans and N. Brewer vied with each other in the excellent rendering of their messenger speech. Agaue was played by Rosie Emanuel and Josie Pearson, both of whom were extraordinarily powerful. The Chorus acted, sang, and danced with conviction and togetherness.

Guiding and inspiring such creativity was, of course, the work of the director, and SF combined and shaped all the elements of the production with an eye for detail and the passionate commitment to "getting it right" which have made her a director of brilliance.

a report of a production of Euripides' tragedy "Bacchae", joint with St. Helen's, in the Amey Hall, June 30th to July 2nd, by JHT

photograph by G Smith 2S

Music reports

Christmas Concerts

**a report on the
concerts
in the Amey Hall on
December 9th and 10th,
by P Gardner 6WHZ**

The Christmas Concerts this academic year were extremely successful. The Brass Band gave a rousing start with *Those Magnificent Men in their Flying Machines*, followed by the more mellow *By the Time I get to Phoenix*, with a beautiful trumpet solo from M. Spencer Chapman. The band finished off with the festive *Sleigh Ride*.

Following them came the First Year choir; a smaller year group than usual were sometimes drowned by their accompanists, particularly when divided in their second number, *Only You*. However, their last song, *Rock around the Clock*, was considerably better, and the singers clearly enjoyed themselves.

The first half concluded with the First Wind Band, firstly performing the overture to the musical *Funny Girl*, a varied piece, which gave all the parts a chance to shine. A short presentation to their conductor Mr. Jones followed, as he retired at the end of term, having taught brass at the school for over twenty years. The band then performed an old favourite of theirs, *Christmas Festival*, a medley of carols and Christmas songs, ending the first half in festive style.

After the short interval, Second Orchestra took the stage, conducted by this year's A level musicians, who had to contend with nerves, absences and some poor tuning. However, they all performed very creditably,

especially since for most it was their first public performance as conductors.

First Orchestra followed with Shostakovich's first Piano Concerto, K. Cheung performing the solo rôle. This is a fiendishly hard piece for all concerned, but the pianist, playing from memory, gave a brilliant and dramatic performance, full of life and vigour. The orchestra then performed the energetic and varied *Land of the Mountain and the Flood* before the traditional communal singing, which this year was *God rest you Merry, Gentlemen*.

To play out was the Big Band, who began with *Mood Swing*, a piece composed by band member T. Richards, with himself and M. Spencer Chapman as soloists. This was of an extremely high standard, and deserves special praise. Following this was a quieter piece, *Lonely Street*, featuring a saxophone duet from N. Hawken and D. Procter, before the band finished off with the lively *Woodchoppers' Ball*, featuring numerous soloists, particularly T. Coe on clarinet and M. Spencer Chapman (yet again).

This ended a very successful concert. Our thanks go to all the band directors, Mr. Stinton, Mr. Elliott, Mr. Millard, Mr. Jones and Mr. Currie, and also to Mr. Cutting, S. Smith and W. Bartlett for standing in for M. Spencer Chapman on the Thursday night.

Chapel choir

**a report on
the choir's year,
by R Asher 6JEF**

The Michaelmas term was the first after the successful Chapel Choir tour of Italy with the Chamber Orchestra. As usual, there were many newcomers, especially from the First Year, which was good as the choir always needs plenty of new boys, to help balance and strengthen it.

The first service for the full choir was a boarders' evening service in the School chapel, soon followed by a service in the chapel at Lincoln College, Oxford. For both of these services our music was Ayleward's *Responses*, Noble in B minor and *And I Saw a New Heaven* by Bainton.

After half term, the first service in which the choir performed was a Remembrance Sunday service at St. Helen's Church, a joint performance with their choir. Not long afterwards, we sang evensong at Chichester Cathedral, our main event of the term. This was a very

enjoyable experience; special congratulations to R. Morris for a solo from Mendelssohn's *Hear My Prayer*.

Our final date of the term was the Carol Service, where our repertoire included *Today the Virgin* by John Taverner, a very modern and challenging piece.

The Lent term was largely preoccupied with services directly involving the School, notably a Candlemas Communion and the Music and Readings for Lent. Both provided opportunities to explore a wide variety of repertoire, including Allegri's *Miserere mei* and Walton's *A Litany*. Further new ground was broken at Bath Abbey in the Summer term with a new venue and a good performance of Britten's challenging and exciting *Rejoice in the Lamb*. The year was crowned at the Leavers' Day service with a memorable interpretation of *Rise Heart*, the first of Vaughan Williams' *Mystical Songs*, with T. Herford as soloist.



New Year concert

"Welcome to this year's New Year's Concert," announced Mr. Stinton, before explaining the new format. This concert has traditionally been a fairly modest affair, owing to it being so soon (in practice terms) after the Christmas Concerts.

This year, however, owing to the increase in quality musical groups in the ever-expanding Music School, this New Year's Concert was extended, to relieve pressure on the massive line-up for the Christmas Concerts.

Second Wind Band (now conducted by Mr. Somerville) opened the proceedings with four pieces from *Aladdin*. Next were the Chamber Orchestra, as always giving a polished performance, with the first movement of Dvorak's *Serenade for Strings*. Closing the first half were four of the School's top musicians, in a saxophone quartet. This tight and energetic performance certainly did justice to Gordon Jacob's *Quartet no. 2*.

After the interval was the First Orchestra brass section, in their first performance without the rest of the orchestra. The first two pieces were *Fanfare pour*

preceder la Peri and *Russian Funeral*, which are both bass-heavy, tonal and relatively slow pieces. If the audience needed cheering up, the section's final piece, *Jamaican Rumba*, certainly achieved this, featuring as it did sombreros, bead wigs and every maraca which the School possesses.

Another group of the School's top musicians followed, in the form of a string trio. The unusual piece *Little London Trio* was a light-hearted one, performed excellently, with some interesting viola solos. After them was the double reed quartet, quite possibly the most unusual ensemble which the School has. Performance of two marches from the American Revolution featured two bassoons and two oboes.

The grand finale of this concert was the Second Year choir, which always attracts a large audience. This year the choir, directed by Mr. Elliott, performed five of the best-known pieces from Lionel Bart's musical *Oliver!*, featuring many brave soloists. Particularly noteworthy were the performances of J. Bishop, R. Powis and J. Barclay, in *Where is love*, *Be back soon* and *Oom-pah-pah* respectively.

**a report of a concert
given in the Amey Hall
on January 29th,
by J Persaud 6MAS**

Music scholars' concert

**a report of the concert
by music scholars
and senior musicians,
in the Amey Hall
on November 13th,
by J Mearns 6CMM**

This was certainly the best music scholars' concert which I can remember. What was particularly notable about this concert was that everyone who played had something individual and personal to contribute to the piece which he performed. The high standard was maintained throughout a long concert, and so it would be impossible for me to award each and every participant his due. As it is, it remains for me to pick out a few particularly memorable performances.

The repertoire ranged, for the most part, from the lyrical and romantic to the virtuosic and technically demanding. The latter category both began and ended the concert, with an assured performance of Liszt's concert study *Un Sospiro*, by T. Ting on the piano, and an electrifyingly dazzling account of Milstein's *Paganiniana* (yet another set of theme and variations on Paganini's ever-popular twenty-fourth *Caprice*) from T. Mak on the violin.

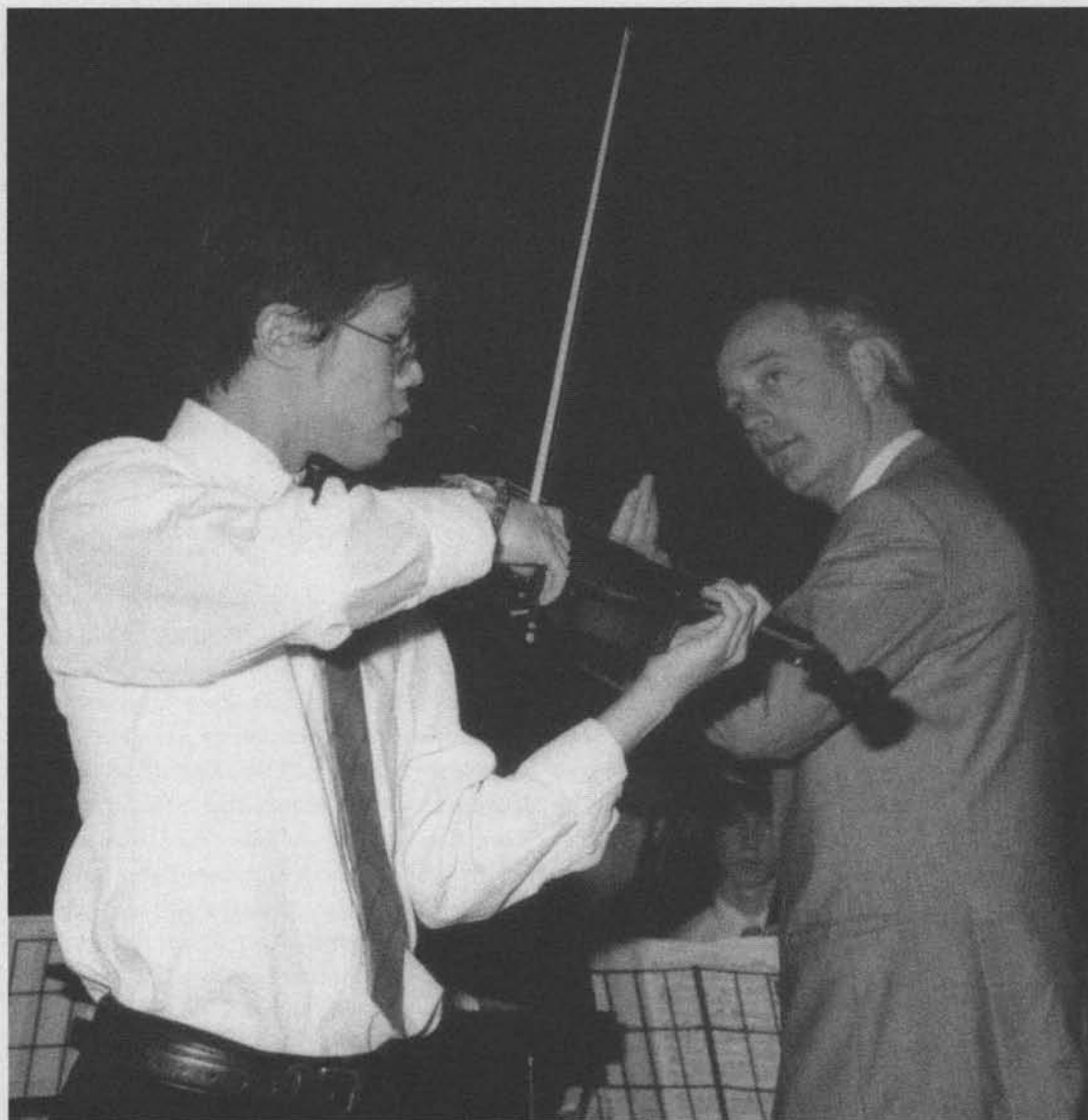
Other noteworthy and convincing displays of virtuosity were M. Ederer's rendition of *Perpetuum Mobile* by Novacek, and J. Findlay's performance of Rimsky-Korsakov's *Fantasia*, both on the violin. J.

Mak interpreted Chopin's *Valse in A Flat* on the piano, and T. Richards performed some of the Glazunov saxophone concerto, a piece which he played with the Oxford Concerto Orchestra later that term.

R. Morris contributed notably to the Romantic side of the evening, playing Brahms' *Intermezzo Op. 116 No. 4* on the piano and Bruch's *Ave Maria Op. 61* on the violin. Bruch featured again during the evening, A. Choudhuri playing the second movement of the violin concerto.

Particularly memorable were T. Herford's performances; the first movement of Bartok's first violin concerto on the violin, and Bach's *Italian Concerto* on the piano. M. Spencer-Chapman (with Debussy's *Bruyères* for piano) and M. O'Donovan (an authoritative interpretation of Schoenberg's *Piano Piece Op. 11 No. 2*) were also excellent.

Warmest congratulations and thanks are due to all those who contributed to what was a very impressive and enjoyable evening, including, in particular, the staff, who as usual accompanied superbly and organized the whole concert.





Summer orchestral concert

This summer's concert was a demonstration of an ambitiously wide range of musical styles and genres, including the concerto, the serenade for solo string orchestra and the contemporary repertoire. The musicians coped very well in spanning the divide between the radically different demands exerted by these different pieces.

The evening was opened by Second Orchestra. The members of the orchestra made a huge effort for a relatively new set of conductors who, themselves, had prepared their parts well. Their programme included Verdi/Woodhouse's *Melodies from Rigoletto*, Tchaikovsky/Stone's *Two Melodies from Swan Lake* and Morand's *Trepak*. There was a lot of talent in evidence, as is demonstrated by the fact that each piece had a different leader.

As a complete contrast to the weighty orchestral sound of Second Orchestra, the twenty or so musicians of the Chamber Orchestra played three of the five movements of Dvorak's *Serenade for Strings*. This beautiful and arresting piece, with its almost pastoral mood and folk influences, contained many challenges for the performers, both in its technical difficulties and in the highly refined sense of balance and ensemble which is required to bring it off well. The orchestra, mainly on top of the piece's technical hurdles and attentive to its subtleties, coped well. The first half was rounded off by the brass section of the

First Orchestra, who played the lively and cheerful *Kraken* by Chris Hazell.

The second half of the concert was occupied by the First Orchestra. They started with the world premier of a piece by Matthew O'Donovan: *View From Elsewhere*. This witty and varied score contained a large selection of styles and moods, ranging from the expansive and triumphal to the fugal. All credit must go to the composer, not only for having written the piece but also for rehearsing and performing his own composition with great aplomb.

T. Mak then gave a memorable performance of Mendelssohn's violin concerto op.64. This was a very accomplished rendering, as the soloist combined the fiendishly demanding virtuoso writing with more lyrical passages, such as those in the deeply expressive second movement. His fluidity of tone and astonishing clarity were well suited to this alternately dramatic and beautiful piece, and his playing was extremely self-assured and confident. Consequently, his astonishing technical accomplishment was communicated to the audience. The orchestra was concentrating very hard throughout, an aspect which greatly enriched the performance.

The concert then drew to a close with another piece by Mendelssohn, this time the *Hebrides Overture*. This piece was both exhilarating to play and to listen to, finishing the evening on a high note.

**a report on the concert
in the Amey Hall on
May 28th,
by J Mearns 6CMM**

Creative writing

A child's cry

a story by
T Ainsworth 4DJJ

You would never have considered Martha Smith to be an actress, thought her landlady Mrs. Bunce with satisfaction. Her voice was quiet and refined, and she had none of that garish extravagance of dress that characterizes that dubious profession. Mrs. Bunce was pleased to have her as a lodger: an impoverished widow forced through circumstances to take in boarders to her house in a squalid road in Whitechapel, she was more used to renting rooms to shifty-eyed clerks and women of negotiable affection.

Martha Smith had told her landlady that she was appearing in Shakespeare's tragedy *Macbeth* in a theatre up West, but could not afford to acquire lodgings near her work. Certainly her clothes were drab enough to suggest poverty, and she appeared unable to pay a fare on the omnibus. She seemed prepared to walk to and from her place of employment, although Mrs. Bunce had warned her that two women in the neighbourhood had recently been murdered.

Violence was not uncommon in the streets of East London, but these killings were reported to have been unusually savage. Rumours were rife that the women had been mutilated in an unspeakable fashion, and most people tried to remain secure in the confines of their own homes during the hours of darkness. Miss Smith however did not hesitate to walk the dark streets where the intermittent gaslights only served to cast darker shadows over hidden doorways and twisting alleys. She had smiled grimly when her landlady warned her of the dangers she could be facing and had made the curious comment that she knew it would not be her fate to suffer in such a way. Mrs. Bunce had thought her fearless at first; nothing had seemed to ruffle her lodger's bland features.

One day, however, while they were sitting in Mrs Bunce's kitchen, they heard the painful sound of a young baby crying in hunger and despair. The older woman registered the sound, but was unaffected by it; hungry babies and inattentive mothers were a commonplace in her street. Miss Smith however reacted violently; she cowered away from the noise, covering her ears, her features contorted in unaffected terror. Mrs. Bunce could not understand what was wrong. When the crying baby had been carried away from the window, Miss Smith made an excuse and left the room. Mrs Bunce heard her sobbing through the thin walls of her room, but when the young woman left for the theatre that evening, her features were once

more composed and bland.

As the weeks went on, Mrs. Bunce became very fond of her young lodger. Miss Smith was kind, courteous and respectful, always willing to help her landlady with bringing in the coal or carrying heavy shopping. Her behaviour in the kitchen was never repeated so violently, but Mrs. Bunce noticed that she would flinch or startle whenever they passed a crying baby in the street.

One night, Mrs. Bunce decided she would take an omnibus up West herself and treat herself to an evening at the theatre. She would have preferred to go to a music hall, but was curious to see Miss Smith perform. Martha, as she was now permitted to call her, had told her that although other actors often shunned Shakespeare's Scottish tragedy, fearing that it would bring them ill luck, she only ever performed in that one play.

Mrs. Bunce settled herself comfortably in the red plush seats of the stalls. She noted from her programme that Martha Smith took the rôle of the Third Witch, and thought idly that this was a curious part for an attractive young woman to choose.

Slightly against her will, Mrs. Bunce found herself drawn into the performance. She had observed in her neighbourhood many different acts of greed and violence, but even the streets of Whitechapel, haunted by the presence of an abnormal murderer, lacked the menacing presence of evil which the actors conjured in the theatre that night. After the opening lines, Mrs. Bunce no longer thought of the Third Witch as Martha; she was a conduit through which evil flowed into the heart of the play.

The performance had reached its fourth act, and the witches were on stage once more. They clustered around the black cauldron, and began to practise their black art. Martha, as the Third Witch, began her chant and placed her ingredients into the pot. Each charm seemed more terrible than the last, but the Witch's cackle changed to a flat monotone as she declaimed:

"Finger of birth-strangled babe Ditch-delivered by a drab: Make the gruel thick and slab."

The silence in the theatre was pierced by a thin mewing cry that rose and then died in the darkness. The Third Witch's face contorted at the sound, and her body appeared to quiver with a curious agony. The moment passed and the play continued. To the rest of the audience, it had appeared merely a piece of drama, but to Mrs. Bunce it had been a moment of revelation.

On the bus

a story
by L Berryman
3SPO

I cannot remember that much about it. I was only six. My brother, who was only four, cannot remember it at all. My parents, on the other hand, can remember all of it. What I can remember, I shall relay to you.

It was Saturday morning, in early December. It was very cold. The tips of the blades of grass were touched by frost, and sparkling in the cold morning sun. I was wrapped up warmly, a scarf tied firmly around my neck, and my little red bobble hat was perched on the top of my head. The sky was blue, and there were a few wispy off-white clouds floating lazily in the sky. We were off to town.

We drove down to the "Park and Ride", me and my brother protesting at the clothes that had been selected for us. I didn't like wearing my scarf, as it made my neck itch, and I didn't like my hat either, as I was very self-conscious about my ears sticking out – although I didn't dare say it for fear of making a fool of myself. Instead I usually came up with some silly story about it making my head sweat – or something like that.

There was a bus waiting for us when we arrived. We parked the car near it. As we walked towards it, Paul and I had fun smashing all the icy puddles, sending little freezing splinters out from underneath my tiny shoe.

When we got on the bus, Paul and I went straight to the top, and on to the back seat. It was fun to sit there. Mum and Dad came up and there was room for all of us on the one seat. We sat and laughed about nothing – we were just happy.

The bus was cruising along in the bus lane, past all the furious drivers stuck in the queue. I looked back out of the window, the exhaust fumes looking like a see-through duvet: all of them were wrapped up in it.

I turned around again and faced the front of the bus. The suspension on the bus wasn't very good. I could feel every little pot-hole and bump in the road as we went along. To get the message across to everyone else on the bus, I bounced up and down on my seat wildly.

And then, suddenly, there were no more bumps. The bus was gliding. And at a lot faster speed than before. I didn't realize it then, but the bus had found some black ice on the road. We veered towards the right of the road. The brakes screeched piercingly – and we were going so fast that it sounded as if the brakes were behind us. I heard a loud scream. I recognized the voice – it was mine. I was panicking. We were going to crash!

Not only did I hear it, but I also felt the side of the car that we'd hit in the traffic jam. There was a horrible noise, like long finger-nails going down a blackboard, as metal ground against metal. The impact had diverted the course of the previously flowing bus – quite dramatically. I slid in to the side of my brother, as the seat tilted at an angle. The bus was toppling over.

Now everyone on the bus was screaming as we began our horrible descent to the ground. I could tell that the bus was only on the two side wheels as we fell. Suddenly my brother was no longer underneath me. I fell into the aisle, and dramatically rolled under a seat further up the bus. We were falling faster and faster, and then, impact.

I could hear the people in the car underneath me scream, as their roof was crushed under the weight. The windows of the bus seemed to explode as if a huge blast of air was pushed through them, as the bus struck the cars in the other lane next to the one we'd already hit. I had my eyes shut tight, the way a toddler does if you invite him to a game of hide and seek. I was waiting for the next impact that the bus would suffer. But there wasn't one. There was just a silence. A deafening silence. Then I heard someone cry. I knew who it was at once – it was Paul.

I got up, not realizing that the fact he was crying was a good sign – it showed that he was alive, and that he could at least feel his body to feel the pain. In fact I thought that it was the worst sign. I got up frantically. My bobble hat was all sticky with my blood. I wasn't bothered. I ignored that pain. I just had to find my family. I looked around to find them. I heard my mother shout for me and Paul. And then I heard Dad calling for all of us. I couldn't find them – I wanted them. I was panicking. And I burst into tears.

I turned around. I couldn't really see where I was. My vision was blurred. But then I smelt something. Something disgusting. My vision was back. I saw a man, his head against a pole – which was curved because he had hit it so hard. His eyes were wide open, but lifeless, and his mouth was open and he'd swallowed his tongue. I couldn't see any cut, but there was blood flowing down his face and on to the floor – drip, drip, drip, each drip getting louder inside my head.

For a moment I looked into his grey eyes, but they didn't look into mine. It was the first dead man I'd ever seen. The smell of death wafted up my nose. I lurched, and vomited, all over everything. My shoes, the seats – and then I saw some on him, and I vomited more. There was a knock on the window above me. And then it was smashed.

"Hey, son, come on, easy now, just give us yer 'ands," said a big man wearing a yellow helmet. I obliged and held up my hands. "There we go, good boy," he said, lifting me out. I saw my parents on the other side of the road, and Paul. I ran over and hugged my mother, and my Dad – even Paul! I was so glad that I found all of them.

In the end, I only had a few stitches to my head, but the mental injuries stayed a lot longer. I saw that man's face every night for the next three years. Now I think about it rarely – let alone mention it. I doubt that I will ever talk, or write, about it again.

Expeditions

Ten Tors

**a report on the School's
participation in the
annual Ten Tors event,
on Dartmoor,
May 15th-17th,
by B Warner 6JFH**

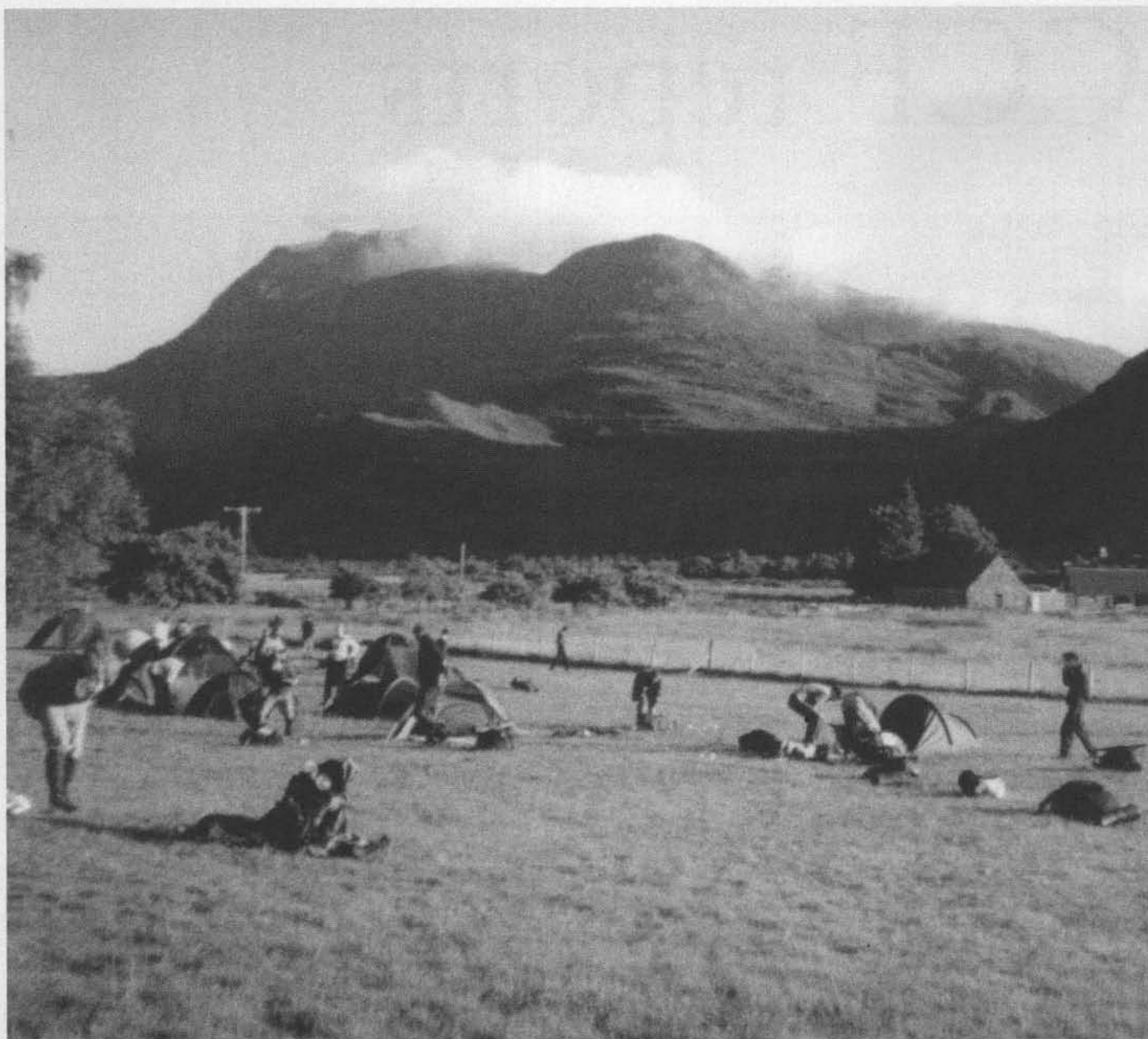
Over the weekend of May 15th, two teams walked and conquered the forty-five and fifty-five mile routes of the Ten Tors endurance competition on Dartmoor. This year the Ten Tors event involved around four thousand walkers of different ages, all of whom had come to test their both their stamina and mental strength, qualities which are required in order to complete the journey.

Abingdon School has entered teams every year since the days when the event was first set up forty years ago, and this time the teams once again proved that they did have the skills needed to stay the course. These they had obtained after many weekends of training on Dartmoor before the competition. Both teams were rewarded for their efforts by obtaining record-breaking results.

The forty-five mile team came sixth out of around two hundred teams, completing the distance in twenty six and a half hours, including sleeping time. The team, comprising N. Hambridge, B. Hewett, B. Wells, B. Warner, C. Rose and J. Wood, reached many of their tors before anybody else did, defeating schools from all over England. The fifty-five mile team also achieved success, coming twenty-fifth out of fifty-four schools competing at that distance. Congratulations go to M. Cooper, T. Hester, J. Tarasewicz, M. Armstrong, P. Norbury and J. Brown for finishing probably the most demanding test so far in their lives.

In all we achieved splendid results, thanks to the support and training of Mr. Haworth, and are very much looking forward to defeating Dartmoor again in years to come.





Duke of Edinburgh's Award

As I write, most Welsh farmers and landowners are trembling mightily and battenning down the hatches or furiously hammering-in hand-painted red NO ENTRY signs around their property, as forty Abingdon School boys prepare for their final assault on the hills in their assessment expedition in Snowdonia. Over five days in the wild, boys will participate at all levels to try to complete the expeditions section of their award. Preparations seems to have been going on endlessly all Summer term. Tents, stoves and waterproofs at the ready, boots worn in on countless practice ventures, we leave.

Throughout the year enthusiasm has not diminished; cactus-growing rivals Tai Chi as a popular, rewarding and enlightening skill, whilst the willing elderly still attract an amazingly large number of young Abingdonians into their homes with lures of tea and sweets. It is heartening, to be serious, that so many

boys are now actively involved with the Award; there are almost ninety active members at present and I hope that this growth will continue. As numbers grow, so do the diversity and richness of the activities in which the boys take part.

County-wide changes to the Scheme have caused us to look to our own resources more and I am pleased to report that staff interest is also developing; I am grateful to DGA for his help this year. Several boys formally received their awards from the Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire, Mr. Hugo Brunner, at the area presentations held in January.

So, with packing to do and route plans to chase, I invite you to look forward to future reports of this summer's expeditions, and perhaps even a new Duke of Edinburgh's Award web-site in the autumn, on which it is intended that the boys' exploits will be displayed in full-colour glory.

a report by DH

**photograph of Gold
Award expedition
August-September 1998
by S Smith VIDE**

CCF reports



Army Central Camp

**a report on the annual
Army section camp,
by C Brads 4DVC,**

**photograph by
Sgt. R Egerton**

Folkstone Central Camp was my first camp after Recruit Camp. It was a very different experience; a sergeant was not shouting at me the whole time. The week was devoted to learning skills such as close-quarters combat, modern infantry manoeuvres, and radio equipment. This made for interesting situations.

In a marksmanship competition against another school, we beat them by a considerable margin; the only points we lost were from our officers. The waterborne activity section of the camp was interesting, in that the competition seemed to be to see who could ram and hit C/Sgt. Wood's canoe the most effectively.

The highlight of the week was undoubtedly the exercise, in which a high standard of fieldcraft was

displayed. Eight of the patrol of ten involved are now NCOs. Unfortunately for the opposition, Repton School, most of their cadets had no experience in the field, and so we located the objective undetected, and observed two enemy patrols, one of which walked directly over us. In the final platoon attack, we were so quick and efficient that we finished our task whilst Repton were still bumbling around. This exercise clearly showed that Recruit Camp brings Abingdon School cadets to a very high standard; we far outclassed any other school attending.

After a quick excursion to France, we returned to Abingdon. The camp had been enjoyed by all who went, and we are all very grateful to Lt. Carson.

"A two day epic"

At the start of the May half term, a group of cadets set out for the Black Mountain in Wales as part of their Army section gold star adventurous training. Conditions were atrocious, and the cadets were lucky to have Sgt. R. Holman 6JFH with them as an "observer". In these excerpts from his report, he understates, with typical modesty, his own leadership in potentially hazardous conditions.

At this point I was blithely informed by two of the team leaders that we must have gone off course somewhere in the hills; they quickly plotted a route to our next checkpoint, for which we set off at a brisk pace. The weather began to deteriorate; just as we reached the bottom of a very steep hill the heavens opened. Undeterred by what we all vainly hoped was a passing shower, we struggled up the muddy hill, hanging on to the trees in order to prevent ourselves from sliding backwards under the weight of our packs.

As the day wore on it rained more and more heavily and we could hear thunder some way off. Having crossed another major river (this time with dry feet) we called another halt, resigning ourselves to a cold lunch as it was clearly impossible to light a fire in this weather.

By this stage we had run out of water, and so we had to refill our water bottles from the river and purify it using "puritabs". These little miracles from the wondrous world of science kill off any bacteria in the

**a report on the CCF
training expedition to
the Black Mountain,
May 28th to 30th,
by R Holman 6JFH**

**photograph by
Sgt. R Egerton**



"A two day epic" (continued)

photograph opposite
by Lt D Carson

water, but render it undrinkable to all but the most thirsty, owing to the foul taste of the purified water (vaguely reminiscent of swimming pool water, only a great deal more concentrated).

Moving on to our next checkpoint, we encountered Messrs. Haworth, Hullis and Ocock. The vertical downpour had made us all, cadets and officers alike, look like a set of drowned rats, but morale was still high, although some of the weaker brethren were starting to feel the strain. Despite sitting under a tree in the rain for several hours waiting for us, the officers were in good spirits, and decided that this was an ideal opportunity to find out if everyone knew where we were. After a brief map-reading session we started out along the track up the valley to our camp-site, some ten kilometres distant. As we sloshed through a field of mud and slurry I asked myself why I was here when I could be at home relaxing...

The next day, people were feeling the energy drain of the previous day's walking, coupled with an early start and a large hill. But, once again, I could not fail to be impressed by the clear evidence of team-work from those who were weathering it slightly better, and the determination of those who were not. Just as we started the first big climb, the fog rolled in, reducing visibility to less than ten metres. Trusting to our compass bearing, we climbed the first peak and then half-way up the second peak of the mountain.

A hot lunch revitalized everyone and did a great deal to warm up the colder members of our group. By now visibility was so bad that we had no way of knowing our precise location, as any obvious geographical features were completely hidden in the mist. So we stayed with our compass bearing and struggled on towards the summit. As we started to get a bit higher, small ice crystals began to form on our hair and eyebrows and this encouraged us more than anything else to get on with the walk and get down off the mountain.

Having reached the summit, we started to descend the other side until, about a hundred metres down, we were confronted with a cliff which was supposed to be our last big obstacle. There should

have been a path leading down to a lake at the foot of the cliff. However, all that we could see was a sharply-defined drop and a sea of white fog. There was no clear path down, and without any way of telling whether we had hit to the north or the south of the path we had been aiming for we flipped a coin and set off south along the cliff edge. After a couple of kilometres we realized that this had been the wrong decision, but we could not find it in ourselves to turn back, and time was starting to press.

As we walked along the cliff line, a member of the group walking slightly nearer the edge than the others spotted, through a gap in the mist, a steep but viable descent. Having scouted it to ensure that it was in fact possible, we descended the slope, a process which was made very difficult by the wet grass and the loose rocks. Even so we all managed to descend safely as far as a large ledge about two thirds of the way down.

Once there, we had to lower ourselves down approximately nine feet to the next ledge and thence to the remaining descent. This was accomplished by means of the senior members of the group helping people down to the next ledge, guiding their feet into crevices in the rock whilst someone hung on to them at the top for as long as they could reach. Once again everyone displayed maturity and responsibility in the face of what could have been a potentially dangerous obstacle. We all reached the bottom in good order, although there was one moment of excitement when someone screamed "Below!" from the higher shelf; the sound was accompanied by the passing of a dislodged rock, but no one sustained any serious injury and we carried on to the valley bottom.

When we had reached the river at the foot of the mountain, the mist receded somewhat and we simply trekked into the nearest village, two miles south of our point of descent, and well off our planned route.

I have been on several of these expeditions now, but this was undoubtedly one of the toughest. Time and again I was impressed by the commitment and stalwart team spirit of the group as a whole. My warmest congratulations to all of them; I am sure that they benefited from the experience.



Recruit Camp

reports on the annual
Recruit Camp at
Longmoor Training Area
April 10th to 18th,
from the perspective of
Green Section recruit
H Hunter 3BJLS,
Red Section recruit
H Feather 3SPO,
and an anonymous
junior NCO.

Recruit Camp
is unique to
Abingdon School CCF

I personally loved every bit of the camp at Longmoor. It certainly varied, from the night exercise (which included an ambush on higher-ranking cadets and a section attack on a single, isolated Junior Corporal) to cleaning the barrack toilets in the early hours of the morning. We sat in heavy hail to learn how to search an injured enemy, before returning to the barracks to get feeling back in our feet. We fired rifles on both indoor and outdoor ranges, before having a range day at a nearby site. For me personally this was a disappointing though fairly new experience.

The next day came my favourite part of the week-long camp, the night exercise. This brings out aspects of your personality which you have never explored before: courage, stamina, along with patience and a will to work in a team. It was a challenging but fantastic experience.

The camp was not all hard work, as we had over an hour every evening to relax, and staged a comedy show at the end. The show included a "mini Monty", a song which looked at a different side of the Colour Sergeant, and a group of monks who marginally altered the Lord's Prayer. The show certainly brought a tear to the eye of many.

My feelings when leaving Longmoor were of satisfaction and pride, along with happiness and a thirst for more. I had become a Cadet, which means a great deal. I highly recommend attending the camp.

The camp at Longmoor this year was a thrilling experience because we learned things which were not only useful on camp but out of the CCF. For instance, every night we all had to polish our shoes, iron our trousers and shirts, and make our beds.

There were boring parts of the camp, like the drill sessions, but there were also very interesting, exciting parts, like the shooting. There was a lot of shooting over the week. I found the shooting very fun but sometimes quiet hard. We shot on a 25 metre range indoors, using a converted Cadet GP rifle which used .22 ammunition, I was really good at this and got a better score than my NCO, which made me feel really good about myself.

Then there was the use of the 25 metre range outdoors, where we fired full-bore rifles. I found this part very hard because the "kick" was quite large and after shooting a couple of rounds my arms started to hurt. The aim of the outdoor shooting was to get as small a "group" on the target as you could. I did really badly because the gauge was only a foot in diameter and both times my groups were larger.

But the most fun part was when we went on a 100 metre range and shot at targets of men. The only problem with shooting at that distance was that you

could not see the targets as clearly through the sight, but this time I got a better score.

In my section, Red Section, there were thirteen boys, three of whom were NCOs. Sgt. Holman was our head NCO and could be very angry. I think the one thing that got a lot of us through the week was that we could have fun with the NCOs, but there was a line which we could not cross and we got a lot of press-ups for going over that line. There were many names thought up by recruits for both each other and NCOs; as usual there were some names that people did not like. For instance, Sgt. Holman did not like being called "Sergeant Ginge".

On camp there were many contests going on; there was best section, best recruit and most improved recruit. Red Section won the prize for being the best; one of our recruits got the "most improved" award, but unfortunately we did not get best recruit.

Recruit camp is a hard week to tackle, but there is a lot to encourage you. When you get out on to the parade square and impress your parents, other people's parents and even officers of the Regular Army it is well worth the hardship of the tiring week.

The word best used to describe this camp from my point of view and that of the other junior NCOs is "a challenge". The week of training, teaching and learning was demanding and exhausting. It was a real test of both of one's own skill and knowledge, but also one's own personal qualities and leadership capabilities. To use a cliché which is certainly true, one learns a lot about oneself.

Many of the NCOs have worked hard to be where they are now. Therefore it is satisfying to be given such a large amount of responsibility and then to try to fulfil it to the best of one's ability. For some it is their first time in a position of responsibility; they were recruits on the camp only a year before, so were interested to see how far they had progressed.

The main aim of the camp was to give the recruits invaluable experience on exercise, and in the field, as well as teaching them further basic military skills, such as drill and section tactics. The camp was something of a "short sharp shock" to some; however, everyone gained invaluable knowledge from the teaching provided by the highly experienced Cpl. Betty of the TA and Lt./Col. Ashworth.

The camp was not only challenging, but also fun and exciting. There are many to be thanked for the success of the week; the NCOs for their professional attitude and support, and all the officers, especially Lt. Carson who was in charge of the camp.

Bramley

The CCF began their Michaelmas half term by departing in coaches for Bramley in Hampshire. We arrived at the training area late in the evening, for it took well over an hour to get there; and at that time of year it is of course dark, so that nearly all of us were in unfamiliar territory.

On arrival outside the training area we had to unload our kit from the buses and then walk to the centre, where we found a hut which had been designated as the exercise control headquarters. There we were fed and carried out further preparations before we all dispersed. Ration packs were issued and with that a lot of swapping took place, whilst section commanders were being briefed for that night.

From there the older cadets went out into the deep dark night, and walked to an allocated area where they set up their harbour area. Mr. Ocock was lurking in the bushes in case of any problems, and Sgt. B. Gancz was in charge of both cadet sections.

That night the cadets had to guard their ground (a concrete platform) heavily, for they had heard that the enemy (the recruits) were in the vicinity. Although the cadets pretended not to know it, they were being "skilfully" watched from the surrounding woodland by "highly trained" recruits, whose first time in the field this was.

At the end of the evening the recruits went to bed in their cosy snug hut, having been taught about the basics about patrols and a bit of field-craft. However, the cadets were outside, really exposed to the elements. Luckily it was a pretty mild night.

The next morning, the cadets rose early (as usual), and whilst waiting for the day's orders enjoyed a tasty breakfast. We were then informed that we had to move, for the enemy knew of our whereabouts. After setting up a new harbour area the NCOs were briefed on the mission which was to be executed at midday.

All this time the recruits were under going intense training back at the headquarters. They then dispersed to go and guard specified areas, and of course the cadets carried out "recces" on those areas.

During the latter part of the day, things went horribly "pear-shaped", as the weather turned for the worst. Characteristically, everybody's morale remained high. Unfortunately the cadets had to retreat to a pill-box type building to take shelter. Towards the end of a day spent in an unpleasant drizzle, the cadets launched an assault on a stronghold held by the enemy, on this occasion the Fifth Year cadets.

Late in the evening came the inevitable job of weapons cleaning, the sign of "end-ex". Following that we all went to very welcome sleeping bags in various places. Not long afterwards, we found ourselves being sung to by the senior NCOs, and very impressive it was too.

In the morning it was simply packing up to return to School for the rest of a good half term. The whole weekend proved a great success, and the weather could not be helped; it gave the cadets a chance to practise their skills and knowledge and gave the new recruits a good first experience in the field. Everyone enjoyed themselves, which is the main thing.

**a report on the annual
battle camp weekend
exercise at Bramley
Training Area,
October 23rd-25th,
by R Garside 4JPGGB**

**photograph by
Sgt. R Egerton**



Sports reports

Athletics

a report on the
Sports Day on July 1st
at Tilsley Park,
by KJS

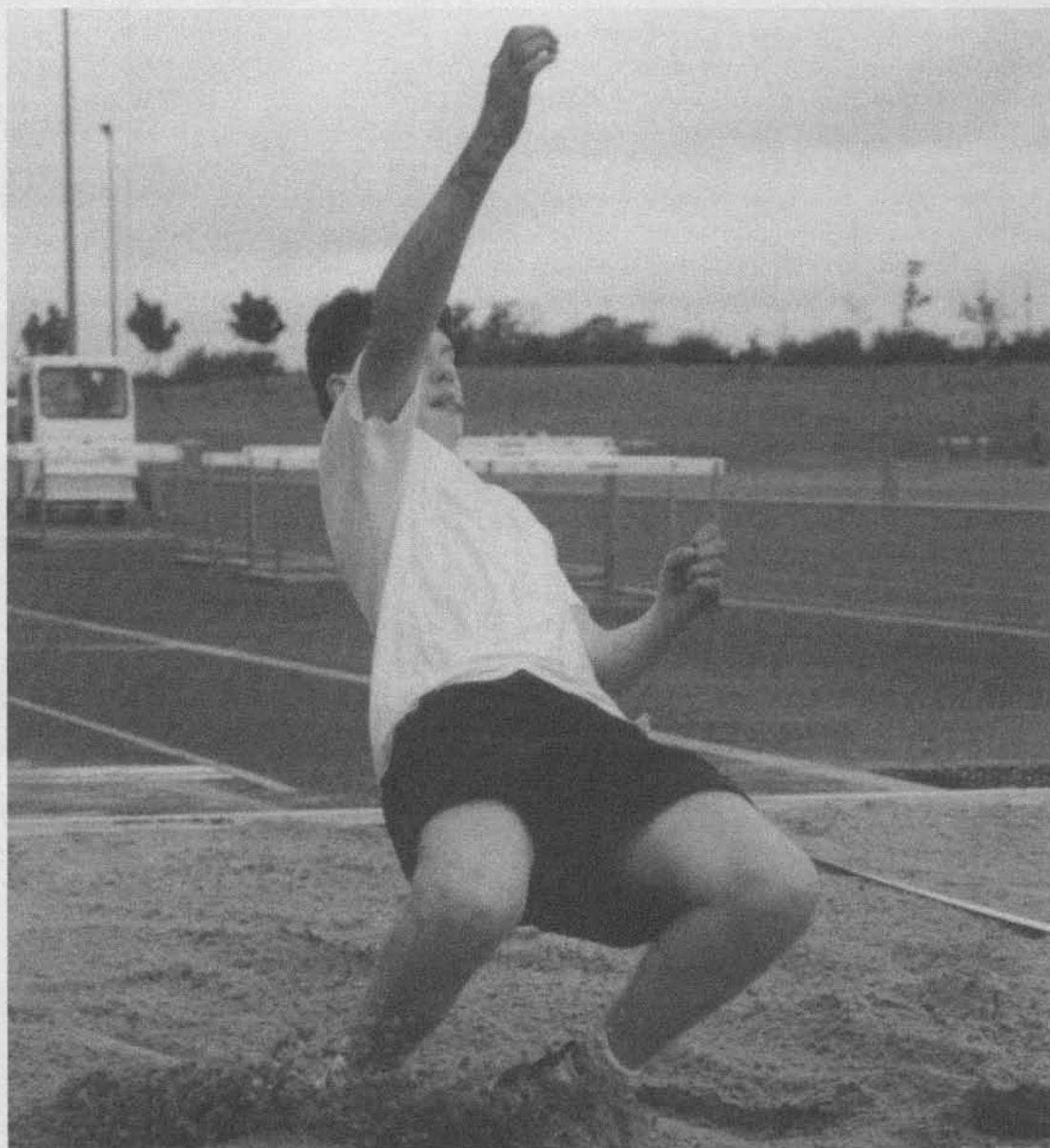
photograph by
G Smith 25

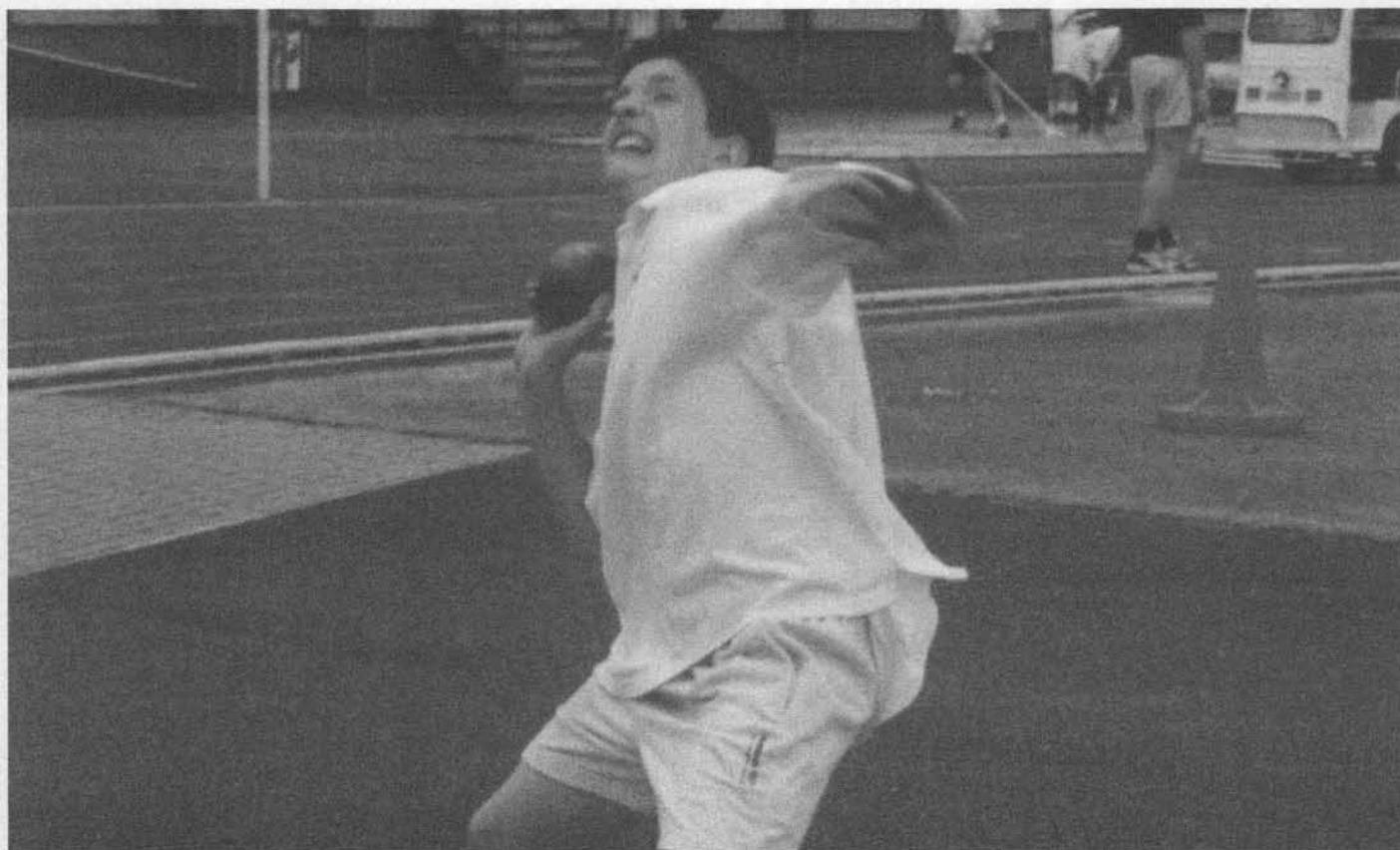
This very enjoyable afternoon saw much of the spirit of the inter-house singing competition transported to Tilsley Park. The School owes much to RSH, who called in numerous favours when magically producing seven Tappins coaches on one of the busiest travel days of the summer. The presence of these coaches allowed the whole of the Third, Fourth and Lower Sixth years to travel up to Tilsley Park as complete house groups, a "first".

The novelty of such an obvious manifestation of the "through-house" system prompted ICF to consider a full time move to the Coach Park; he told me that standing on the bus was the first time that he had seen his whole House, face-to-face, all year.

Both before and during the event a significant contribution was made by the Lower Sixth, who in many houses had selected the teams and then organized their running; this was an excellent appetizer for their roles as House and School Prefects.

Drummond-Hay's were the winners with 437 points, way ahead of the Boarders (360) and Fishpool's (352). On a day when the house was everything there were also some excellent individual achievements. The year-group *victores ludorum* were in ascending order M. Johnson (Garnier's), A. Addis (Drummond-Hay's) and J. Kingsley (Boarders). Special mention must go to M. Johnson whose 1.65 metres in the high jump is a new record for the Third Year.





Badminton

After the successes of 1997/8 we might either have shot our bolt or got into our stride; fortunately it has been the latter, and we have been undefeated for another season. Though several successful and established players left last year, their successors have amply filled the vacuum.

W. Lui (captain) continues to confuse and wrong-foot the opposition with his speed and dexterity when he is not intimidating them with stinging power shots. B. Longworth (secretary) may not be such a natural player as Lui, but has made himself into a very effective one. With increasing reach and speed he covers the court with considerable intelligence, and very seldom repeats a mistake.

J. Tarasewicz, too, applies his considerable brain to the task and is one of the heaviest hitters in the club at present, though seldom in an impulsive or un-productive way. J. Earley has some of the sharpest reactions which I have seen in a schoolboy player, and they allow him to retrieve points that he seems to have thrown away. Even as a twelve year old, J. Spearing had an instinctively neat swing, and this has never deserted him. No wonder even the mighty Lui is happy to take him as partner.

B. Adrian is physically from the same mould as M. Said (of an earlier generation), light and tall. Once accustomed to the relatively light-hearted approach that we try to adopt, he made himself a necessary part of the operation, and derived evident pleasure and entertainment from the games.

R. Aminuddin too has become part of the strength this year after a cautious Lower Sixth. His service is very like that of An. Harsono – hardly surprising, since Harsono taught him last year.

In the Lower Sixth, M. Yeung plays an elegant left-handed game when he is not trying to impersonate Lui (who sometimes plays left-handed in order to relieve the tedium). R. Tattersall seldom makes a move unless the need for it arises, and A. Bitmead, when fit, is gaining in consistency.

Our stealth weapons are D. Cole and D. Mitchell, who have become an extremely efficient doubles partnership. Also from a 1M of six years ago have come J. Ma, N. Page, P. Slater and E. Webber. Is this some sort of record?

Our U16 players have included quite a variety of guests, but among the regulars have been Al. Harsono, Y. Dong, K. Ma, B. Chadwick and A. Aggarwal.

After many years as a mainly one man band I have been grateful to welcome JGB to share the load of games session supervision; his record of matches supervised to matches won is unsurpassable.

Colours are held by W. Lui, B. Longworth, R. Tattersall, M. Yeung, B. Adrian, R. Aminuddin, and J. Tarasewicz. Half Colours are held by D. Cole, D. Mitchell, Y. Dong, A. Bitmead, J. Earley, J. Ma, A. Aziz, A. Leung, and Al. Harsono.

Next season's officers are as follows:

Captains: R. Tattersall and M. Yeung.

Secretaries: D. Cole and D. Mitchell.

Bloxham A Won 5-4
Bloxham B Won 9-0
Radley A Won 9-0
Radley B Won 8-1
10/10 Marlborough A (A) Won 8-1
10/10 Marlborough B (A) Won 9-0
13/10 Stowe U19 Won 9-0
13/10 Stowe U16 Won 8-1
17/10 Bradfield A (A) Won 7-2
17/10 Bradfield B (A) Won 9-0
20/10 Rugby U19 (A) Won 7-2
20/10 Rugby U16 (A) Won 6-3
11/11 Oratory A (A) Won 8-1
11/11 Oratory B (A) Won 7-2
14/11 Bloxham A (H) Won 9-0
14/11 Bloxham B (H) Won 9-0
18/11 Millfield A (A) Won 12-4
18/11 Millfield B (A) Won 11-5
28/11 Wellington A (H) Won 16-3
28/11 Wellington B (H) Won 10-6
16/1 Cheltenham A (A) Won 6-3
16/1 Cheltenham B (A) Won 8-1
6/2 Wellington College (A) Won 20-4
9/2 Rugby A (H) Won 7-2
9/2 Rugby B (H) Won 9-0
6/3 Oratory (A) Won 12-2 (2 drawn)
10/3 Chipping N'ton U14 (A) Won 25-0
13/3 Eton (A) Won 12-0 (4 drawn)
17/3 Chipping N'ton U16 (H) Won 16-0
Millfield Drew 12-12

Tennis

1st VI

M.C.S. Lost 4-5
 Pangbourne Won 8-1
 Oratory Lost 4-5
 Shiplake Won 6½-2½
 Bloxham Won 7½-1½
 St. Edward's Lost 4-5

2nd VI

M.C.S. Lost 4-5
 Pangbourne Won 7-2
 Oratory Won 7½-1½
 Bloxham Won 8-1
 St Edward's Won 9-0

U16 VI

M.C.S. Lost 3½-5½
 Bloxham Won 5½-3½
 St. Edward's Lost 3½-5v

U15 VI

M.C.S. Won 9-0
 Shiplake Won 8-1
 Lost 4-5
 Radley Lost 3-6

U14 VI

A VI M.C.S. Won 8-1
 B VI M.C.S. Won 6-3
 SW Oxon Doubles: Runners up

U13 A VI

M.C.S. Lost 4-5

U13 B VI

M.C.S. Lost 2-7

This has been an enjoyable and successful season for the tennis club, with some very good tennis being played, and some pleasing results.

The 1st VI emerged as a strong unit after some initial tinkering with pairs and players. S. Hughes and N. Gray performed well as a very strong first pair, winning most of their matches with some impressive doubles play. There is an even look to the results; however, the three losses were by a mere set in each case. Special mention must be made of S. Hughes, who has played regularly for the Senior team since arriving in the School as a Third Year. He has been an outstanding player, especially in recent years.

As usual, we entered the Midland Bank U19 competition (the Glanville Cup) and were drawn in the first round against Radley. This proved to be a very exciting match. Losing 1-3 down after the singles, we knew that we had to win both doubles in straight sets to win. We achieved this, playing some very determined tennis and thus emerged winners by virtue of having won more games. However, we lost to M.C.S. in the next round.

In the Public Schools Tennis Championships at Eton, right at the end of the term, we came up against strong opposition in the first round in the form of K.C.S. and were knocked out of the Youll Cup. We entered the Clark Trophy (for first round losers) and were drawn against St. Edward's. This proved to be a very exciting match, with the score one-all after the doubles. R. Tattersall put up a very good fight in the deciding singles set, but lost on the tie break.

The 2nd VI developed into a strong side, and after losing in the first match to M.C.S., where they

looked very rusty, they carried all before them, rounding off the term in fine style with a 9-0 victory against St. Edward's. There were always plenty of good players to choose from, both in the Upper and Lower Sixth, and the strength in depth was impressive. The U16 VI did not have much of a season to get their teeth into, but there are some promising players here who should develop well in the Sixth Form.

The U15 VI have enjoyed a successful season, and there is certainly plenty of talent in this squad. They scored convincing wins over M.C.S. and Shiplake, but then came across stiffer opposition from Radley and St. Edward's. In the U15 Midland Bank competition they defeated M.C.S. in the County semi-final stage, before losing to a very strong team from Cooper's School, Bicester in the final.

Two pairs were entered for the Thomas Bowl competition at Eton. C. Thomson and D. Procter did well to reach the third round, defeating Colston's and Nottingham; unfortunately, they then came up against one of the seeds, Leys School, and this ended their run. The second pair, R. Turnbull and B. Chadwick lost to Harrow in the first round then Whitgift in the "plate" competition.

In the Buckley Cup (the internal singles knockout tournament) R. Tattersall defeated A. Apps in the final to take the trophy.

During the course of the season colours were awarded to N. Gray, A. Heather, C. Watney and R. Tattersall; half colours to P. Barry, A. Apps, B. Wells, N. Watney and C. Rose.

Finally, thank you to TRA, NMR and BJLS for their help with the Tennis Club this season.

1st XI football

For a school where football is not a main sport, this season we had a hugely talented squad, with strength and depth in every department. Despite the new facilities at Josca's, less than half the squad was able to train regularly and we were never able to practise with a full squad. For each fixture there were always four or five key players missing through absence, other commitments or injury; it was therefore to our credit that our team spirit, talent and character led to a very successful set of results.

The only defeat came in our first game, against Marlborough. We played on a Sunday, and despite our weakened side we outplayed them for the majority of the game. Football is one of the main sports in the winter term at Marlborough and the difference in training eventually showed; our finishing was wayward and their fitness was superior. They scored two goals in the final ten minutes, but we were the better side.

Our next game, against St. Edward's, was not as close as the score suggests. We outplayed them, but conceded three sloppy first-half goals whilst trying a formation to which we were not suited. Two goals from M. Harris won us the game. While our defence was suspect against St. Edward's, it was outstanding against Haileybury, in probably the best side we played all year. We were unlucky to find ourselves two goals down just after half time, but came back with goals from C. Browne and B. Watts. Great defending by J. Otterburn, A. Heather, M. Harris (captain) and goal-keeping by J. Lucas kept the scores level for most of the second half. We sealed victory with a last minute winner from C. Howard.

Although the Reading game was a comfortable victory, with a brace of goals from R. Fabes, we were

disappointed with our performance against Radley. We conceded a goal early on, but were 2-1 up by half time. We looked very promising in attack with J. Gardner and A. Cooper providing good width on the wings; however, a penalty late on put the scores level.

Our final two victories were notable for the attacking performances of C. Howard and M. Jones (who scored five of the six goals against Cokethorpe between them) and A. Holland (producing a hat trick against M.C.S.).

Team spirit was the best which I have ever seen, and everyone's enthusiasm was excellent. The new pitches at Josca's were better surfaces than any of the others we played on. However, it was disappointing that we were not able to use these facilities as a full squad, and yet again the School failed to recognize the hard work and effort made by members of the team. However, Josca's will help to raise the profile of football and with increasing support the future of football at Abingdon looks far better than when I first started playing three years ago. The present Lower Sixth has some very good individuals and hopefully, with the correct organization, these players will be able to combine their commitments to other sports with football and have an equally successful season.

Our sincere thanks to Mr. Figgis for his efforts, and to those who helped with transport.

The following players represented the School: T. Bracher, C. Browne, S. Campbell, A. Cooper, H. Duff, P. Edwards, R. Fabes, T. Fleming, J. Gardner, N. Hambridge, M. Harris, A. Heather, A. Holland, C. Howard, A. Hulse, M. Jones, J. Lucas, J. Mascaro, P. Neville, O. Norman-Longstaff, J. Otterburn, D. Pearson, R. Smith, S. Tompkins, and B. Watts.

Marlborough Lost 0-2
St. Edward's Won 4-3
Haileybury Won 3-2
Reading Won 3-0
Radley Drew 2-2
Cokethorpe Won 6-0
M.C.S. Won 5-0

a report by
J Lucas VINAFP

2nd XI football

The first two games were before Christmas, both of which we won, probably owing to the lack of hockey commitments. The first was a win over Marlborough. On a bad pitch the whole team played well, especially C. Browne, who netted two goals. The second game was a victory against a weak St. Edward's team where we should have won by more.

The matches after Christmas started away at Haileybury. This was probably our best match of the season, although we lost. The score was 2-2 in the penultimate minute, after we had come back from 2-0 down with spectacular goals from J. Mascaro and N. Hambridge. Then T. Bracher scored, but nearly a minute later the referee disallowed the goal for off-side. Then, in the last minute, Haileybury snatched the winner, though their striker was off-side.

The next game, in contrast, was the worst of the season, losing to Reading. Unfortunately we lost the following game against our arch-enemies Radley, owing to a bad first half performance. The last game of the season produced a bonanza of goals against a poor Cokethorpe side. The score included two excellent goals each from mid-fielder A. Chouduri and defender M. Parker, as well as a hat-trick from P. Neville.

The style and manner of the football under the captaincy of J. Spearing was impressive. The defence was strong, with pace coming from the full backs S. Campbell and H. Duff. The mid-field was a mixture of skill and determination, with A. McTier and J. Mascaro controlling the centre. The skills "up front" came from T. Bracher and C. Browne, with N. Hambridge adding speed.

Marlborough Won 4-1
St. Edward's Won 3-2
Haileybury Lost 2-3
Reading Lost 0-2
Radley Lost 1-3
Cokethorpe Won 7-2

a report by
H Duff VIJFH

1st XV rugby

16/9 Bloxham (H) Won
19/9 Oratory (H) Lost
30/9 M.C.S. (H) Lost
3/10 Radley (A) Lost
10/10 Stowe (A) Lost
17/10 High Wycombe (H) Lost
7/11 St. Edward's (A) Lost
14/11 Pangbourne (H) Lost
18/11 Reading (H) Won
28/11 Shiplake (H) Won
5/12 Marlborough (A) Lost

a report by C Howard VIGCR

The season began in a positive fashion at a fifteen-a-side tournament at Douai. Our group was very tough, with strong R.G.S. High Wycombe and Colston's sides, two of the favourites to win. We had an extremely inexperienced team, with just five players who had consistently played previously for the 1st XV. However, we played with a solid defence and lost only narrowly to R.G.S. and Colston's, having destroyed the other teams in our group.

With this experience on which to build, we looked forward to Bloxham confidently. This has always been a close fixture, and that was again the case, but we came through and dominated the second half to clinch the victory.

However, injuries and illnesses plagued the rest of the season, and these began to have an impact against Oratory. We started slowly in this game, which we should have won, but were unable to come back, though there were valiant efforts.

This set-back seemed to cause a crisis of confidence, which led to a row of defeats, including, unfortunately, Radley, who were looking for revenge for last year. Against R.G.S. High Wycombe, whom we had tested earlier in the season, we were made to look pretty ordinary, though we had as many as eleven first team regulars missing injured.

However, against Pangbourne we showed great improvement and were leading well into the second half. Although we lost in the end, this match gave many back the self-confidence which we had lost earlier in the season. Against Reading and Shiplake comfortable wins were obtained, with exciting tries coming from all angles. Our final match at Marlborough was played in poor conditions, which led to a scrappy and quite violent match; we lost.

In all, it was a season full of matches which we should have won; potentially we had a really exciting team who could play fluent rugby.

3rd & 4th XV rugby

3rd XV
Played 9
Won 4
Lost 5

4th XV
Played 5
Won 2
Lost 3

a report by JRWB

3rd and 4th XVs often do not train very assiduously. These two teams maintained a proud tradition ("Just practising our line out calls, sir," they explained as they chatted away under the trees, having jogged unstrenuously to the far end of the pitch). The net result is that they tended to lose convincingly to heavyweight opposition (R.G.S. High Wycombe and an outstanding St. Edward's team), but played with invention, energy and considerable success in other matches.

As injuries in the senior teams took their toll, so the shape of the 3rd XV changed significantly, but M. Armstrong as captain and omnipresent back-row forward kept up morale and set consistently high standards throughout. He was well supported in the forwards by M. Shaikh (making a thunderous, snorting return to rugby), R. Dawson, J. Anderson, T. Betteridge, T. Hester and S. Fabes, and the team's support play and continuity were often too good for the opposition.

The back line went through any number of permutations, and the organization and effort of W. Ranscombe and M. Harris were sorely missed when they were rightly promoted. However, many excellent

tries were scored. C. Browne and A. Holland were quick off the mark (the latter heading the try-scoring table) and P. Norbury, J. Dando, P. Mather, P. Grayson and J. Mansfield all performed well at half back or in the centre.

There were some frustrations. Some opponents failed to muster full teams and one memorably adopted the tactic of lying on the ball whenever they were too tired to play any more, a strategy recently employed by my three year-old daughter in stopping her brother's game of football. The penalty count in this game was 34-0, yet Abingdon still lost. Frustrations apart, this was an enjoyable and purposeful season from an intelligent and skillful squad whose good humoured company was much enjoyed by JRWB and TJCG.

The following played: J. Anderson, M. Armstrong (captain), T. Betteridge, W. Bond, G. Brooke-Hollidge, C. Browne, T. Butler, S. Campbell, A. Chater, J. Dando, R. Dawson, H. Duff, S. Fabes, W. Ferguson, P. Grayson, M. Harris, T. Hester, A. Holland, A. Hunter, M. Kom, J. Mansfield, P. Mather, S. Nickson, W. Ranscombe, C. Rose, S. Rutland, J. Sasanow, M. Shaikh, M. Shields, and J. Wood.

Senior Colts A XV rugby

At Bloxham, the pack dominated from the start, but it was not until the second half that their superiority paid off. Bloxham had defended well, but ran out of steam under the constant barrage, and as space began to appear, the backs produced some scintillating handling and support play, running in eight tries to seal a convincing victory.

Both the Oratory and M.C.S. matches were played on Lower Field, where the lack of width did not help, and a sense of complacency led to a string of errors and scrappy play. Nevertheless, our line was never under any serious threat, and we ran out comfortable victors in both matches.

Open Day this year meant Radley. Having had to clear the pitch of the remains of the previous evening's fireworks, the team were determined to produce a show of their own; they did not disappoint. After a pulsating first half, where the lead changed hands six times, they turned round with a narrow 15-13 lead. However, the team's second-half supremacy showed once again, with two early tries killing off the opposition's challenge, paving the way for a famous victory which will live in the memories of those involved for a long time.

Could the team perform at such levels again in the next game against Stowe? Yes (despite the disruption caused to their set play by the absence of the regular hooker and the failure of the referee to turn up); nine tries were scored in a rather one-sided affair.

The final game before half term was at R.G.S. High Wycombe, last year's *Daily Mail* cup winners. This was always going to prove a big test of the team's credentials, but once again they came through with flying colours, defending stoutly in the first half against a gale-force wind, and then controlling the second half to end as comfortable winners.

Unfortunately the second half of term did not start as planned, with St. Edward's pulling out, which meant going to Pangbourne without having played for a month. This proved the team's undoing, in a fiercely contested game on a very wet, muddy pitch. They were not at their best, and despite opportunities to take the game, it was not to be. Abingdon took the lead with about ten minutes to go, but there were a lot of tired legs out there, and they could not hang on. Pangbourne finished the stronger, scoring two late tries, to inflict the team's first defeat.

Reading were next, and proved difficult to beat. Abingdon started strongly, scoring two early tries, but a stray pass turned a scoring opportunity into a

try for the opposition's winger. In the second half, Reading defended their lead resolutely, and it was not until late in the game that two more tries secured the win.

Then followed the re-scheduled St. Edward's match. Once again, Abingdon were the stronger side, and dominated proceedings, but they came up against a determined defence. The game was won in a devastating ten-minute burst, where three tries were scored at the start of the second half, before fog descended and made it almost impossible to see who you were passing to.

Shiplake were the next opponents, coming to Abingdon unbeaten. This did not deter our team, though, and the forwards produced their best performance of the season, completely overwhelming their counterparts and setting up the basis for another comprehensive victory.

Then came the final game of the season, at Marlborough. Injuries and illness deprived the side of three regular players, but the fifteen who took the field were determined to finish on a high – and that they did. After the set-back of conceding a try early on, and in bitterly cold, wet conditions, the pack slowly began to gain the ascendancy and levelled the score just before half time. Just when it appeared that the game was heading for a draw, a pounce on a dropped ball secured a richly deserved and hard-fought win. This proved a fitting finale to a highly successful and most enjoyable season.

The squad, basically the same seventeen players, was a pleasure to work with. Often, with talented players, they think that they know everything and do not need to train; but not these characters. They put in the effort during the week in training and reaped the rewards for their efforts on match days. They worked hard throughout, both on the unit skills and their individual techniques, were always willing to listen and discuss matters, and responded positively to the occasional "rocket" when it was needed. The fact that they held their own in several practice sessions against the 1st XV was testimony to the ability and confidence of the team as a whole.

Talent is a key ingredient if you are to have a successful side, and this side is blessed with plenty of that, but other necessities are team-work and spirit, and once again this was clearly evident from the way they pulled together in tough situations and worked for one another on the pitch. They have been a terrific group of lads, and in a way it is a shame that they have to be split up next season, but I am sure they will rise to the challenges ahead, and I look forward to following their progress.

16/9 Bloxham (A) Won 48-3
19/9 Oratory (H) Won 21-3
30/9 M.C.S. (H) Won 32-0
3/10 Radley (H) Won 32-13
10/10 Stowe (H) Won 60-12
17/10 High Wycombe (A) Won 32-10
14/10 Pangbourne (A) Lost 15-22
18/11 Reading (H) Won 20-13
24/11 St. Edward's (A) Won 25-3
28/11 Shiplake (H) Won 34-0
5/12 Marlborough (A) Won 10-5

a report by AMB



Senior Colts B XV

a report by DE

This was a most enjoyable and successful season for all involved. The statistics show that only one game was narrowly lost (you can guess who it was against) and that the remaining nine games were all won.

The quality of defence and the resolution not to allow the opposition to cross our line, regardless of the score, was highlighted by the fact that only nine tries, from three schools, were conceded all season. The early part of the season was dominated by the quality of the backs, living off spartan possession from the forwards who took some time to appreciate that rugby is a contact game and that total commitment was needed for the full duration.

As the season wore on, and the grounds became heavier, it was however the now fitter forwards who came into their own and won several bruising encounters almost single-handed, Pangbourne and Reading being but two.

The attacking potential of the side was illustrated by the fact that over fifty tries were scored, despite local rule variations being introduced in certain one-sided matches. Much of the success of the 'B' team was due to them being able to remain a distinct team throughout the season, as there were few calls from the 'A' team, even when injuries occurred, and thanks must go to AMB for this unselfish approach.

Junior Colts A XV rugby

Much was expected of this team, and in the early part of the season things were looking rosy. An opening victory against Bloxham was pleasing. The forwards played especially well and some incisive running and crisp passing saw the backs finish off some enterprising moves; the victory was indeed all that we deserved. In the following match against Oratory, the die was cast early on with some outstanding running from both forwards and backs. Once again the pace and ferocity of forward play was too much for the opposition, as we quickly got into our stride to score excellent tries from all parts of the field. The scrum was an effective unit and we varied the play well to expose weaknesses in all areas of the Oratory play. By half time the score was 44-0, and the game was as good as won.

The match against our old rivals M.C.S. was a much sterner test, and on a pitch which resembled a ploughed field we managed to convert good pressure into some excellent tries. A third victory was ours. Stowe came to Abingdon with a good record, and certainly fancied their chances. Tactics in this game were crucial and excellent play by the half backs, particularly the outside half, exposed the frailties on the Stowe wings to such an extent that we ran out comprehensive winners.

So, four games, four outstanding displays, and now for Radley. This fixture is always a highly charged affair and this match was no different. We had our chances, but so did they, and while it might

gall us to admit it, Radley probably deserved their victory: but it was close. The disappointment of losing to Radley spurred us on to even greater heights and the win against R.G.S. High Wycombe was probably our best performance of the season. Tackling was good, our support play excellent, but it was our ability to convert pressure into points that pleased most; we may have to wait a long time before an Abingdon side so completely dominates a team from R.G.S.

What happened after half term was nothing short of disappointing. Out of five games played, only one was won, although the hard-fought draws against Reading and Shiplake said an awful lot about the character of the side. It would be easy to blame the debacle on the loss of key players through suspension and injury, but the truth is that many players went off the boil and our play seemed to lack the cohesion and drive which had featured so prominently in a successful first half of the season.

In conclusion, this team has plenty of outstanding individual players, but such raw talent is not enough to secure the success which only really comes from training hard throughout the week. Initially, there was talk of an unbeaten season, but such ideas should be firmly set aside until the team can develop the maturity, discipline and total commitment which separate a good team from a great one. Who knows; perhaps next year's coach can do for this team what Graham Henry has done for Wales.

16/9 Bloxham (H) Won 39-0
19/9 Oratory (A) Won 44-0
30/9 M.C.S. (A) Won 24-7
3/10 Stowe (H) Won 45-0
10/10 Radley (H) Lost 5-7
17/10 High Wycombe (H) Won 39-5
7/11 St. Edward's (H) Lost 3-10
14/11 Pangbourne (H) Won 20-0
18/11 Reading (H) Drew 10-10
28/11 Shiplake (A) Drew 3-3
5/12 Marlborough (H) Lost 18-19

Playing record at half term:

Played 6

Won 5

Lost 1

Points for 210

Points against 26

Playing record at end of term:

Played 11

Won 6

Lost 3

Drawn 2

Points for 264

Points against 68

a report by ADW

Junior Colts C XV rugby

A very successful season was enjoyed by all members of the team. We got off to a slow start, since Oratory cancelled when they could not raise a team. Led by D. Desai, we travelled to Radley to win our first match of the season. J. Howe scored a try after ten minutes, and E. Ritchie followed later.

Doubts over continuity were quashed in our first home game, as we convincingly overcame a powerful and skilful Stowe team. Real optimism and team spirit developed as a result, but a crucial match followed against the formidable St. Edward's side, who, like us, were unbeaten to date. This was a superb game, a contest of the forwards, and honours were even at the end, without a point being scored.

Next we travelled to an under-rated Shiplake. After good forward play, we were told to use the backs

more in this game, and a resounding victory was recorded, marred only by unfortunate flare-ups between the two sides. Tries from D. Desai, S. Mayhew-Archer, G. Stratton, N. Betteridge, J. Howe, H. Greaves and others secured the win.

Finally we played our main rivals, Marlborough. Owing to injuries it was a chance for new players to establish themselves. In a very close game, A. Roberts got the luck of the bounce and touched down with the only try of the match. C. Manners also contributed with a try-saving tackle late in the game.

It was a season which saw M. Salmon leave us for the 'A' XV, and a huge number of non-team players competing for places. There was also a team spirit rare at this level. Our thanks go to Messrs. Sandow and Phelps for making it all possible.

3/10 Radley (A) Won 10-0
10/10 Stowe (H) Won 28-10
7/11 St. Edward's (H) Drew 0-0
28/11 Shiplake (A) Won 46-0
5/12 Marlborough (A) Won 5-0

a report by J Howe 4DAG

Juniors A XV rugby

16/9 Bloxham (A) Won 45-0
19/9 Oratory (H) Won 17-5
30/9 MCS (H) Won 36-12
3/10 Radley (A) Won 13-7
17/10 RGS (A) Lost 0-27
7/11 St. Edward's (A) Lost 0-43
14/11 Pangbourne (A) Won 34-0
18/11 Reading (A) Won 17-5
28/11 Shiplake (A) Won 31-5
5/12 Marlborough (H) Drew 5-5

a report by SAE

Another successful season, further evidence of the talented squads which seem to be coming up through the School. The early part of the term was again an exciting period, as attempts were made to blend a side from disparate parts, and to get players to play in a similar style, with common aims. Fitness and skill levels improved quite quickly and the prospects looked encouraging; it was clear that there would be healthy competition for places across the 'A' and 'B' squads.

The backs settled into an effective unit early on, with J. Calnan converting from back row to scrum half (before giving way to A. Hough). H. Monsell looked a skilful fly half; J. Watkins and J. Henley were an impressive pair of strong-running centres. There was pace on the wings in the form of G. Hackford (an adept finisher) and S. Holland (later M. Johnson and A. Pride). M. Hardy was a lively runner at full back, and always courageous in defence.

The forwards were a more difficult unit to settle, especially the right combination for the front five. Some positional changes were made, and some inform players came through from the B team. S. McKenzie hooked effectively; later S. Spriggs and S. Winearls were given their chances, both contributing well. T. Dyson played solidly at tight-head prop throughout, also throwing in to the line-out. A. Eeles was a fit, rampaging-style forward, who played several games at loose head before being tried both in the second and back rows.

In the second row various options were tried, usually in partnership with J. Tarrell, who was always handy in the line-out. M. Smith moved from prop and developed well; S. Hall showed potential. In the back row the dependable D. Puri commanded the blind-side spot throughout. The open-side berth was always competitive; J. Paul was given a try, as was D. Atkinson, but finally W. Allen came through from the 'B' team to take the place. J. Chater was a natural number eight, always quick, strong and effective; his captaincy by excellent example was an important factor in the success of the team.

The season got off to a bright start with a run of wins against reasonable opposition: Bloxham, Oratory and M.C.S. Then came the Radley match, and the hard-fought win said a good deal about the character of the side, their ability to defend and to take chances. Then came a mid-season slump, with a loss of momentum and two away defeats against very strong sides, R.G.S. High Wycombe and St. Edward's.

In a way, the most pleasing aspect of the season was the way in which the team re-grouped and bounced back after these two losses, and then went away to Pangbourne and put together some very good, winning rugby. Two more useful victories followed; a tough mid-week encounter away against Reading, then the somewhat frustrating aqua-rugby fixture at Shiplake-under-Thames.

The final match is always significant, but a win was going to give us a nice symmetry of results through the term. In the end it was not quite to be; but it was a great rugby match. Marlborough had the lion's share of possession in the first half and some effective ball-handlers, but our defence (much improved through the term) generally held very firm, especially after Marlborough took their early try. Five-nil down at half time, I felt that a win was possible; we certainly created some good chances, but Marlborough's defence proved equally hard to breach. Finally the try came, started by A. Pride on the left, scored deservedly in the right hand corner by Chater. A draw in the end, and a fair result in all.

This team has the potential to do very well, and I have seen this season where their strengths and weaknesses lie. They have much still to work on (especially the all-important matter of continuity) but have already shown what they are capable of.

My thanks to the players for their efforts, for making it both an enjoyable and successful season. Many thanks, too, to FCB for all his help, and to RSH and AMB for their help on games afternoons. A last thank you goes to the loyal parents and friends who supported us.

Juniors C XV rugby

a report by H Hunter, A Martin
and N Herbert 3BJLS

Our comprehensive 52-0 victory over M.C.S. early in the season gave us a very useful confidence boost for the extremely successful series of matches which was to follow during the term.

Coached with style and enthusiasm by Mr. Williams, the team gained many an emphatic victory, including a superb 50-0 thrashing of Radley, not to mention the 48-0 embarrassment of Marlborough. We

won almost every other of our games, beating Oratory, R.G.S. High Wycombe, Pangbourne and Shiplake.

The exceptions to this run of success were a draw against St. Edward's and an unexpected loss mid-season against the Cokethorpe 'A' team, who surprised us with their intelligent play.

We would like to thank Mr. Williams and wish him the best of luck in the future.



Juniors B XV rugby

The team had a reasonably successful season, which promises much for the future. A number of regular 'B' team players gained promotion and a chance to play at a higher level in the 'A' XV. Thus there was some disruption to game plans as personnel changed, most significantly when our captain W. Allen earned a permanent promotion.

Throughout the season there was a certain amount of indecision on selection in key areas such as scrum half, fly half and hooker. A. Hough served us well at scrum half until promoted. A. Warren-Upham will be a useful fly half once he overcomes his injury problems; he kicks intelligently but also needs to gain a little more speed. As hooker, S. Spriggs was quick about the field and fearless in the tackle, but he has more work to do on the throw-in to the line-out.

Throughout the season the forwards were fortunate in having RSH and AMB applying their coaching skills and expertise on Mondays. Thus sporting abilities and attitudes developed and improved as the season progressed, though we were still a little overawed by teams from Radley, Marlborough and High Wycombe. Our tackling faltered and we were much slower to the breakdown of play on these three occasions, which was a pity. The team had more than enough skill and possession to have beaten Radley, and the score against R.G.S. High Wycombe flattered them somewhat. Our teams should look forward to some success against these schools next season.

On the positive side, congratulations must go to the team for their exciting win against St. Edward's. Secure, aggressive tackling by D. Atkinson, N. Orr and J. Paul kept the opposition at bay, even though St. Edward's had territorial advantage. Some astute kicking by A. Hough gave us sufficient advantage at one point for J. Paul to score the try which turned out to be the winning one. There were several run-away victories, against M.C.S., Pangbourne, Shiplake and Reading. The last few games showed how well the forwards had developed their rucking techniques, which won good ball and gave our fliers on the wings, M. Johnson and A. James, plenty of room for manoeuvre with scoring chances.

This whole squad has strength in depth, and the 'B' XV were fortunate to be able to call on a strong and successful 'C' team for new players. B. Burnham and T. Brewerton showed courage and determination, promising well for the future. Various utility players have yet to find their permanent niche, and J. Cousin is one player who could claim the scrum half position if he continues to develop and grow in strength.

My thanks go to all the many boys who represented the School at this level. They clearly have the potential to maintain a good record in future years, provided that they continue to support each other as they did throughout this last year. Many thanks also to SAE for his expertise with the backs and efficient publication of the team lists. It was a thoroughly enjoyable season.

19/9 Oratory (H) Won 25-0
30/9 M.C.S. (A) Won 53-0
3/10 Radley (A) Lost 7-19
17/10 High Wycombe (A) Lost 0-40
7/11 St. Edward's (A) Won 5-0
14/11 Pangbourne (A) Won 50-14
18/11 Reading (A) Won 39-5
28/11 Shiplake (H) Won 46-0
5/12 Marlborough (H) Lost 7-26

a report by FCB



Minors A XV rugby

3/11 High Wycombe (H) Lost 5-29
 10/11 Pinewood (A) Won 26-0
 17/11 MCS (A) Won 27-19
 28/11 Dragon (H) Lost 0-61
 5/12 Marlborough (A) Won 26-17
 20/1 Cothill (H) Won 19-5
 27/1 Ludgrove (A) Won 31-10

a report by T Gater 2H

This was an extremely productive and enjoyable season. We trained hard, and played well in most of our matches. At the beginning of the season we were playing well in parts, but we were not playing together as a team, more as individuals.

Our first game, against R.G.S. High Wycombe, was a hard-fought one, but they were too strong for us. The next game, however, was against Pinewood, who were a lot smaller than us, and we managed to win the game in the forwards. After that we travelled to M.C.S. Again, this was a hard match; fortunately, we were faster and fitter.

We now faced our hardest and most embarrassing game of the season, against the Dragon. They were fast and experienced, having obviously played together for a number of seasons, and we lost heavily. We heard later that this team was unbeaten, so the defeat was less painful. Against Marlborough, in some awful weather (rain, sleet, hail and strong winds), we played as a team and performed very well, given the circumstances.

The second half of the season saw a new team. The forwards played as a unit and the backs moved the ball well. The first game after Christmas was against Cothill. We ran well in the backs, the forwards got the ball to the backs quickly and efficiently, and we won the match. After this we travelled to Ludgrove. They were a small side, though quick and well-drilled, but our confidence and team spirit won us the game.

We ended the season very disappointingly, our last match (against Reading) being cancelled. On the whole it was a great season which everybody enjoyed. We would all like to say a big thank you to Mr. Drummond-Hay and Mr. Slatford.

Players who regularly represented the team were H. Abrahall, J. Barclay (joint captain; two tries), C. Dyer, J. Dyson, T. Gater (joint captain; three tries), J. Hoyle, J. Lakin, A. Marsh, A. McKenzie, P. Minch (one try), R. Muirhead (joint captain; eleven tries, one conversion), W. Poole, R. Powis, J. Prinold (five tries), D. Stalker, and R. Vasudev.

1st XI hockey

This year's 1st XI had a difficult task. A relatively small team physically, plagued by injuries, came up against some very skilled and often some very "agricultural" opposition. Though the season's results were mediocre, the team played with plenty of heart and sportsmanship and, as the season progressed, the skill of everyone in the team dramatically improved. In fact the improvement was so great as to reduce a 1-9 deficit (at the beginning of the term) to 2-3 (at the end in a tournament) against King Edward's, Southampton, one of the best hockey schools in the country.

There were sterling performances from individuals, who contributed to a team which gelled well from the outset. The two hockey captains, P. Edwards and J. Otterburn, showed determination and led with spirit and passion. Both W. Smith and J. Lucas excelled themselves in goal with some fine saves. Regrettably, W. Smith injured himself before half term, but he was replaced by an equally talented player who performed well under some very trying situations.

Under the guidance of Mr. Sandow, the squad experimented with some "radical" formations, and in times of strife it was left up to him to help rally the team to greater things. He also brought in some very skilled younger players for several of the games and tournaments; K. Roche, S. Allen, and I. Downie played very well and such a glut of talented players in the present Fourth and Fifth years bodes well for next

season. The defence, headed by J. Otterburn, tried hard against some impressive onslaughts. S. Tompkins, A. Bitmead (injured against Stowe) and N. Gray battled hard, all playing sturdily and effectively when the goal was being tested.

The midfield, with no excuse to tire thanks to the new rotating substitution rules, ran like hares back and forth. Great vision from B. Wells (right), J. Tarasewicz (left) and occasionally S. Balch (centre) fed a tireless forward link man, P. Edwards (tenacious as a terrier), our leading goal scorer. Our strike force constantly changed throughout the year, a testament to the abilities of the five players who pushed hard for the three places. D. Pearson, A. Hulse, T. Fleming, J. Gardner and L. Butler (potentially our star striker, he was injured after only the first match) all scored some stunning individual and selfless combination goals.

Five of the team attained colours: J. Otterburn, D. Pearson, S. Balch, A. Hulse and J. Lucas. Other particularly notable performances included P. Edwards, J. Tarasewicz and B. Wells; everyone tried hard.

It was clear at the end of the season that Abingdon spirit is hard to break, and it was also pleasing when towards the end we began to play some fast-flowing and elegant hockey; a shame that the season was not longer. Even if this was not the most successful of seasons, we hope to use this as a stepping stone to greater things. We shall have to wait and see next year.

16/1 King Edward's,
Southampton (A) Lost 1-9
27/1 Pangbourne (H) Lost 0-3
30/1 Reading (A) Drew 2-2
3/2 Shiplake (A) Lost 0-3
6/2 Stowe (A) Lost 0-5
10/2 Leighton Park (H) Won 3-1
1/3 M.C.S. (A) Lost 2-5
24/2 Bloxham (H) Won 3-1

a report by S Balch 6MAS

2nd XI hockey

This was a very mixed season, with more defeats than victories, but only one match in which the team looked out-classed. We were never able to field a full-strength side (injuries and call-ups to the 1st XI particularly affected selection). As a result, our play lacked a consistent pattern. The gap between midfield and the forwards often became a void. Nevertheless, there were many promising aspects of the team's development during the course of the season.

The captain, T. Andrews, contributed a distinct and muscular style of play and served as a real inspiration to others. His strength and determination brought him two goals against Pangbourne and a well-deserved victory for the team.

The final match of the season also produced our best display. M.C.S. dominated the first half, and it was only the brilliance of W. Smith in goal which restricted their advantage to a single goal. The pattern of play was reversed in the second half. Having fought back to equalize, in the event we were unlucky not to finish with a win. J. Dando, in particular, had an outstanding game.

There are many fine players in the squad who should go on to play at first team level next year.

Squad: M. Ambler, T. Andrews (captain), A. Apps, C. Browne, E. Campbell, T. Coe, A. Coxall, J. Dando, B. Hunt, G. Le Tocq, P. Mather, S. Nickson, P. Norbury, W. Smith, E. Webber, B. Wells.

16/1 King Edward's,
Southampton (H) Lost 1-3
27/1 Pangbourne (H) Won 2-1
30/1 Reading (H) Drew 1-1
3/2 Shiplake (H) Lost 1-2
6/2 Stowe (A) Lost 1-5
10/2 Leighton Park (H) Won 2-1
1/3 M.C.S. (A) Drew 1-1
24/2 Bloxham (H) Lost 1-2

a report by DVC

Senior Colts hockey

a report by DGA

Despite being a relatively small squad and having a coach rather too keen on fitness training, the Colts hockey players started the season with high hopes. The 'A' team had been successful in their Junior Colts year and had a sound nucleus of outstanding County players; the 'B' team half of the squad was ready to make up with enthusiasm and youthful excess for what they lacked in the silken skills of a K. Roche.

The optimism seemed well-founded in the first half of term when both teams were unbeaten. There was disappointment at not getting more of a result at Reading, but otherwise class told, and an average of over four goals a match did not flatter us. The second half of term brought mixed fortunes. A highlight for the 'A's was coming back from two goals down to draw with, and almost beat, a well-organized Stowe team. As in most matches I. Downie in particular regularly brought panic into the opposition circle.

Bloxham was our Waterloo; a nasty injury to P. Thomas at the heart of the defence left us with a

damage-limitation exercise against easily the strongest opposition of the season. Things ended on a high note when our exuberance resumed with a well-deserved victory over M.C.S. in an exciting match in the sun at Radley; if the Brazilians played hockey this is what it would be like.

The 'B' team had a miserable time, with two heavy defeats, and nobody to look after them regularly on match days. I would like to thank S. Allen for being an inspirational captain, and the whole squad (well, almost) for their good humour, reliability and commitment. This group still has a tremendous amount to offer to hockey at Abingdon.

The following boys represented the School at this age level: S. Allen, S. Brewerton, A. Brodie, G. Coppock, I. Downie, J. Eighteen, A. Fraser, C. Fudge, T. Garside, P. Gooch, J. Hayden, R. Kempson, M. Legg, B. Lo J. Mather, T. Matheson, L. Pearce, A. Rabindran, K. Roche, J. Rowley, M. Sanderson, K. Sawetz, D. Smith, O. Thomas, and P. Thomas.

Junior Colts A XI hockey

27/1 Pangbourne (H) Won 4-1
3/2 Shiplake (A) Won 3-1
6/2 Stowe (A) Won 5-0
24/2 Bloxham (H) Won 2-0
2/3 Radley (A) Won 5-1
17/3 M.C.S. (A) Won 2-1

a report by PJW

This year's XI was the first hockey team in the history of the School to record a 100% record. This was achieved as a result of high levels of skill, combined with excellent team spirit and the will to win. When, on occasions, they were in danger of relinquishing their record, a fighting spirit won the day.

It all began in almost comic fashion, when the first match was reduced in length to thirty-five minutes. In that time a three goal lead was achieved against Pangbourne, and R. Kershaw had earned an early entry into the record books with four goals. As expected, there were a number of things to work on, in particular the firmness of passing. The team followed up with a victory against Shiplake, but were guilty of a poor tactical approach. However, three goals were scored by three different members of the team, which was most heartening.

The next match was away at Stowe, which is never an easy place to gain a win. Having drawn their previous match, against Radley, Stowe clearly fancied their chances and were expecting a convincing victory. Instead Abingdon produced one of the best performances which I have seen, and eventually played them off the park. Both J. Hedges and C. Thomson created havoc by taking on defenders down the flanks. M.

Armitage, P. Timberlake and G. Stalcup controlled the mid-field with their sharp passing and intelligent defence. R. Balch was proving to be a rock in defence, ably assisted on the flanks by P. Peacock and E. Dingwall. S. Osborn-King swept intelligently behind that trio and R. Perkins was proving to be an agile and very able goal keeper. N. Fuggle came on as rolling-substitute and defended as well as anyone. R. Kershaw not only provided a cutting edge with his front running, but lifted the rest of the side with his willingness to tackle back and put the Stowe defence under pressure.

Against Bloxham, the team had to overcome a holiday break and were not as sharp. It was not until the second half that they really began to dominate. The most enjoyable win came next, away at Radley. This really was a victory that came from a determination not to give anything away. There was an element of luck with one of the goals, but not with the result, and the Radley staff were full of praise for our performance. The final match, against M.C.S., was bound to be a bit of an anticlimax; nevertheless, the team won with something in hand, despite the closeness of the final scores. There is a plenty of promise for the future.

Juniors A hockey

The season began with the team in good spirits and with high hopes, which led to emphatic victories; we crushed both Pangbourne and Shiplake. These matches saw some fluent passing along with clinical finishing. Our next match was disappointing; after taking the lead away at Bloxham, we gave away two easy goals and then squandered our chances.

In the second half of term, fatigue set in. We went to London to compete in a tournament, but the loss of crucial players to other commitments meant that winning became a distant prospect. Despite our team's

depletion, we battled very hard. Results did not go our way, however, and we narrowly lost 0-1 to St. Edward's, who went on to win our group. Despite the day's failures, everyone really enjoyed themselves, and we would like to thank Mr. Drummond-Hay for taking us to the tournament.

The season ended with defeats by a stronger Radley side and by M.C.S., but in all it was exciting and fun despite the disappointments. Our thanks go to Mr. Revill for coaching and supporting us throughout the season.

Pangbourne (H) Won 5-2
Shiplake (A) Won 5-0
Bloxham (A) Lost 1-3
Radley Lost 0-6
M.C.S. Lost 1-3

a report by H Hunter 3BJLS

Cross-country

This season saw the fantastic debut of Mr. Ocock as coach. His thoughtful approach to training and pre-race preparation, together with global recruitment from the rowing, rugby and hockey teams, allowed Abingdon to unleash its talent effectively.

Our busy race calendar began with Dr. Challoner's in November. Despite poor conditions, both our 'A' and 'B' teams improved their previous places substantially. Our fastest runner was N. Hawker. He, G. Kitto and J. Kingsley came in the top twenty-five runners out of one hundred and seventy-five. Our next appearance was at the Oxfordshire County Cross-Country Championships, held at Drayton School, Banbury. G. Kitto came third in the U20s division, while J. Kingsley took fourth in the U17s. G. Bailey took ninth, while R. Rothkopf came a staggering tenth place out of ten runners.

Other results included third place in the U17s and second place in the U20s at the Vale Championships,

seventeenth at the Knole Run, ninth at the Goater Cup, sixth and twelfth at the Tortoise's School relays, thirteenth in the Seniors and third in the Juniors at the R.G.S. Worcester Spring relay, and first place at the Oxfordshire Schools Senior Championships.

Consistently outstanding performances came from J. Kingsley (first place in the Road Relay), B. Warner (most improved runner), G. Kitto, L. St. John Mosse, A. Beck and, in particular, M. Cullen (Vale Champion) and J. Richards (third in Vale Championships). The last two named, although of junior division age, ended up competing against much older age groups and achieved excellent results.

Full colours were awarded to J. Kingsley, L. St. John Mosse and the two captains, R. Rothkopf and N. Hawker. B. Warner and A. Beck were awarded their half colours.

The cross-country club has made huge strides this season, and has impressive targets to meet in the next.

a report by R Rothkopf 6BAHF

Fencing

The fencing club has increased considerably in numbers this year, to a maximum of about twenty at any one time. We train under the professional supervision of Mr. Alan Ley after School every Thursday. There is a broad cross-section of members from across the age range within the School, and all three weapons (foil, sabre and épée) are represented.

Since most of our members joined this year, we have not yet been strong enough to compete regularly

in inter-school matches. Indeed, in our only match this year, against Bloxham, we were soundly beaten. However the standard has markedly increased since then, and next year we hope to be able to fight in many more matches.

At the end of the Summer term, a short knockout tournament was held, with medals for the winners. First place went to A. Brown, second to P. Gardner, and third to J. Rose.

a report by R Cork 6WHZ

1st & 2nd VIII rowing

1st VIII
Bow: R Hutchins
2: T Betteridge
3: L Whibley
4: G Whittaker
5: S Curran
6: H Mackenzie
7: W Horner
Stroke: R Bourne-Taylor
Cox: S Hutchins
Coach: MDM

2nd VIII
Bow: N Moffatt
2: J Mascaro
3: B Grady
4: J Persaud
5: A White
6: M Jobling
7: J Wilcox-Jones
Stroke: N Le Fèvre
Cox: D Wilson
Coach: ARMI

a report by S Woodcock 6JEF

On Sunday October 18th the seniors went to Reading Small Boats Head. The Élite coxless IV, the Senior coxed IV, the Junior coxed IV and the Junior pair all won, with the coxless IV claiming the fastest time of the day. Wallingford Head was also successful, with three IVs winning.

At half term, most of the squad went to a training camp at Hazewinkel, Belgium, where the pairs combinations for GB trials were decided. Four pairs went to trials, with impressive results. R. Bourne-Taylor, H. Mackenzie, S. Woodcock and G. Kitto were selected to attend a training camp in Seville in the Christmas holidays.

The first Head race of the Lent term was at Peterborough, where three senior VIIIs were entered. The 'A' VIII won its division by a long way with the 'B' VIII also performing well, beating Eton's 2nd VIII. The Senior pair also won its event. At half term, pairs went to the GB trials; Abingdon pairs finished fifth, eighth and twelfth, and as a result H. Mackenzie, R. Bourne-Taylor, T. Betteridge, G. Kitto, S. Curran, L. Whibley, G. Whittaker and N. Le Fèvre were invited to final trials. After these, H. Mackenzie and R. Bourne-Taylor were invited to represent Great Britain at the Munich regatta, where H. Mackenzie picked up two silvers and a gold, and R. Bourne-Taylor three gold medals.

The main event of the term was the Schools Head, in which Abingdon performed extremely well. The 1st VIII finished second, eight seconds behind Hampton. The 2nd VIII also finished second in their category, again to Hampton, this time by five seconds. Another second place was gained by the Novice IV.

The Easter break was well spent; in the Eights Head, the 1st VIII came fifty-third, second in the Schools VIIIs behind Hampton, a good result since they experienced wash from a launch. The 2nd VIII came 125th, also finishing second behind Hampton, in their event.

At Ghent regatta, the 1st VIII won their event by twelve seconds and in the process became Belgian national champions. The Easter squad training camp was held at Hazewinkel, Belgium, after the regatta. The 1st VIII beat Kingston in three short pieces during the stay; the 2nd VIII also beat Kingston over a 500 metre piece.

The first regatta on the domestic scene was Wallingford, on May 1st. This regatta was a great success for the seniors; the 2nd VIII split into IVs and won the Senior IV category, and only failed to win the senior category owing to a broken collar coming into the enclosure when half a length up on Eton's 1st IV. The 1st VIII entered two events: Senior VIIIs and Junior VIIIs. In the final of the Junior VIIIs they beat St. Paul's by two lengths, and then in the final of the Senior VIIIs they beat Hampton by two and a half lengths. As a result of these results, and those of the juniors, Abingdon was the most successful crew of the day and won the Victor Ludorum prize.

At Bedford regatta, the 2nd VIII competed in two events, losing to one Radley crew by two feet in the semi-final of one and beating another Radley crew by two feet in the final of the other. At National Schools regatta, the 1st VIII came a close second to Hampton, winning a silver medal, and the 2nd VIII taking bronze behind Hampton and Radley. The 1st IV also finished second to Hampton. Marlow regatta proved to be less fruitful than last year, with the 1st VIII losing in the final of both its events.

Henley Royal Regatta was the final and most important event of the rowing season, and the crews did not disappoint. In the Temple Challenge Cup, the 2nd VIII had a bye to the second day, where they faced Trinity College, Dublin. Unfortunately a creditable row failed to bring them victory. In the Princess Elizabeth Cup, the 1st VIII came up against Eton in the first round, and with a very good row came out on top by four and a half lengths. This was followed by a two and a half length victory over Noble and Greenough (U.S.A.) in the second round, and a third of a length victory over Southport School, Australia in the third round.

In the windy semi-final on Saturday, they raced St. Edward's, a heavy crew, in conditions more suited to sheer weight than technical finesse. Despite the 1st VIII taking an early lead of half a length, "Teddies" came through in the end to win by two and half lengths, and went on to win the event. This was nevertheless a fine achievement, being the first time that an Abingdon VIII had reached the semi-final of the Princess Elizabeth Cup. This fittingly marked the end of a very successful season.



J16s rowing

Rowing for this team is always difficult. With GCSE examinations in May and June, it is essential that practice for big regattas is balanced with revision. We always try to make sure that we maintain this balance to ensure a winning crew both on and off the water. This was particularly apparent this year.

The squad was unusually small for a year group, but we did have some of the School's best rowers within it. Owing to the small squad, we were not able to put out a VIII as we would have liked, but instead concentrated our efforts on two IVs.

The season started with the Head of the River race in London, in which we put a 'A' IV and a Novice IV. Both did well, with the Novice crew losing by less than five seconds, coming second in their event. We lost J. Hammond for this event, as he rowed with the 2nd VIII because of illness in their crew. We put out much the same crews throughout the Easter term. At Bedford regatta the 'A' crew won their way through two rounds before losing in a very exciting and dramatic final to Eton (less than a third of a canvas). The same crew jumped out of that race and into a straight final in another event but lost – owing to exhaustion – to St. Edward's.

National Schools regatta, the highlight of the rowing calendar, came in early May. We entered two coxed IVs on the Saturday and a coxless IV on the Sunday. The 'B' IV did not quite qualify for the final and the 'A' IV just missed out by half a canvas, though with a time eight seconds quicker than the winner of the other heat.

As the end of the season approached it was more difficult to train, with increased pressure from examinations and the fact that through illness "higher up" a number of our best rowers had moved to the 2nd VIII. The last regatta in which we competed was Reading Town. Again we entered a Novice IV and an 'A' IV, but unfortunately we lost out to Pangbourne. Exeter knocked us out of the Novice IVs.

On the whole, although the season did not produce all the wins which we would have liked, we all thoroughly enjoyed ourselves and I would like to think that our rowing careers have benefited a great deal. We would like to thank Mr. Slatford for his huge efforts in keeping the crew together and making sure that everything ran smoothly all the time. He was patient with us at times when no doubt many other people would have snapped.

J16 'A' IV
Bow: J Hammond
2: N Williams
3: J Wilcox-Jones
Stroke: M Watkinson
Cox: O Varney

J16 'B' IV
Bow: T Beardsworth/ S Allen
2: T Tarrell
3: G Larsson
Stroke: T Davis
Cox: O Varney/ T Wilson

Coach: RSS

a report by O Varney 6WHZ

illustration by N Hayes 6DH

J15s rowing

J15 'A' VIII
Bow: W Burdall
2: W Gervers
3: J Rowe
4: D Easterbrook
5: T Stockford
6: A Addis
7: N Betteridge
Stroke: T Kingham
Cox: E Macdonald
Coach: TJCG

J15 'B' VIII
Bow: G Upcott
2: M Clayton
3: A Markham
4: R Copper
5: T Guiver
6: D Brown
7: N Evans
Stroke: N Hopkins
Cox: A James
Coach: Mr. Watson

a report by W Burdall 4PW
and A James 4PW

On February 13th an VIII competed at the Henley Schools Head. A good effort was made, resulting in a final position of sixth place out of a field of eleven boats in their event.

Two VIIIs travelled to London to compete in the Schools Head in March. This was the first race of the season for many of the crews, following the cancellation of Reading Head. Having placed the compulsory red noses on the boat, the 'A' crew was aiming for the top six and the 'B' crew aiming to win its event. The 'A' crew finished ninth, with the 'B' crew finishing thirty-seventh, sixth in the 'B' event.

A training camp in Belgium was attended by thirteen boys, with one borrowed cox to help. The main purpose of the event was to work on skills which would make the boat move, as well as to select the VIII which would race at the National Schools Regatta in May. There were four outings a day, with one before breakfast at 7.15 a.m. The first day was spent in IVs in preparation for the seat racing which was to come. The weather was bad with plenty of rain and some bright spells. Some people realized that they had not taken enough warm clothing. At the end of the day we made a regular visit to McDonalds.

The first two sessions of the day were technical outings, still concentrating on the basics and cementing them into our stroke. We also started to do more physical work in the form of two-kilometre pieces. Wednesday saw the seat racing, with five races in the first session and three in the second. On Thursday we raced Kingston Grammar School girls over 750 metres and two 500 metres. We won all three, so we took up the promise from our cox that if we won all three we could throw him in.

Two VIIIs and a IV attended Wallingford regatta. Owing to Duke of Edinburgh's Award expeditions these were not the proper crews; the VIIIs had little success, losing to stiff opposition. The IV reached the final with two great rows, but lost to St. Paul's.

At Bedford regatta the 'A' crew had a bye through to race St. Edward's. We won with a convincing row, in which we were ahead throughout. In the final we came up against Bedford School, beating them easily. This was our first pot, and we were pleased with our success. Though the 'B' crew had a good row, they lost.

The National Schools regatta was the main event of the season and was what we had been training for all year. We had been drawn against Hampton, St. Paul's and K.C.S. Wimbledon. We had a very close race with Hampton; St. Paul's faded near the end but were just able to hang on. We were last, and were knocked out of the final; nevertheless, we were pleased with both the race and the season. The 'B' crew raced brilliantly and made it to the final, where they led for a while and came third in style. They had surprised everyone, and won a bronze medal.

After our mixed fortunes at the National Schools regatta we went to Bedford looking for some pots. In the IVs we suffered bad luck, coming up against strong opposition and equipment failure. In the VIIIs event the 'A' crew rowed extremely well and reached the final comfortably. The 'B' VIII led Canford until someone fell off his seat, in the end losing narrowly. The 'A' crew were beaten by a narrow margin in the final. The J15 'B' squad went to Thames Valley Park and enjoyed success in the VIIIs event, eventually coming out winners against Bryanston. Reading Town regatta was our last of the season. This was our last chance to prove ourselves and there were two IVs and two VIIIs entered. The 'A' IV nearly capsized at the start and lost a huge amount. They rowed hard to get it back, but lost. The 'B' IV won its heat, beating Radley, and went through to the final. The 'A' VIII, in a hard race, lost against Radley by just over a length; it was a lot less than a few weeks before.

Our thanks must go to our long-suffering coaches, particularly Mr. Watson, who had to put up with endless jibes about his "aksint".



J14s rowing

a report by JAR

This season has seen one of the most promising J14 squads of recent years. Forty-three boys started the very blustery January season, and had to bide their time building up general fitness levels as they waited for risky currents to slow. Despite a frustrating delay of almost half a term, all the rowers quickly picked up the basics of this very difficult sport (made all the harder by the fact that they have to scull with two oars each, in boats for either four or eight oarsmen). The rowers were helped by TLW, JAR and DAG, and also this year by the quality of the coxes – A. Champion, T. Wilson, B. Street and, in April, L. Berryman – each of whom showed determination and skill in (usually) avoiding the banks and protecting the equipment. Within only a few weeks, several quad combinations acquitted themselves well at an informal head race at Bedford, showing real enthusiasm for racing.

JAR (kindly helped by RSS) held a short Easter rowing camp on the Abingdon stretch, and about fifteen boys tried out smaller boats, tested the new cleaver blades, and rowed in different crew combinations. The holidays enabled them to spend more time on the water than usual, and this helped to get Abingdon's regatta season off to a good start.

For the first time in a long while, J14s were entered for the prestigious Wallingford regatta, and the 'A' octuple beat Radley 'B' in the semi-finals, but lost to Radley 'A' in the final. The first quad did well against a victorious King's Canterbury crew, and gained a loud round of applause from the spectators for their effort. At Bedford regatta the 'A' and 'B' octuples proved to be similarly successful against strong opponents, the 'A's' winning medals in the plate event against Bedford 'B' in the final. Bedford Star regatta saw our first outright victory, when the 'A's' won tankards against a very promising Canford School. In this last regatta, the 'B' octuple crew raced particularly well, and were defeated only after some rather unfortunate decisions on the part of their opponents. Two J14 octuples and a quad entered the major Junior regatta at Peterborough, but all three crews were sadly beaten in the semi-finals.

All the rowers – competitors and non-competitors alike – should be extremely proud of their achievements this year, both in mastering a very demanding sport and in approaching the land training and water work with such determination and maturity. The quality of their rowing bodes well for future successes.

1st XI cricket

Played 18
Won 5
Lost 8
Drew 4
Abandoned 1

Oratory Won by 61 runs
Eton Lost by 106 runs
Reading match abandoned
Berkshire Gents Won by 8 wickets
Thame Drew
Bloxham Lost by 5 wickets
Pangbourne Won by 3 wickets
St. Edward's Drew
M.C.C. Won by 6 wickets
High Wycombe Lost by 9 wickets
S. Oxon Amateurs Won by 5 wickets
Highgate Lost by 19 runs
M.C.S. Drew
O.A.'s Drew
Durban High Lost by 161 runs
Birkenhead lost by 12 runs
K. Edward's, Lytham Lost by 91 runs
Hutton G.S. Lost by 4 wickets

a report by AMB

This was a season of rather mixed fortunes. There were some excellent performances along the way, but the majority of the side lacked experience at this level and were unable to produce the goods consistently.

The side performed well against adult opposition, winning all three games (Berkshire Gentlemen, South Oxfordshire Amateurs and notably the M.C.C.). The remaining two victories came against Oratory, in the opening game of the season, and against a very poor Pangbourne side. However, against the other school sides, the lack of a genuine strike bowler was clearly evident, and an inability to string together enough runs proved to be the team's downfall.

The team generally adopted the policy of inserting the opposition, hoping to frustrate them with some accurate bowling and then chase whatever target was set. When they managed to get this right, they gained good reward, but there were occasions when the bowling was too wayward and they were heavily punished as a consequence (Eton and St. Edward's in particular spring to mind here), or, more often, when the batting did not come up to scratch.

Two bowlers in particular were the pick of the bowlers throughout the season. The first was A. Hunter, with his off spin: thirty-four wickets at an average of 19.65; five for fifty-eight, including a hat-trick, against South Oxfordshire Amateurs, four for sixty-three against the OAs, and eight for fifty-one against Birkenhead. The second was S. Dexter, with his gentle medium-pacers, picking up twenty-three wickets at an average of 18.91).

However, T. Fleming (eleven wickets), A. Choudhuri (eight wickets), O. Norman (thirteen wickets, with four for fifty-four against M.C.S. and five for sixty-nine against King Edward's, Lytham), T. Hedge (eight wickets) and W. Smith (nine wickets) all put in good performances. Two bowlers under fifteen, B. Garner (four for thirty-six against Hutton) and R. Garside, showed promise towards the end of the season, which bodes well for next year.

The team struggled to perform consistently enough with the bat throughout the season and this proved their biggest problem. The only batsman who stood out throughout was the captain, P. Edwards who had an excellent season, scoring 570 runs at an average of 47.5. He scored seventy-six against Eton, sixty-six not out against the Berkshire Gentlemen, sixty-nine against Bloxham, eighty against the M.C.C., fifty not out against South Oxfordshire Amateurs, and was very

unfortunate to be dismissed for ninety-eight against the OAs when a century would have been a fitting end to a distinguished career.

The remainder of the batting proved very fragile, although there was a lot of potential and indeed five other individuals had one innings of fifty-plus in the latter part of the season, but nobody seemed capable of digging in and building an innings on a regular basis.

W. Smith was the team's most solid opener, scoring 257 runs (average 19.77; seventy-nine against the M.C.C.) whilst I. Downie (169 runs, average 16.9, sixty-six against the OAs) and S. Campbell (155 runs, average 15.5; sixty-three against Durban High School) showed increasing glimpses of their potential as the season progressed. Into the side mid-way through the season came two batsmen who showed promise, J. Gardner (194 runs, average 24.25; fifty not out against M.C.S.) – whose aggressive style improved the team's potential to score runs quickly – and E. Webber (143, average 14.3, seventy-four against Birkenhead) with a somewhat more cautious approach. T. Fleming scored some useful runs lower down the order with his rather unorthodox hitting.

In all, this was a very frustrating season, especially from a coach's point of view. There was plenty of potential amongst the team, although a lot of it was untested at this level, but very few players managed to perform anywhere near their potential on a regular basis. Some of this must be put down to the limited facilities available to practise on, but a lot must go down to the individuals themselves and in several cases their rather selfish attitude and approach. Cricket is a team game and if anyone wishes to succeed and perform to the best of their ability then simply being talented is not enough; they must also work hard for one another and show a disciplined and committed approach, both to their practice and on a match day.

It may be worth noting at this point that twenty-two different players had to be used during the season because of unavailability for various reasons. All but five of these will still be around next year, and I hope that they will have learned from their experiences this season and will return determined to fulfil their potential and enjoy more success next time around.

Full Colours were awarded to P. Edwards (re-awarded), R. Smith and S. Dexter. Half colours were awarded to S. Campbell, A. Choudhuri, I. Downie, T. Fleming, J. Gardner, A. Hunter, O. Norman, W. Smith and E. Webber.



2nd XI cricket

A rather disappointing playing record does not reflect the spirit and purpose with which the team played; it might reasonably be said that such fortune and "rub of the green" that there is in cricket tended to go against us throughout the season. A combination of injuries, examination calls and the loss of key players to the 1st XI meant that we were seldom able to call upon our best or most settled XI; our batting order and bowling attack varied from week to week.

Against Oratory our top order and lower order played well and we were never in danger of losing; A. Choudhuri bowled their last man with the final ball of the match. Eton possessed two excellent opening bowlers and we struggled to post a challenging target; steady bowling from J. Drury (three for eleven) reduced the opposition to sixty-seven for seven, but that was as close as we got. The match against Lord William's, Thame, followed a similar course; though several players got established and A. Hutchinson scored a rapid twenty-six, we again failed to reach three figures. L. Butler took four for sixteen to slow

their reply, but the application of their captain saw them through.

The M.C.S. game was heading for an exciting climax when thunder intervened; S. Balch made a fine sixty-one not out. Against Bloxham, we batted first for the fifth time in succession and a polished seventy from E. Webber allowed us to declare (probably three overs too late) at 179 for five; Bloxham's aggressive reply was curtailed by the leg spin of A. Hutchinson (three for twenty-three) and the swing of Jonathan Wilson (four for thirty-one) and they were 142 for seven at stumps. The final game, against St. Edward's, was very exciting; a stylish fifty-four from J. Gardner saw us total 116 but, despite penetrative bowling from P. Tolley (four for thirty-one), St. Edward's edged home by two wickets.

In summary, we have a decent nucleus of gifted players, all with an excellent attitude; once our batsmen score a few more runs (by being less willing to give away their wickets) we should be in a position to win more matches.

**Played 6
Won 1
Lost 3
Drew 2**

**Oratory Won by 56 runs
Eton Lost by 3 wickets
Thame Lost by 3 wickets
M.C.S. Drew
Bloxham Drew
St. Edward's Lost by 2 wickets**

a report by JFH

Juniors A XI cricket

Played 9
Won 7
Lost 1
Drew 1

a report by RPF

Our record would suggest that this was a very successful season, and until our last match, this was true. Having defeated such teams as Eton and St. Edward's, we looked forward with some confidence to our most important match, the semi-final of the Lord's Taverners' Trophy against M.C.S. Unfortunately, we turned in by far our worst performance of the season, to lose by eighty-five runs.

Highlights of the season included an exhilarating run chase against Eton (Prince Harry and all) a nail-biting one-wicket victory over St. Edward's, and a fighting eleven-run win against Bloxham. Individual performances which stood out were J. Watkins' seventy at Burford, one of several fine innings which he played; R. Silva's ninety-six against an admittedly poor Pangbourne side; J. Henley's match-winning forty-nine against Eton, and his many excellent (if somewhat unlucky) spells with the ball; and M. Martin's timely fifty-three not out in the High Wycombe game.

All the bowlers had their moments, but only Henley bowled with any real consistency. The best all-

round performances came from A. Hough and J. Watkins, whilst A. Martin was generally neat behind the stumps and often batted well when required. Usually the team fielded well and took many very good catches, with J. Florey and A. Hough outstanding in this department.

If the batsmen can tighten their defence, improve their footwork and their shot selection then there should be no shortage of runs in the future. The bowlers need to develop their control in bowling both line and length, a matter of concentration as well as technique. Too often we failed to bowl enough wicket-taking balls and gave the batsmen too many easy ones to feast on.

There is clearly much potential in this side. If they are prepared to work hard on the above then they should serve the School's cricket well in the coming years. The team was selected from: J. Florey, J. Henley, H. Holland, S. Holland, A. Hough, H. Hunter, M. Knox, A. Martin (wicket-keeper), M. Martin, W. Martin, R. Silva, J. Watkins (captain), A. Watson, and J. Wilcox.

Juniors B XI cricket

Played 6
Won 4
Lost 1
Drew 1

a report by PJW

The season started well with a draw against Oratory. S. Holland scored a rapid forty-eight, and M. Burnard thirty-two in a total of 126 for seven declared. M. Hardy then produced an excellent spell of fast bowling, taking five wickets, but we were unable to whittle out the last pair of batsmen.

We then lost to Eton 'D's, but that failure was more to do with some inept batting than because of any real disparity between the sides. We bowled very well, but dropped catches and then gave up wickets far too easily. Our first victory came next, against Bloxham. M. Knox took four for fifteen, and T. Brewerton four for thirteen, to restrict Bloxham to ninety, and we rattled off those runs for four wickets. A. Watson scored twenty-five and W. Martin twenty-nine not out.

From that point on we did not look back. Victories followed against Pangbourne (whom we dismissed for sixty-seven) and St. Edward's, who were all out for fifty. Against St. Edward's we batted first, and compiled our second highest score of the season. M. Knox scored fifty-nine and J. Wood forty-two in a total of 163 for four. When St. Edward's batted, N. Sadler and T. Brewerton both captured three wickets.

The highest score of the season was posted against M.C.S. We batted first, and with a number of batsmen chipping in with twenties we totalled 184 for nine. A. Watson was top scorer with thirty-nine. M.C.S. were dismissed for eighty, with seven bowlers taking wickets.

The final record then was very satisfactory and bodes well for next season.

Junior Colts A XI cricket

This was a season of high – almost heart stopping – excitement (even the draw was a game in which all four results were possible until the last over) and a season in which every player learned a little bit more about himself, and indeed about his fellow travellers.

There were some one-sided matches; at least three wins in which we played the opposition out of the game at an early stage (Pangbourne, Chipping Norton and Gosford Hill), and one comprehensive defeat by an impressive St. Edward's side, but there were also five matches in which all was in the balance until the last twelve balls, most memorably against Lord William's, R.G.S. High Wycombe and M.C.S.

After a welter of early-season wides and no-balls the bowling proved to be more consistent than the batting. B. Garner and N. Andrews opened the bowling and took forty-seven wickets between them, with Garner just the odd wicket ahead, and both had a genuine desire to make life as awkward as possible for the batsmen. R. Garside supported them with his effectively flighted leg breaks (fourteen wickets and two hat-tricks among them), and McTier, Morgan, Armitage, White and the much-improved Peacock all bowled good spells.

The batting was occasionally joyous, usually determined, but invariably short of a truly competitive total. Good players such as M. Armitage, R. Balch, D. Desai and L. McTier played important innings but rarely managed to take a game by the throat, and P. Timberlake must have lost count of the times that he had to co-ordinate a rearguard action (often successfully) after mid-order surrender.

The well-organized and precise Desai took the batting honours, in the end, from the patient Balch and sweet-timing McTier, and it was not until the end of the season that the captain, Armitage, found the gaps and his best form.

Armitage captained the side with increasing maturity and understanding – indeed, he deserves to take credit for the positive cricket played by his team – and proved a strong leader. He was well supported by all his players, who backed up his ideas with effort and determination, and together they formed a team of great character.

They were: M. Armitage (captain), N. Andrews, R. Balch, J. Brockbank, D. Desai, N. Fuggle, B. Garner, R. Garside, L. McTier, H. Morgan, P. Peacock, P. Timberlake, and A. White.

Played 12
Won 6
Lost 5
Drew 1

a report by JRWB

U13 A & B XI cricket

The U13 'A's got off to a bad start, and lost three of our first matches, but eventually the batsmen matured and the bowlers became more accurate. As a result of this, we won more of our matches in the middle of the season. There were excellent performances from the batsmen: R. Muirhead forty-four not out against Eton; W. Poole (vice captain) thirty-eight against both Cothill and Josca's; G. Potter thirty-seven against St. Edward's and twenty-eight against M.C.S.; A. Nash twenty-five against Cothill.

The bowlers also performed well, especially J. Brooke (five for twenty-five against New College) and Nash (three for ten against Eton, three for fourteen against Josca's, four for twenty-four against M.C.S.). Fielders played admirably towards the end of the season, with fewer and fewer dropped catches. Potter, D. Sullivan and A. Marsh all performed well in the field. In the end, a pleasing season.

Colours were awarded to Nash, Potter, Muirhead, Brooke, Poole and A. McKenzie.

The U13 'B' team's initial enthusiasm after the victory against King Alfred's was dampened by continual postponements and by stiffer opposition when eventually play did happen again.

Our seventy-two for nine against Bartholemews was swiftly passed by their vigorous striking of our modest bowling. Faringdon was more interesting, in part owing to the soggy outfield, but we were unable to reach their total of sixty-seven for nine, achieving fifty-one all out.

In both the defeats, our tactical organization was as much the culprit as deficiencies in technique. Nevertheless, everyone enjoyed the outings. C. Ranscombe, E. Antysz and T. McKeown battled well, and R. Vasudev, N. Patterson and C. Dyer bowled with some success.

C. MacKenzie (captain) kept wicket well and led by example. I hope that all those who played continue to develop their skills and maintain their interest in the game.

U13 A XI

Eton (A) Lost by 1 wicket
M.C.S. (A) Lost by 8 runs
New College (A) Lost by 10 runs
St. Edward's (H) Won by 8 wickets
Cothill (H) Won by 1 wicket
R.G.S. (H) Lost by 8 wickets
Josca's (A) Won by 7 wickets
M.C.S. (H) Lost by 40 runs

a report by A Nash (captain)

U13 B XI

King Alfred's Won by 7 runs
Bartholemew's Lost
Faringdon Lost by 16 runs

a report by PKHR

Valete

**the School wishes every
success to those pupils
who are leaving;
the list is as known at
the time of going to
press**

Abdullah, M.S.A.
Adrian, B.A.
Allen, E.R.
Aminuddin, A.R.
Anderson, J.J.
Andrews, T.J.
Armstrong, M.P.
Aston, B.J.M.
Aylward, P.J.
Aziz, A.B.A.
Bader M.A.
Bartlett, M.F.
Baxter, D.A.S.
Beckett, M.G.
Benson, A.J.
Blackford, A.N.
Bourne-Taylor, R.E.G.
Bowden, W.L.
Brettell, B.C.
Broad, L.J.
Brown, J.S.
Burbank, S.P.R.
Butler, L.J.
Campbell, C.D.K.
Campbell, E.F.F.
Carnwath, A.P.
Cavender, S.W.R.
Chater, A.A.
Cheung, K.K-W.
Choudhuri, A.
Christofi, M.
Coates, R.J.
Cooper, A.J.V.
Cooper, M.H.B.
Cox, J.E.J.
Croft, A.W.J.
Dali, M.N.
Darling, B.J.
Dawson, R.A.
Dear, J.L.
Duckworth, S.G.
Dugan, C.
Duncan, T.A.J.
Earley, J.C.G.
Eaton, J.T.
Edwards, P.J.
Evans, J.D.M.
Fabes, S.P.
Gancz, B.
Gillman, P.J.

Glick, A.N.
Gray, N.R.
Griffiths, B.T.
Ham, W.R.
Hancock, S.D.
Harris, M.G.
Hatt, W.D.
Heather, A.W.
Hedge, T.A.
Hester, T.W.
Himpson, D.P.
Hockley, C.W.
Holland, A.J.
Horner, W.
Horton, O.C.
Howard, C.P.
Hughes, C.E.
Hughes, S.
Hulse, A.K.
Hunt, B.R.T.
Hutchins, R.A.H.
Hutchins, S.J.M.
Iseringhausen, H.M.
Jobling, M.P.
Jones, M.I.
Kerley, W.R.
King, G.R.
Kirtley, D.
Kitto, G.H.
Kom, C.Y.
Kynaston-Pearson, F.J.B.
Langton, P.F.
Laurie, S.J.
Le Fèvre, N.N.
Livingston, N.J.T.
Longworth, B.L.
Lucas, J.P.W.
Lui, W.
Mak, T.S-H
Mason, B.T.B.W.
Mason, C.J.C.
Matzner, M.
McCullough, J.P.
McMahon, E.W.
McTier, A.J.
Montague, J.P.
Morse, J.
Munro, M.A.
Neville, P.R.
Norbury, P.L.

Norton, T.H.J.
Nowottny, S.M.
O'Donovan, M.A.
Orr, C.W.T.
Otterburn, F.J.
Pagett, M.P.
Pank, W.J.
Papps, A.T.G.
Pearson, D.G.D.
Perry, A.J.
Petrovic, Z.
Podmore, S.M.
Ranscombe, W.R.
Rendell, C.J.W.
Rendell, S.J.
Richards, T.P.J.
Rivers, D.A.
Ronaldson, H.O.
Roycroft, G.A.
Rutland, S.C.J.
Sagaya, A.O.
Salter, J.A.
Sasanow, J.S.
Shaikh, M.D.
Smith, I.C.
Smith, R.H.
Smith, S.M.
Smith, T.J.
Smith, W.I.S.
Spearing, J.C.
Starkie, W.N.E.
St. John Mosse, L.W.
Stocks, M.E.
Tarasewicz, J.P.T.
Thomas, A.R.
Tompkins, S.J.
Vogt, C.
Von Müller, J.
Waldron, J.D.G.
Walford, J.
Watkinson, H.
Watney, C.P.J.
Watson, R.C.
Watts, B.
Wesche, P.L.
White, A.J.
Whittaker, G.A.
Wilberforce, D.N.O.
Yau, K.K.J.
Zwart, J. T. L.