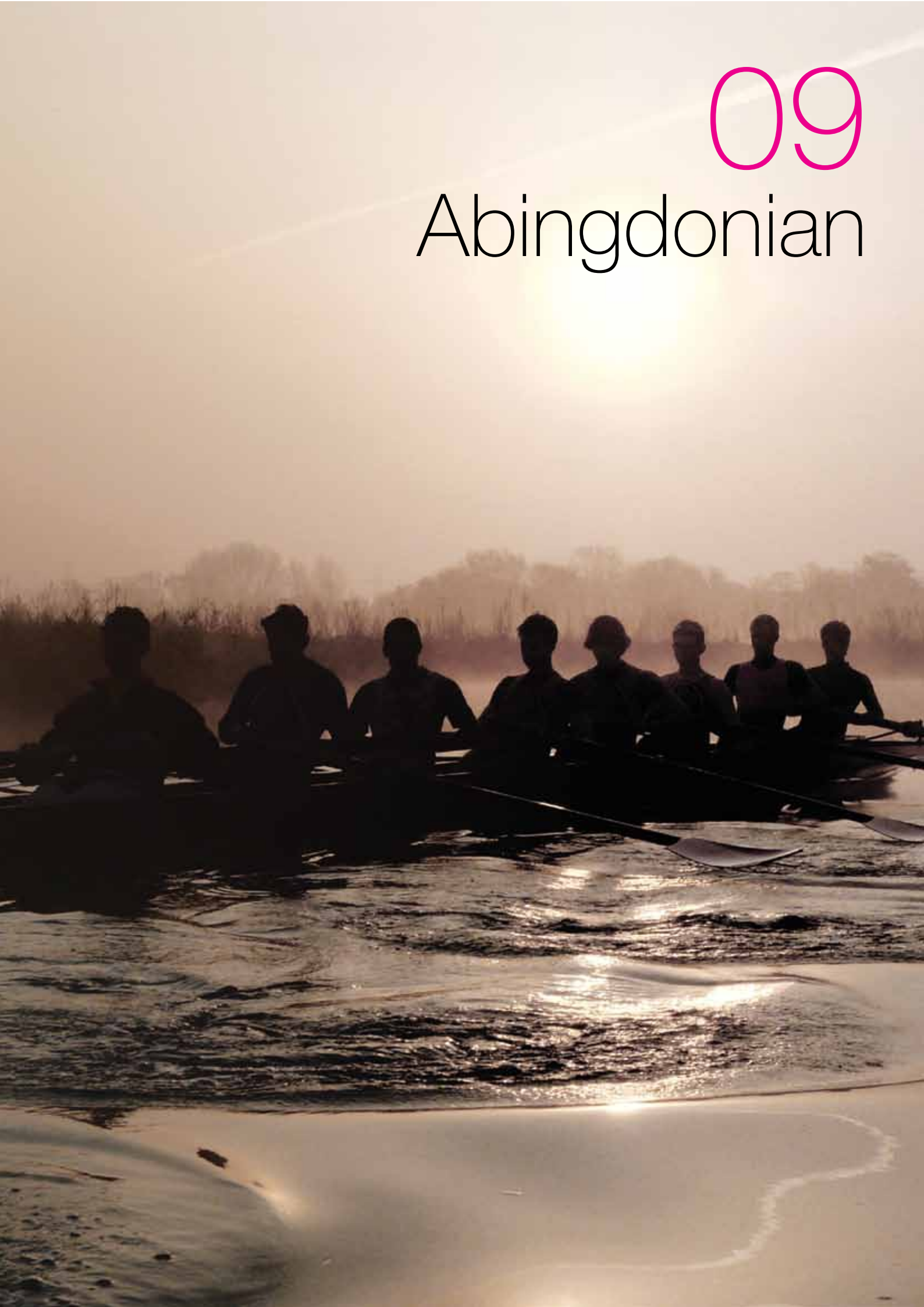


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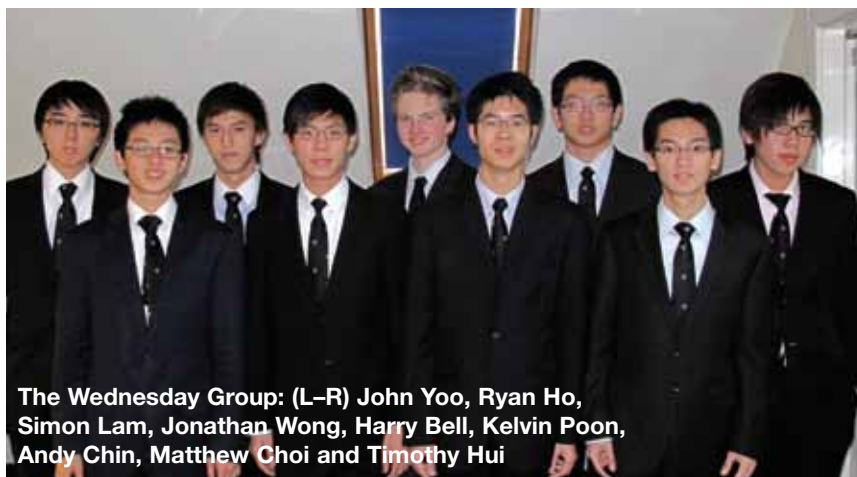
The Abingdonian

2008 – 2009

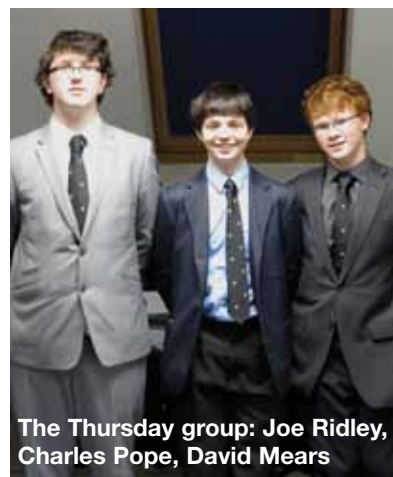
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Editorial



The Wednesday Group: (L-R) John Yoo, Ryan Ho, Simon Lam, Jonathan Wong, Harry Bell, Kelvin Poon, Andy Chin, Matthew Choi and Timothy Hui



The Thursday group: Joe Ridley, Charles Pope, David Mears

The Abingdonian was first published in 1890, in order to record the activities of both the School and its Old Boys. In those days there were three issues a year, each issue being about 12 pages long. In 1976 this was reduced to one issue of 55 pages. Until 1987 the magazine carried brief news of Old Abingdonians but the following year the *Griffen*, established in 1976, took over this function completely. Despite this, the magazine has not got shorter but much longer. One has to remember that in 1890 there were fewer than 100 boys at the School whereas now there are over 850 – and these 850 all seem to be extremely active!

As the Editor of *The Abingdonian* I am delighted to have received so many reports of all these activities – from the triumphs of the Under 12 B XV to the challenges of those who tackled the Three Peaks. However, producing *The Abingdonian* is a huge job – and it seems to be getting bigger every year. Without the help of my editorial group I would be swamped; not only do this group check the spelling of all

the names, and endeavour to impose house style on all the documents, but they also turn up week after week with a dedication I have to admire, as the work requires painstaking thoroughness and accuracy. We are all of us, however, extremely grateful to Anne Soper, whose unerring eye for a misplaced comma or a mis-spelt name means that the final document is far more polished than it might otherwise be.

During the past year the back numbers of the magazine have all been digitised – all 118 years of them – so that now, if you have *Adobe Reader* on your computer, you can word-search all the indexed files at the press of a button. Without this program it is still possible to read the magazines but only as separate files. At the moment the facility is available on the School's intranet but soon we hope to perfect a web version.

I find it strangely compelling to be able to read that 100 years ago the Debating Society motion, 'That in the opinion of this House the growth and



power of the eastern nations is a threat to western civilization,' should have been defeated by 16 votes to 7, and the motion, 'That in the opinion of this House the ambitions of the German Emperor menace the peace and safety of Europe,' be carried 9 votes to 6 – especially since I know that the proposer, HWB Burkett, by then a captain in the Wiltshire Regiment, was killed in France in April 1918.

Who knows what ironies future generations will find in the pages of this edition.

Sarah Weame

Headmaster's foreword



Mark Turner with left to right – Kate Hoey, Richard Dick, Martin Keown, Robin Brew and Kate Allenby at the opening of the Sports Centre on 4 October 2008

It is with growing nostalgia that I write this, my last, contribution to *The Abingdonian*. Once again, my most important function is to thank our editor, Sarah Wearne, and her splendidly energetic editorial team. It is no coincidence that, under Sarah's editorship, both the size and the quality of this production have increased immeasurably.

Looking back over the course of this last year, one's hindsight is perhaps tainted by the fact that autumn gales are hitting the Abingdon site, and the number of absences with swine flu appears to be rising. Nevertheless, I hope very much that you will enjoy reading in these pages the triumphs of the School over a particularly busy period.

With the breezes of change beginning to whisper round the rafters, I am delighted to record my congratulations and thanks to all involved.

Mark Turner
November 2009



Common Room Farewells



Ian Macdonald

Reports of Ian Macdonald's retirement in summer 2009 were exaggerated, like those of Mark Twain's death in 1897: a colleague's sabbatical prompted a temporary return to the English Department in the autumn, and he remains the overlord of school badminton.

Ian's continuing link with Abingdon edges him towards that increasingly rare achievement, four decades of paid work in schools. He started at Pocklington in 1971, after four years at Leeds University. The Yorkshire years presaged much of the contribution he has made here, especially in the field of boarding, badminton and buses. Above all, they enabled him to refine the skills and strategies essential to the success of the teacher of English; the prerequisite of imaginative empathy was probably there from the start.

For all of his activities outside the classroom, Ian would prefer to be remembered for his work inside it. Teaching came first. Something of a sceptic with regard to modern theories

of pedagogy, wary of fads and the danger of teaching by numbers, he remained true to the traditions and values of a liberal education. Perhaps his favouring chalk over board pens was symbolic. He enjoyed his work, and, once they had found his wavelength, boys responded with similar enthusiasm. Master of ceremonies, provoking and nudging debate, Ian took especial delight in the positive reaction of less gifted pupils to both his own prompts and, more important, those of the class's witty and wise. Few matched his ability to 'work' an unstreamed set. Just occasionally, when recounting the events of a particularly rewarding lesson, he allowed a tiny but unmistakable Caledonian element to colour his BBC accent, testimony, perhaps, to the sincerity and depth of his feeling, and a reflection of the sheer pleasure he takes in shared word-play.

A former Head of English has commented on Ian's role as maestro, commending his ability to inspire, blend and synthesise responses, draw them to conclusions, then proceed to develop a related theme. No wonder he is a keen student of musical structure. In Ian's lessons, there was always room for the unexpected and the oblique; idiosyncratic writing tasks were conjured up, allowing boys to be funny, honest and themselves. Each boy was encouraged to 'find his own voice' — to begin to discover in his own writing (and reading) who he might be. There is always a pastoral element to English teaching, and Ian's long spell of tutoring in the Lower School, where the tutor is a form master, gave him the opportunity to monitor and

steer the progress of tutees who were also his pupils. The dead hand of an examiners' 'specification' has not reached this region, allowing him to be especially inventive.

Older pupils benefited similarly from their teacher's lateral thinking. The syllabus was covered conscientiously, uncongenial though some of it was; but students of Oscar Wilde would find themselves listening to Gilbert and Sullivan, and trawling through fifth-form 'media' material was alleviated by a generous dose of Jeremy Clarkson journalism.

And still the marking got done, pressures of work notwithstanding. Ian was not one to succumb to the temptation to postpone this essential task, tired, perhaps, after returning from an away fixture. Boys came to expect a rapid return of essays and exercises; they appreciated the crisp, detailed criticism of their efforts; confidence grew accordingly.

Older Abingdonians will probably remember Ian as a mainstay of the boarding operation, starting as resident tutor in Larkhill, transferring to Crescent and eventually taking over the running of School House. Here, too, he did much to promote the social and cultural awareness of his charges: 'Symposium', a society which became prominent in the Upper School through the 1970s and 1980s, had its origins in the boarding houses, growing out of its creator's interests in theatre, music, literature and history. Converts to classical music owed their enthusiasm in great part to evening listening sessions, and were given special

insights into the interpretations of Ian's favourite conductors, Karajan, Szell and his beloved Toscanini — exacting taskmasters, all of them, and sticklers for standards, not unlike their champion.

Constraints of space and the sheer length of Ian's Abingdon career now dictate something of a list, to do some kind of justice to the extent of his contribution. He directed several plays, in the era before specialist Drama; he played the major role in the design of the Charles Maude Room, and was its supervisor for several years; he had a spell as Technical Director of the Amey Theatre. He ran the English Department for a year, during Graham Barrett's Australian sabbatical. He helped Graham run the ever-burgeoning reprographic department, and succeeded him in 2004. He shepherded the school minibuses. Famously, he was, and remains, master in charge of badminton.

Two of these responsibilities demand special treatment. There is probably no truth in the rumour that Hartwell's staff would hide behind cars and counters on hearing that Ian was on his way, but they were certainly wary of him; only the best would do for Abingdon's minibuses, and they grew to realise that a bus that hadn't received their fullest attention would be returned forthwith, its driver brandishing a list of complaints, some of them highly technical. There's little Ian doesn't know about motor vehicles, Fords in particular, and he is never afraid to display his mastery. Common Room minibus drivers who failed to match his high standards risked a similar earful.

It is hard to write anything original about Ian's stewardship of badminton. For a third of a century, he has presided over the School's most consistently successful club. Abingdon teams have verged on the unconquerable, even

when their strength has been diluted to give other schools a semblance of a chance. Abingdon's links with the Far East have helped, of course, but this asset has been enhanced by Ian's rapport with Asian students; his background in boarding has helped here. They respect his organised, patient approach, together with his capacity for sheer hard work. All of the players appreciate his calm encouragement, and impress other schools by their unassuming, polite demeanour. Their supremacy is not effortless, but it usually seems so; and there's certainly no need for group huddles. Ian's influence is manifest.

Ian adores Jane Austen's filigree wit, yet revels in the sumptuous sonorities of Richard Strauss — Wagner, too, as long as the singers keep their mouths shut. He is no petrolhead, but loves cars; in contrast, he is an aficionado of steam locomotives, and knows how to drive them, both scale models and the full-blown version. Indeed, he is something of an expert in the field of railway history. He has a clear, tidy mind; but the boys' view of their English teacher was partly obscured by a barricade of books and papers. Not everybody believed his claim to know exactly where everything was to be found. Contrasts, contradictions and paradoxes abound. It is, however, the consistency and integrity of his effort that compel attention and admiration. High fliers make their contribution, no doubt, but 'stayers' à la Macdonald play an enormous role in the history of schools. He will be missed — when he eventually departs — and deserves a long and rewarding retirement. One of his ambitions is to personalise his Honda Prelude's numberplate. Is anyone willing to sell him BWV 547? (Bach's Prelude and Fugue in C major, Ian's favourite).

Richard Hofton



Anne Soper

Anne Soper joined the English Department at Abingdon School in 1985 and 'retired' at the end of the summer term of 2006, but continued on a part-time basis until the middle of the Michaelmas term 2009. Only then did she decide that a celebration was in order, inviting present and former members of Common Room and the many friends she has beyond the School to an autumnal but sunny garden party somewhere along the Radley Road.

Anne stumbled into the teaching profession after having gained a B.A. at the University of Exeter and an M.Litt at Keele. After five happy years teaching in Cornwall, where she learnt her trade, she arrived in Abingdon, spending eight years at Our Lady's Convent Senior School before moving to Park Road.

Her teaching style and enthusiasm for her subject have been an inspiration for legions of Abingdon boys, from callow first-formers to gnarled upper-sixth-formers. As a form tutor she was equally successful, giving judicious help and guidance and yet still encouraging the pursuit of excellence. To ensure her tutees were awake and ready for the day, they would often be challenged to solve the Polygon word puzzle from the Times, or some other fiendish conundrum. Her understanding and kindness were always evident on exam

results days – ever ready to congratulate those who had done well, but equally willing to console and advise those whose results were disappointing. Her love and knowledge of cricket, especially Yorkshire CCC, meant that during the summer term she might be seen, scorebook in hand, umpiring matches at junior level. For a number of years, Anne was School Librarian and continued to help in the Library after the post had been made full-time. More recently, she took on the job of co-ordinator of the Third-Year Service Scheme within the Community Service programme.

In looking back at her career at Abingdon, one would hope to hear Anne say that it was “terrific”. Tackling the crossword, country and city walks, and watching cricket can now be given a little more time. Life beyond Abingdon presents its own challenges, but we can be sure that Anne will meet them with the same sympathy and understanding that she has shown to her pupils and her colleagues within the Abingdon School community.

Phil Richardson

One of the many things Anne Soper loved about teaching was the opportunity it afforded for puzzlement, whether located in a verbal crux (is flesh for Hamlet too “solid” or too “sullied”?), a crossword puzzle or, most frequently, in a boy. So there is an enjoyable appropriateness in the historical fact of knowing that Anne arrived at Abingdon in 1985, but not quite knowing when she departed. It is true that she began to withdraw from full-time teaching in 2006, but even by 2009 she was still to be found in English Department classrooms; to compound further the archivist’s problem, Anne remains on the books, as it were, even at the time of this going to press, poised as she is with red pen over the draft pages of *The Abingdonian*. Not so much gone-but-not-forgotten as just not-quite-gone.

Notwithstanding the caveats to be entered (and stayed in, she might sardonically mutter), the time has come to pay some sort of official tribute to a career that has been a source of reassurance to many boys, delight to her colleagues and surprise, perhaps, to its protagonist. It’s my guess that Anne did not intend at the outset to spend most of her career in an all-boys’ school (though her love of cricket might have been a factor here), nor as a recidivist Yorkshire lass did she necessarily plan to inhabit the soft south. But Anne has always delighted in the fortuitous, the coincidental, the serendipitous. Her love of cryptic crosswords, it seems to me, is of a piece with her love of Hopkins’s poetry, or the Metaphysicals: a tough intelligence (and Anne does have three degrees) finding expression in dazzling obliqueness. There was something of that in Anne’s teaching, too: generations of (senior) boys have had the hyphen (“extra-marital sex or extra marital sex?”) made as memorable as the Wife of Bath by way of Anne’s gift for finding the unexpected comparison or suddenly illuminating context.

But Anne has been much more than a clever teacher leading clever boys. Many of us have been glad to benefit from her amused tolerance of and deep sympathy for those boys who did not easily succeed in conventional terms; where other teachers despaired, Anne would not only persevere but actually relish taking on problems and difficulties. She always looked beyond (but did not overlook) the syllabus or the next examination: she had a firm conception of herself as nurturing the boy into adulthood, of equipping a child with the resources by which he might navigate his way through school and beyond. Hence her pleasure in encountering former pupils: she well understood Wordsworth’s line about the child being father to the man.

As for her colleagues in the English Department and beyond: we shall miss her punctiliously annotated marking, her passion for the library as representing the heart of the School, her unassuming modesty ... but most of all we shall miss her sense of the absurd. Few were the days that were not enlightened by Anne’s delighted laughter in the face of some apparently intractable problem, whether in the shape of boy, colleague or crossword clue. May her retirement furnish her with many more occasions for laughter.

Andrew Swarbrick

Dr Jamie Older

Dr Jamie Older contributed a huge amount to the life of Abingdon School over his six years of service. He has had an impact in a number of areas and he has left metaphorically large shoes, which will prove to be difficult to fill, by moving to Trinity School as Head of Sixth Form.

For most people the prospect of spending January afternoons at Tilsley Park would be uninspiring, but this environment brought the best out in Jamie. His coaching instructions, unaffected by the roar of the traffic from



the A34, have proved to be inspirational to the teams he has taken. He is a real hockey evangelist who has contributed a huge amount to the game as a whole at Abingdon School. Trinity School is a hockey school and will reap the benefit of his expertise, and hopefully he will have more time to actually play the game himself.

As a housemaster, Jamie has achieved the difficult task of establishing a genuine house spirit in a dayboy house. A large number of boys have really developed from the help and encouragement Jamie has given them, and he has spent a lot of time supporting members of his house in various sports matches and performances. There have been a number of successes, but the inter-house singing competition has been an elusive title. Like Chelsea in the Champions League, refs' decisions have proved to be costly, as have individual performances by key players.

In the Chemistry Department, Jamie has been an excellent teacher of all age-groups and abilities. He was always prepared to give up his own time to help and support those who found the subject difficult. As a self-confessed 'chemistry geek', the top sets he has taught have hugely enjoyed his passion and knowledge of the subject. His role as manager of the Abingdon School Chemistry Olympiad Team should not be underestimated as in the last two years boys have made the final GB team under his guidance. I know he will miss the chemistry teaching at Abingdon and in return the department will miss his advice and guidance.

Jamie will be successful as Head of Sixth Form at Trinity, and I am sure he will use that role as a springboard to move further up the teaching profession.

Ian Middleton

Patrick Wilmore

Patrick's interest in biology started with his degree course at East Anglia University, where he stayed on to do a doctorate in molecular genetics, which involved four years of research into yeast. It was to Abingdon's advantage that Patrick decided not only to teach biology but also to remain here throughout his teaching career. With his interest in yeast, it was also fortunate that the school of his choice was within sight of the local brewery!

It is not easy to express the depth of gratitude the School and countless Old Abingdonians feel for Patrick. Professionally first-class at his job, he had what an ex-colleague has described as a "passionate loyalty" to the School: these were two of the factors that made him very popular.

Although best remembered by present pupils as a hyper-efficient Examinations Officer and as an outstanding teacher of biology, it is for the impact that he had on School life prior to this for which he will be best remembered. At a time when health and safety was less important than it is today and risk assessments were unheard of, it was indeed a challenge to take groups abroad, especially if there was a high risk potential. This did not deter Patrick from pioneering several successful and popular ski trips.

At the time of Patrick's appointment, hockey at Abingdon was struggling to survive, the decline in interest among players and coaches due mainly to the lack of playing facilities. The game was seen as a means of letting off steam, with the main emphasis on 'playing the game', without first acquiring the skills to do so successfully. Fortunately, in 1979 Patrick agreed to take on the role of master in charge of hockey,



a position he held for fifteen years, during which time, and as a result of his expertise and enthusiasm, the sport took on a whole new impact. Coaches were encouraged to give more structure to their practice sessions, pitches were rolled (much to the annoyance of groundsmen), and Abingdon fixtures were no longer seen as a soft option amongst our opponents. Patrick was responsible for all this, and the ethos of hockey at Abingdon today owes a huge amount to his initiative in those early days.

It was this same initiative that made encouraged the Second Master in 1981 to persuade Patrick to run for the position of President of Common Room. He believed Patrick was the right person to spark some action into what was a very loyal but staid committee, reluctant to 'rock the boat'. As a result, not only did the committee, under Patrick's leadership, make some significant and necessary changes to the constitution, but Common Room knew that they had a president who was not afraid to express their views on important issues.

Another milestone in Patrick's career was his appointment as a dayboy housemaster. Throughout his long reign, Wilmore's House was the one

that middle and upper school boys particularly relished being part of. Not one to suffer fools gladly, fairness was the value he prized above all and inculcated among his boys. He will be greatly missed, and very difficult to replace in the many and varied important roles in which he has served the School. Abingdon is very fortunate to have had such a loyal ambassador, one who spoke his mind not to offend others, but with a passion for school-mastering which many will find difficult to emulate today.

We wish him a long and happy retirement. No doubt some time has been reserved for the golf course, for improving his impressive reputation as a film buff, and for a few more flutters on the horses.

Jeff Drummond-Hay

Finola Donovan-Picknett



Finola Donovan-Picknett joined the school in September 2002 after a career as an Associate Partner with a firm of Solicitors in Wallingford. There cannot be many who go into teaching, let alone drama teaching, after experiencing the dizzy heights of the law, but in Finola's case this bold career switch was prompted by a genuine 'Damascus Road' experience, one that took place – allegedly – in the jacuzzi of the Esporta Club in North Oxford. Finola's specialty was family law, something that sounds warm and cosy, but frequently isn't, and as she soaked away the stresses and strains of another day of separations, divorces, custody battles and restraining orders, Finola realized there had to be more to life than presiding over the dismantling of domestic relationships. In particular, she sought an outlet for the creativity she felt was being stifled by her legal work.

That creativity had an impressive pedigree: before entering the law, Finola was President of the Heywood Society at Peterhouse, where she oversaw the production of three plays a year. In addition to her Cambridge English degree, she developed interests in debating, creative writing, photography and magazine production – and then, of course, teaching.

It's no surprise that Finola's wide range of interests found many outlets at Abingdon. She has been a supportive tutor in middle school and sixth form; she has run the Junior Drama Club with a combination of energy and fun that has offered young actors an annual opportunity to take part in productions ranging from *Wind in the Willows* to *Lord of the Flies*; with Andrew Loughe she steered the Legal Forum and helped senior pupils gain a foothold in the legal profession; she served on the TASS and Common Room Committees; she contributed to public-speaking competitions, Duke of

Edinburgh trips to Snowdonia and the production of the *Abingdonian*. Latterly, she worked alongside Marcus Gibbs to run the fifth-year work experience scheme, in which her combination of careful planning and organisation was appreciated by boys, parents and employers alike. Above all, she has been a thorough and effective teacher, whose care and concern for the welfare of those around her, whether pupils, support staff or fellow members of Common Room, will be one of the most abiding impressions she leaves with us. Indeed, Finola's generosity of spirit is all the more remarkable in view of some very testing times she has faced in her own life while she has been here. Initial training as a lawyer may have helped, but I sense Finola's abilities to provide the sympathetic ear and wise counsel that many of us have appreciated are natural gifts, and ones that make her a clear candidate for a prominent pastoral role in the future. If that all sounds a tad worthy, let's also recall Finola's marvellously earthy laugh and sense of humour; the combination of her membership of the British Military Fitness programme and her enormous love of chocolate; the impromptu offers of stress-relieving massages in the Quiet Room, and her endless surprise at the range of odours boys are capable of creating in a classroom on a Friday afternoon.

Finola and her husband Miles are moving to Yorkshire to be closer to members of the family, and Finola then plans to strike out in a new direction once again, this time in a role that will allow her to concentrate on English teaching. Before that, she will have a chance to travel on a well-earned break. We wish her and Miles all the best for a happy and successful move.

Jeremy Taylor



Patricia Henderson

Patricia 'Trish' Henderson started at Abingdon as a teacher of Spanish and French in 2004, having completed her Modern Languages degree at University College, Durham, her PGCE at Green College, Oxford, and one year as a newly qualified teacher at Matthew Arnold School in Oxford. Quickly establishing herself as a popular and professional teacher amongst boys and colleagues alike, Trish took over leadership of the Spanish Department in 2006 and swiftly went about making it highly successful. There is no doubt that the recent achievements of the Spanish Department – including increased interest in the subject at all levels, its outstanding GCSE and A level results and its successful exchange programme – are in many ways down to Trish's tenacity, creativity and hard work. The GCSE results achieved in 2008 were so good that Abingdon School was awarded ten of the top grades by the exam board and 2009 saw the first Abingdonian leave School to study Spanish at Oxford. Several other Abingdonians are currently studying and applying for Spanish at other universities.

All this is great testimony to an extremely talented teacher. As one former pupil says, "her unique take on professionalism meant her lessons were always ones to look forward to." She always ensured that her lessons were interesting: managing to combine her love of fun and quirkiness with challenging and original material and exacting standards – a fantastic combination. She was no less popular or effective in her role as tutor – in the Middle School in Townsend's/Boyd's for three years, and in the Sixth Form in Franklin's for two.

Trish was also an admired and now sorely missed member of Common Room, of which she was President for twelve months. A keen socialiser, lover of good food, a connoisseur of fine wines and frequenter of local and regional restaurants and pubs, Trish was never one to miss a chance to spend quality time with friends and colleagues after a late-night marking session in the Common Room. In addition to this, she was the first to volunteer when any help was needed – be it covering lessons, 'policing' discos or giving lifts to the boathouse. Her support on the many Duke of Edinburgh expeditions she accompanied was invaluable, and she accompanied or organised several trips a year, notably the Spanish Exchange and the first sixth-form Spanish trip to Madrid in 2009. More intrepidly, she went on three World Challenge Expeditions during her time at Abingdon – to Peru, Morocco and the Himalayas. On all trips, the same mixture of fun and professionalism made her the perfect leader and colleague.

Being such a lover of the great outdoors and of adventure, it came as no surprise then when Trish announced last February that she would be leaving Abingdon to begin the next chapter of her career and life as a Spanish teacher

at the Garden International School in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

We shall all miss her wit, infectious laughter, support, reliability, competence and professionalism, and above all her friendship.

Andrew Loughe and Sophie Payne



Andrew Crook

Andrew Crook joined Abingdon in September 2006, after having studied for his PGCE at Oxford University. He had already completed a stint as a high-flier in the Treasury, and had also spent a year at Tonbridge School prior to his PGCE, deciding whether teaching was the right choice for a long-term career. Luckily he decided that it was, and Abingdon School has benefited from his decision in a number of ways. Firstly, his teaching has been excellent. His enthusiasm for the subject is readily apparent and his precise and academic approach has ensured that his students have received a rigorous grounding in the skills necessary to succeed in the subject. Secondly, the fact that Andrew came into history teaching from a slightly unusual background has also given him extra strengths. He

completed a PPE degree at Oxford and then went on to do an M.Phil in Economics before joining the Civil Service. This diversity has deepened his teaching and also given him an experience of working 'in the thick of it', which has been invaluable in giving students a glimpse of how real politics work. Andrew cleverly cultivated a slight air of mystery about what exactly he did whilst he was working for the government and some of the more conspiracy-minded students decided that this was unequivocal evidence that he had in fact been working for MI5. When I questioned him about this, he told me that he could tell me the truth of the matter but then he would have to kill me. Needless to say, the subject is still a mystery. Andrew has also contributed to the School in a number of other ways. He has run several Alpha groups for the sixth-formers, which have stimulated an interest in Christianity in some of the students; he also helped run the School's Citizenship programme, and in his final year he took over the organisation of General Studies. He also retained his interest in politics and debating at Abingdon through his involvement in the European Youth Parliament competition, helping to coach three successful teams. However, his most triumphant moment has to be his emergence one morning assembly as an impressive Blues guitarist. The Blues Society was soon impressing revellers at the Griffen Ball, and his obvious musical talent further established him among the boys as something of a 'dark horse'. Andrew leaves Abingdon to take up the Head of History post at Cheadle Hulme School 'up north', and our loss is, as they say, very much their gain. I am sure he will bring the same blend of intellectual rigour and dry sense of humour to his new school, and that they will consider themselves very lucky to have him. We wish him and his family all the best.

David McGil

Jon Barker

Jon is the first member of the 'new look' 2005 Geography Department team to move on to a new appointment. When Jon joined Common Room it was very obvious from the start that his keen, enthusiastic and competent manner would make him a popular teacher in the classroom. Always prepared to have a go and to try new things, he very soon found that he was in demand for many activities beyond the confines of the Geography Department. It was in the first couple of years that he established his dramatic credentials with his highly acclaimed sixth-form production of *Bouncers*, which he later took to the Edinburgh Fringe. Following this, there were other dramatic successes with Lower School productions; he also established the School Archery Club, was a resident boarding house tutor, and for three years ran the sixth-form General Studies programme. It was on field trips that Jon came into his own both as a geographer and as a good companion; not surprisingly, he was very soon being invited to make 'guest appearances' on a wide variety of school trips, the pinnacle of which must have been his participation in the arduous World Challenge expedition to northern India in the summer of 2008. During his short time with us at



Abingdon, Jon grew in both stature and professionalism, and it was obvious that he had the talent, skills and determination to become a very competent head of department in the future. It was no surprise when he secured just such a post at Uppingham School for January 2008. Challenging times lie ahead for many a head of department, with the numerous curriculum changes taking place at both middle school and sixth-form level. Jon will relish the opportunities this brings, and no doubt he will enthuse his new team and lead from the front. We wish him every success in his new post: Uppingham's gain is a significant loss for us.

Ian Fishpool

Yang Qin

Yang Qin was our Chinese assistant for the academic year 2008–2009. From the start of her Abingdon life, she demonstrated her own special brand of enthusiasm both for teaching and for Chinese. Her help in our Modern Languages Club has given pupils all across the age range the opportunity to learn some basic but useful Chinese. Her hard work over the year has helped to maintain the popularity of the Chinese Club. She has also



helped many boys to achieve success in both IGCSE and GCSE Chinese. As a qualified teacher of English, she has adapted her existing unique teaching skills well to teach Chinese in Abingdon. We truly appreciate all her hard work and help throughout the year. She has been a valuable member of the Chinese Department.

Yang Qin has gone back to her previous post as teacher of English in China. Although we will miss her effervescent contribution to the department, we all wish her very well indeed in the development of her teaching career in China.

Lina Man

Kai Grädtker

Once again, the small town of Diepholz on the North German Plain has provided Abingdon with a language assistant. In common with his predecessors, Kai has been a welcome addition to the German Department, providing valuable support across the full range of pupils. As ever, the most useful contribution has been at sixth-form level, where Kai has spent many an hour honing the oral skills of candidates preparing for AS and A2 oral exams. Kai has taken his role very seriously and has always been willing to



carry out whatever has been asked of him with a minimum of fuss, and with good humour. Outside the department he became involved in the wider school community, particularly on the boarding front, where he has helped out enthusiastically and competently in Phelps' House. He quickly grew to appreciate our English sense of humour and soon attempted to emulate it, but with varying degrees of success – I did genuinely laugh at one of his jokes recently though ...

Kai leaves us to return to his studies at Osnabrück University where he hopes to train later as a teacher. We wish him every success in his future career and look forward to his inevitable future visit to Abingdon (although maybe not wearing those 'nice' yellow shirts...). The boys from Diepholz always come back!

Nick Revill

Andy Hall

Andy joined us in September 2008 for his year as Music Assistant, a role that was established in 2005 to offer support of all kinds, particularly in the context of supervision for boarders' music practice and in the running of the weekly lunchtime concerts. He quickly made his mark in this and much else.



A recent graduate of Bristol University, where he had also completed a Master's degree in musical composition, Andy showed himself to be committed to all aspects of the job, offering support to our forty-strong team of music teachers, and proactive in looking ahead to concerts coming up and establishing good administration in the Music staff room. Andy soon revealed his commitment to an evolving role, which included work with the Big Band and with the senior jazz ensemble: both bore fruit, especially with the preparations for the Big Band tour to Tuscany at the end of the year.

Andy also immersed himself in a number of teaching roles – aural training for groups and individuals and theory classes kept him busy at lunchtimes and after school. In the evenings, Andy was a presence for the boarders in the Music School and also helped with Thursday evening services in Chapel.

We are aware that Andy continued to compose and was selected as a composer for the prestigious SPNM – the Society for the Promotion of New Music. He submitted a Big Band composition for a competition in Japan and has a performance coming up soon in Sweden. Meanwhile, Andy has been appointed as Librarian to *Berkshire Maestros*, the county music service based in Reading. Andy will be sorely missed – his charming modesty, his appetite for hard work, and his commitment to boys and colleagues alike have served us very well indeed. We will miss him greatly, but wish him and Helen all the very best.

Michael Stinton

Obituary

Veronica Walker

When Veronica Walker, a local girl, was a pupil at Our Lady's Convent Senior School in the 1960s, she could hardly have imagined that she would one day send two sons to Abingdon School, and teach there herself, in due course.

After reading for her degree in French with German at Royal Holloway College, she taught in Slough, and then she and her husband spent some time living in Germany when he worked at Tübingen University. She taught at a secondary school in Kaiserslautern and then lectured in Reutlingen.

Veronica joined Abingdon in 2001 to teach French. She quickly became Head of French, then Head of Modern Languages. This came as no surprise since she had been Head of Languages at St Bartholomew's, Newbury, then Director of Studies at Douai School before its closure. She joined Abingdon from St Edward's, Cheltenham, where she had also served on their senior management team, which freed her from the burden of commuting from Newbury to Cheltenham.

Astute in all her dealings and keenly committed to pupil achievement, she managed the largest department in the School with determination and skill. Colleagues recall meetings which were fun, and in which everyone worked together – though she did once forget to turn up to her own departmental meeting, and went to the town centre instead! A generous



//
Astute in all her dealings and keenly committed to pupil achievement, she managed the largest department in the School with determination and skill.
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host of departmental parties, enhanced by her impressive cooking and beautiful garden, Veronica sought to get the best out of her colleagues for the benefit of the pupils. She was always calm and considered in her comments, and pragmatic in seeking to resolve difficulties. For me, in my days as Director of Studies, she was a considerable help, always putting her side of an argument robustly, but realising that other factors might have to win out. I valued her wise counsel.

She was very positive about the experience of her own boys at Abingdon, and believed that our philosophy of breadth was important,

particularly for able pupils. She was also very unassuming about the considerable achievements of her OA sons, Alan and Martin, and of her husband, recently appointed OBE.

Sadly, she suffered ill health in the last two years, which she bore with amazing fortitude, and she spoke at the Common Room leavers' lunch in 2009 with great dignity and hope. Her health declined further over the course of the summer, and she died at home on Friday 6 November.

A large contingent of current and former members of Common Room attended her funeral at St Nicolas' Church, Newbury, where she had worshipped and sung in the choir for twenty years. Her husband spoke of Veronica's vivacity, intellect and generosity, and the minister paid tribute to the faith, hope and love which Veronica showed.

Her broad smile and her concern for others were always apparent when I visited her, and I always left in a more positive frame of mind than when I arrived, despite seeing the tribulations she had to endure. Veronica was a remarkable colleague and friend.

David Dawswell

The School

Chapel



Nicholas Mynheer's initial ideas for the Armed Services Memorial Window in the Chapel.

The Chapel, consecrated in 1903, is at an exciting stage in its history. Not only do we have a splendid east window dedicated to the Holy Trinity, but also Nicholas Mynheer, the artist, has produced plans to replace the other windows with scenes from both the Christian year and Abingdon School life. We pray for the realisation of his vision through legacies and other donations.

The year began with School services in St Michael's Church. At the annual School services in St Helen's Church for Christmas, and for the Commemoration of Benefactors and Passiontide, the preachers were, respectively, the Reverend Professor Ian James, a Church of England environment adviser, and Fr Timothy Radcliffe, OP, a former Master of

the Dominican Order. During the Commemoration service a wreath was laid on the tomb of John Roysse, the School's sixteenth-century benefactor. The Right Reverend Andrew Burnham, Bishop of Ebbsfleet, confirmed Thomas Fabes, Campbell Garland, Tim Grant, Edward Hughes, Jack Lindsay, Tom McGivan and James Telford. Their preparation included visits to churches in Abingdon, Oxford, Dorchester and Iffley, as well as the cathedral and University College Chapel.

The boarders attended a variety of Chapel services on Thursday evenings, including: Evensong and Eucharists, some led by the Chapel Choir, who also sang Compline on some Tuesdays in Lent; candlelit services for Advent and Christmas; the Imposition of Ashes on Ash Wednesday and a Sunset Service on the Sports Centre balcony. Music, art and drama were used. The boarding houses each sang 'en masse' a rousing anthem. The visiting preachers were: Francesca Elloway, a medical missionary in Congo; the Reverend Canon Beaumont Stevenson, former Chaplain of Littlemore Mental Health Centre; Professor Chris Lavy, Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre, Oxford; the Reverend Anthony Hogg, Vicar of Hanney; the Very Reverend Dr Simon Gaine, OP, Prior of Blackfriars, Oxford; the Reverend Canon Roger Humphreys, Rector of Woodstock; the Reverend Professor John Barton, Oxford University and Fr Tom Taaffe, St Edmund's RC Church, Abingdon. Some members of Crescent House

raised money for *BLESMA*, the British Limbless Ex. Serviceman Association, by singing Christmas carols in Park Road and Park Crescent.

There were services for Lower School, for first-year boys and their parents, for the new boarders, for the academic staff, and, in St Michael's Church, for the leavers. Prayers for the School were said daily at 8.20 am, and Church festivals and Saints' days were celebrated with Holy Communion before lunch.

For Remembrance Day, an Act of Remembrance in the Amey Theatre ended with a wreath of poppies being placed in Chapel below the lists of OAs who died in the World Wars.

We are most grateful to all who assisted to enhance our worship: the Headmaster, the boys and the staff who read lessons; Mr Whalley and the Chapel Choir; Mr Dawswell and Mr Aitken, who assisted with a chalice; Miss Matthews for her inspirational conducting of boarding houses; the Reverend Paul Gooding and colleagues who led worship; the Chapel cleaners; and Mrs Turner and the ladies for their glorious arrangements of flowers.

The Revd Henry Kirk

The Library

The Michaelmas term started with a pleasant surprise for all first-year boys who, as part of a recent government initiative, were able to select a book of their choice from a wide selection of current children's literature. Later in the term, a visit by members of Lower School to see *War Horse* at the National Theatre in London caused the novel to fly off the shelves for the rest of the term!

In this term the Kids' Lit Quiz is held: an annual event for first- and second-formers, which provides them with the opportunity to demonstrate their detailed knowledge of children's literature. A hard-fought internal heat produced two teams of four boys to represent Abingdon. An excerpt from Wayne Mills' blog (our Quizmaster) describes our regional heat thus: "...Fast and busy evening last night in front of over 200 spectators who witnessed extraordinary talent on display. Some kids were even attempting questions before they were asked, with the winning school (winning) by half a point. The authors' team with superior numbers bettered the winners, but look at the literary power of these people: Meg Harper, Linda Newbery, Dennis Hamley, Mark Robson, MG Harris, Rachael Wing and Susie Day. I was delighted to see so many local politicians supporting the event. ... Can't wait until the next heat."

After the Michaelmas half term, the Reading Bonanza scheme, which encourages boys to read as many books from different genres as possible, was started again, running through until the Summer term. This year, second-year boys could choose a percentage of their books from the non-fiction section of the Library: popular with some, dismay from others!



One of Abingdon's Kids' Lit Quiz teams

Awards were presented at the end of each term with notable successes by Thomas Kelly, who excelled with a platinum award for 15 different genres read by January, followed by a similar award to Colin Nuttall and Edward Reynolds in the April round, by which time, Thomas Kelly had worked his way to his second award, a gold, for 12 more books read. Not to be outdone, Edward Reynolds achieved silver for 8 books in the summer award! Along with these starrier awards were some personal successes which culminated in 29 bronze awards (5 different genres), 19 silver, and a further 5 golds awarded to Thomas Allen, Ivan Nikolaev, Benjamin Nabnian, William Sharp and Gem Vongseenin.

In the Lent term, the 'Joint Schools' Author' event, organised by the librarians from three schools (Abingdon, Our Lady's Abingdon and the School of St Helen and St Katharine), offered an opportunity for as many primary and secondary students as possible from the local area to hear a first-class children's author talk about his work. This year Abingdon hosted the event and it was a pleasure to welcome Tim Bowler. Tim's inspiring talks were the

source of a competition, which he judged personally, to write an essay in a similar style to his books.

In his letter he wrote:

"I have now read and judged all the entries. It was a most enjoyable task. Please pass on my congratulations to ALL the boys. The standard was very high and it was difficult to choose a winner. All six boys produced excellent stories and I have a few comments on each piece."

1st prize was awarded to Edward Bryant for his essay which was "tense, terse, dark, dangerous: a chilling piece of writing".



Tim Bowler signing for a keen reader



The winning Carnegie Quiz team

Highly commended were William Nash for his “pacy, dramatic, well-realised action sequence with good characterisation” and James Hearn for a “startlingly original story, very creepy and an outstanding use of dialogue”.

And finally a certificate was presented to the following boys:

Johnny Burrow for a “slickly-written, fast-moving, scary and very gripping essay”;

Laurence Lilley for an “inspiring, upbeat story, extremely well-written and very moving”; and Alexander Grantham for an “extremely frightening, well-written story with a brilliant twist at the end”.

Children's Laureate

This year a new Children's Laureate was appointed (the illustrator Anthony Browne, who succeeded the poet, Michael Rosen) and *Booktrust* ran a competition for nominations.

Frederick Clamp Gray won a prize for his nomination of Caroline Lawrence, last year's visiting author.

The main library activity of the Summer term is 'Shadowing the Carnegie': a national scheme involving over 30,000 school children reading the shortlisted titles of the prestigious prize, the Carnegie Medal, which is awarded annually for the best of children's literature in that year.

Students from all six Abingdon secondary schools join to participate in shared events. The first event, the Carnegie Tea, was held at John Mason School and gave the students the opportunity to exchange first impressions of the shortlist.

Abingdon hosted the Carnegie Quiz, the next event in the Carnegie calendar, where a more in-depth knowledge of the books was required.

The final event of the year, the Carnegie Forum, is normally hosted by one of the individual schools. However, this year we broke with tradition (for logistical reasons) and used the Guildhall, Abingdon. It proved to be very successful, with one librarian taking the 'hosting' responsibility. Over 100 students took part, utilising all the different spaces within the Guildhall for a mixture of discussion groups, rehearsals and presentations centred around the shortlisted books.

The Forum voted *The Knife of Never Letting Go* by Patrick Ness as their winner. As usual this was at variance with the national winner, which was announced as *Bog Child* by Siobhan Dowd – very sadly, a posthumous award.



Carnegie shadowers with a book-shaped cake

The Library has a very effective team of pupil librarians, without whom it could not run, and thanks are due to senior librarians, Charles Hutchence and Jonathan Webb, for their final year's contribution. Although not a senior librarian, thanks are also due to Chris Davis for his dedicated service to the Library.

The Library would like to acknowledge donations received as follows:

Mr M. Copus

The estate of Nigel Hammond, OA

The Revd Henry Kirk

Hugh Leach, OA

Madsen Pirie

Mr G. Osborn-King

Oxford University Press

Mrs Anne Soper

Mrs Fiona Wills

Paul Vlitos, OA

Contributing publishers to the

Oxfordshire Book Award

Classics & French Departments

Gaynor Cooper



Martin Keown



Kate Allenby



Robin Brew

The Sports Centre's First Year

The eagerly awaited Sports Centre was officially opened on Saturday 4 October 1999 – 2001. A large number of Open Day visitors got the opportunity to tour the Sports Centre and take in various sporting demonstrations from the VIP guests, with Olympic swimmer Robin Brew coaching in the swimming pool, Olympic bronze medallist Kate Allenby (modern pentathlon) fencing with representatives from the school team, and Martin Keown coaching football in the refurbished sports hall.

On their return to School from half term, the boys were keen to get in and use the Sports Centre. Of particular interest was the Fitness Suite, with approximately 250 boys and 100 staff members taking the opportunity to have an induction to be able to use the new equipment so as to add a new training element to their sport-specific sessions, or just to improve their general health and fitness. The sixth-form sessions at lunchtime were very popular and many boys attended, even through exam periods. Plans for 2009 – 2010 include greater access for the boys to follow strength

and conditioning programmes to improve their sporting potential and to complement the current rehabilitation programme aimed at getting them back into sport following injury.

The start of the Summer term saw the arrival of both swimming and water polo fixtures to the new pool – an opportunity to utilise the *Omega* electronic timing system provided by donations to the Sports Centre fund. The highlight for many was the House swimming competition, which saw the boys representing their houses for the inaugural House Swimming Cup. This event was well supported by a particularly vocal crowd of spectators, providing a fantastic atmosphere. The Sports Centre also hosted galas for the prep school boys to experience

swimming in competition. As well as increasing the opportunity for the boys to experience a wider and more diverse range of sporting and physical activities, the Sports Centre has extended the opportunities for the wider school community and local sporting and physical activity organisations. The pool has been well used for both swimming lessons and galas, with the School of Saint Helen and Saint Katharine, the Manor Preparatory School, the Unicorn School and Carswell Community Primary School the main beneficiaries thus far.

In June, the Sport and PE Department ran a 'mini-Olympics', which saw several local primary schools competing in a variety of different sporting events. The children enjoyed the pool, ergo



The highlight for many was the House swimming competition, which saw the boys representing their houses for the inaugural House Swimming Cup.



suite and studio as well as participating in some outside events – there was great enthusiasm and competitive spirit shown by all. The following day, a gala was hosted as an opportunity to showcase the swimming pool for competition purposes. Abingdon Prep., Chandlings, Moulsoford and the Dragon School attended and a high standard of swimming was evident, with the Dragon School emerging victorious.

Outside school hours, various local organisations have been using the Sports Centre. A strong partnership has been forged with Abingdon Vale Swimming Club to make the Sports Centre their home pool, and the sports hall was well used by several local cricket clubs in the run-up to the start of the season in April. As an educational establishment, it was anticipated that the Sports Centre could be used to improve coaching – to provide individuals with opportunities to undertake training, increase their knowledge and improve the standards of local sport. The Sports Centre has hosted various courses from the Oxfordshire Cricket Board and the Amateur Swimming Association, with a view to attracting other sporting organisations to bring courses here because of our excellent provision of teaching facilities. The Sports Centre is an RLSS Approved Teaching Centre for the National Pool Lifeguard Qualification and has run two courses this year, with a further two planned for 2009 – 2010. It has provided an opportunity for boys to gain a professional qualification and seek paid employment at the Sports Centre – twelve boys or OAs have thus far worked in the pool alongside other local sixth-formers.

Felicity Brown



Ergos



Karate



Fitness Suite



Basketball



Swimming Pool

The Origins of the Road Relay –



The start in 2007



Park Road 2008



Entering the School 2008

In the years after the Second World War, county cricket teams comprised of amateurs (mainly ex-public school) and lowly-paid professionals. The season was brought to a close with the annual *Gentlemen (amateurs) v Players* (professionals) – a light-hearted but usually pretty even match.

Consequently, it was hardly surprising that this structure was being mimicked at Abingdon in an entirely boy-organised, annual *Gentlemen v Runners* relay race of eight or more laps of 'The Wall'¹ – the name given to the non-grass circumnavigation of upper field. The Runners were the best two athletes for whom running was

their major sport, while the Gentlemen were eight or more boarders who, of course, dressed themselves as befits gentlemen for the occasion. The race was held on a Sunday afternoon and had been an unofficial fixture for several years before I joined the school in 1957.

In the early 1960s, the Cross-Country Club was also taking part in road relays at other schools, and a governor, Aubrey Smart, whose son Nick was a most promising athlete, thought that an internal competition would help to raise the standard of the School's teams, and offered to donate a cup for an inter-house competition. Multi-laps of 'The Wall' were obviously unsuitable, so

agreement was reached with Christ's Hospital to use Park Crescent. Even so, each runner would have to do two laps to bring the distance up to what we were looking for. In those days, every boy in the School was a member of one of the four athletic houses².

Road Relay Inaugural Event – 23.1.1967

Athletic house-teams (senior, junior, inter, senior) Bennett (Halling, Green, Smart, Denny) won in 36:22; Mr Murray: all 8 circuits in 33:02.

22.1.68 – Bennett (Crawford, Vernon, Smart, Halling) won in 35:48.

25.1.69 – Bennett (Crawford, Vernon, Balbernie, Smart) won in 34:59.

1. Not to be confused with the 'Stone Wall Run', which was a much longer run past Shippon, inflicted on whole teams when the pitches were unfit.

2. Bennett (yellow), Blacknall (blue), Reeves (red) and Tesdale (green).
There were no houserooms, but inter-house competitions, which included PT and music, flourished.

Each team was to comprise one junior, one intermediate and two seniors. Houses were encouraged to field three or four teams. The Masters' Common Room usually managed two.

The finish was the post near Tower Steps, the take-over box south of Big School. The start by the Well Head in Park Crescent was chosen as this avoided having a dangerous first corner while still making all legs equal length. In the early days, all eight laps came past Tower Steps, but when the composition of the teams changed to represent year-groups, there was so much lapping of the slower teams that the recorders had great problems. The solution was the first lap short-cut north of the Chapel.

Many years ago, leading runner Julian Day had a close encounter with the school maintenance truck, which resulted in the latter losing a wing mirror. Now mounted on a piece of oak, The Jules Wing is a trophy awarded to the individual recording the fastest leg. Over the years a



The take-over box

number of OAs and staff have run all four legs themselves, and I think I remember Mr Pritchard, when Oxon cross-country champion, coming in ahead of all the other teams. A relay is a team competition, however. The fastest team receives the accolade of

the Smart Cup, and the leading teams in each year-group surely deserve to have their achievement recorded in the *Abingdonian*.

Roger Baker



The finish

The Noble Art of Fencing



Very few people these days are familiar with 'the noble science of defence,' as we sometimes refer to the art of fencing. Most who are have only glimpsed it in theatrical form, in films or on television. Think of James Bond, Errol Flynn, Zorro or *The Three Musketeers*. So it is intriguing to notice the recent renewal of interest in fencing generally across the UK, and in particular in Abingdon School. Perhaps we have a collective eye on the 2012 Olympics to be held in London? Fencing is an Olympic sport, after all. Several schools and public bodies have jumped on this bandwagon and are constructing sports facilities, it seems, but arguably our school has recently built one of the best fencing salles in the country, and it is already receiving ever greater and more constant daily use.

Putting inspirational new facilities aside though, I believe there are more profound reasons for this flourishing of interest in fencing in our schools, and a preliminary look at the sport's background will help us better understand them.

Background

Fencing was born in Western Europe as the feudal knight declined and the bourgeois gentleman appeared. It was emphatically never a military art. Fencers did not concern themselves with the use of the sword in battle, but

rather, its use as a civilian weapon for self-defence 'on the street' as well as to decide private disputes in a formal duel.

Today the fencing that one will frequently see at competitions such as the Olympics, or the Public Schools Fencing Championships is a high-tech game bearing only a vestigial resemblance to these old duels. Clearly, the sabres, épées and foils used are no longer sharp, and the fencer is encased from head to toe in protective clothing; some might argue that such Health and Safety regulations have, as it were, taken the point away from the sport, and that the kind of fencing seen in these competitions is as far removed from the passionate historical duel as possible.

I disagree. Far from being divorced from its heritage, this sanitised form of fencing still is fascinating and occasionally passionate to watch and is the direct descendant of 500 years' evolution of the sword. In it, the fighters continue to simulate as closely as possible a 'frank encounter,' that is, a real fight with sharp swords. Like passionate classical music (according to the *Harvard Dictionary of Music*), I have seen fencing offer us a particular ideal of "poise, balance, proportion, simplicity, formal discipline, craftsmanship, and universal and objective (rather than idiosyncratic and

subjective) expression," perhaps even a "standard or model of excellence that has enduring value."

From this noble background I can discern at least two reasons why fencing continues to attract a growing number of our young men and women. The first is encapsulated in the idea of honour.

Honour

"A fencing bout between men of honour, under the direction of a teacher inspired by the same feelings is a diversion proper to good taste and fine breeding." – Arturo Perez-Reverte *The Fencing Master* 1999

The concept of honour seems very old-fashioned, until one remembers the modern street fight and its holy grail: the struggle for superiority or 'respect'. Whatever we call it, it is clear that adolescents, in their search for an identity, have always sought to lay claim to this nebulous property. I am with the Spanish novelist above, though, in that I believe that sublimating and refining the young person's natural aggression and search for superiority into this beautifully choreographed and highly practised skill that we call fencing is beneficial to all concerned, particularly if there is no physical danger involved. Perhaps this is a reason why so many young people are flocking to our new fencing salle, to (re)discover their honour?



But how exactly do they do this? Just by fighting? Certainly not. Even though there can be as many as five officials presiding over a fencing contest, fencers are still honour-bound to acknowledge all hits they receive. This, I believe, makes fencing quite unique. The intriguing thing is that if fencing is only a 'minor sport' (as some might insist) then it is the only one in which your opponent determines your score for you. Whilst a fencer places honour above all, even when it might cost him or her a touch, a bout or a tournament title, it is equally vital that fencing students come to appreciate the difference between 'ego' and 'honour'. Ego says 'Whatever I do is right.' Honour says 'Whatever is right, I will do'.

For example, it is a long-standing tradition in fencing that the person who 'receives a touch' from (is theoretically wounded by) the adversary, must acknowledge it openly. Perhaps you're familiar with the cry 'Touché!' which means, 'I have been touched!' A fencer never claims a touch against his or her opponent. But, if the adversary concedes a touch our fencer does not believe was valid, credit for it is declined by replying 'Pas de touche,' meaning 'Not a touch.'

Using the brain is indeed a pre-requisite for success in a fencing bout (as opposed to a street brawl), and the winner is often the fencer who uses his brain fastest. Quick thinkers respond well to the challenges of our fencing salle. Another reason to practise fencing, therefore, must be its call on the mind.

Intellect

"Art is the lie that enables us to see the truth" – Pablo Picasso

When crossing blades with a worthy adversary, a good fencer uses a three-stage process to solve the living, breathing, tactical and strategic puzzle facing him or her. First, one gathers information, one makes a decision and one takes action. Each action results in more information, upon which is based another decision for another action, which in turn brings more information and so on.

A fencing match, therefore, is nothing if not an exercise in critical thinking – carried on in a space of a few minutes and at a rather smart pace. The fencer soon develops a keen ability to sort out truth from appearances – and to do so under somewhat adverse and rapidly changing conditions. Could this be another reason why increasing numbers of the sharpest minds among Abingdon's youth visit the new salle? Certainly, I believe that practical study of this noble art is an entirely appropriate addition to the education one can offer the cleverer young people in our society. And it is much more fun than sitting yet another examination!

"The supreme end of education is expert discernment in all things – the power to tell the good from the bad, the genuine from the counterfeit, and to prefer the good and genuine to the bad and counterfeit" – Samuel Johnson (1709-1784)

The Future

I believe these are the main reasons why we are seeing a resurgence of interest in our schools in fencing. Certainly it is very obvious here at Abingdon. From a lowly beginning of three boys and a fencing master in the elderly and arthritic school fives courts, today Abingdon's Fencing Club stands at around 45 members, and counting, and two professional coaches, many of whom meet at least twice a week throughout the year in our new purpose-built salle. We have just fielded a team of sixteen boys at the 2009 Public Schools' Fencing Championships, at which one of our sixth-formers, William Fotherby, won the most prestigious competition, the Boys' Senior Sabre. But there are numerous success stories from lower down the school too: the third-former Thomas Chan recently won the Great Britain Silver Medal for his skills with his épée, for example, but this is for the report for next year's *Abingdonian*.

In order to respond in a measured way to the onward march of enthusiasm for fencing, we have begun a blog and forum on the School's internal site, and we are keen to build up our fixtures list over the coming months and years. (Do please get in touch if you are a Fencing Master and you would like to visit our wonderful new facilities.) Lastly, to honour the Club's continued fighting success, to recognise the immeasurable effectiveness fencing has on young people's upbringing, and to save our fencers, when they have removed their masks and plastrons, from having to fight for it, we have recently commissioned a tie! Clearly the most important element in a young man's upbringing, as I'm sure you'll agree.

After all, "La cravate, c'est l'homme" – Honoré de Balzac

David Pope

Doing Time in Abingdon



**The Abbey gateway in 1803.
The room over the gateway was used to house prisoners.**

When Evelyn Waugh, in the first half of the 20th century, said, "Anyone who has been to an English public school will always feel comparatively at home in prison", he probably was not aware of the feelings and thoughts of a handful of French prisoners of war who were confined in Abingdon in the latter half of the 18th century, billeted on the local population. Some of these prisoners felt kindly towards the School and when the time came for them to go home they donated a number of books to the School Library. So, who were these soldiers, and why were they here?

The ones who donated the books were Le Marquis de Chapuis, Monseigneur Couturier de Flottes, Monseigneur de Champclos and Monsieur le Chevalier de la Devèze, a mere four of the large number of captives of several nationalities interned in the county,

having been captured during the Seven Years' War of 1756-63. All were officers and, as we can tell from their names and titles, some were members of the aristocracy.

The Marquis de Chapuis was a fairly new title having only been established in 1740. Monseigneur Couturier de Flottes was repatriated through Holland following an order for the exchange of prisoners, signed by the Admiralty and dated 22 April 1760. The remaining two gentlemen styled themselves merely 'French Officers', although Monsieur le Chevalier de la Devèze called himself a French King's Officer.

They appear to have been educated men of good standing and among the books they gave are French translations of works by Xenophon, Bossuet and a commentary on some

of Voltaire's writings, including a reprint of his article on Geneva from the great *Encyclopédie* created by Diderot and d'Alembert. The express purpose of the *Encyclopédie* was to draw up a taxonomy of all human knowledge in order to change the way people thought, and this great work was to have a determining effect on the course of the coming French Revolution.

Most of the prisoners were keen to get home – some did not want to because they had formed attachments with local women, others were not allowed to because they were in debt and at least four of them died and were buried in Abingdon and so never went home.

However, those who were keen to get home petitioned the Admiralty when they thought that the order for their removal from Abingdon was being 'delayed', itemising their grievances in detail:

*To the most upright and most honourable
Lords of the English Admiralty
In London.*

My Lords,

... My Lords, (we) beg you most urgently to remove us from this town, where we are held as objects of horror by all the people and where we are not able to take a step without being insulted. Each day provides us with some examples of mistreatment, some, are attacked in the public squares, others suffer blows almost to their very inward selves; these latter overwhelmed unfairly by the most atrocious affronts, and the former, in short, snatched violently from the Bosom of their homes, to be dragged inhumanely into a public Cage which was only made for criminals; this latest

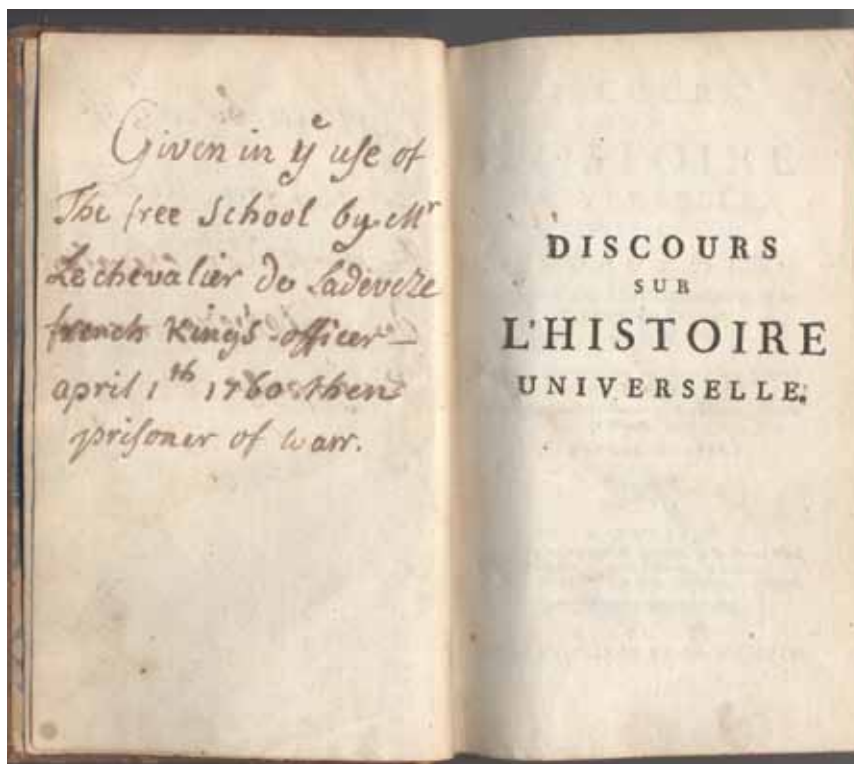
slur, my Lords, made us beg the chief citizens of this town to want to inform your Highnesses about it, and to ask you for our return; they did so since on the 31st of last month we learnt, with inconceivable joy, that your Agent was in possession of your Orders to send us away from here; but the delay which he is taking in carrying them out makes us suspect something & we have even just learnt that about 30 Frenchmen, whose love affairs or debts are keeping here, have together with your agent begged some of the local Lords to encourage your Excellencies to issue a Contrary Order.

We would have awaited, my Lords, your decision on this matter with great respect, had not the matter which occurred again last night forced us to redouble our urgent efforts, to beg you to give preference to our just petition.

Mr. Bordenave, the Surgeon, went out at 8pm to take a light to a house next to his own, barely had he gone in than a bargeman assaulted him with blows from a stick; he was bled and has been bedridden, very ill, since that moment. Such, my Lords, is a part of the maltreatment, which we have suffered. And although the justice we have received has slowed down the Rage of those who would do us harm, on the contrary each day they make new threats against us; worthily, my Lords, worthily we beg you, with all possible humility, to agree to our demand; this would be the most important service you could render us & we would forever be as grateful to you as can be imagined.

With the deepest respect, we are honoured, your Highnesses, my Lords, to be your most humble and most obedient servants.

(There follow 63 names)
Abingdon, 4 September 1760

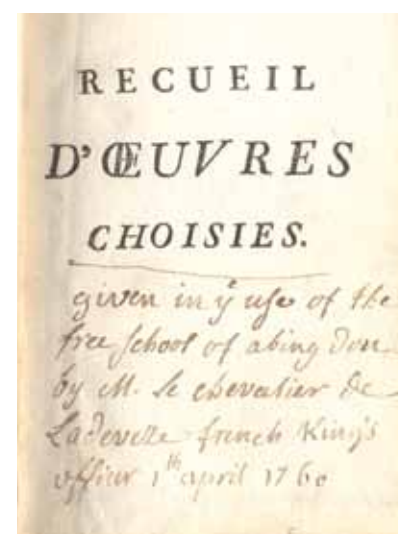


Discours sur Histoire Universelle a Monseigneur le Dauphin given by M. le Chevalier de la Dezeve

On the 17 September, the Admiralty replied by sending a copy of this and another petition to the Commissioners for the Sick and Wounded, who had the final say as to the whereabouts of Prisoners of War such as these. The Commissioners received the paperwork 'at 10 o'clock pm' and replied the next day:

The P^s of War being removed from Abingdon before Rec^d of this Letter made, it is not necessary to do anything in Con^o.

All the donated books are dated 1st April 1760, so it may be that 'our' Prisoners of War had already left by the time of the Admiralty's involvement. One can only presume that they had been better treated by the people of Abingdon than the 63 who complained; well enough, indeed, for them to bequeath to us their books.



I wonder how much use our boys and staff have made of them in the ensuing 249 years? Thank goodness we still teach and learn French and read French literature at this school!

David Pope

Three Peaks Trek – July 2009



At the start of the summer holiday eight boys, accompanied by Mr Stokes and Dr Wiekak, climbed the highest peaks in England, Scotland and Wales. After a long drive to Scotland, Mr Stokes cooked the boys a hearty meal before they retired for the evening, eager to get the trekking under way.

At 6 am the boys started the ascent of Ben Nevis and reached the summit four hours later. The weather was cool with mist on the peak and some snow for the boys to slide down! After the descent the team travelled to Wastwater in the Lake District. The climb to Scafel Pike the next day involved some scrambling and the boys reached the summit in high spirits, despite the fog. After returning to the Youth Hostel, some of the boys and one member of staff decided to have a dip in the lake before getting some well-earned rest. The next day the team drove to Snowdon and, after finally finding somewhere to park, climbed the mountain in just over two hours.



This was an excellent opportunity for the boys to experience these mountains and we hope that it has inspired them to take part in further trekking challenges.

Nicholas Stokes

Schools Challenge

Abingdon won the regional round of the Schools Challenge – the inter-school general knowledge quiz – with convincing victories over Radley, Wycombe Abbey, Cokethorpe and City of London School to qualify for the inter-regional round where they met Solihull School.

Here we were up against an altogether more formidable team, captained by an experienced and lightning-fast player, who on his own might have proved enough to beat Abingdon. There is no shame in coming to the end of a season's run by losing to such talent, and should Solihull maintain their form, it would not be unlikely that they will win at the finals.

Abingdon's two juniors this year have been Thomas Salt and Edward O'Brien and the two senior team members Thomas Finch and Kris Cao.

Thomas Finch's store of general knowledge is legendary, as is his ability to tell you all he knows in one breath and argue all four legs off an Arcturan megadonkey before persuading it to go for a walk. He has been the 'deviller' for Schools Challenge as well, and is the natural successor to the captaincy, so it is entirely fitting that he should be awarded Arts half colours. This season is Kris Cao's last: he has set an enviable standard of speed and general knowledge, even carrying the team all but single-handed on occasion. It is only fitting that he should be awarded full Arts/Service colours, as high a decoration for the Arts/Other Half as the School awards.

Ian Macdonald

Clubs & Societies



Mr English with Dr Tim King and Tomer and Omri Faraggi

Chess Club

This year the Chess Club entered a team for the first time in the Oxford & District Chess League (ODCL), the local league for adults. To ensure against defaults and provide a club night for Abingdon players, we affiliated ourselves with Oxford City Chess Club, which is based at St Margaret's Institute on Polstead Road in North Oxford. From October through to March, Abingdon boys, staff, parents and the occasional substitute from Oxford City Chess Club, battled valiantly as City 5 against other Division IV sides from Bicester, Cowley, Cumnor, Wantage, Witney, MCS and Oxford University.

It was hard to predict how our recently rejuvenated club of ungraded players would fare in the league, but after eight matches, that is, just over halfway through the season, it was amusing to find City 5 lying second in the table,

behind University 4. Winning the division and achieving promotion were beside the point, so, having proved our merit, we increasingly selected sides to provide match experience for a wider range of Abingdon pupils, experience that could usefully be drawn upon in schools' matches. By the end of the season, thirteen Abingdon pupils, three members of staff, one parent and seven substitutes had between them played 82 games for City 5, two games being won through defaults. Our five match victories were largely the result of successful play on the lower boards by City 5 regulars Omri Faraggi, Aslan Sayfimehr and Richard Slade. Incidentally, all individual and club results in the ODCL are available for perusal at the Oxfordshire Chess website: www.oxfordfusion.com/oca/. Michaelmas term began, like last year, with Old Abingdonian Stuart Robertson repeating his popular blindfold display at the Activities Fair, using the Club's giant chess set. Stuart returned a couple of weeks later to give a

simultaneous display, and bravely agreed to the same conditions that GM Peter Wells accepted last year. So, facing Stuart alternately as White and Black were eighteen boys, selected in equal numbers from the U13, U15 and U18 age categories, and two members of staff. Each player had 1½ hours for all his moves. Stuart, whose ECF grade is now 160, performed exceptionally well, conceding only five draws and no losses, and so won the encounter 17½–2½. The players who achieved draws were Omri Faraggi, Michel Baumgart, Henry Kibble, Veeral Manek and Dr Older.

In the knockout section of the prestigious National Schools' Championship, Abingdon entered one team of talented younger players: Edward O'Brien, Aslan Sayfimehr, Omri Faraggi, Thomas Salt, Tim Davies and Louis Hampden. For the first match in our zone, we were drawn against the Dolphin School, Berkshire, who have done well in this tournament in the past. Because of the age-handicap system, Abingdon could afford no more than two losses, and in the final minutes of the match, Edward O'Brien battled on Board 1 fully aware that two of the five finished games had already been lost. So, it was under considerable pressure that he delivered Abingdon's 2-4 away victory. The consequence was a home match a week later against a strong Eton side, whose top three players were all, strangely, graded 126. Eton's narrow 4-2 victory, in which age difference was not a factor, was indicative of the progress made by the Club since the beginning of last year, especially



OA Stuart Robertson playing twenty opponents simultaneously

as Eton would eliminate MCS in the next round and go on to win the zone. Edward O'Brien drew on Board 1, Aslan Sayfimehr won on Board 3, and Edward Reynolds, Louis Hampden's excellent substitute, drew on Board 6. Aslan Sayfimehr's win against his highly graded opponent was, perhaps, the best individual result of the year.

The Michaelmas term also saw the conclusion of individual knockout tournaments in the Lower School, Middle School and Sixth Form, the finals being played on Wednesday 10 December. In the Lower School tournament, which attracted 22 entrants, Edward Reynolds defeated Tim Davies to win the Nightall-Jakubovics Cup. In the Middle School tournament, which attracted 13 entrants, Edward O'Brien defeated Aslan Sayfimehr to retain the Pearce Cup, a notable achievement. And in the Sixth Form tournament, which attracted nine entrants, Henry Kibble defeated Veeral Manek to win the Harding Cup. Winners received book prizes. With more competitive chess games being played this year than last, it has been of even greater benefit to draw upon the coaching expertise and



GM Peter Wells coaching at the Oxfordshire Schools' Chess Congress

advice of Grandmaster Peter Wells. Sadly, international commitments caused Mr Wells to be absent for long periods, but we learnt a great deal when he was here, especially about the opening phase of the game, which has been our recent focus. We were also fortunate to receive additional help on a number of Wednesday afternoons from Mr Truran, an Abingdon parent and formidable chess player from Witney Chess Club.

In the Oxfordshire Schools' League, Abingdon again fielded teams in the U13, U15 and U18 sections. Because of difficulties finding suitable dates, the contests all occurred within the space of a fortnight towards the end of the Lent term. In the U18 section, our only opponents were a strong MCS side, whose top three players were graded 167, 138 and 124. Looking to the future, we fielded a comparatively young side of players who had recently been active in their support of the Club. This team was Henry Kibble, Veeral Manek, Tomer Faraggi, Edward O'Brien, Aslan Sayfimehr and Omri Faraggi. These boys put up stiff resistance away from home and gained valuable experience, but disappointingly came away without

even a single draw. In the U15 section, owing to the absence of Marlborough, our only opponents were last year's winners, Oxford High School, whose top two players were graded 119 and 90. So, it was particularly pleasing, when in our sole encounter at home on 13 March, Abingdon triumphed 4-2. The victorious Abingdon team was Edward O'Brien, Aslan Sayfimehr, Omri Faraggi, Thomas Salt, Matthew Davis and Angus Chan. This team result and Aslan's individual win on Board 2 represented a real breakthrough for the Club against top local opposition. In the U13 section, a combined team from Abingdon and Abingdon Preparatory School, proved themselves evenly matched against the Dragon School and Oxford High School, but they were outclassed by MCS, who won 5½-½. The combined Abingdon team was Michael Bicarregui, Tim Davies, Luke Teh, Edward Reynolds, Thomas Howard and Giles Waterson. It was Edward Reynolds who earned the solitary draw. The fact that Abingdon's U13 team failed to hold on to its joint second position in the table can be put down to the acceptance of a crafty draw offer from an Oxford High School girl who was just about to lose on time. That lesson was quickly learned.

Abingdon was represented again this year in the Varsity Chess Match. On Saturday 14 March at the Royal Automobile Club in Pall Mall, Mr English watched Stuart Robertson, playing for Cambridge on Board 7, defeat former MCS player Ti Chen. Another Old Abingdonian, Graham Morris, was reserve for the victorious Oxford team. Graham, who is now undertaking graduate research in mathematics at Oxford, has also been captaining the University's 1st team in the ODCL. Towards the end of the six-hour long match, it was enjoyable, instructive and not a little intimidating, to watch grandmasters Jonathan Speelman and Luke McShane help Stuart analyse his game.

The school phase of the UK Chess Challenge, which advertises itself as 'the world's largest junior chess tournament' also took place in the Lent term. From 32 Abingdon entrants, there were fifteen who earned sufficient points to qualify for the Berkshire Megafinal. Last year's School Champion, Tomer Faraggi, this year shared first place with Edward O'Brien, both players ending on 18 points. Joint second were Aslan Sayfimehr and Omri Faraggi on 17 points. The other

qualifiers were Alex Smith, Richard Slade, Alex Davis, Thomas Salt, Angus Chan, Matthew Davis, Tim Davies, Thomas Kelly, George Ruck, Giles Waterson and Edward Reynolds.

On the last Wednesday of the Lent term, the House Chess and Lower School Chess tournaments were finally decided. In the House Chess final, Older's, represented by Edward O'Brien, were again triumphant, beating Phelps', represented by Aslan Sayfimehr, in a repeat of the Middle School final. In the Lower School final, 1AJL, represented by Edward Reynolds, Alex Gunasekera and Alex Churchman-Davis beat 2 EMTS, represented by Giles Waterson, Oliver Sayeed and Karan Mukhi. The two lower boards were settled 1-1 before a much-improved Giles Waterson finally yielded to solid play by Lower School Champion, Edward Reynolds.

During the Easter vacation, on 8 and 9 April, the Oxfordshire Schools' Chess Congress took place at Abingdon for the first time. Games were played in English classrooms on the ground floor of Big School, and resting players and parents were accommodated in the Charles Maude Room, where

they could buy refreshments, browse at Tim Onions' bookstall and watch informal play on the School's giant chess set. With GM Peter Wells also providing coaching, the 2009 Abingdon Congress became a real festival of chess. The U13, U15 and U18 events were combined this year, which provided an excellent opportunity for three of our most promising players to test themselves against the county's finest. All came away with points in the seven-round Swiss tournament: Aslan Sayfimehr with 3.5/7, equalling Magdalen's Board 3; Thomas Kelly with 3/7 and Omri Faraggi with 2.5/7. Marcus Harvey, of Marlborough School, Woodstock, won the U13 trophy with 5/7 and James Foster, of Aylesbury Grammar, won both the U15 and U18 trophies with 5.5/7. The team trophy was won by Emmanuel Christian School, Littlemore, who performed well in the U9 and U11 sections.

In the summer term, the Club continued to meet on a recreational basis after lessons on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, and on Thursdays Mr English coached at the Preparatory School.

The Club is grateful to Dr Burnand, Dr Older, Dr Jeffreys, Mr Truran and GM Peter Wells for their dedicated work coaching this year. We will be sad to lose Dr Older, who will no doubt continue playing chess at his new school in Croydon, and also Tomer Faraggi, who is going up to Balliol. We hope to meet Tomer next season, playing for a University team in the ODCL. He has been a splendid Club Captain and is the first recipient of the new King Trophy for services to the Chess Club. This trophy is named after illustrious former Club Captain Tim King, who went on to become master in charge of chess at Abingdon, 1986-2005.

Andrew English



Match play at the Oxfordshire Schools' Chess Congress

The Edmund Society

Edmund Society lectures – on topics associated with philosophy, theology and ethics – are open to all pupils, staff and friends of the School. In the past year the speakers have been:

- General the Lord Guthrie of Craigiebank, GCB, LVO, OBE, DL, Chief of the Defence Staff 1997 – 2001, who spoke on *The Just War – are the traditions still relevant today?* (The just war theory specifies when it is right to go to war and what is right conduct during war.)



General Guthrie

- Mike Proudfoot, Department of Philosophy, Reading University, who spoke on *The Intellectual Fallacy – are the intentions and biography of the artist relevant to determining the meaning and interpretation of a work of art?*
- Jane Nicholson, an icon artist, who displayed some of her icons and spoke on *Icons – windows to heaven.* (An icon is a devotional image of Christ, the Virgin Mary, saints, angels or the cross.)
- The Reverend Dr John Strain, whose topical subject was *Virtue and Business Ethics.*
- Professor Marina Warner, CBE, DL, novelist, mythographer and cultural historian, who spoke on *Phantasmagoria and Imagination.*
- Dr Lisa Wide, Lecturer in Art History at Essex University, who gave an illustrated talk on *The Last Judgement.*

The Revd Henry Kirk

Real Tennis

This year has seen the formation of a Real Tennis Club, which plays on Radley College's new court, coached by two professionals, one a former world champion. Real tennis is the original racquet sport from which the modern game of lawn tennis, or tennis, is descended. It is a fascinating game, involving penthouses, a tambour, a grille, a dedans, galleries, hazards and chases. Such is its attraction that after the Michaelmas term there was a 25% increase in the number of boys playing the game.

We had a successful season and came to the last match undefeated. Initially, St Edward's struggled to win a point, perhaps because of their late arrival. Fortunes then kept changing until the important last game, which we won. The office-bearers are Euan Campbell (Captain), Campbell Garland and Charlie Leslau (Vice-Captains) and Joon Ho Sung (Secretary). Alex Jeffreys and Tom Farrant won the House Doubles Cup for Franklin's, and Tom Farrant won the Junior Award.

The Revd Henry Kirk



Professor Marina Warner



Rifle Club

The Rifle Club has had an active year, competing against a wide number of schools and clubs. In the Lent term we competed away against Wellington College in a close-fought competition, with Wellington winning by 750 points to 730. Abingdon's top shooter was James Boreham, scoring 96/100 points. It was an enjoyable match and we are very much looking forward to competing against Wellington again next year on home territory.

Abingdon has now run an exchange against the German team from Stade for eight years and it was Abingdon's turn to host again this year. As ever, the exchange provided an opportunity for members of each team to get to know one other, and excursions were organised to the National Shooting Centre at Bisley, as well as to London and Oxford. We were grateful to Councillor Martin Smith for taking both teams on a historical tour of Abingdon. The Abingdon School team won the competition overall, as well as having the top shooters at both 50 metres (James Boreham) and 25 yards (Finn Ryley and Peter Wood). The exchange culminated with a presentation evening and the Deputy Mayor of Abingdon, Patricia Hobby, was kind enough to present the awards. We have been invited to return to Germany next year, and we will be doing our best to retain the trophy.

In May the Rifle Club attended the Oxfordshire Rifle Association Small-bore Championship, held at Chesterton. The competition is 40 shots at 50 metres and 40 shots at 100 yards, and in four classes adults and juniors compete together. The team acquitted itself admirably with Finn Ryley winning the U18 Junior Championships, Peter Wood winning Class D and the two



together taking the Class C and D pair. Harry Wood and Peter Wood won the Markland Cup, Finn Ryley, Ben Bryant and Peter Wood won the Symonds Bowl, and the Tyros Trophy for best novice went to Peter Wood. In addition to our successes at the Oxford championships, Abingdon School Rifle Club entered two teams into the British Schools' Small-Bore Rifle Association Leagues. Abingdon A (Ben Bryant, Finn Ryley, James Boreham, Peter Wood and Harry Wood) came joint second in Division 1, Section A. Finn Ryley was the second-highest scorer in this division, with Peter Wood a close third. Abingdon B (Luke Derrick, Tom Pugh, Finn Ryley and Ben Bryant) were entered in Section C, Division 1, which is open only to those under 15. They won their division of seven teams with Finn Ryley being the top equal scorer in the league; Ben Bryant was third equal highest scorer.

These results show consistency in performance by all concerned and possibly the School's best-ever set of results in shooting. It has also been really encouraging to see three boys from Abingdon in the Great Britain Junior Squad, all of whom achieved personal bests both inside and outside School during the course of the year. Next year we look forward to a rematch against Wellington College, as well as competing against Harrow School and Port Regis School for the first time.

Simon Grills



The Blues Society

After a ground-breaking first year, the Blues Society has consolidated well. Mike Summers helped see us through the transition from last year, but otherwise we had a sea of new talent, including Olly Jackson (vocals), Tom Spears (lead guitar), George Halsey (guitar), Joe Brown (bass), Richard Slade (saxophone) and Jack Trotman (drums). The band worked hard through the year, gelling through performances such as the House Singing and the Sixth-Form Charity Concert, and reaching a real level of maturity and performance at *Jazz on a Summer's Evening* in June. However, the crowning moment was the Society's hugely well-received set at the Griffen Ball, featuring songs as diverse as *A Little Less Conversation*, *Boom Boom* and *Sweet Home Alabama*. Thanks also to Ed Crystal, Tim Jones and Harry Stout for their contributions this year. The Society will no doubt go on from strength to strength next year, with a strong core of musicians going into the lower sixth, and with the exciting new leadership of Richard Cotton (drums) and Simon Balderson (saxophone).

Andrew Crook

House Reports

Phelps'

The 2008 - 2009 academic year has proven to be another highly successful one for the House. I felt we excelled in the House Singing, with a fine rendition of Smash Mouth's *All Star*. And although we didn't come in the top three, it was by far the best performance in my five years at Abingdon by our House, and credit must go to Tim Jones as conductor.

The year's success owes much to the promising group of young men who joined only last September. The third-formers have shown a lot of promise in academic areas, and the tutor group contains three scholars: Mathew Hartshorne, Ian Middleton and Lewis Spring. The group has also been successful in House competitions: a team consisting of Thomas Sishton, Mathew Hartshorne and Nicholas Leah won the public-speaking competition, seeing off a competent Boyd's side in the final. They have also shown sporting promise, finishing second in the House ergo competition. This

leaves a lot for Mr Phelps to smile about, as the group can look forward to much more success ahead of them. I would like to take the opportunity to thank Mr Stokes, who has been a great asset in helping the boys settle in their first year in the House.

The fourth-formers have also enjoyed a prosperous twelve months: they won the House hockey competition and only just missed out on first place in the road relay, with impressive individual performances from Stuart Jones and Christian Reedman. They also helped Phelps' win the first-ever House swimming gala, with some outstanding swims from Sam Hughes, Guy Giles and James Edwards, and with next year to look forward to, this seems to be an area in which Phelps' can continue to dominate. Charlie Leslau and Charlie Bateman are worthy of mention for their musical talents, displayed in the recent performance of *Hope Springs*. I know only too well the time and effort Miss Hicks puts into her

role as tutor and I would like to thank her on behalf of the fourth year, and also on behalf of the upper sixth, who were lucky enough to be Miss Hicks' tutees for three years. Not many would have lasted the term and remained so enthusiastic, which I think is a testament to how valuable Miss Hicks is, and we wish her all the best.

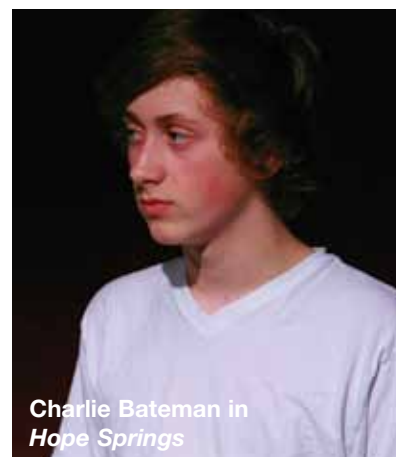
The fifth-formers are proving a lively set of characters, and although there are still many rough diamonds in the group, they are also extremely talented. I'm sure they will grow into the sixth form, and have much to look forward to.

The lower sixth have continued to do great work for the House. They helped contribute to the sixth-formers' triumph in the hockey competition and to Phelps' House finishing second overall on Sports Day. I am pleased to announce that Liam Smith is to be next Head of House; I'm sure he will take full advantage of his final year at Abingdon.





Charlie Leslau (left) and Henry Jenkinson (Webb's) in Hope Springs



Charlie Bateman in Hope Springs

Finally there is the upper-sixth group, who are leaving now to pursue their futures, many going on to university. It has really all come together this year for many members of the upper sixth: we have won the House hockey competition, won the House swimming, reached the semi-finals of the House public-speaking, and put in decent displays in House rugby. There are many names who stand out: Thomas Buffery, ever the reluctant athlete, reaching new heights in the pool; JJ Robinson's talent with a hockey stick, George Dugdale's commitment to charity events, Edward Crystal's public speaking; Will Shrier's determined rugby performances, and many more. I have felt lucky to have been a part of this free-spirited group for five years, and on behalf of all of the leavers I would like to thank Mr Phelps, who has always been open to listen and to give sound advice. Also I would like to thank both Mr McGill and Mr Davies, whose hard work, particularly involving our UCAS applications, means that most of us can now look forward to top university placements.

I would also like to mention all of the staff who help out in and around the House, in particular in regards to the boarders. I would like to make special mention of Carol who, over my time at



Mihai Clapaniuc, Ulrich Bauer, Eric Gartz and Arif Mammadov, stalwart helpers at the Community Service tea parties

School, has always been on hand with a spare tie, and is highly regarded by all of the boarders: we wish her a happy future. At the end of the Michaelmas term the House said goodbye to Mr Barker, as he left us to pursue new challenges at Uppingham. He had always been a fantastic help with the boarders and has been greatly missed: we wish him a happy future at his new school. I personally have always been glad I was placed in this House which, I think, has a greater community spirit than many, and through size and diversity has more to offer than any other; I'm sure next year will prove just as prosperous. Finally, to all those leaving I wish all the best as you go on to university or travel.

*Jamie Wilder VI DRM
Head of House*

I would also like to add my thanks to the boys, tutors and support staff that make Phelps' House such a successful operation. A special thanks must also go to Carol, the House Matron, who consistently provides pupils with the care and attention that makes all the difference. I am very proud of what we achieve but I am most proud of the team spirit that runs throughout the House.

Best wishes go to our leavers – keep in touch.

William Phelps

School House

The great thing about School House, at least from a Housemaster's perspective, is that there are very few dull moments. We have had the now customary rollercoaster ride once again, with one or two lows but, I like to think, at least our fair share of highs. We got to the end of the school year older and wiser certainly, but with every year-group having achieved huge amounts in various fields. It is clear that as the House grows bigger in numerical terms, as it will for two more years, its potential increases. These continue to be exciting times for the House as well as the Housemaster.

With the upper sixth group though, it was a case of quality not quantity. Five big characters made as big an impact as ever on School House in their final year. They were guided through these difficult times by Dr Wiejak, and were soon responding in the most respectful way they knew how, by getting fully dressed for morning registration. George Bone was Head of House and a School Prefect, and in both roles he got the important bits right. He was known to many in the School for his musical and sporting prowess, but only the boarding community knows what a tremendous after-dinner speaker he

is. Matthew Purssell, Head of School no less, was another School House man – we had the benefit of his quiet authority and thoughtfulness as well as his tremendous sporting talents. Quite simply, he was inspirational. Parathan Rabindran, another School Prefect, another great sportsman, and as dapper as any, was rarely spotted without a smile on his face. Ryuichi Murase has done the full seven-year stint as a boarder, and left as courteous as the day he arrived - and finally ready to do good service to the hair-dyeing industry. Last but not least in setting the tone, was Barry Tse. Things have not always gone Barry's way of late, but that did not stop him getting 5 As at A2. I wish them all well, and look forward to hearing their news. I would like to pay tribute to the whole group for their good humour, their energy and their maturity. It has been a pleasure and a privilege being associated with them.

The lower sixth, guided through the year by new boy Mr Castle, adapted quickly to life in the upper school. The old guard was joined by six newcomers, who added to the existing wealth of sporting prowess and academic ability, not to mention charm and sophistication. Dan Boddington

was joined in the senior squad on the river by Julius Gerstmeyer and Jakob Schleu. Max Makarov had a new partner in 'crime', Dami Etomi, and Matthew Choi made his mark with the Film Unit as well as elsewhere. Ali Ibrahim did his bit for boarder/ dayboy relations, and I am grateful to him and the four others in the group who were appointed prefects earlier in the year than normal. To a man, they help set the tone in School House, even if I have not mentioned them all by name, and will do a great job as the senior year in the House. Jakob Schleu and Ali Ibrahim were appointed Heads of House at the end of the year, and Matthew Choi was invited to be a School Prefect.

The fifth form continued to provide their tutor, Miss Briggs, with the sort of challenges that teachers thrive upon, on an almost daily basis. It is much to her and their credit that they performed so well in the GCSEs at the end of the year; particular mention must be made of John Mulvey's 11 A*'s, and of Alex Leung and Nicholas Williams, who were not far behind. Indeed, the whole group earned places in the sixth form with something to spare. Having said that, I wish the two leavers well –



Daniel Boddington



Jakob Schleu



House Singing Competition



Left to right Parathan Rabindran, Matthew Pursell and George Bone playing in the 1st XV

Kimran Sahota and Oliver Davies (the stuff of School House legends!). The tutor group provided at least its quota of talented sportsmen, musicians and thespians, and will continue to forge ahead as the first integrated boarder/dayboy group in School House. And I am sure that they will miss their tutor for two years as much as she will miss them ...

The fourth-formers had Dr Smith to keep them as much as possible on the straight and narrow path. They responded well to his caring, relaxed approach, even if they did not always manage to avoid the sort of excesses self-respecting fourth-formers are renowned for. Gerald Chan joined the group at the beginning of the year, and very quickly earned the respect of his peers, not least for conducting our House singing competition entry so early in his career here. The individual sporting successes of the group continued in great measure, even if our name did not appear on quite so many

House sporting trophies as we had expected. Sound progress was made by most towards some good GCSEs, and George Eason in particular has already got some top grades under his belt. And they can all do the business in the fifth form, if they put their minds, and huge energy, towards it.

The new third-formers were left in no doubt as to what was expected of them by their tutor, Mr Callan. For the most part they rose to the challenge both in the classroom and in the other half. Thomas Farrant lived up to his billing as a scholar, but had some very stiff competition for the form prize. Thomas Chan's fencing achievements were outstanding, and the whole group's spirit in sporting and other House competitions was hugely encouraging – despite the odds not always being in our favour! They have become very supportive of each other, and loyal to School House. Mr Callan will continue to nurture their talents in the fourth year, and we both have very

high hopes... We also wish our two leavers from this group the best of luck at their new schools – Gregor Buchan and James Hebborn.

As ever, I would like to thank the House staff for all their professionalism, and genuine concern for the boys – Di Faulkes (the one who is really in charge at School House) and the girls, Yvonne Aitken, and the House tutors. In particular, I would like to record my gratitude to our one transfer out, Dr Wiekaj; quite apart from being an excellent source of information on hikes in the Lakes, he has inspired boys and colleagues alike with his quiet professionalism and wisdom, and his exacting standards. Webb's House will soon see what an outstanding tutor they have gained. And again, as ever, I would like to thank the boys for doing their bit to ensure I don't feel too guilty about my embarrassingly large salary.

Douglas Aitken

Crescent



Jamie Cook



Freddie Howe



Stephen Poland

As a boarder, come the end of the year, it always feels like a long time since the boarders re-convened at the beginning of the academic year the previous September, but during that time, Crescent has achieved in all areas of the School. We welcomed Mr Cobbe to the House as fourth-year tutor and his influence as Director of Rugby was clearly evident as the fifth year won the tag rugby shortly afterwards! Our Matron, Mrs Milton, left the House and we welcomed Mrs Williams as her replacement in January.

The seniors have led the House impeccably well this year. The lower sixth were so strong that six of them were made House Prefects a year early, and four of them, Andrew Nagi, Stephen Poland, Jamie Cook and Edd Howe, showed their entrepreneurial spirits with an improved House tuck shop, whilst also managing to organise a third-year disco and, in both cases, give sizeable amounts of money to charity. Adrian Lo and Alex Ward set the bar for academic performance, with 11A*s and 10A*s respectively,

whilst Adrian Lo also continued to perform to the highest standard in many musical concerts for the School. There is rarely a School sports team that doesn't feature a member of Crescent House and this year we have had representatives in all of the 1st teams. Edd Howe has played for 1st team Tennis, Rugby and Hockey; Ben Kemp and Bobby Aigbogun for 1st rugby, with Bobby finishing as leading try scorer; Lewis Davis-Poynter and Freddie Howe represented 1st Hockey, and after endless nights of practice, Daniel Choi got his rewards by playing for the 2nd Tennis team. Jamie Cook cemented his place in the 1st VIII this year and we wish him the best of luck for his GB trials this summer. With such talented lower sixth and fifth form tutor groups, I'm sure that Crescent seniors will continue to represent the House in the highest echelons of the School.

The fifth and fourth years have also contributed much to the school: many of the fifth year sat their GCSEs early and gained A*s, while Charlie Uden has been ever present in the rowing team,



Adrian Lo

Tom Price made his debut for 1st XI cricket and Amir Garmroudi was an ever-present prop for the Senior Colts A XV. In the fourth year, Michael Deeks and Andrew Halls have been appointed as Lower School Assistants, whilst Andrew Halls has also represented the U15 A rugby and J15 rowing teams, while Michael Deeks has turned out for U15 A cricket and hockey where, along with Daniel Leach, they helped their teams achieve an unbeaten season. Mark Shuttleworth and Neil McKenzie



House Singing Competition – Adrian Lo conducting



Edd Howe



Bobby Aigbogun

have also rowed with the J15s, while Stuart King gained a place in both the swimming and the water polo teams; Jonathon Chung and Nick Acutt stormed to victory in the middle school badminton competition. The new third years have settled in remarkably well, quickly adapting to the fast pace of School, largely owing to the assistance and care of their tutor, Mr Brenchley. There is clearly plenty of potential in their tutor group, some of which has already been demonstrated by Toby Brown playing U14 A rugby and by

chess supremo Angus Chan. Music continues to play a large part in the House. Crescent had no fewer than five members in 1st Orchestra: Adrian Lo, Jonathon Chung, Otta Jones, Andy Halls and Jay Jung, as well as several other people in different bands and many who have achieved grade 8 on their respective instruments. In the House singing competition, our rendition of *Perfect Day* by Lou Reed failed to hit our usual high standards, and a big effort is being prepared to reclaim the trophy next year.

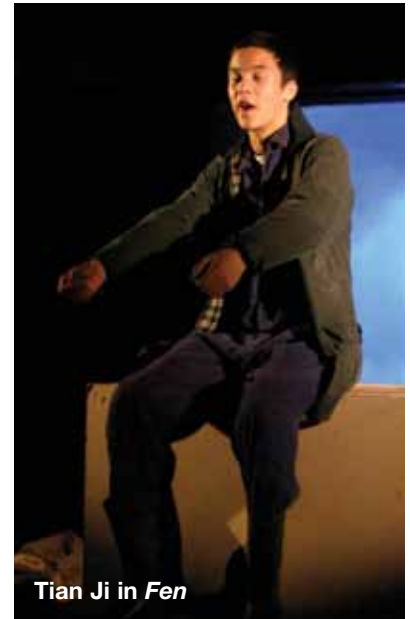
Next year the House welcomes Mr MacDonald as a new tutor; it is certain to be an even stronger year with the House at full capacity and under the leadership of the newly appointed Head of House, Edd Howe and his deputy Daniel Choi, together with School Prefects Stephen Poland and Alex Ward. We also congratulate Alex Ward on his appointment as Head Boy.

Stephen Poland 6 HFCP

Boyd's



Mark Heffernan in *Sketch, Drugs & Rock 'n' Roll*



Tian Ji in *Fen*

This year Boyd's House has been as successful as ever, with members of the House immersing themselves in every aspect of school life. Under the watchful eye of our Head of House, Mark Heffernan, Boyd's has gone from strength to strength.

The year got off to a great start with the House Singing Competition, conducted by the ever-enthusiastic Alex Clinkard, with our rendition of Journey's 80's classic *Don't Stop Believin'*. Despite being the only House to include original dance moves in our performance, we failed to impress the judges. Although the house-singing crown has eluded us for another year, it is an enjoyable event and brings the whole House together, the only inter-house event that does.

Boyd's continued its tradition of debating success with a victory at the regional heat of the European Youth Parliament for Jasper Marlow, Harry Gray and Tian Ji. Along with the rest of their team, they will now compete in the national final, to be held in Durham



Matthew Winters in *The Crucible*



in September 2009, for the chance to represent the UK at the international session of the European Youth Parliament in Helsinki.

Not to be outdone by the lower sixth, the upper sixth have had numerous academic successes of their own. Congratulations are in order, firstly for Tim Deeks, who has received an offer to read English and Spanish at Trinity College, Oxford. Not content with just his scholarship to Sandhurst, Matthew Winters has received an offer to read Mechanical Engineering at Pembroke College, Oxford. Finally, Jeremy Stockdale has received an offer to read PPE at Worcester College, Oxford.

Mark Heffernan has been making us laugh this year with his role in the comedy show *Sketch, Drugs & Rock 'n' Roll*. After a string of successful shows at School, the group will be performing at the Edinburgh Fringe in August. James Yan has also been in the spotlight with his films *7 o'clock* and *Dance with Stacey* being selected for the Auburn International Film Festival for Children and Young Adults,

held in Sydney, Australia. To the best of anyone's knowledge, this is the first time AFU films have received public screenings in Australia.

With the opening of the brand-new sports centre, Boyd's has relished the opportunity to further our sporting abilities. Tim Deeks should be congratulated on his place among the top school bowlers in the country as recorded in this year's edition of the cricketing magazine *Wisden*. The fourth year successfully defended their inter-house tag rugby title in a fiercely fought contest, which bodes well for future sporting successes in Boyd's.

After the success of last year's quiz evening, in the absence of the upper sixth away on study leave, it fell to the lower sixth to organise this year's evening. With our very own Jeremy Paxman in the form of Tian Ji, the evening provided a great opportunity for boys and parents alike to socialise and was once again a great success. With such great feedback from parents, this may become an annual event in the Boyd's House calendar.



All in all, another successful and enjoyable year for Boyd's House. Special thanks should be made to Mr Boyd and all the tutors for the huge amounts time, commitment and enthusiasm they have put into the House and with spirits as high as ever, we look forward with anticipation for the successes the coming year will bring.

Sam Newman 6 EOD

Christodoulou's



Dominic Berry conducting Christodoulou's in the House Singing Competition

The pastoral care of the boys in the House works so smoothly because of the tutors: Mr Athol Hundermark, Mr Andrew Swarbrick, Mr Nick Reville, Dr Megan Bowdrey, (née Bowen-Jones) and Mr Daniel Freyhan, who all do a first-class job; each very differently from the next, but their commitment to their tutees and the collective ethos of the House is unwavering. Over the year, the tutors' hard work and its effect on their charges was sometimes very noticeable, but much of the time what they did was well guarded from the rewards of publicity and praise. On behalf of 81 very grateful and bettered boys, thank you for all your outstanding work.

Well done to all the upper sixth for making it to the end; most of you were part of the School for five years and others for seven. On behalf of the remaining boys in the House, I want to wish you good luck with your future pursuits in life. I would also like to say a very big thank you to those who helped out both the House and me personally; you showed great generosity of spirit and sacrifice by

helping out your third Housemaster in as many years and in doing so, more importantly, you left your mark on the boys in the years below. Head of House James Manasseh, Cody Yellowlees-Bound, Ben Warwick, Oliver Bouchier, William Walker and Chris Brash: you were outstanding, despite all your other commitments. The house singing competition was an example of the 'generosity of spirit' that I have mentioned. Dominic Berry truly led here, not just with his inherent talent

but also with his selflessness and the ability to accept risk and responsibility for the good of the community, no matter what the outcome – an example to the rest of the boys. I would also like to warmly thank James Manasseh for being a strong leader and having a wise and calming effect on us all. Credit to their tutor.

The lower sixth tried hard to hide their talents but upon closer inspection they were looking very impressive:



L – R James Manasseh, Jonathan Bouchier, Michel Baumgart (Webb's), Andrew Russell



Christodoulou's victorious house hockey team

William Fotherby was ranked number one cadet in Great Britain for U17 sabre fencing, having competed in France in the cadet European Championships and then in the World Championships in Belfast. He also won the Senior Public Schools' Fencing Championships for Abingdon; he, Luke Abbott, Charlie Robertson and Will Hutton were appointed school prefects. Luke Abbott, Robert Lloyd and Alexander Davis made an excellent job of getting their tutor group to the final of the House public-speaking competition. However, these accomplishments could not disguise the successes and talents of the rest of Mr Swarbrick's tutor group. Mr Swarbrick, sadly for us, after 11 years of wise and patient tutoring, moves on to run University Applications and Mr David Pope takes over from him.

It is with much regret that from the fifth year we lose three brilliant young men. Ever positive and resilient, Michael Garner leaves us to commence his studies at a sixth-form college in Witney. Academic scholar and highly promising oarsman Calvin Walker moves back to the United States. Hugely talented Benjamin Hammersley also leaves us and may

one day resume the acting career in which he showed so much promise in his younger years. They leave behind a remarkably large number of huge personalities who also have the capacity for great things in the future. Matthew Boyd, Robert Brooks and Jamie Hall managed to take their tutor group to the final of the House public-speaking competition. Mr Revill, who was their tutor for three years, will be greatly missed as he will be looking after the new third year in September. The fourth-formers benefited enormously from their hugely successful and hardworking tutor Dr Bowdrey: William Nott and Freddie Stott became Lower School Assistants and Drew Finnigan's talent for swimming saw him become county junior champion for the 50m backstroke (Oxfordshire & N. Buckinghamshire). Their tutor group was also responsible for raising the most money for charity after the sponsored walk, earning them a free cinema trip – the House as a whole raised £3,500. Charlie Manasseh was by now a regular in 1st XI cricket and occasionally on loan to the U15s; what he managed to achieve for cricket at Abingdon was quite remarkable – the accolades could be never-ending.

Oliver Bailey excelled as an outstanding hockey player and a great all-rounder. Matthew Landells and Felix Newman were quite possibly the archetypal over-achievers of the House – I lost track regularly of their academic and other half successes. The third-formers will agree, I am sure, that their tutor, Mr Freyhan, did an excellent job of keeping them organized, out of trouble and on time. Jacopo Blumberg, Jack May and Joe Ereaut displayed outstanding talent at the Junior Music Scholars' Concert while Julius Coventry, Charlie Bethell and Rory Brampton stood out as solid sportsmen. I look forward to seeing how this group, full of both overt and hidden talent, will progress next year when even more opportunities will come their way.

I may have run out of space to catalogue the amount of times I was kept both amused and pleasantly perplexed by so many in the House or even to express how rewarding and unpredictable you made my day-to-day existence: I thoroughly enjoyed it and wholeheartedly look forward to more of the same ...

Alexis Christodoulou

Franklin's



Heads of House this year were Rex Carter and Daniel Harris, who exemplified energy, leadership and good humour. Rex did superbly to fight his way back after his long absence through illness, somehow remaining cheerful and friendly, and always offering his help. Dan managed to avoid the siren voices calling him to the shores of SHSK drama and Youth Parliaments; several times he came to school on time! They were ably supported by the House prefects Oliver Boddie, Andrew Hatzis, Ian Houlsby, Jack Longden, Jacob Swain, Robert Walker and Jianghao Zhu, who all contributed to a cheerful and pleasant tone in the House.

As ever, the House singing competition kicked off the year with joyous strains in every sense. This year we rose on the stepping-stones of our former selves to sing *The Rhythm of Life*. David Mears accompanied on piano with his wonted unflappable mastery, and Henry Jenkinson was our brilliant leader, teaching and conducting with such enthusiasm and ability that a fraction of both was communicated to our communal body. We gave a great

performance, and podiomed at third place overall. Dizzy heights indeed!

Old Faithful erupts at eponymously regular intervals; the Franklin's House Panto bursts forth less predictably. This year there were forecasts, and even minatory tremors, but in the end nothing broke the surface. Experts suggest that pressure must be building for a huge event next year...

Which brings me to the road relay. What can I say? This event belongs to Franklin's House, and we proved it once again. Andrew Hatzis and Ian Houlsby were joined by older brothers Philip and Neil, Franklin's graduates both, and were a star turn. Even they, however, were upstaged by our lower-sixth team of Tom Watkins, Alex Muir, Alex Veale and Joe McDonagh, who set the fastest time in the School. Tom also recorded the fastest individual time of 8.25, showing the leadership that saw him appointed as Captain of cross country.

Our next most significant win in House sporting competitions was in rowing. The team of David Munro, Howard Winfield, Tom Kynge, Joel Cooper and



Ed Lewis won the rowing competition for their year-group and were crowned champions. There is every prospect that they will go on to achieve great individual and team success in the future.

Not surprisingly, we performed extremely well in the inter-House athletics competition. Edward Hughes, Tom Kynge, Alexander Hatzis, Luke Terry, Tom Watkins and Alex Muir turned in fine performances, and Peter



Ian Houlsby

Barnshaw was the most successful athlete in the School, winning all the events he entered.

In the House cricket we did not have our best year, but some individuals stood out. James Beer's bowling impressed particularly, and George Bull was a real star as Captain. The spirit of the team was good, and the occasion was an enjoyable example of cooperation between different year-groups.

Franklin's boys achieved many individual successes this year. Andrew Hatzis proved that he is a rower of national standard, and Ian Houlsby was an academic Olympian. Jack Longden led the CCF with rare distinction, earning respect and admiration from officers as well as younger foot soldiers. Fayaaz Ahmed and Ian Houlsby earned places at Oxford and Cambridge respectively. Jianghao Zhu excelled in leading the School chess team, and Dan Harris starred in an impressive number of dramatic productions. Robert Winearls achieved the distinction of being selected for the 1st XV while still in the lower sixth. Tom Watkins proved himself a serious contender in the steeplechase, and



Left to right Alex Veale, Tom Watkins, Joe McDonagh and Alex Muir, Franklin's lower-sixth road relay team.

with Alex Muir took the cross-country team to new heights of success; Alex Veale established himself as a runner of real talent, as did Luke Terry. Peter Barnshaw continues to advance as an athlete of the highest quality, competing at national standard in multiple events. Matthew Lake won distinction for his batting in cricket, and Tom Spears and James Dewar won selection in the School squash team.

My House tutors have been excellent as ever, encouraging and assisting their tutees in academic and Other Half challenges. I must thank Mr Hughes in particular for stepping in to see the fifth-formers through their GCSEs, and earning their affection and respect in the process. Sadly we had to bid farewell to Miss Henderson, whose contribution was so appreciated by her sixth-form tutees. We wish her well in her job in Kuala Lumpur.

David Franklin

O'Doherty's

The year got off to a successful start with outstanding public examination results for all three senior tutor groups. The best of these were the AS results gained by the lower sixth which should stand them in good stead for university entrance. We wish our leading academics, Tomer Faraggi, Guy Cutting and Nick Howe, success at Oxford and Cambridge next year. Guy receives our hopes that he will grace big stages in years to come. He is truly a phenomenal talent as a musician, in particular as a tenor. His performance with professional musicians, as part of Abingdon's twinning celebrations, and his victory in Absolutely Fabingdon, with his singing of *Nessun Dorma*, were both breathtaking. This year's leavers have contributed massively to the expressive arts during their careers. Oli Mumby and Russell Gordon-Jones both take up places on Art Foundation courses next year. Oli was shortlisted for the Royal Academy A Level Online exhibition for his piece of artwork *Spinnaker*, and I found Russell's sketchbook, submitted as part of the A2 course, quite incredible. Stephen Hodgetts furthered his reputation as not only a superb actor in, amongst

other things *An Italian Straw Hat*, but also as a producer, writer and general impresario. He keeps up a strong tradition of Abingdon shows performing at the Edinburgh Fringe, where he was joined by Andrew Partridge in *Sketch, Drugs and Rock 'n Roll*. Andrew was also 1st XV captain and played alongside Rugby Club legends Tom Green (player of the year) and Jonny Bucke, who were all three instrumental in Sevens success at Hampton. Nick Wilkinson took Abingdon sailing to new heights, competing against the world in both New Zealand and Los Angeles.

We look forward to him hitting the national headlines one day in the not too distant future.

Guy Cutting, as music captain, almost led us to victory in the House singing competition. An inspired choice of *Keep on Moving*, by music industry giants *Five*, generated fun and enthusiasm in rehearsals as well as in the final performance. It was possibly the slight lack of absolute singing talent that was responsible for a very worthy second place!



Russell Gordon-Jones and Steve Hodgetts



Guy Cutting



Carrots



The lower sixth demonstrated their potential in many ways. The public-speaking team once again proved too strong for all-comers, rising above the problems created by delays and controversy to secure a comfortable victory. Matthew Copson, Oliver Todd and Geoffrey Penington duplicated this success as part of the School team in the National Youth Parliament Debating Competition, winning through to the national finals to be held in Durham. Henry Wood burst onto the scene as a fixture in the newly formed Swimming Club's senior team. Nathaniel Watkins and Josh Smith were critical senior members of the 1st XI, with Nathaniel in his second season as captain. The team lost only once during the season, in the national Twenty20 competition at Shrewsbury. Both represented Oxfordshire, and Josh has spent the summer furthering his reputation at Northampton Academy. His School season highlight was a match-winning 91 not out against Radley.

In the middle school the boys showed that their talents were just as varied as those of our senior boys. There were excellent stage performances by Peter Moore, playing the lead in *Carrots*, and a mature debut in *Hope Springs* by



Josh Smith, front, at the House Singing Competition



Nick Wilkinson (centre)

Tom McGivan, ably supported by tech crew stalwarts Anthony Grieveson and Zander Cornish-Moore. Chris Wilkinson and Tom Earl contributed to the success of Big Band and its Tuscany tour. Public-speaking success wasn't confined to the sixth form, but it is possible that some coaching may have taken place in the Copson household. The fourth-year team consisting of Laurence Copson, Joe Hogan and Tom McGivan, fought off a strong Phelps' team, and an almost catastrophic lack of punctuality, to win victory.

In the Lent term, both the fourth- and fifth-year teams won their sections of the road relay, and similar athletic prowess was also shown in the inter-House athletics competition in which the House finished third overall, with the third years winning their section. Kristian Wood and Peter Moore contributed massively to winning the first swimming gala in the swimming



pool. Tom Foxon and Alistair Duff were mainstays of the intermediate cross-country team, which finished the season with a 100% unbeaten record, including the County Championships; they were joined in this event by Zander Cornish-Moore and Edward Firth.

I certainly enjoyed working with the boys in the House this year and the positive energy and talent brought by the new third years was a big part of this. I am very excited about the next couple of years and look forward especially to the leadership of Jonathan Prest-Smith and Oliver Todd – the latter balancing this role with that of senior army cadet – and their team of House prefects. We thank our leaving Head of House, Tom Green, and wish him and the rest of the leavers success in their future courses and careers.

Nick O'Doherty

Older's



Jamie Older joins his House in the singing competition

It seems very strange to be writing my final House report, but I could not hope for a better year on which to end. The difficulty is always in trying to express an atmosphere and ethos through a list of achievements. Whatever great feats are recorded herein, nothing could truly give a sense of the charming, friendly and hugely talented group of boys that make up the House. As I look back on this and previous years, it is always with a smile on my face since the boys seem to combine success with a real sense of fun and enjoyment. It has certainly been a privilege to work in an environment where each boy is valued by his peers, and where the sense of pride in victory is matched by camaraderie in defeat. The House is a microcosm of this, and when I consider the current crop of boys I cannot think of a better representation of Abingdon School.

It is often the way that the tone for a year is set by those at the top of the House and this was certainly true this year. Leading by example, in an impressive group, was one of the Heads of School, Felix Wood: a gentleman,

scholar and sportsman in every sense. There can have been no better role model for younger boys. In turn, the two Heads of House, Andrew Cook and Alexander Campbell, were two contrasting but equally well-regarded characters. Both showed enormous maturity and have gained the unreserved respect of their Housemaster.

Elsewhere in the upper sixth, talent abounded in just about every field. However, specific mention should be made of a few: Jack Trotman for his involvement in just about every concert and production from Big Band to Blues Society, *Absolutely Fabingdon* to the Fringe; Rory Spriggs for his continued success on the waves; Alexander Smith for all that he has done for school badminton and for his individual achievements on court; Julian Thorn for, it often seemed, keeping the House running smoothly; and Jack Maynard for combining academic ability with a punishing rowing regime. It is always difficult to single out individuals and I hope I have made it clear to all the boys how much the outgoing sixth form





Rory Spriggs
(second from right)



Henry Kibble

Mason and Alistair Nicoll, along with Joe Kempton, who excels in the classroom and on the cross-country circuit.

Further down the School, the fourth- and fifth-formers continually improved upon already high standards, and reinforced the ethos of the House with their positive and friendly outlook. The new boys in the third year soon followed suit, offering glimpses of what is in store for the rest of their school careers in their multitude of successes in every field.

As ever, I will no doubt miss a few but I shall attempt to list the most obvious milestones this year. The house singing once again eluded the combined musical leadership of Jack Trotman and Joe Mason, but I was left glowing with pride because of the spirit and sense of fun that the boys brought to *Sweet Home Alabama*. Inter-house hockey was once again a success story, with victory for the fifth year and a narrow loss (to a golden goal) in the third-year final. Comprehensive victory in house chess for the second successive year (with Henry Kibble and Edward O'Brien once again showing their class) and an impressive all-round effort in the road

relay rounded off a fine Lent term. My final term was to yield the most impressive House successes of the year, however, with victory for both third- and fourth-year groups in the tug-of-war, and, for the first time, overall victory in the inter-house athletics. This latter performance was a very fine end to the year, with contributions from every boy being the key to success, but the comprehensive victory of our sixth form should not pass without mention.

It was, overall, a fantastic year and, as always, much must go unmentioned. There were many more landmarks along the way, many perhaps only of significance to the individuals concerned. I hope that all felt their achievements were celebrated and can look back with pride and happiness at the last twelve months.

It only remains for me to thank boys, tutors, parents and everybody involved in the House for all that they have done for me over the last four and a half years; I was overwhelmed by the farewell that I was given. The House is made great by the boys within it and the Green Army will march on under a new banner. I could not hope to leave



a better group of boys in the hands of a better new Housemaster. Good luck, Mr Southwell-Sander: I hope you enjoy it as much as I have!

Those leaving at the end of 2009 were: James Burford, Alexander Campbell, Gabriele Caprotti, Andrew Cook, Rory Copus, Marcus Cross, Alastair Hughes, Oliver Henstridge, Alastair Hughes, Robert Kenworthy, Jack Maynard, Alexander Smith, Rory Spriggs, Julian Thorn, Jack Trotman, Felix Wood, and fifth-former, Dean Cross. We wish them every success for the future and hope that they will keep in touch in the years ahead.

Jamie Older

Webb's



Webb's House – winners of the House Singing Competition



Fergus McIntosh

The new third years that joined the House settled in quickly and soon seemed to help create a really friendly and relaxed atmosphere in both the House and the houseroom. It seemed that, for a change, everybody (well almost) was doing the right sort of things, and the issuing of fewer copies than previous years seemed to back up that feeling. Through all the year-groups, boys were getting involved in their chosen activities after school lessons, and that was really shown in the 1st XV rugby match in the *Daily Mail Cup*, when we had Richard Parkin-Mason, Henry Mills, Tom Bradfield, and Mark Francis all playing. Ross Muir was on crutches on the sideline and would have been playing if he had not been injured.

Ross was also the newly appointed Head of House, and his first job in the role was to manage our entry in the House singing competition. To his credit, after perhaps a slightly slow start in choosing the song and the early arrangements, he rose to the challenge and pulled the elders in the House together, and the spirit and enthusiasm

grew as the rehearsals in the final week of the first half of term progressed. The chosen song, American Pie by Don Maclean, (not the full version!) was modified and evolved by a few of our more musical upper sixth, most notably by Fergus McIntosh and Joe Glover, who both made an excellent contribution to the arrangement as well as to the rehearsals and performance. A late change to the arrangement was for the introduction to be sung by a select group of the more vocally blessed from the House, and that was a real boost to everybody, as the singing by the rest that followed had to try to match that standard. You can probably tell from how much I've written about the singing that it was really good fun and everybody got into the spirit and enjoyed themselves. The judge also thought that we could actually sing reasonably in tune as well and decided that, despite the standard across the board being higher than previous years, we were the winners. I think that the team effort and contribution from all really exemplified the atmosphere in the House.



Elliott Mills and Paddy Sardeson

The second phase of the Michaelmas term was characterised by hard work by each of the years, as that is when the majority of the year's work is completed. The term was, and seemed, long, and in the last couple of weeks the House took its fair share of casualties from the illness that swept through the School. The House competition during the lead up to Christmas was pool: its progress was hindered by boys' absences but eventually Alex Fisher came through to



Webb's House

win the title. The last Wednesday of term brought the traditional inter-House rugby competition and illness played its part in this as well: the fifth years only managed to put out a team of 6 when a squad of up to 12 was allowed for a team of 8, although Mark Francis had to miss the matches because he was in the 1st XV squad playing in a round of the Daily Mail Cup in Salisbury (unfortunately they were knocked out). Overall the afternoon was a triumph for the House with two of the four competitions ending in our victory. The third years earned one of the wins and set the standard for their next four years. The fourth years did not do so, and the fifth years did not win either, although they did have reduced numbers and two of their matches were cut down to about three minutes -- anyway we'll have next year! Next year will also be an important year for the then lower sixth, as they'll have to defend the Sixth Form Cup that was our other win, despite Tom and Ross being away with Mark.

There are many good aspects to Webb's Houseroom but one of its less attractive qualities is the way that on a cool morning the temperature is the same inside the room as outside. Well, January and February this year saw plenty of cool mornings, so to help keep the boys active and warm,

we held our annual table-tennis competition. There was a surprise result in the early rounds when the defending champion, Joel Morris, was knocked out by his tutor-group colleague Ed Norris, who went on to prove that he was not just a one-match wonder by going on to win the tournament and earn his name on the trophy. That was really the highlight of the term, as most people seemed to be focused on their coursework, with the older years working up to the Easter break on exam material.

The summer term always seems to come around far too quickly and before we knew it the exams were under way. When the results came through there was a general strong performance across the years, with some exceptional results among them. When the exams were over, the remaining years could have some fun with a flurry of inter-House events: athletics, tug-of-war and cricket, to name a few.

The inter-house athletics competition saw a mixed set of performances and, overall, we were towards the lower end of the ranks, but within that result there were some noteworthy efforts. The lower sixth came third in their year, our strength coming from consistently finishing in the middle of the pack. In the javelin, however, we led the way,

with Andrew Dart winning the A event and Richard Parkin-Mason winning the B event. The fourth years were ninth and did not win any events and they'll probably be glad that they won't have to go through the ordeal for another two years (I'm hoping by then they'll have found some more strength and speed!). The third years had the most extreme results, coming fourth overall but having both more first and last places than any other year. I'll focus on the wins, which included Elliott Mills (100m B), Paddy Sardeson (200m A and javelin A) and Fraser Capill (1500m B), and the House also won the 4x100m relay A event.

Even at this late stage of the term there were still two more sporting events for these years to show their true potential: the tug-of-war and the third/fourth years' inter-House cricket tournament. Of course, now I value these much more highly, as the lower sixth showed their strength in depth and their teamwork, to dominate their year's tug-of-war and the cricketers, despite losing Hamish Grant to the 1st XI, beat Phelps' in the final with a few wickets and overs to spare. An excellent end to the year, and I hope a manner in which we can start in September to defend our title in the House singing competition!

Mike Webb

First Year



Our Day Out



Road Relay



September saw the latest crop of new boys begin their Abingdon journey. As usual the 66 members of the first year came from many different primary schools and had a wide range of academic experiences: the emphasis of much of the first term was therefore on settling in, getting to know each other, and starting to learn about what life at Abingdon is all about. The Lower School Assistants played their part in helping the boys feel at home, as did the members of the CCF who ran a morning of team-building activities. It was not too long before most of the boys were starting to make friends, exploring what the Other Half has to offer, and getting used to probably the least popular aspect of life at secondary school – prep!

Under the dynamic direction of Miss Matthews, the first years had the chance to perform musically several times during the first term, joining three local primary schools in a concert of music from the four corners of the world in November, and then singing at the Christmas Concert, complete with festive hats. Perhaps the biggest musical event of the year, however, was the inaugural appearance of Lower School in the House singing competition just before half term – the cockney accents of the second years



Christmas Concert

in their rendition of *Consider Yourself* was no match for the exuberance and cheesy choreography of the first years in *Under the Sea*, and the latter were duly crowned Lower School winners. It has now been agreed that lower school will compete against the senior houses next year – we are expecting silverware!

By the Lent term most of the boys were settling down into routines (although correct use of the prep diary remained a mystery for several!) and were adapting well to their teachers' expectations. The rugby season came to an end with some good performances against local opposition:

although the U12 As did not always play as well as they could, the fact that the U12 Bs had an unbeaten season shows that this is a year-group with strength in depth. The annual lower school drama production directed by Miss Wright and Mr Loughie was a performance of *Our Day Out* by Willy Russell. The cast members rose to the challenge of playing a coach-load of badly behaved and rowdy school children (although some would argue that not much acting was required!). A brief cameo by a Housemaster with delusions of grandeur was well received, but special mention should go to Alex Grantham and Tim McGovern

for their moving performances and excellent solos, to Alexander James for a nice comic turn as the coach driver, and to Sam Kashti, who clearly has a glittering career as a thug ahead of him.

Jack Walsh was the fastest first year in the annual road relay, while the team event was won by 1L. 1L also won the chess tournament, with Edward Reynolds claiming the individual prize, and the first-year public-speaking competition, with the team of Will Juffkins, Alex Grantham (arguing as main speaker that football should be more widely available at Abingdon School) and Gus Mills, just losing out to 2W in the grand final. Meanwhile Theo Brophy-Clews was the first-year winner in the pool tournament.

During the Easter holidays, 60 members of the year group travelled to Osmington Bay near Weymouth for the annual adventure trip. The mixture of team-building and extreme activities was enjoyed by all, with the giant swing and leap of faith proving particularly popular, and inspiring some thoughtful writing on return to Abingdon. As ever, the trip allowed teachers to see pupils in a different light and vice versa – although those boys who decided to wake up at 4.30 on the first morning reckoned without the thinness of the walls and their proximity to their Housemaster's sleeping quarters!

In the Summer term, trips were arranged by the History Department to Warwick Castle, by Modern Languages to Normandy, by Classics to Fishbourne Roman Palace and, a new fixture this year, by the Geography and Biology Departments to London to visit the Natural History and Earth Sciences Museum. Somehow there was also time for plenty of exam preparation, with teachers doing their best to guide the first years through their first major set of examinations. Tensions



built as the exams grew nearer but, on the whole, they were navigated successfully, and particular mention should go to the three boys who topped their tutor groups and were therefore presented with prizes: Archie Wimborne, Alexander Gunasekera, and Alexander Taylor.

Cricket was the sporting focus of the summer term and it was here that the first years showed that they have really exciting potential for the future. The U12s, under the leadership of coach Mr Southwell-Sander, had an unbeaten season culminating in winning the final of the local Bunbury Cup against Bartholomew School, Eynsham. The final was a rather straightforward affair but the semi-final against MCS was very different, with victory secured off the penultimate ball and with the last pair at the crease – not good for the Housemaster's blood pressure!

The post-exam weeks also saw the usual inter-tutor group competitions, with the new sports centre meaning that a swimming gala and water polo tournament were added to the sports day and tug-of-war competition. 1L, clearly inspired by the athletic prowess of their tutor, (or possibly bribed by huge amounts of chocolate), swept the board to secure victory in every event

– rumour has it that Miss Matthews is planning to spend most of her tutor periods next year in fitness training!

As one would expect, all the boys have found the jump from primary to secondary school a big one and all have faced challenges as the year has gone on. Many of them will no doubt be looking forward to the new year, when they can watch the new intake get confused about exactly the same things as they themselves did, while being secure in the knowledge that they now know how (most) things work. Reading all the boys' reports at the end of term, it was clear that, as a group, they have made considerable progress over the last three terms and have got a lot to offer to Abingdon in the future. That they have made it to the end of their first year relatively unscathed is in no small part due to the hard work of the three tutors, Miss Matthews, Mr Loughie and Mr Macdonald. The latter deserves special mention since, after many years of tutoring in Lower School, he is now retiring. His genuine concern for his tutees and his ability to assess quickly and accurately the relative strengths and weaknesses of each boy under his care will be missed. All in Lower School wish him well.

Adam Jenkins

Some Experiences of Osmington Bay

The Zip Wire

I was called up for the zip wire. As I clipped myself in I heard Jack Dawson zipping along the wire. I finally finished clipping myself in, hoping I never would.

"You're clear to come up now," I heard the instructor say.

"Do I really want to do this?"

Not thinking what I was doing, I climbed up the ladder to the very top of the tower. Gosh! Heights are very deceitful. It looks suicidal. My heart skipped a beat, or two, or three.

"All right. All you've got to do is..." I heard words, but didn't understand them. I had more sweat than I have ever had in my life. I felt every little drop of sweat running down my temples.

"I don't want to do this."

"You're safe. Don't worry."

I felt sick, mentally and physically. I looked up at the wire, over the ledge, then jumped! I was grasping the rope! I was flying! I punched my fist forward. AARR! YEAH! I'M SUPERMAN!!!

I was upset to get down. But I did it. One of my fears was defeated. I faced my fear. I overcame it.

I'M SUPERMAN!!!!

Tim McGovern 1J

The Giant Swing

When I was at Osmington Bay, I had a few memorable moments such as when Ben Seares was climbing up

the pole so fast on the trapeze that the instructor shouted, "Can you slow down a bit?" so he could catch up on the pulling of the rope, or when I jumped so high on the trampoline that I nearly fell off. But my very favourite memory was Mr Loughe's face on the giant swing.

His face was very funny – it made us all laugh. The giant swing is a thrilling activity that sends your stomach plummeting to the floor as you drop down. It is made of two pieces of plastic held up by three beams and a load of wires. All we had to hold on to was a metal bar. When you looked down from the top it looked like you were fifty feet high.

We had all had our swing so it was Mr Loughe's turn. When we were pulling him up by the long rope his eyes were shut and he was hanging on really tight. He was sitting next to Lisa (our group leader). He didn't realise he was at the top when he was shouting, "Enough, enough, stop!"

So, we let go of the rope and ran to the hut for a better view. This is where we did the count-down to his tummy-trembling demise. When he pulled the rope to let himself go and swing down he screamed for dear life, his face was all shrivelled up and puckered. Lisa said to us before her turn with Mr Loughe, "I have been on this swing so many times but I still scream and I will, always. I don't know why but I just do."

When the instructors slowed the swing to a halt, Mr Loughe was quite stunned! When we pulled him up again he did it all over. It was like watching a video repeat itself. He still looked very scared.

Joshua Burdass 1M





The Trapeze

"Ready," I'm calling.
 "Okay," the instructor is responding.
 "Climbing," I am replying nervously. I'm anxiously moving up the ladder.
 "Keep it going, Calum, good pace," my group are calling in encouragement.
 Now, calmly, I'm climbing, holding. I'm thinking, "Supposing I fall, supposing the rope snaps?" I'm brushing the negative thoughts aside. Look at the fabulous view. I'm gazing into the distance, only allowing my mind to think about the grey battleship and black and red oil tankers far beneath me in Osmington Bay. Panic.

I'm at the top of the ladder. Where is a grip? I feel my trembling hands searching. I'm thinking, "Don't look down; please don't look down." I stop. I'm clinging on, trembling with

terror. I'm high up, very high up. I can only imagine how high. My eyes are following the steps upwards. I'm thinking, "Surely I'm halfway, surely I must be." I'm looking down, now up. I must be ten feet up by now. Okay -- climb on. "Keep going Calum, you're nearly there," my team yell. My harness tightens; my feet are frozen with fear. I'm feeling dizzy; the pole is swaying, trying to shake me off. I'm thinking, "This is what I want to do and I'm going to do it." I'm speeding up the pole like a monkey up a tree. Keep going.

I've reached the top. Both of my hands are on the flat reassuring surface. I'm putting one foot up, now for the other. I'm willing myself on, pushing. I'm thinking, "I will do this." All forces are against me. My legs are shaking like jelly. I can do this; I will do this. I'm shouting at my leg, "Don't fail me now."

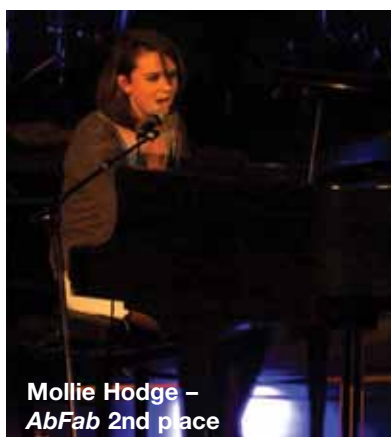
I'm nearly there. Suddenly, my leg is obeying; my hand and my body are following. "Pull the rope towards you," the instructor commands. My mind is willing me and my body is moving. I'm letting go of the rope and staring at the white gleaming ball in the sunlight. I'm thinking, "If I miss, my whole climb is pointless and I will be devastated." I have watched others in despair failing before me. I'm praying, "Don't let it happen to me." I'm jumping and for what seems like eternity I'm gliding in the air, smashing the ball. Relief, exhaustion, pain and terror rush through me. I'm shouting, "I've done it; I've actually done it."

I'm looking up at what now seems a smaller pole, ready to face it again.

Calum Farwell 1J

Service Activities

Charity Fundraising



The fund-raising year got off to a quite unbelievable start with the biennial sponsored walk, which this year, with Gift Aid, raised a staggering £34,000 for four charities: *Helen and Douglas House*, *Agape*, *Maggie's Oxford* and the *Asha Society* in Delhi.

Sixth-form pupils really surpassed themselves this year with the number of events they organized and the amount of money they managed to raise. *Sketch, Drugs and Rock 'n' Roll*, written by Mark Heffernan, Steve Hodgetts and Jack Trotman (this year's answer to *FxP2*) and performed by them and others, not only greatly amused its audience but also raised £2,500 for *Cancer Research UK*. Mike Summers' fantastic *An Evening of Soul and Funk* raised £1,200 for the *Addison's Disease Self-Help Group* and Dan Harris' *Pinteresque Plays*, replacing Franklin's usual annual pantomime, raised £350 for *Helen and Douglas House*. A much-enjoyed third-form disco, organized by Edward

Howe, Andrew Nagi and Jamie Cook, raised £220 for the *Abingdon Bridge Youth Charity*, which provides free support and advice to young people.

A real highlight was George Dugdale and Steve Hodgett's *Absolutely Fabingdon*, a sixth-form talent show which took the format of last year's whole-school *Abingdon's Got Talent*, with added video clips of interviews and auditions and humorous in-between audition comments from the judges. The evening was brilliantly organized, with valuable support from Rory Fraser-Mackenzie and his technical crew, and the audience had a great time with lots of laughs. Most importantly, £2,630 was raised for *Marie Curie Cancer Care* and *Christopher's* (part of the children's hospice charity, *Chase*). George had also previously done a sponsored abseil for *Marie Curie Cancer Care*, raising an extra £350.

The Third-Form Charities Group could also not be accused of

slacking. Doughnut sales on Open Day and throughout the year, and an ingenious small change collection in Houses raised a very valuable £500 for *Helen and Douglas House* and *WaterAid*. Once again people were extremely generous in giving money to collections. The Christmas Concert collection raised £933.50 for the *Oxfam IRC Congo Disaster Appeal*; the Christmas Service collection raised £252.17 for the *FARA Foundation*, which helps poor children in Romania, and the New Year's Concert in January raised £984.48 for *Oxfam*. The Confirmation Service collection raised £167.95 for the Bishop of Oxford's *Outreach* fund for mission and the Lent Term collection raised £82.04 for *Help for Heroes* and the *Rainbow Farm Trust*, which works with needy children and young people in Brazil.

Another success was the sale of the Christmas card designed by third-former Edmund Lewis. These sold out quickly, making a profit of £400



which was donated to the *Nightingale Children's Project* in Romania, of which Old Abingdonian Ben Wells is assistant director and which is at present fund-raising for the provision of transitional housing for those leaving the care of state orphanages.

Adam Jenkins continued additional fund-raising for *Agape*, with £300 raised through a staff wine-tasting evening and a Lower School car treasure hunt. Pupils planning to visit Moldova in the summer also raised a further £500.

The Lent term saw the annual Home Clothes Day which raised £1,800 for three charities/projects in Uganda: *Invisible Children*, which works directly with individuals and institutions in war-affected regions, focusing on long-term development; the *AMREF* and *FARM-Africa* projects at Katine; and the deaf unit of a school in Kisoro District. Also in this term, the Lower School drama production raised £300 for *Build the Nations*, a Christian charity working with the poor in South Africa, to add to a further £1000 raised prior to the summer holiday visit made by Andrew Loughie and his group of sixth-formers.

Miss Man's Baking for Charity group continued its good (and delicious!) work this year, raising £26.50 for *Cancer Research UK*, and Crescent House boarders also kept up their good work, raising £210 for *BLESMA*, which provides support and care for amputees and other disabled ex-service personnel.

The summer term was quieter in terms of fund-raising. The Lower School Gala Concert raised £278 for *Build the Nations* and the Leavers' Service collection raised £375 for *TRAX*. Finally, as every year, the cleaners raised regular amounts of money through raffles. The total this year was a fantastic £900.

All in all, the School managed to raise more than £50,007 over the course of the year. Thank you to everyone who contributed to this splendid amount, with special thanks to the pupils and staff mentioned in this report and to the Charities Committee, who worked tirelessly throughout the year on promoting charities, organising events – and counting money!

Sophie Payne

Charity Walk

After a worrying week of rain, the sun shone on 18 September for the biennial sponsored walk. Pupils and staff were ferried to Oxford through the generous support of Tappins' Coaches. They then all walked (or ran) the nigh-on ten miles back along the Thames Path to Abingdon. The caterers provided a fantastic barbecue at Radley Boathouse, and other refreshments were available along the way.

Sponsor money was then collected and, with the inclusion of gift-aided donations, a grand total of £34,000 was raised – a new record. Special mention should go to 1J, 5 SAP, and VI ATH for raising the most money in Lower, Middle, and Upper School respectively, and to Christodoulou's for making the most as a House. Thanks should also go to School suppliers, who made valuable contributions via David Carson.

The proceeds from the walk were split between four charities:

Helen and Douglas House, based in Oxford, offers respite and end-of-life care for children and young adults, as well as support for their families. The



School were very fortunate to hear from the inspirational founder of this Charity, Sister Frances, at a School assembly later in the year.

Maggie's Oxford is fund-raising to build one of the renowned *Maggie's Centres* at the Churchill Hospital. These centres offer psychological and emotional support to cancer sufferers.

The *Asha Society* provides support, education and healthcare for people in the slums of Delhi, giving them the motivation and abilities to make lasting changes to their lives.

Agape works with young people in Moldova, the poorest country in Europe. Its mission statement is "to serve the educational, emotional, physical and spiritual needs of those suffering the effects of poverty". Abingdon School has been working with this charity since 2000.

All those who took part in the walk must be congratulated for a truly fantastic fund-raising effort.

Sophie Payne

Third-Year Charity Fund Raising

At the start of the school year, the group researched the work of a number of charities and the decision was taken to support one international charity and one local one over the coming year. The international charity chosen was *WaterAid*, which helps to provide clean drinking-water for countries in the developing world. The group has provided the charities' notice-board with publicity about the work of this charity, and has also publicised its work through the various Houses. It was also decided to join forces with the main school to help support *Helen and Douglas House*. The group met with their schools' publicity officer and helped her with suggestions for a schools' pack, containing well-presented information about the charity and its outreach into the community, and ideas for further fund-raising activities. The group also helped at the pre-Christmas tea party held at School for senior citizens from the local community.

Over the Michaelmas and Lent terms, fund-raising focused on organising two activities: a number of doughnut sales, both at Open Day and on various days in term time, and also an inter-House loose change competition. Containers, recycled from the School's caterers, were decorated with House names and images of the work of *WaterAid*, and were used to collect loose change to give to charity. Together, these two activities raised £410 for our main recipient, *WaterAid*, and a further £90 for *Helen and Douglas House*. The winner of the Inter-House Charity Competition was Christodoulou's, which collected a staggering £106 in small change. Our thanks go to the Bursary for checking our totalling of all the pennies and other small coins which went into this collection. Throughout the year there has also

been a third activity running. This has been the compilation on screen of entries for an *Abingdon Almanac*, a collection of fascinating, little-known information, organised around various days in the calendar. When this is finished, it will go on sale to raise funds and perhaps to furnish the material for a trail competition around the School. A small group of third-formers pupils, meeting after school on a Tuesday afternoon, has made these activities an enjoyable way of supporting these good causes.

Stephen Ridd

Baking to Beat Cancer

This year, twenty-four third-year boys have decided to bake something special on Tuesday afternoons. Each half of term, four boys cook something different every week, ranging from the savoury delights of quiches to sugary, delicious flapjacks. These are then sold to the Crescent House boarders and to anyone who is prepared to part with some cash for a good cause! That good cause is *Cancer Research*, a well known and very important charity. Usually, at the end of each half of term, the group makes (and eats) pancakes or pizza while counting up how much money has been raised. So, if you ever feel hungry between 4.30pm and 5pm on a Tuesday afternoon, then come along to Crescent House and enjoy the freshly baked treats, secure in the knowledge that eating cake is potentially a lifesaver!

Alex Iley 5 SAP

Community Service

During last year, a large number of pupils were involved in visiting the elderly each week at residential homes within the local community. Visits tend to involve tea, coffee, biscuits and other refreshments being served, followed by a chance for a chat. A quiz, which has been prepared by the boys, may also be delivered, or card or board games may be played. Musicians and thespians will sometimes join the visiting group to put on short performances. While it is quite a simple concept, this service is undoubtedly a valuable experience, both for those involved and those who are visited. At the end of each term, a tea party is held for the over-sixties. These tea parties are normally themed around a particular event and involve quizzes, raffles, light refreshment and music. I would recommend this service to just about anyone who is looking to make a difference. You begin to appreciate what you have and you learn not to be so self-centred. Most of all, you really make a can difference, no matter how great or small your contribution is.

Charles Beirouti 5 SAP



Frankenstein revisited: the Drama in the Community group perform at Old Station House residential home.

A Year of Tea Parties

Each term, Abingdon residents are invited to a tea party. The boys serve tea and cakes, and musical groups, like the *Abingdon Academicals* or the Brass Band, entertain the guests. There is always a quiz and raffle at each tea party with lots of prizes.

Third-year Service and Citizenship Scheme.

'In Citizenship we have looked at left- and right-wing politics and at the different political parties. We have also watched a film about spies.'

Thomas Chan 3 GBC

'In Waste Force we have looked at methods of recycling and at all the waste that the School generates. We have measured the School's energy levels and have made recycling bins.'

Jack Sznaka 3 NPS

'We made posters advertising a doughnut and sweet sale for charity and counted all the coppers that we collected.'

Tom Farrant 3 CFC

'We learnt about stage lighting in the Amey Theatre and put up steel decking. I really enjoyed learning about being a member of the tech crew.'

Charlie Roberts 3 RSS

'I played cards with Duncan, mostly 'cheat' and a bit of '21'. It was very rewarding to see him smile and enjoy our company.'

Omri Faraggi 3 HCGM

'We met Marian at Old Station House and played dominoes. Unfortunately I didn't win a game until the second week.'

Matthew Workman 3 JAW



The Abingdon Academicals entertain at the Easter tea party



A string ensemble entertains residents at Lady Eleanor Court residential home



Ulrich Bauer organises the newsletter of the Abingdon Alzheimer's Society

'I have made cookies, muffins and fairy cakes and served tea at Cygnet Court. I now know how to entertain the elderly and make them happy.'

Angus Chan 3 SRB

'Sam and I have worked well together and have formed a deadly partnership in terms of cooking.'

Afolarin Shasore 3 SRB

'I can now make great tea and coffee in double-quick time. I made many quizzes including one at the party (the best one!).'

Sam Ward 3 NPS

Absolutely Fabingdon



Andy Partridge and the *Back Alley Boys*

Absolutely Fabingdon (aka *AbFab*) was the principal fund-raising event of the year. It took the form of a talent show created by sixth-formers George Dugdale and Steve Hodgetts. Both laboured endlessly over the auditioning, advertising, ticket sales and smooth running of the show on the night. The Amey Theatre on 28 January was clearly the place to be in the UK, as a completely sold-out auditorium created an immense atmosphere which very nearly topped *Sketch*, *Drugs & Rock 'n' Roll's* comedy shows - but not quite! The judges were Mr Hogben (from

St. Helen's) Miss Man, Mr Southwell-Sander and Mr Wickes. And a pretty grumpy bunch they turned out to be, but entertaining, even so.

The opening act was Rory Copus and Marcus Cross playing a video game. And we had to watch them. Alas, their version of *Guitar Hero* didn't quite hit the talent mark we were hoping for. Nevertheless, the hordes were still entertained by the sheer bravado of these two sixth-formers. At least the song was a good one. Next came a trio of jugglers comprising Laurie

Barrow, Greg Craven and Ben Vaux. Attempts at juggling were made, and greeted with a sympathetic round of applause. From trainee-jugglers to singers: up next was Euan Campbell singing his rendition of Lionel Richie's *Easy like a Sunday Morning*. Now this was fantastic. Euan's deep, charming voice was an absolute delight to listen to, and he deservedly received extremely positive comments from the judges. *Eclipse* was next to occupy the limelight. This dance duo of Russell Gordon-Jones and Steve Hodgetts unintentionally turned out to be a mixture of George Sampson after a hard night out and Mr. Blobby. "A failed attempt to impress the ladies" was the judges' verdict. After *Eclipse* came James Burford (vocals/guitar) and Ross Muir (bongos) performing a version of *Sitting, Waiting, Wishing* by Jack Johnson. This was an interesting performance from the globally renowned band *Empire Safari*, and it deserved a decent reception.

After this, the talent diminished, to be honest. A 'bantermime' of *Cinderella* in three minutes, performed by the rowers, was an acquired taste, though if you like half-naked sixth-formers with ginger wigs and hideous make-up, then this was probably your thing. The shameless cast comprised Chris Brash, Rex Carter, Tim Clarke, Rory Copus, Jack Maynard and Felix Wood - funny, but disgraceful.

Mollie Hodge then turned things around by performing a moving rendition of *When a man loves a Woman*. This was utterly brilliant. Her amazingly rich voice grabbed the attention of almost everyone - a superb achievement. *Sony Music*, watch out!



Euan Campbell

So, we'd had singers, jugglers and dancers, but no doughnut eaters – an essential for a talent show, surely? Tommy Pritchard's challenge was to eat five doughnuts in three minutes. He failed. Enough said. A drumming three-piece, *Three-Step*, consisting of John Davies, Ross Muir and Jack Trotman, delivered a quite masterful set of rhythmic drumming on kits and waste-bins. It was loud, and a lot of time had obviously gone into the cleverly conceived item. The eagerly anticipated *Back Alley Boys* were up next. Patrick Child, Andrew Cook, Nick Croft-Simon, Nick Howe, Andy Partridge, Matthew Purssell, Parathan Rabindran and Jeremy Stockdale took to the stage with the ballad of *I want it that Way*. All I remember is some painful noise, mixed with over-exaggerated boy band mannerisms.

Not an act to write home about, if truth be told, though very popular with the audience. Next on were the boys' arch-enemies, *White Trash*, a dance group from St Helen's featuring Jo Hall, Lucy Ifould, Anna Last and Lindsey Russell. Lots of jumping and not much dancing, in my view, but entertaining, nonetheless. Next came a skit from *Sketch, Drugs & Rock 'n' Roll*. Mark Heffernan, Steve Hodgetts, Andrew Partridge, Jack Trotman, Jo Hall and Lindsey Russell parodied a stereotypical 'computer geek' session that received many a laugh and offered an entertaining scene which added variety to the show as a whole.

The first band of the night starred Jamie Brown, Ben Clayphan, Yannick Hoegerle and Jack Trotman. Their original song was very well executed,



Messrs Taylor, Crook and Davies

but it went down terribly with the judges, which was a shame. Arguably the most anticipated act of the evening was the 'mystery act'. A staff band was the result, disappointing some who'd heard rumours of a *Radiohead* set. Nevertheless, *Twist and Shout*, performed by Messrs Crook, Gibbs, Davies, Castle and Taylor, was a magnificent performance by the staff, with special mention to Mr Taylor, whose voice lifted the hearts of many. The final act was Guy Cutting, performing his version of *Nessun Dorma*. Guy's natural singing talent means goosebumps are always guaranteed, and his exceptional rendition brought the show to a fitting conclusion. The judges conferred, and the results were: in third place, *Three-Step*; in second place, Mollie Hodge; and in first place, Guy Cutting.

Absolutely Fabingdon was an evening enjoyed by all. It was enhanced by the superb presenter, Simon Evans OA, who used magic and natural wit to charm the audience. Special thanks are due to Mr Frazer-Mackenzie and his technical crew, as well as the immensely hard-working and helpful Mrs Hart. The show really was absolutely fabulous.

Stephen Hodgetts VI TCG

Abingdon: South Africa Partnership 9 Aug – 1 Sep 2009

In August 2009, a team of seven sixth-formers, Timothy Deeks, Timothy Delaney, Oliver Henstridge, Jonathan Ient, George Palmer, Bhavik Patel and Harry Porter, were accompanied by Mr Andy Loughe and Mr Richard Cotton on a trip to Venda in the Limpopo Province of South Africa, in association with Abingdon School's latest partner charity, *Build the Nations*. We had spent twelve months on planning, preparing and fund-raising for this trip, the purpose of which was to offer first-hand experience of some of the many challenges in South Africa, whilst affording the opportunity to experience this fascinating country's beauty and uniqueness.



The risk assessment for this trip proved to be an essential document and whilst out in the African bush we were always diligent to exercise all due caution and common sense when faced with the threat of snakes, rhinos, lions and malaria. Surviving on a staple diet of boerewors, biltong and the local delicacy of mopane worms (I believe the polite term is 'an acquired taste'), and fuelled by the dangerously addictive *Willards* crisps, the team divided their time between working in schools and community outreach projects, and visiting National Parks.

At Nwanedi Nature Reserve, the first of these visits, we were again careful to exercise all due caution and common sense, as required, when jumping from a 65-foot waterfall and during the unforgettable experience of playing with a baby white rhino whose parents had been poached a fortnight before. Arguably, we were even more fortunate at Kruger, where we saw all of the 'Big Five', including a sighting of the elusive leopard whilst on a night drive, which was a magical moment. As

if this weren't enough, on our return journey, we stopped off at Polokwane Lion Reserve, where we were able to play with the cubs, and Pilanesberg Game Reserve, where we calculated that we had seen a sixth of the world's population of the endangered white rhino!

Venda is statistically the poorest region in South Africa, with the lowest standards of education. However, *Build the Nations* is making vast strides in improving the situation. We were based at The School of Tomorrow in Shayandima where, along with teaching and playing sport with the children, we completed various outreach projects in the region. These included Aunty Hannah's School in Tshivhazwaulu and Rambuda Christian Academy, where we helped in the classrooms and built playgrounds. This was more than just a token western idea of charity: climbing and playing are essential in stimulating muscle tone and co-ordination in children, yet the vast majority lack the facilities to do so. Many of the children



we met had never seen a white person – we were greeted with hysterical cries of "Makoal!" ('white man' in Venda). At Rambuda, we were also fortunate enough to be granted permission from the chief (who only has thirty-seven wives) to climb his sacred mountain, where we enjoyed magnificent views and a very chilly waterfall.



Our final outreach project was in Mozambique which, without intending to sound clichéd, was a life-changing experience. Here we witnessed poverty on another level – we didn't touch tarmac on our seven-hour drive. The endless beautiful scenery was punctuated only by the incessant potholes in the road, harrowing evidence of the wars that have shaken this amazing country. Cries of "My sweet! My sweet!" from local children accompanied our journey, as we passed numerous villages en route to Xicumbane, our home for five nights. We handed out sweets and sugar (courtesy of *Silver Spoon*) on the way -- a treat that caused a frenzy of excitement amongst the children who almost exclusively eat pap (maize meal), and are extremely lucky if they can afford the vegetables which are so essential for healthy human survival. Before we began work, we played football with some of the local children, who were ecstatic about receiving a real football to replace their improvised one of several rags tied up with reeds. Not

only was it special to interact with the children and to see how such simple things could bring so much joy, it also provided a much-needed confidence boost for the Abingdon six-a-side team after its controversial 12-11 defeat by the teachers at Shayandima. The next morning, treading carefully (again, with all due caution and common sense) to avoid the abundance of deadly snakes in the area (and definitely not actively seeking them out and provoking them with sticks), we began work on another playground for the school in the village, though this time, rather than using treated wood, we had to use mopane tree trunks. Again, under the guidance of Jacques and Mr Brad Palmer from *Build the Nations*, we were able to construct a fairly impressive playground, which the growing crowd of chanting local spectators seemed to appreciate.

The most humbling experience, though, was watching the local ladies of the church feed the orphans with the food we had brought. The only way to describe it is that it was like taking



part in a video for Comic Relief: it was simultaneously heart-wrenching to witness such extreme poverty, and uplifting to see that these people so happily made the most of what they had, and even had the generosity to help others.

Whilst trying to avoid sounding trite, it is hard to emphasise enough what an incredible experience this trip was. Great thanks must go to Mr Andy Loughe and Mr Richard Cotton who accompanied the boys. The School hopes to establish a lasting link with The School of Tomorrow in Shayandima and the *Build the Nations* charity. A similar trip is planned for the summer of 2010.

Timothy Deeks VI SJG

Build the Nations is a Christian organisation, founded in 2002 by Brad Palmer and other like-minded visionaries as a non-denominational organisation aiming to make a difference to the lives of the poor in Africa. Their primary ministry is to advance the faith, to further education in Africa and the world, and to help bring relief to the poor. See <http://buildthenations.org>

Andrew Loughe

The Moldova Project



Moldova, a small ex-Soviet state recognized as the poorest country in Europe, is not on many people's list of top holiday destinations, but for several years now groups of sixth-formers from Abingdon have travelled there to support the work of *Agape*, a small charity working to improve the lives of people suffering from poverty. At the start of the summer holidays, thirteen Abingdonians accompanied by four members of staff flew to Bucharest, from where we undertook an epic minibus journey across Romania to arrive in the Moldovan village of Ialoveni. It is typical of Moldovan hospitality that several of the group found themselves met by a full dinner as soon as they entered the homes of their host families – even though it was by now 2am!

The main focus of our first day was on acquainting ourselves with our two main bases for the next week: the *Agape* Community Centre, where

we would be providing games and activities for young children, and the Gymnasium (formerly Number 4 School), where we would be giving English lessons. The Community Centre, opened by *Agape* in 2004, provides educational and emotional support to children at risk. It can sometimes take a while to knock barriers down between Abingdon sixth-formers and young Moldovan children, especially as many of the latter have little or no English, but the ice was melted very quickly on our first visit thanks to the presence of an inflatable paddling pool: some of the more confident Moldovans quickly invented a game of 'push the English boy in the water' and soon everybody was drenched through and beaming broadly (although the two boys who between them soaked Mr Jenkins should watch their step for next year!). Following our initial visit, a programme for the remaining mornings was designed which mixed energetic and noisy

outdoor games such as British Bulldog and relay races with quieter, more creative activities including bracelet-making and painting. The discovery of a game of Twister aided English-Moldovan relations, while Sunday morning provided the opportunity for a treasure hunt round the local area which ended with a game of rounders.

Afternoons were spent at the Gymnasium where, after an initial plenary session, it was decided to split the Moldovan students up into three groups, depending on their ability in English. The Abingdon boys then prepared a series of lessons: the less confident English speakers were given sessions in which they learnt how to describe the weather, tell the time, and talk about the members of their family. The intermediate group practised talking about their hobbies, using descriptive language, and giving directions, while the advanced group explored English colloquialisms and



practised their persuasive writing by preparing a speech to get themselves elected as president of Moldova (one of the students even going as far as to quote Tony Blair's "education, education, education" mantra!). It was clear that all the pupils really enjoyed the opportunity to practise speaking English with native speakers – thanks to the hard work put in by their Abingdon teachers, they all made considerable progress.

Three members of the Abingdon Film Unit, Tom Bateman, Matthew Copson, and Will McDowell, aided by Mr Taylor and film professional Jonas Mortensen, had travelled as part of the Abingdon group with the aim of making a documentary about life in Moldova. They were fortunate to find a perfect subject for their film in the shape of their host family. The older son, Andrei, (a gentle giant who would not look out of place playing Jaws in a remake of *Moonraker*) is a semi-professional basketball player who had been offered the chance of playing in Russia but had turned it down, partly because of his mother's wish that he stay in Moldova and continue his education.

The choice of leaving the country for possibly better opportunities abroad is one that faces many young Moldovans and it is hoped that Andrei's story will lead to a film that can increase awareness of Moldova in this country.

Moldovan boys are very keen on sport and so it was no surprise when the Abingdon group was challenged to several different sporting competitions. For the first time we also engaged in a quick game of Moldovan Rugby – it soon became apparent that this was basically a fight with no rules in which one person happens to be carrying a ball. The Moldovans scored an early basket (not a try!) but Abingdon, under the leadership of captain of rugby Richard Parkin-Mason, managed to equalise, at which point it was felt that the game should come to an end before anyone was dismembered. The climax of our sporting endeavours was undoubtedly the Abingdon v Ialoveni football match. Posters advertising the fixture were produced, announcing "se invitatoti amatorii de football" (all lovers of football are invited!) and a sizeable crowd gathered for the big game. The Abingdon group looked



the part in kit borrowed from the Gymnasium and were reinforced by Abingdon's first Moldovan scholar Mihai Clapaniuc in goal, but could not conceal their nerves at having to play a full match against the fitter and quicker Moldovans. It seemed that their fears were warranted as the Moldovans took an early lead, but as the match went on Abingdon's superior organisation and communication came into play and led to a 4-2 victory.

The group also visited the wine cellars of Milestii Mici, the man-made beach at Vadul lui Voda, and Moldova's capital city, Chisinau, where we were invited to the residence of the new UK Ambassador to Moldova, Keith Shannon. Later in the trip we were very pleased when Ambassador Shannon was able to come to Ialoveni to visit the Community Centre and see the group at work – and he was even sporting the Abingdon tie that we had presented him with!

Our time at the Community Centre ended with an evening concert attended by many of the friends we had made over the course of the trip.

The whole group played their part in a series of sketches: Henry Kibble had an unfortunate encounter with a Moldovan elephant, while Henry Mills, Luke Parker, Harry Gray and Richard Parkin-Mason told the (rapidly-changing) tale of a princess rescued from a tower. Oliver Todd passed on his cake-making tips, Stephen Poland played the part of an abandoned lover to perfection, and Ali Ibrahim showed real potential as a Romanian-speaking opera singer. Richard Milford and Max Makarov meanwhile proved that many hands don't make light work when Richard went through his morning routine (hands being supplied by Max). The Film Unit did a comedy turn and performed some English jokes in Romanian ('Yo spoon, Yo spoon, Yo spoon' allegedly means 'I say, I say, I say') and showed beyond doubt that some humour does not cross language barriers. The grand finale was a performance of the Moldovan Hora, a dance which the group had been learning for several days – what we lacked in precision and poise we made up for with enthusiasm! Following the concert, there were the inevitable emotional farewells to those we had been working with at the Community Centre, before returning to our host families for our last evening meal.

2010 marks the tenth anniversary of Abingdon's link with *Agape* and it is hoped that there will be several events to celebrate the decade's achievements: if the reactions, printed below, of some of the boys who came to Moldova this summer are anything to go by, then the link is one that has huge benefits for Moldovans and Abingdonians alike, and one that has only been strengthened by this trip.

Adam Jenkins

What the Moldovan children find most difficult to comprehend is that people from privileged backgrounds, from 'the first world', should care about and look to help people from less privileged backgrounds. I recognised this when Marianna could not believe that we came out of choice, and insisted that we must have been made to come by the school. During the trip I found it difficult, as an outsider, to see the impact that the arrival of the Abingdon group had on the children and the village of Ialoveni as a whole. However, on the last day, though the children were happy, it was clear to see their disappointment at our departure. This was when I realised the significance of the visit.

Henry Kibble 6 JJ

During my whole time in Moldova I did not meet a single person who was not friendly towards me. In retrospect, I feel in some ways that I learnt more from the families and children at the *Agape* centre than possibly I gave to them.

Oliver Todd 6 JHW

I really enjoyed the trip and found it very humbling and moving. It is good when you've had a privileged upbringing to spend time with those who haven't had one in order to constantly remind yourself of how lucky you are and how there is a need not to take it for granted. I'm glad also that the kids got as much out of it as I did – it made all the planning time worthwhile when we saw them running about outside or doing the arts and crafts inside and, importantly, enjoying themselves.

Stephen Poland 6 HFCP

The warmth and kindness of the people who not only welcomed us into their homes but also allowed us to spend time in their shoes was incredible to see. Playing sports, teaching English, and doing activities with the children at the *Agape* centre were all fantastic experiences and great fun. I would use one word to sum up the trip to Moldova – 'unforgettable'.

Richard Milford 6 APS



Combined Cadet Force



We began the year with the arrival, or rather return, of Squadron Leader David Haworth to the contingent as OC RAF Section. With the loss of two officers from the RAF section in July 2008, staffing numbers had looked to be a concern for the OC. David is an experienced officer, whose busy schedule in charge of ICT for the School had meant he had to step back a while ago. Happily, he has managed to find the time to recommit to the contingent, and a revitalised and busy RAF section, with growing numbers, is the result. He has been assisted this year also by the arrival of Flying Officer Richard Ashdowne, who is also a full-time academic at Oxford University. Richard has quickly established a reputation for hard work and dedication to the contingent.

Major David Carson's services to the cadet movement were recognized formally with the award of a Lord Lieutenant's Certificate this year. The

arrival of Matthew Perris, teacher of Geography, has also been of benefit to the contingent, as Matthew is a former Captain in the Queen's Dragoon Guards and a Gulf War veteran. Captain Perris has been making his mark teaching planning and leadership to the fourth form and has brought the style and finesse of the cavalry to the contingent – Colour Sergeant Longden was heard to request latte and patisserie when the OC offered only tea and doughnuts. Captain Perris will take over as OC Army section in September 2009; Captain Gooding, upon his ordination, will take on the role of Adventure Training Officer, using his wide experience as a mountain leader and adventurer. I wonder how many other contingents are fortunate enough to have their own Chaplain General?

It is possible for all cadets to gain their Duke of Edinburgh's bronze award in their first or second year and we are hoping to raise the profile of Adventure

Training in the contingent. We do not have a tradition of making the best use of the large number of courses the services offer our cadets in this regard, and Captain Gooding is keen to promote this aspect of the Combined Cadet Force in his new role as Adventure Training Officer. Not least, we are looking forward to the climbing wall in the Sports Centre being finished. Unfortunately for Captain Gooding (BASI Snowboard Instructor), the army has removed snowboarding from its list of adventure training activities, so the Alpine Ski Development Camp in Wengen, Switzerland, was for skiers only this year. Major Williams (BASI Skiing Instructor) was heard to chortle for an indecent length of time at this news and to make disparaging remarks about silly goatee beards and baggy trousers, mostly for his own amusement.

Colour Sergeant Jack Longden and Flight Sergeant Chris Davis have now stepped down after a year in

which they have both given sterling service. They and their peers have made a significant contribution to the contingent, especially by their excellent example in instruction, drill and in the field. They are succeeded by Colour Sergeant Oliver Todd and Flight Sergeant Luke Abbott, the latter also in the role of senior cadet.

The standard of drill, under the leadership of the upper sixth, has been very good this year. We are not a contingent that is particularly fond of drill, but on the few occasions when it is required – Remembrance Parades, Biennial Inspections and Passing Out – we like to get it right.

A significant number of fifth-form cadets attended the Cadet Leadership Course at the Cadet Training Centre, Frimley Park, which serves as excellent training for those considering leadership roles later in life, in the services or elsewhere, and equally for their roles as SNCOs in the contingent. Some were surprised (horrified?) to meet Major Williams there; he instructs on these and other courses at Frimley Park.

An emphasis this year has been on the 'Combined' part of our title; although cadets, after initial training, select the option of Army or RAF sections, we are keen to prevent this selection being too exclusive and now give green cadets the option to try flying once in a while and blue cadets the chance to get rained on and muddy.

Links with regular units have been developed this year and prospects for the future look good, with offers of help and experience from 28 and 33 Squadrons at RAF Benson, A Company 7 Rifles and 4 Logistic Support Regiment at Abingdon. 4 LSR made a big hit with the prospective third form on Induction Day in June with their display of vehicles, weapons

and radios.

Major Joss Williams

Army Section

Abingdon School CCF has enjoyed a very exciting and positive year. After the Christmas break, the annual survival exercise got under way in the Wiltshire countryside. The weekend training was fortunately met with pleasant weather and this year saw the survival lessons being taught solely by senior cadets after weeks of meticulous research and planning in the classroom at Abingdon. The level of professionalism and enthusiasm shown by all the cadets created a very enjoyable weekend, mid-school term, in the beautiful rural setting generously offered once again by Major Carson at his family's farm.

As well as weekend camps, the CCF has been active on various field days, which this year incorporated two live-firing range days and a busy field-craft training day at Barton Stacey. Taking place on Wednesdays during the school term, these days provide examples of the welcome and exciting variety in school life that the CCF continues to afford its cadets at Abingdon.

The annual Easter Camp this year took place on Salisbury Plain. With the assistance of some ex-cadets now serving in the armed forces, combined with a rigorously planned and varied exercise schedule, the camp achieved a very high standard of training, which could be seen by parents watching the cadets at the Passing Out Parade on Saturday. This year we were fortunate enough to be able to send a group of cadets to the Army Firepower Demonstration taking place on a nearby training area. The show, hosted by the 3rd Battalion, The Mercian Regiment, actively demonstrated live firing by

Challenger 2 tanks and an Army Air Corps Apache helicopter, as well as a 500 pound bomb dropped by an RAF Tornado jet, watched by the crowd at only around one kilometre away from the impact zone. We were extremely lucky to be able to watch the show that was also attended on the same day by the current head of the British Army, General Sir Richard Dannatt.

With such enthusiastic and capable cadets now entering senior level in the contingent, and with fresh talent joining from the years below, combined with the tireless efforts of the officers to create a continually challenging and high quality level of training, the CCF can look forward to another thriving and high-achieving year in 2009 – 2010.

Colour Sergeant Jack Longden
VI PEH

RAF Section

This year has been as eventful and productive as ever for the RAF Section, with cadets taking full advantage of the amazing array of opportunities available to the CCF.

Cadets in the RAF Section had the opportunity to go flying twice termly with the Air Experience Flight Squadron at RAF Benson. We all continued to develop our flying skills in the Grob Tutor 2-seater aircraft, receiving personal tuition from RAF pilot instructors alongside in the cockpit. Weather permitting, most of us still found time for some stomach-churning aerobatics, of course! Other activities on the several field days throughout the year varied from range shooting to touring the Merlin helicopter squadron. Members of the section naturally continued to enjoy more down-to-earth pursuits, participating together with the Army Section in the various exercises



throughout the year, which were on top of the RAF specific activities. Highlights included the survival exercise in the Lent term, an elaborate scenario meticulously planned by Captain Gooding, instructed by SNCOs and thoroughly enjoyed by all involved. The Remembrance Parades in Abingdon ran as smoothly as ever, with cadets performing seamlessly without exception.

The NCOs enjoyed several evening dinner events throughout the year, including the Christmas Dinner, always a merry affair, followed later in the month by a formal 'Evening with the Gurkhas', kindly hosted by Westonbirt School, which was highly engaging and congenial. In June, the upper sixth, officers and guests, enjoyed the Leavers' Dinner at Pembroke College, Oxford. Over the summer, several cadets will be attending the RAF Summer Camp at RAF Cosford and leadership courses, both of which are guaranteed to be highly rewarding commitments.

Congratulations to all those who completed qualifications and to those who were promoted this year, especially Sergeant Abbot, who will be the Senior Cadet for the contingent next year; J/Corporal Bowyer for obtaining his Silver Wings (flying solo in a glider); and Sergeant Brash for his work at the Volunteer Gliding Squadron, most particularly the achievement of his

Gold Wings (Advanced Glider Training) in a very fast time and, at the time of writing, gaining a place in the final fifty of 15,000 applicants for a University Pilot Scholarship. We owe a great debt of thanks to the officers. I'm sure I speak for all the leavers when I say how unequivocally rewarding our time in the CCF has truly been!

Flight Sergeant Chris Davis VI ATH

Advanced Infantry Cadre Training Camp

On the 27 March, the Abingdon School CCF departed to Knook Camp, Salisbury Plain for its annual week-long training camp. The Advance Infantry Cadre arrived on the Friday to help prepare for the subsequent appearance of the Recruit Section, which they then joined on an orienteering exercise on the Saturday afternoon. This was beneficial to the contingent as a whole, as it allowed the cadets and NCOs to re-acquaint themselves with the training area as well as allowing the recruits to have a taster of the landscape of Salisbury Plain.

From Sunday onwards, the contingent split into two halves to conduct a range of different training exercises. The Advanced Infantry Cadre under Major Williams' guidance, with the help of Lieutenant de Wilde, began to learn more complicated patrolling

techniques. They started to utilise the orders process that they had learnt throughout the Lent term to plan through a variety of different scenarios, including deliberate attacks, ambushes and reconnaissance patrols. On Tuesday afternoon, the cadre deployed on their 48-hour exercise, which was, for everyone involved, the longest amount of time they had spent in the field, and drew on all the elements they had learnt over the previous few days. Each cadet was expected to write orders for, and to lead, patrols. The emphasis throughout the cadre is on the development of individual leadership skills, and over the subsequent 24 hours the cadets were given the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge as they took part in a hectic schedule of ambushes and attacks. On Wednesday night, they carried out close target reconnaissance on the recruit positions for attacks the following day.

Under cover of a morning mist the two sections, led by Cadet Smith and Cadet Newman, cleared through the enemy positions successfully. The final two days of the camp were spent preparing for the passing out parade. Friday night saw a variety of awards, with Cadet Smith winning Best Cadet from the Advanced Infantry Cadre. The parade was attended by Colonel Kelly of The Royal Logistics Corps and signalled the end of another highly enjoyable and successful camp for the Abingdon School CCF. Thanks must go to the entire staff training team, but especially to Captain Chapman and to Major Williams in his inaugural Easter Camp as OC.

Colour Sergeant Oli Todd 6 JHW

Departments

Biology: Åbisko, Sweden

During the February half term, Dr Gunn led a school trip of eight boys and five adults to Åbisko, a remote village in northern Sweden. It sits on the edge of lake Tometrask, 45km long and about 12km wide, and completely frozen over during the winter.

We set off from Heathrow in the early morning of Saturday 14, and flew into Kiruna at around 3.30 pm local time. We arrived to temperatures of -20°C and a runway covered in snow. Having collected bags in the single-roomed arrivals hall, we met Thomas from Åbisko, who showed us to his minibus. As we drove to Åbisko, it was very apparent how deserted the place was, and we tried to make out as much as we could through windows which had become frosted on the insides. Arriving in darkness at around 5 o'clock, Åbisko treated us to night temperatures of below -30°C. However, the extreme dryness of the air meant that the cold was not felt as much as in other cold climates.

We were staying on the first floor of a self-catering chalet, with our host, Orjan, living above on the second floor. This was great, as it meant that any queries we had could be sorted almost immediately, yet it also meant he was down in an instant if he thought we were using too much hot water in the shower! With supplies obtained from the local shop, we enjoyed a dinner of reindeer bolognaise on our first evening.

For our daytime activities we split into two groups and spent alternate days cross-country skiing and dog-



sledding. Having been energised with a big cooked breakfast, my group, led by Doug Wilkinson, spent the first day on skis, with the other group taking to the sleds. For most of us, being fairly confident downhill skiers, cross country took a bit of getting used to. Having mostly mastered the new technique and balance issues within the first hour, we progressed to the frozen lake. We tracked along the shoreline for most of the morning, and stopped for lunch at a small summer hut on the edge of the lake. Tucking into sandwiches and all but completely frozen bottles of water, we were quick to get moving again to fight the cold. After lunch, we came off the lake and made our way back to Åbisko through wooded areas in deep snow. It had been about an 18km round trip, so we were all glad to get back to some hot chocolate and to have a lazy evening back at the chalet

discussing experiences with the other group. As the evening progressed, we made a short trip outside to have a look at the northern lights. They were clearly visible but, at that stage in the week, not very exciting. We kept our hopes for a better display later in the week.

Our second day in Åbisko began again with a hearty cooked breakfast. The groups swapped over, and my group made our way to the kennels. These were run by Orjan's sons, Thomas and Andreas. On arrival, they showed us the basic controls of the sleds, followed by a demonstration of how to harness up the dogs. Having expected them to be rather wolf-like and vicious, we were all very surprised by how friendly the Siberian huskies were, and it was great fun chasing them round the cages to get the harnesses on. Once all harnessed up, it was clear the dogs

knew we were about to get going, as the enclosure erupted with howls. We mounted our sleds (we had a sled each with between four and six dogs) and, with Thomas leading, we removed our anchors and shot off. Winding through steep trails between trees, the dogs follow the sled in front, yet as a driver, you constantly have to lean to make sure your sled corners behind the dogs. Furthermore, as we hit the downhill sections, and as gravity causes the sled to catch up with the dogs, you have to be sure to use the footbrake of the sled to re-tighten the line so as not to carry on straight when the dogs turn round a bend! Falls were plenty in the early stages as we got used to the sleds, but the excitement of hurtling round bends at high speeds more than made up for a few sore arms, legs and backs. The uphill stages were exhausting in a different sense. For the heavier people, uphill was more of a hike than a ride! The dogs are very powerful, but can also be lazy at times, and the prospect of pulling a fully-grown adult up a mountain was obviously not their idea of fun! We arrived back at the chalet, having had the most awesome day, and could now understand the excitement the other group had experienced after their first day out.

The third day saw our group skiing again, this time venturing up the valleys into the hills behind Åbisko. The snow-covered scenery was beautiful, and from high up in the hills we had the most magnificent views out across the lake. On the way back, we had some exciting downhill sections, another new experience in our flimsy cross-country boots with no back bindings! That evening, Orjan managed to persuade us that we must try the Swedish sauna. This was a spiritual experience that involved washing from bowls in the sauna as we went in, and every so often taking a 'break'. This may

have been a break from the heat, but consisted of us running outside in the snow in Swedish night-time temperatures!

Our second day of dog sledding was again very exciting. We took a different route from the first day, all with at least five or six dogs. This made hills much more manageable, and flat parts extremely fast. It was an eventful day, with Rob Hussey's dogs (sled number 3) deciding to take a different route at a junction from the first two sleds. The dogs on the rest of the nine sleds decided that following Rob was a much better idea than following our guide, Thomas, so Andreas on the skidoo had to do his best to re-route us all back on track. Eventually, we encountered our longest, most extreme downhill section of the week. This was immense fun, and we all survived it well enough to tell of our experiences over supper that evening. Later on, we made our way out again for another look at the northern lights. We were in luck and had some very bright bands of green light across the sky to gaze at. This was a new experience for almost all of us, and was something truly amazing to see.

On the fifth day of our trip, I woke to an extra big, 17th birthday breakfast! Not only did we have the usual bacon, eggs, etc., but the chefs also served us eggy-bread and tomatoes! Our group then left on the skis, our plan for the day to go right across the lake and back again – a 24km round trip. All started well, with a slight mist about as we crossed the bay just offshore from the village. As we neared the main channel of the lake, we entered a strong crosswind running down the lake. This 30 – 40mph breeze made the already cold -25°C seem absolutely bitter! To add to our difficulties, the wind had also blown a lot of the snow off the lake. This meant we had to

ski from patch of snow to patch of snow across sections of sheet ice. We made it across to the other side after four hours of skiing, where I enjoyed a cold birthday lunch of semi-frozen sandwiches with the others! Then, after another 3½ hours of skiing/skidding/falling, we made it back to Åbisko, absolutely shattered. That evening, I was lucky enough to have a birthday cake pavlova made by the adults, which we all enjoyed hugely. Following that, we made our way to the scientific research station down the road, where Dr Gunn's friend, Professor Callaghan (who gave a talk to the Biology Society earlier in the year about climate change in the Arctic), had kindly agreed to give us a brief talk on what goes on at the station. It was fascinating to see the research that goes on there, and also the international prestige of the station: regularly, UN meetings on climate change take place there, and its research papers often get published for consideration elsewhere.

On the sixth and final day of the trip, my group had our last day of dog-sledding. This time we went further into the mountains in a slightly different direction from before. This gave us new, more barren scenery, and another exciting, fast trip. On returning to the kennels, it was sad to say goodbye to the dogs one last time, having had such good experiences with them and grown to like them so much. We went to the only restaurant in the village for the last night, where we enjoyed a reindeer steak with chips. It was a great way to finish a great week and, on our return flight the next day, we had time to reflect on what an amazing experience the trip had been for us all.

Our thanks go to Dr Gunn for organising such an exciting trip, and to the other adults for their support.

Guy Stephens 6 MIL

Chemistry



L – R Fayeaz Ahmed, Tomer Farraggi, Andrew Phillips, Kris Cao and Mark Scott, winners of Gold CREST Awards

The Chemistry Department has achieved success beyond the school laboratory with pupils gaining awards and recognition both nationally and internationally. The 41st Chemistry Olympiad is to be held in July in Great Britain, and for the second successive year one of our pupils is to be a member of the four-strong British team competing against chemists from 70 other countries. Ian Houlsby faced stiff competition to gain his place: an hour-long exam, written by the Royal Society of Chemistry and sat by the top 2200 chemistry pupils in the country, placed Ian in the top 25. A selection weekend at Cambridge, involving three hours of theory and a three-hour practical, earned Ian his place in the final four. Other Abingdon pupils gained medals in the initial round: Gold for Mark Scott and Gregory Craven; Silver awarded to Andrew Hones, and Julian Thorn won Bronze, placing these four in the top 200 pupils in the UK.

The upper sixth achieved additional success with 5 Gold CREST Awards. The British Science Association uses the CREST award scheme to promote science, maths and engineering amongst 11 – 19 year-olds. They are a nationally recognised achievement for school pupils, ranging from Bronze

to Gold. In order to achieve a Gold award, pupils have to carry out projects in an original area of research. They then have to produce a written report and present their findings. The total time spent on a Gold project is in the order of 100 hours.

Five upper-sixth pupils have built upon the success of last year and gained Gold CREST Awards for their research project. Fayaaz Ahmed, Kris Cao, Tomer Faraggi, Andrew Phillips and Mark Scott continued the work on the metallisation of polymers, whereby metal is adhered to plastic surfaces without the use of electrolysis. The metallisation of surfaces has a broad range of applications, from printed circuit boards to prosthetic joints. In the current age of environment awareness, developing new technologies requiring less energy during production, coupled with a lower waste of reagents, is vitally important in sustainable manufacturing. Although not every experiment was successful, the group managed to take the chemistry in new directions, broadening their understanding and appreciation of research.

Not to be outdone, the current lower sixth (Joshua Stedman, Richard Moon, David Choy and Geoff Penington)

has managed to record evidence for the first time of silver deposition on polydopamine-coated polymers. The XPS spectra conclusively prove that significant quantities of metal have been successfully plated onto the polymer, and the project mentor, Dr Mark Moloney of Oxford University, plans to present the data at a forthcoming summer conference.

A team from the lower sixth has won the regional heat of the RSC Analytical Chemistry competition and progress to the national final to be held over two days in June at the University of Plymouth. Joshua Stedman, Richard Moon and Joe Mason planned and executed two analytical tasks in four hours: which dye gives IRN-BRU its distinctive colour and what is the concentration of the dye; and how much ammonia dissolves in two different immiscible solvents, water and chloroform. The team achieved 100% in the two tasks, and achieved their triumph by being the only group to spot a systematic error.

For the national final, squad rotation had to be used owing to D of E commitments, so Richard Moon was replaced by Robbie Henley. At the finals held at the University of Plymouth there were 18 teams. Two experimental tasks had to be completed and the team worked with a high level of accuracy on both. They also demonstrated high levels of teamwork and time management. They eventually finished second behind Ruthin School and won £500 for the School in the process.

Congratulations to all the boys in their various endeavours.

Meg Bowen Jones

Classics

This was another busy year of activities in the Classics Department above and beyond the timetabled lessons. Our sixth-formers attended a variety of lectures and conferences, which included a day on Classics in film at St Edward's for the Ancient Historians and a morning of lectures on the Latin A and AS level texts at Headington School.

For the first time, the third year classical civilisation set visited the Corinium Museum, Cirencester, where they learned what life was like for the Roman cavalymen living in the fort at Corinium (the Roman name for Cirencester), and saw mosaics and other artefacts from Roman villas in the area. After packed lunches in the remains of the Roman amphitheatre at Cirencester, they travelled to Chedworth Roman Villa, where they saw evidence of a once-palatial house, including large rooms with mosaic floors, hypocaust systems for heating the rooms, and a latrine! There was also the usual programme of trips for the Lower School Classics Club, with visits to Cirencester and Bignor. There are separate reports below by boys on the main Lower School trips to Fishbourne and Bath, as well as about the main October trip abroad, which went to Greece.

On Tuesday 17 March, 24 boys competed in various categories of the Oxford Classical Association Reading Competition against other local schools in the Oxford Classics Faculty, judged by university tutors. Although we took a very young 'team' this year, they performed well and twelve of them won prizes. Tom Salt won a first prize in the Greek junior section, where prizes were also won by Alex Sunderland, Christian Reedman, Sandy Gildersleeves and

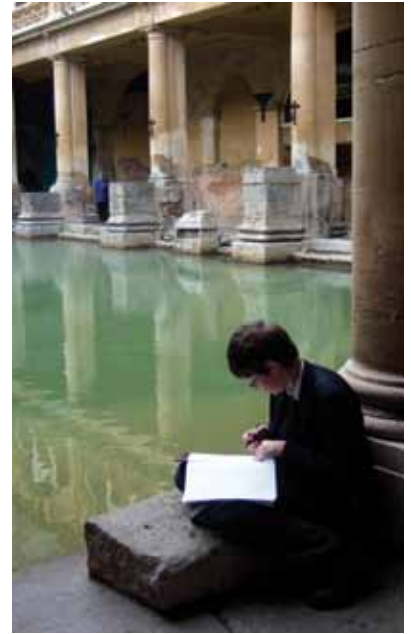
Sam Wright. These last two did particularly well, having studied Greek for only two terms. This was also the case for six other third-formers, who took on the tough challenge of reading a piece of Homer from memory; against some much more experienced opposition, Fraser Capill, Luke Carter and Charles Pope did particularly well to win prizes (coming equal third and second, respectively). Amongst the sixth-formers, Richard Slade, Anthony Lloyd, Thomas Watkins and Thomas Finch all won deserved prizes.

Ten of the leavers have gone off to read various Classics courses across a range of universities, including two, Oscar Hird and Fergus McIntosh, at Oxford. These two also recorded strong results in the last-ever AEA Latin exam, scoring a distinction and a merit, respectively. This summer, six members of the present upper sixth attended the JACT Greek Summer School at Bryanston in order to read Greek texts more intensively for a fortnight of their holidays; they also attended a full range of seminars and lectures which are put on as part of the course. 2009 – 10 promises to be at least as busy!

Chris Burnand

Bath

On Wednesday 21 January, the second year visited the Roman complex of baths in Bath. When we first went into the complex, we collected an audio guide and listened to the introduction whilst looking out at the great bath. We then proceeded downstairs and saw a very impressive wooden model of the Roman baths. We went through to a large room with steps and saw



a huge stone head which was very strange. There was evidence that it was the Gorgon Medusa but it had a moustache! After answering some questions, we moved on to the temple where we saw the altar, which was a lot bigger than I had pictured it. We also saw a statue's head and base, which had been donated by none other than Lucius Marcius Memor, who had recently appeared in our textbooks. We then saw some tombstones and, a highlight of the trip, the lead pig (!) that was actually just a huge lump of lead that belonged to the Hadrian who built Hadrian's Wall. We then finally went into the courtyard that surrounded the great bath. The water was brown in some places, owing to iron in the water. You could also smell sulphur and you could see the steam coming off the water. We then looked at the hypocaust that heated some of the other baths, before seeing the frigidarium into which I threw a 2p coin. Finally we saw the spring itself – the steam was more intense here and you could feel the heat. This trip was a good balance of fun and learning.

Thomas Fabes 2 EMTS

Fishbourne

On 29 June a coach and a minibus full of first years set off from Abingdon to Fishbourne Roman Palace near Chichester, on what must have been the hottest day of the year. Fishbourne, completed during the reign of the Emperor Vespasian from about AD 75 to 80, has some of the best-preserved Roman floor mosaics in the country, including the very famous mosaic of Cupid riding a dolphin. The palace was apparently built for Cogidubnus (or Togidubnus), chief of the Regnenses tribe, in payment for supporting the Romans and keeping the locals loyal. It was occupied for nearly two hundred years until it was destroyed by a fire, after which some of the stone was stolen to build other parts of Roman Britain.

Not much is left of the walls and you need a good imagination to picture what it might have been like during Roman times, but there is a model showing how extensive and palatial the building was, and also a reconstruction of one of the rooms. Another aid for the imagination is the remaining half of the reconstructed garden, which is approximately 30 x 70 metres in size.

A picnic lunch on the excavation spoil heaps was followed by an archaeology workshop, identifying artefacts from the palace, but it was a little disappointing that there were not more opportunities to practise all that Latin we have been taught!

The atmosphere in the coach on return journey was very warm, but when we arrived back in Abingdon, it felt almost tropical.

Alexander Gunasekera 1 AJL



Greece

Forty-seven boys and five members of staff set off for Greece, assembling early on 23 October in the coach park. There was much excitement at the promise of seeing many sites both in Athens and the surrounding area, which we had learnt so much about in the classroom.

On arrival in Athens, we boarded the coach for the long drive to Sounion, where we expected to dine on the coast accompanied by the famous sunset. The only hiccough of our first day's travel was that we arrived at the restaurant after nightfall! After dinner we boarded the coach again for the Hotel Odeon, which was to be our base for our three nights in Athens.



A great deal was packed into our time in Athens: we had a long day of walking round the sites in the scorching heat, making the ascent to the Parthenon and Acropolis – my personal highlight of the area – and the visit to the Theatre of Dionysus. The trips round the Roman agora and Hadrian's Temple of Olympian Zeus provided some Roman relief amidst the domination of Greek remains. A novel feature of this Classics trip was the advanced involvement of the sixth form – various individuals gave talks at the different sites to keep the boys entertained and to allow the teachers to let off some steam. These talks were kicked off spectacularly at the Parthenon by Jack Longden, followed by the eloquent and racy myth-narration of Charles Hutchence at the Erechtheion.

We also made the most of the opportunity to explore the area surrounding Athens while we were still based there; we travelled to Marathon, the sanctuary of Artemis at Brauron and the silver mines at Thorikos, where we raced to the top of the hill to see the spectacular views.

We visited some excellent museums in Athens, notably the brand new Acropolis Museum, which was unfortunately yet to be finished when we visited, but was nevertheless very impressive. The trip to the superb National Archaeology Museum was a fitting way to end our stay in Athens before our journey to the beautiful Ossios Loukas monastery in Boeotia, and our eventual arrival at our hotel in the picturesque mountain village of Delphi.

The tour of Delphi, the site of the most important oracle in the classical Greek world, was truly awe-inspiring; the fantastic views were overshadowed by the sheer mass of 'ruins' – temples and the theatre, most of which were in remarkably good condition, albeit after some considerable restoration. The prospect of a race in the stadium at Delphi was short-lived as our route to the track was roped off, but we made the most of our opportunity the next day at Olympia, after a night in the Olympic Village Hotel. Following an excellent talk on the classical Greek Olympic Games by Euan Campbell – a talk to rival James Hunter's at Delphi

– we all converged at the start of the track in great anticipation. The race was hotly contested, a terrifying sight for the other tourists as the mass of boys bore down upon them, and eventually won by James Edwards.

The remainder of the trip included visits to the spectacular tent-covered temple at Bassae, the stunning theatre at Epidauros, where Guy Cutting gave a rendition of *Nessun Dorma*, and tours around Mycenae, Argos and Corinth. As is now traditional on the Classics trips, a fun yet challenging quiz was held on the last night, deservedly won by 'Jacob's Jedis', a team ably led by the eponymous Jacob Swain.

I would like to thank the staff who gave up their own half terms to make the trip possible, not all of them classicists (Chris Burnand, Adam Jenkins, Jenny Fishpool, Jamie Older and Cella Shephard), and also the boys for their near-immaculate behaviour, which made the trip much easier to manage and more enjoyable all round.

Oscar Hird VI IM



History



At the Thiepval Memorial

Tour of the First World War Battlefields

During the Easter holidays, a group of third-formers boys and staff visited the World War One battlefields in northern France and Belgium.

On day one, we arrived in France and drove into Belgium. We visited two cemeteries and a bunker which had been used as an emergency hospital. We also visited the *In Flanders Fields Museum*, where we saw many artefacts from the war, including shells and machine guns. In the evening, we went chocolate shopping and had a meal at a restaurant in Ypres. We attended the Last Post memorial service at

the Menin Gate and laid a wreath in memory of all the soldiers who had died in the war.

On the second day, we visited the Serre battlefield on the Somme. We saw trenches and some small cemeteries with about 100 graves in each one, the soldiers having been buried in the places where they died. After that, we went to the Lochnagar mine crater. The crater had been formed by a mine detonated by the Allies under the German trenches. In the afternoon, we went to the Thiepval Memorial. This is a huge memorial carved with the names of the 73,000 British and South African soldiers

who have no known grave but were missing, presumed killed, in action on the Somme.

On the last day, we went to the Bayernwald preserved trench system. We saw a few trench tools, a grenade and a bayonet. Then we were allowed to walk around the reconstructed trench to get a feel for what trenches looked like. We also visited Tyne Cot cemetery where there are 12,000 allied graves and two German graves. There is also a small bunker in the cemetery. Tyne Cot is the biggest Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemetery in the world. To finish off our trip, we went to the firing post at Poperinghe,

where soldiers were executed for desertion, cowardice or other offences. We also visited the death cells where soldiers were kept for one night before they were killed.

Our battlefield trip was a very memorable experience. We saw at first-hand how many innocent lives were lost and how terrible the First World War really was.

Nick Bradfield 3 RSS

London Dungeons

When we arrived at the London Dungeons we had our lunch on the opposite side of the road in the scorching sun before entering. It was my second time going and on my previous visit the dungeons really had resembled a cold, cruel place. But the cold was replaced by stuffy heat, which I felt ruined the atmosphere a bit. Nevertheless, we continued, in a conga-style line, except without the singing and without the leg-kicking, both of which were replaced by us burying our heads into the back of the person in front from fear. Except me, as I was on crutches so I could not enjoy the comfort of friends reassuringly holding onto my back. We went through rooms with scary people and gruesome plastic bodies, before entering the Labyrinth of the Lost, a pain to those who do not pay attention to detail, literally. After that we went into the torture room where James Peirce was locked in a cage for no apparent reason and Jack became a demo dummy for different torture weapons – nice! Afterwards we went into a court where people were charged for strange things like dancing in the streets naked, asking Satan for a husband and contaminating wells with urine and the like. Afterwards we went through a prison room filled with

smoke before going on a ride that got us wet. Then there was an exhibition on Sweeney Todd and finally a short, sudden drop to hell (which I wasn't allowed on because of my crutches but everyone else said was great). Then, there was the awesome but incredibly overpriced shop. We then waited for the coach and went back to school.

Max Robinson 2 SW

Warwick Castle

The trip was a fun and exciting time for all of us. First we drove from School to Warwick and then, when we got to Warwick Castle, we got in through the bus entrance. When we got to the main entrance we had to get the tickets so, while our teachers waited in the queue, we talked to our favourite person there who talks about trebuchets and swords. At this point he was talking about swords and we all got to have a swing of his sword. Later on we went to the ice-cream shop where we were

all allowed a one-scoop ice cream, but I chose the other kind. I started a craze and after their first one people went for my type of ice-cream, while watching birds fly about, nearly hitting the crowd but skilfully managing just to avoid doing so. Then the highlight of the day...the trebuchet launch!

The launch was on time and so close to the viewers. The trebuchet was the most amount of wood I have ever seen in my life. When we got there we went to the café to get a drink and sat down on the hill to watch the launch. After lunch we headed to the dungeons! Before we went in we had our final photo. (I will not say any more, so you will have to find out what happens in the dungeons by going on this amazing trip yourselves!)

With thanks to our teachers who helped make it such an enjoyable day.

Joshua Burdass 1M



At Warwick Castle

Geography: Iceland

The Geography Department's first visit to Iceland for several years took place in late August. The weather for the most part was kind and allowed us to visit all our intended venues with minimal interruption. Iceland has a spectacular landscape, and during this trip we were able to appreciate superb views across the mid-Atlantic rift valley that runs through the heart of Iceland. In addition, ice caps, so often hidden by low cloud-cover, revealed themselves, much to the delight of Mr Gooding!

In the short time we were there, the group enjoyed a visit to the Blue Lagoon and to the delights of various thermally heated swimming pools. The high standards of personal hygiene to be observed prior to entering the water perhaps raised a few eyebrows!

One of the highlights of the visit was our tour around the Thingvellir region (the rift valley area) that included a visit to the hot spring at Geysir, and to Gullfoss, one of the most impressive waterfalls in Europe. Another day required an exhausting hike up a near-vertical hill to observe outwash plain formations and other fluvioglacial features. A short drive further took us to a series of waterfalls, including Skogafoss, and finally onto the snout of Solheimajokull, the black glacier, so called because of the huge amount of debris it carries. Our return journey took us to the coast and black beaches, sinister black stacks and a small version of the Giant's Causeway.

Our final full day was eagerly anticipated as it involved a short flight, in very small planes, to one of the Westmann Islands : Heimaey – famous for the major eruptions that occurred here in the early 1970s. The associated lava flows nearly destroyed

the whole economy of the island by almost cutting off the entrance to the harbour. We explored the whole island and completed our visit with a boat trip around the islands prior to our flight back to the mainland. Puffins, seals and gannets were much in evidence around the island, along with some spectacular cave formations. Surtsey, another famous Icelandic island, was tantalizing us on the horizon. Sadly, it is not possible to visit – only scientists are allowed.

Our return journey via Reykjavik found us in a city still reeling from the shock of the banking disaster that had occurred 10 months earlier. A large volatile crowd had gathered outside the

Icelandic Parliament to protest and to vent their frustration about the terms and conditions of repayments to be made to Britain and the Netherlands following the collapse of *Icesave*. Several of our number ended up being interviewed by Icelandic TV as British visitors to Iceland; sadly, we did not see the final broadcast!

Iceland is a relatively small country, about the size of Wales and Scotland combined, and we saw a lot of it, but there is still far more to discover. The photographs offer a flavour of our visit. We hope to return next summer with some of the new lower sixth.

Ian Fishpool



Modern Languages: French

French Exchange

For the fourth year running, we exchanged with the Lycée La Nativité in Aix-en-Provence. Thirty-seven fourth-year pupils took part. The French party was in Abingdon at the beginning of March and we went to Aix during the Easter holiday. Below is Nick Krol's report on the visit.

Estelle Slatford

To many people's relief, we hosted the French party first, in March, so that we were able to get to know them, whilst they had to concentrate on translating English into French in their heads! They arrived eager, but understandably nervous, ready to spend a little less than a week in England. Fortunately the weather was on our side, and for the first weekend many boys took their exchange partners to London (of course) or Oxford. Having got to know them better, it made it much easier to get on with them during the following week when they returned from their daily trips and, at some points, I would forget that they were even French! Once the awkward barrier had been broken, it was also easier to chat about their interests.

During their stay, they visited historic and notable places such as Windsor Castle, Bath and Oxford – though the weather wasn't favourable during the week. In order to make the most out of their short stay, some boys took their partners bowling, to the cinema or eating out with the family, so that they could really experience English life. Their stay soon came to an end, but we were able to rest assured that in a month we would be in Aix-en-Provence, just as excited but just as nervous as they had been.

The prospect of spending a week with a French family seemed a little daunting at first for everyone. But there wasn't much chance to worry about that, for as soon as we arrived at the station in Aix, after a whole day of travelling, we were whisked away by our families and submerged into the French language for the first night. Of course, it was a tad awkward for the first few days, but we soon got to know our families, especially during the long Easter weekend when we truly experienced the French lifestyle.

Various highlights were: visits to Les Salins de Giraud (the Camargue), Arles (just before the Feria), Marseille and an olive oil mill in Mourriès, where we tasted various concoctions of olive oil and learnt production methods. Another highlight was the mountain climb I did with my partner, in the blazing sun, whilst others sprawled on the beach in Marseille.

Although the main reason for the French Exchange was to improve our French, which we certainly did, I think that the biggest benefit was that we experienced different foods, different humour, different routines and different people. My confidence in my ability to speak French has rocketed, and it has made me realise how versatile learning a foreign language could be for me in the future.

Nick Krol 4 AJPE

Lower School Normandy Trip

Following the success of recent years, the destination of this year's Lower School Modern Languages Department trip was Normandy. Forty-nine first- and second-year boys, accompanied



by six members of staff, spent three days exploring this fascinating region of France. We were blessed with glorious weather all weekend – the perfect complement to a jam-packed itinerary, which included visits to Bayeux and its famous Tapisserie, the American cemetery and WWII memorial, the Landings Museum (only days after Barack Obama, Nicolas Sarkozy and Gordon Brown had visited the museum to commemorate the 65th anniversary of the D-Day Landings), and the 360° cinema at Arromanches – and this was just the first day! On the Saturday the group travelled to Mont St Michel, and then discovered the origins of camembert cheese in Camembert itself. On Sunday the boys had the opportunity to explore the well-known market in Caen, followed by a visit to the castle and then Ouistreham beach for some ball games and kite-watching. All in all, the trip was a great success and the boys were excellent ambassadors for the School. The destination of next year's Lower School modern languages trip is likely to be the Rhineland.

Andrew Loughe

Modern Languages: German



Bielefeld Exchange

On the evening of 8 February, sixteen Abingdon boys and eleven St Helen's girls arrived at Bielefeld in Northwest Germany, for an exchange that, for ten days, would provide both excitement and challenges.

A well-balanced programme combined excursions (with and without our German partners) and days in school. There were two day-long trips to the historic German cities of Cologne and Münster, both of which proved informative and enjoyable, with tours to a chocolate museum (and, more importantly, its shop), visits to two cathedrals, and free time for shopping or sightseeing. Other trips included ice-skating, sampling traditional 'Currywurst' at a roadside 'Imbiss', a town trail of Bielefeld, conducting experiments into bio-fuels and green energy at the University of Bielefeld, and being guided round the huge town theatre. Some of us were lucky enough to be able to visit other, larger, German cities such as Hamburg and Berlin on the only free day in the programme, Sunday.

The shock of total immersion in German culture was cushioned by the friendliness and hospitality of our German partners and their families and

friends. Everyone we met seemed delighted to see us, and the welcome from the Ratsgymnasium's headmaster, Herr Nolting, was especially warm. The whole exchange will undoubtedly prove to be a huge boost to our German, both in the vocabulary we have learnt and our increased comprehension of conversational German at full pace.

I'm sure we will continue to keep in touch with all the new friends we made on this fantastic exchange, especially our own partners and their families, who did so much to support and aid us in the challenging situations offered by a different culture and language.

Tom Salt 4 RKJ

Frankfurt Christmas Market in Birmingham 9 December 2008

German Christmas markets date back to the 14th century. Originally, the fairs provided food and practical supplies for the cold winter season, but soon the markets became a beloved holiday tradition and a great way to get into the Christmas spirit. On a frosty winter's day in December, fifty third-year German students, accompanied by six members of staff, travelled to Birmingham city centre

to visit the world-famous Frankfurt Weihnachtsmarkt. The boys enjoyed perusing the 100-stall-strong market, which offers authentic tasty German foods, including Currywurst, Brezeln, Lebkuchen, Glühwein and Heisse Schokolade, along with a wide range of traditional German gifts, toys and crafts. The boys also made the most of the opportunity to practise chatting in German to the stall-owners. The market, the largest of its kind in England, is now in its ninth year and welcomes over two million visitors annually. The boys certainly got a feel for a German Christmas, thanks to the exciting and authentic atmosphere created by the market.

"I was surprised by how authentic the Christmas market was –all the food, the drinks and the gifts were just like back home!" – Kai Grädtke, German assistant.

Andrew Loughe



German Conference Report

On Monday 23 March a group of nine sixth-formers travelled to London to attend a German conference entitled 'Deutschland Hier und Heute' ('Germany Here and Today'). After an uneventful train journey, we met the St Helen's party and proceeded to Friends' House, unfortunately getting lost en route.

The conference was led by two native German speakers, who not only presented the various discussion topics in a lively manner, but also invited audience participation. Thomas, one of the presenters, also gave tips on how to impress A level examiners, emphasising the importance of using German idioms in written work. The discussion topics included beauty ideals, the environment, family, racism, nutrition, youth culture, technology and crime, all of which were presented in German – the day was really a complete immersion in the language.

The most enjoyable part of the day was the mock court case, in which one audience member was accused of hypothetically having mugged another audience member. We then spent some time discussing what punishments should be given and the duration of sentences. Above all, the conference was an invaluable opportunity to learn new vocabulary, hone our listening and oral skills and experience German culture. Our thanks go to Mrs Jennings for organising the trip.

Joe Mason 6 JJ



Modern Languages: Spanish



Spanish Exchange

Just before the start of the October half-term holiday, eleven fifth-year boys, accompanied by nineteen girls from the School of St Helen and St Katharine, travelled to northwest Spain for our third exchange with the *Colegio Manuel Peleteiro* in Santiago de Compostela. The boys were able to experience Spanish family life first-hand, as well as attending lessons and visiting the city and surrounding areas, including a brief trip to Portugal and a visit to the Riazor football stadium in the nearby city of La Coruña. Santiago itself is, of course, famous for its cathedral – the destination for the thousands of pilgrims who travel to the city every year on the *Camino de Santiago*. All in all, the trip was a real success: the boys seemed to charm and impress their host families, making firm friends with their exchange partners.

Sixth-Form Study Visit to Madrid

The Spanish Department arranged their first sixth-form study trip for the February half term. A group of fifteen upper- and lower-sixth boys accompanied Miss Henderson and Mrs Payne to Madrid. Trips ranged from the cultural, including a visit to the *Centro de Arte Reina Sofía*, home to Picasso's famous painting *Guernica*, through the undeniably magnificent, if not somewhat macabre, *Valle de los Caídos* (Franco's tomb), to the downright terrifying *Tren de Terror* and the *Museo de Cera* (Madrid's answer to *Madame Tussaud's*). Overall, the trip was a great success, and a hugely enjoyable four days.

Patricia Henderson

Modern Languages: Mandarin

Visit to China

We arrived at Heathrow Airport with an air of anticipation and excitement. None of us had been to China so we did not know what to expect. After having been crammed into a minibus for the long journey to Heathrow, it felt good to stretch our legs. While boarding the plane the excitement rose and we scrambled for our seats, each of us desperate for the window. The journey took a total of nine hours and it was hard to force ourselves into sleep when we were very much awake and very excited. We arrived at the airport and were escorted to our coaches where we met our tour guide, Larry, and began our fantastic journey into the heart of China. The grey sky and the light smell of chemicals could not put us off, as we remained enthralled by the fact that we were in China at last!

We spent our nights at a five-star hotel in Beijing, where we were served the most delicious variety of Chinese cuisine, topped with excellent service and days filled with exciting activities. Whilst in Beijing we visited the Summer Palace, a temple with many traditional gardens and the most beautiful buildings. The weather amplified the beauty, as there were almost no clouds to be seen. We were taken on a tour of the palace and shown most of the gardens and temples and, apart from having to be careful not to get overcharged in the shops, it was truly a fantastic day.

The Temple of Heaven is a very famous historic site, as it is the place where the emperors made contact with the gods. There is a central stone in a raised platform, which is the exact spot where the contact was made. Also there is a circular wall surrounding one of the courtyards, and when two people stand

at either side it is possible for them to hear each other if they shout into the wall. It was a fantastic site, as we were able to learn about Chinese history at the same time as enjoying the beauty of the area.

The Forbidden City was the palace where generations of emperors lived. We were shocked at the scale of the place, as the first huge courtyard was only one of many and they were all equally as big. The buildings were beautiful and it was fascinating to see the contrast between the newly painted buildings and the old unpainted originals. We spent two hours in the Forbidden City and were still unable to cover it all.

The Olympic site was awesome and looked twice as good in real life as it had done on television. The Bird's Nest Stadium was beautiful, glowing red in the darkness, and next to it was the Water Cube, which was glowing blue. We went into the Water Cube, where

we watched a show involving lots of water fountains and dancing. It felt so good being in the actual location of the Beijing Olympics and we were all having a fantastic time. Outside we were shouted at by enraged kite-sellers and were defended by Miss Man – the only one of us who could understand them!

The Great Wall of China is probably the most renowned historical site in China and we felt very lucky to be on such an ancient and awe-inspiring creation. We slowly made our way through the sea of tourists and at approximately two steps per minute we shuffled up towards one of the towers. Once at the tower, standing on the top, you can see the wall stretching endlessly across the beautiful landscape. Lu House is an ancient and traditional house, which accommodated the Lu family. We were given a tour of the house and shown the beautiful architecture of the building and how the family would have lived in it. The house was located in a rural area, which we walked through and



saw people playing *Chinese Checkers*. It was a fantastic building and a great area to visit. The Beijing Film Studio is a wonderful location, as it is in an area of outstanding beauty and there are so many traditional buildings that it makes you feel that you are actually in ancient China. When we were there we were lucky enough to see a film being made! We were taken on a tour of the huge area and told that famous films such as *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* had been filmed there.

After spending a week in Beijing we moved to our next destinations: Yiwu and Hangzhou in Zhejiang Province. We boarded the internal flight somewhat sadly, but we knew that we would be coming back to Beijing soon. The internal flight was very scary, since the pilots didn't seem to care that we were being thrown about so long as we got to our destination in good time. When we arrived in Yiwu it was night and we were all very tired after a long day. However, we were pleased to see that this hotel was even better than the first.

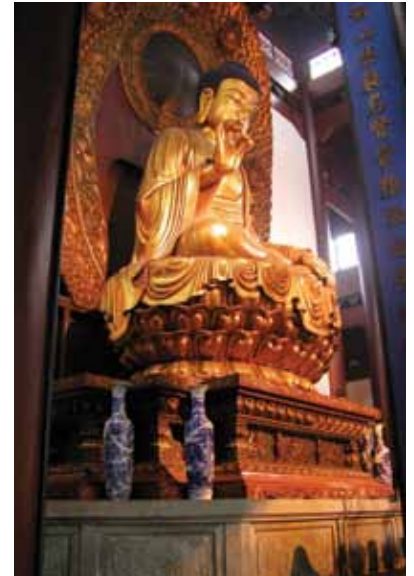
Whilst in Zhejiang Province we visited the largest Buddhist temple in the world, having first walked through the tranquil woods nearby. There were so many temples, each one with beautiful statues, and there was so much gold. It was a fantastic site and we were all amazed at how big and beautiful the statues were. The West Lakes are one of the most beautiful natural areas in China. We were taken on a boat tour of the huge lakes and shown small islands within them. It was very impressive and everything seemed so perfect. We were very lucky to see the West Lakes as they weren't originally on our plan.

Whilst in Yiwu, we were lucky enough to visit a Chinese school. It was great as we were given the opportunity to learn about how Chinese children are

taught at school and we made a lot of friends with the Chinese people. Then on one night we performed a concert and we even participated in singing some Chinese songs. We stayed with a Chinese family for two nights and it was a brilliant experience. The families were so nice and we were able to learn more from them about life in China.

Overall this was a fantastic trip and we were given an excellent experience and learned a lot about China's history and language at the same time.

Thomas Lambert 5 SWB



Economics and Business Studies

New York

New York, the Big Apple, is indisputably the busiest single commercial and capitalist district in the world, as well as being among the most intensely and diversely used piece of real estate. On 15 February, twelve lower and upper sixth boys, accompanied by Mr Castle and Mr Grills, spent four days learning about how this diverse and powerful city had developed into the economic capital of the world.

The trip started with an organised tour of the financial district, highlighting the Buttonwood Agreement and the birth of the stock market. Students also learnt about Alexander Hamilton, the father of American finance and the banking system. This was followed by a trip to the Rockefeller Centre to see how the 'Robber Baron', J D Rockefeller, built his empire in New York.

The second day included a trip to the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island, giving the students an opportunity to experience the effect that immigration has had on the United States. In the evening the boys attended a basketball match between the New York *Knicks* and the San Antonio *Spurs* at the world-famous Madison Square Gardens.

On the third day the boys visited the Museum of American Finance. Here they were able to see some of the methods used by financial traders to buy and sell stocks and shares over the past 100 years. It was also an opportunity to see the original bonds used by George Washington to buy Louisiana from Napoleon Bonaparte. In the afternoon the boys visited *Macy's* – the world's largest department store – where they were given a tour of its operational floors. In the evening the boys journeyed downtown to Little Italy, to experience



a traditional Italian American Pizza Restaurant called *Lombardi's*, renowned for their 18-inch pizzas.

The final full day gave the boys the chance to visit the Federal Reserve Bank, to see, and for some to touch, the gold bullion on which the American economy is partially based – and yes, there is still some there! In the evening the boys attended the Broadway production of *Avenue Q*.

Richard Castle



The City of London

Picture the scene if you will: *Citibank* had just made 50,000 people redundant; *Woolworths* had gone into administration; and the pound would only buy you one euro. So sitting in an economics lesson last thing on a Friday during the Michaelmas term seemed a bit depressing, but when some of us were offered a chance to go to the City of London, to find out what was going on, naturally, many of us accepted.

Our first stop was the Bank of England. It was interesting to relate what we had been learning about in class to the talk given by a Bank representative on the current economic situation, and what was being done to combat it. Walking back through the Bank's museum, we saw a bar of gold that was allegedly worth over £210,000; lifting the bar one by one, each of us was surprised by its heaviness. There were piles of



Jaguar Cars

On Tuesday 24 March, the Economics Department visited the *Jaguar* car plant in Birmingham. It was a highly enjoyable and informative trip that allowed us to see the production of some of *Jaguar's* highly desirable vehicles. After a short presentation, we were guided around the plant. A senior member of the *Jaguar* staff explained the different stages of manufacturing that we were observing, and described how costs were being lowered through lean manufacturing practices (all whilst we were being lightly showered in sparks). It was explained that the factory worked on a batch programme, and it was great to see the range of options that could be applied to the XF to create your own unique *Jaguar*. The XF was the only vehicle being made when we visited, owing to lack of demand for other *Jaguar* cars at that time.

gold right under our feet, so our minds naturally drifted from budding young economists to criminal masterminds ... A short walk away, the London Metal Exchange was next on our list. We didn't know what to expect, but it was entertaining to look down onto the trading floor from a soundproof room on the first floor. The format was simple: there were five-minute slots for the trading of different metals and, as the end of each trading session neared, the activity on the trading floor became increasingly frenzied.

After a break for lunch, we met at Lloyd's of London. The building was next to the illustrious gherkin building and, with glass elevators on the exterior of the building, was a spectacle of glass and steel in its own right. Panoramic views across London could be seen from the top, and inside it was equally as impressive. In the heart of the building lies the Lutine bell, rescued from a nineteenth-century battleship.

A strong sense of tradition pervades Lloyd's and we were told that the bell is rarely rung (once for bad news, and twice for good news). In the past fifteen years it has been rung on 11 September 2001, for the deaths of the Queen Mother and Diana, Princess of Wales, and when Lloyd's was re-capitalised. During the afternoon we learnt how insurance works on a large scale, and the magnitude of the transactions was brought home by the fact that one of the brokers we were with had to finalise a £150,000,000 deal that afternoon!

The trip to the City of London was really beneficial: we learnt much about the economy and insurance, and we were able to see things in real life that we have been learning about in textbooks. On behalf of everyone who went, I'd like to say thank you to Mr Grills and Mr Castle for organising the trip.

Jasper Marlow 6 EOD

After the tour there was a short presentation on the *Jaguar* fleet and the marketing strategy adopted by *Jaguar*. In the overview of the manufacturing process, we were told that the future for *Jaguar* was to attempt to eliminate all waste in the manufacturing process and consistently aim for lean manufacturing. It was also explained that, whilst the falling exchange rate was having a positive impact on sales of *Jaguar* cars to their major export market, America, this was to some extent offset by raw materials becoming more expensive to purchase from abroad, thereby denting profit margins. After a question-and-answer session, we returned to School, having benefited from a highly successful trip that applied theories that we had learnt in the classroom to a real life scenario.

Jonathan Prest-Smith 6 JHW

Art



Art

This was an exciting and busy year. The department was joined by experienced teacher Emily O'Doherty, who quickly proved to be an inspiration to those she taught. Mrs O'Doherty joined the the sixth form on our first foreign tour to the museums and galleries of New York (reported on below). The department did not drop any of its more humble trips, however, to the galleries of London and elsewhere. This year we visited the *Jonathan Barnbrooke* and *Zaha Hadid* exhibitions at Design Museum London, *Peter Doig* and *Camden Town Group* at

Tate Britain, and the *From Russia* show at the Royal Academy of the Arts, as well as taking groups to the permanent collections of the Natural History Museum and Ashmolean Museums, Oxford, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the National Gallery and Tate Modern in London. We also had a busy programme of workshops with a Big Draw workshop for our 4th year and similar event for GCSE groups, while the Lower Sixth artists had a day at Modern Art, Oxford viewing the Cardiff and Miller Exhibition, and enjoyed a workshop led by artist Martin Franklin.

Our Upper Sixth seemed more committed to art than ever and we had 6 students go onto art foundation courses – Jack Trotman, Russell Gordon-Jones, John Davies, Oliver Mumby to Oxford Brookes, Charlie Barber to UCA at Farnham and Peter Wood to the Byam Shaw in London, while Christopher Weller Jones gained a place at Bath University to study Architecture.

James Nairne

New York Visit

This was the first foreign trip organized by the Art Department for a very long time and it was a resounding success. The museums and galleries in New York lived up to their reputation as some of the best in the world. The highlights were the *Museum of Modern Art (MoMA)* and the *Metropolitan Museum*. Both were superbly laid out and at every corner there was a masterpiece. The *Guggenheim*, the *Whitney* and the *New Museum* were also visited. A morning spent browsing the smaller commercial galleries in the Chelsea area on the Saturday was eye opening in showing the wide range of art being produced and sold. As well as drawing and sketching in the galleries there were trips to a basketball game, to the top of one of the tallest buildings, to New York's oldest pizza restaurant, to Ground Zero and the Statue of Liberty.

The *New York Nicks* basketball game was a surreal experience, since every moment had been planned as entertainment, and sport seemed to be quite far removed. The top of the Rockefeller



Tower at night provided an amazing view of the city, while eating giant pizzas in Little Italy expanded the wasteline. We found *Ground Zero*, even though the rebuilding work had started, to be a sobering place. In addition to all this we enjoyed some great window-shopping from the small funky shops of Soho to department stores like *Macy's*. The *YMCA*, overlooking Central Park, was brilliantly placed for our visit and only a few blocks away from the main galleries. Even if there were queues in the morning for the bathrooms the place proved convenient and clean. Throughout the tour the boys were well behaved and fun to be with.

Memorable moments: upper-sixth YMCA T-shirts, one lower-sixth boy being told how mature he was by US immigration officials, the New York skyline at sunset as we drove into the city from *John F. Kennedy International Airport*, Picasso's *Demoiselle d'Avignon* at the *Museum of Modern Art (MoMA)*, the Chrysler building at night in the rain, Central Park at dawn, the *Metropolitan Museum's* roof garden, the architecture of the *Solomon R Guggenheim Museum*, the shouting for the *New York Nicks*.

James Nairne

GCSE

A	'I, Me, Myself'	Illustration	Will McDowell
B	Marijuana - Think!	Poster design	Sam Delo
C	Self-portrait	Graphite drawing	Ben Westcott
D	Head full of type	Collage illustration	Will McDowell
E	My life	Digital poster	Joe Ridley
F	Cascade CD Cover	Digital design	James Cross
G	Grass Roots CD Cover	Digital design	Joe Ridley
H	Battle of the Dex	Digital design	Harry Naylor
I	Hands CD cover	Digital design	Forrest Radford
J	Freedom Lost CD Cover	Collage design	Spencer Davis
K	Opera	Digital design	Joe Ridley
L	Dial F Poster	Digital design	Amir Garmroudi
M	Jazz	Digital design	Sam Delo
N	'Can you go Away?'	Children's book cover	Will McDowell
O	Musica de Cuba	Digital poster	Jack Oliver

A



B



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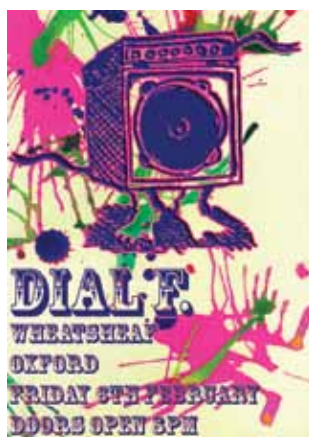
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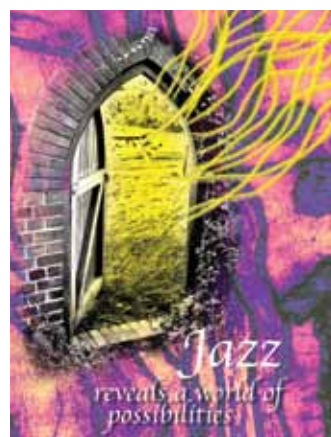
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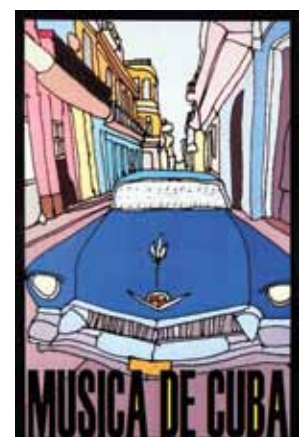
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M



N



O

P	Decayed structure	Ceramic	Chris Hyde
Q	Japanese piece	Painted mod-roc	David Grant
R	Oriental Contrasts	Ceramic	Tom Foxon
S	Zen Patterns	Ceramic	Rajan Sehmi
T	Surreal telephone	Ceramic	Ben Hammersley
U	'Man-made'	Ceramic	Jamie Gallagher
V	Earth Vice	Ceramic	Chris Hyde
W	Flow	Card sculpture	Joshua Bradlow
X	Japanese Screen	Painted MDF	Harry Granger
Y	Abingdon Bridge	Acrylic	Tim Shin
Z	Textural landscape	Collagraph print	Patrick MacMahon
AA	Echinidea	Ceramic	Ben Westcott



P



Q



R



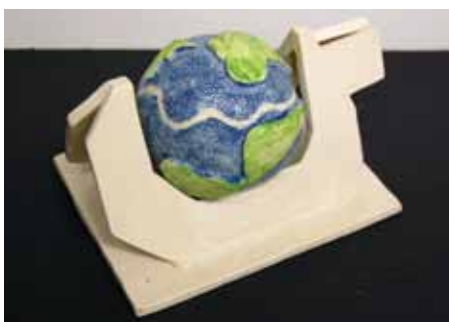
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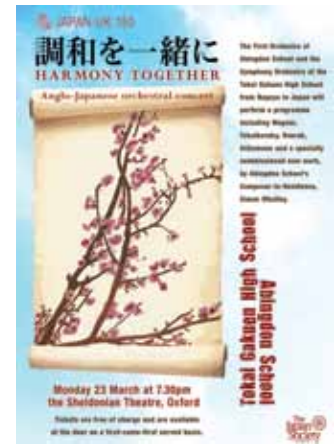


AA

GCSE

A	Harmony Together	Poster
B	Eau d'Toilette	Package design
C	Blackthorne Abbey	Book illustration
D	Untitled	Acrylic on board
E	Harry the Monkey	Book illustration
F	Soft Ice	Digital illustration
G	Mouse Hole	Book illustration
H	Badger and Fox	Book illustration
I	Shoebill	Book illustration
J	My Room	Paint and collage
K	Landscape	Acrylic on paper
L	Rugby Player	Lino cut print
M	Still-life	Acrylic on board

Jack Trodd
Forrest Radford
Amir Garmroudi
James Percival
Harry Naylor
Jack Oliver
Evan Westenbrink
Oliver Jackson
Joe Ridley
Jamie Hall
Jack Rayner
Jamie Hall
Digby Coulson



B



D



C



F



H



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G



I



L



E



J



M

N Self-portrait
 O Landscape
 P Self-portrait
 Q Racing stand
 R Garden view I & II
 S Self-portrait
 T Farmstead
 U Self-portraits
 V 'I, Me, Mine'
 W Through the Trees
 X Garden
 Y Garden View
 Z Near Music School

Charcoal
 Acrylic
 Acrylic
 Acrylic
 Acrylic
 Charcoal
 Acrylic
 Sketchbook work
 Acrylic
 Charcoal
 Acrylic
 Acrylic
 Acrylic

Joshua Bradlow
 Jack Perry
 Mark Kardos
 Jack Channon
 Edd Arnold
 Robin Stewart
 Tom Fishpool
 David Snead
 Robin Veale
 James Barratt
 Jonathan Bouchier
 Will Summers
 David Mears



N



O



P



Q



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S



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X



Y



Z

AS

A Life Drawing
B Canal Tunnel
C Composite townscape
D Family
E Self-portrait
F Map
G Working
H Life drawing
I City
J City II
K City Abstract
L Collection

Charcoal and chalk
Dry-point engraving
Oil on board
mixed media
Coloured lino print
Plaster on board
Screenprint on tissue
Charcoal and acrylic
Linocut print
Linocut print
Linocut print
Linocut print

Matthew Copson
Jack Tinker
Christopher Edwards
Tom Bateman
James Carter
Tom Bateman
Charlie Floyd
Benedict Edwards
Alistair Nicoll
Alistair Nicoll
Charlie Floyd
Matthew Copson



A



B



C



D



E



F



G



H



I



J



K



L

M	Architectural Folly	Card and plaster	Kenneth Chow
N	Head III and IV	Mixed media	James Carter
O	Head I	Ceramic	James Carter
P	Figure	Cut plywood	Freddie Cleworth
Q	Box	Mixed media	Matthew Hinkins
R	Still-life	Collage	Henry Dunbar
S	Collection	oil on board	Matthew Copson
T	Seated	Acrylic	Jack Tinker
U	Tree	Acrylic	Benedict Edwards
V	Reach	Oil on board	Matthew Hinkins
W	New York Night	Mixed media	Stuart Lonegan
X	Bottles	Oil on board	Kenenth Chow
Y	Holding	Oil on board	Matthew Hinkins
Z	Abstract Landscape	Oil on board	Tom Bateman
AA	Town Garden	Oil on board	Anthony Grieseson



M



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Y



Z



AA

A2

A	Composite	Plaster, wood	George Bone
B	Conflict Scape	Mixed media	George Bone
C	Flower Arrangement	Charcoal	Ted Stansfield
D	Urban Landscape	Oil on canvas	John Davies
E	Riot Police	Mixed media on paper	Peter Wood
F	Russell	Oil on canvas	Ben Vaux
G	Iceland Landscape	Oil on canvas	Christopher Weller Jones
H	Indian Roofs	Chalk	Christopher Weller Jones
I	Ted	Chalk	Ben Vaux
J	New York	Oil on board	Jack Trotman
K	In Memoriam	Mixed media	Charlie Barber
L	Life Drawing	Charcoal, chalk	Ben Vaux



A



B



C



D



E



F



G



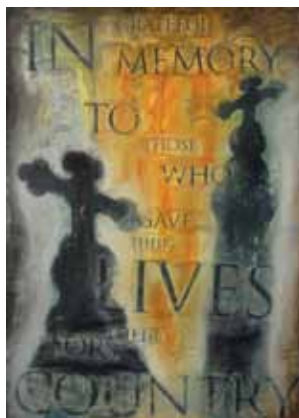
H



I



J



K



L

M	Life Drawing	Mixed media	Oliver Mumby
N	Portrait	Ceramic	Jamie Wilder
O	Jack	Oil on canvas	Jamie Wilder
P	Six Portraits	Oil on board	Russell Gordon-Jones
Q	Still-life	Oil on canvas	Russell Gordon-Jones
R	Charlie	Oil on board	Peter Wood
S	Composition	Mixed media	John Davies
T	Town and Country I	Mixed media	Oliver Mumby
U	Town and Country II	Mixed media	Oliver Mumby
V	Still-life	Oil on canvas	Russell Gordon-Jones



M



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Design Technology

The Arkwright Scholarship

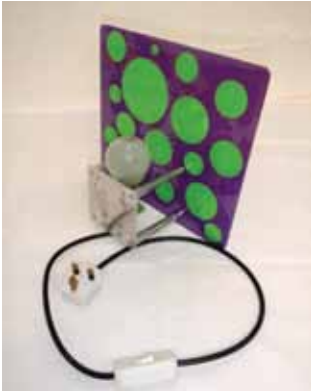
The Arkwright Scholarship is an external award that is open to boys who are looking to pursue a career within the field of engineering. This year, competition was fierce with only 230 scholarships being awarded from over 800 applicants. Congratulations should go to all applicants but especially Clym Buxton and Chris Green who only narrowly missed the qualifying mark. Alex Iley was our successful candidate this year.

Dan Hughes

Last February I took the Arkwright Scholarship aptitude paper. I had to design three ways of crushing the contents of a black wheelie bin so that it would only need emptying every fortnight. After a long wait I was selected to go to an interview along with just under half of the original 800 applicants. The interview day at Loughborough University was an event in itself. I had a guided tour and was involved in a team-building exercise, building a chair out of card. My team's chair collapsed when tested so it was fortunate that it wasn't taken into consideration for the award! The interview was quite relaxed, the interviewers talking partly about my GCSE coursework but mainly about my career aspirations. As a result I have been awarded a two-year scholarship, funded and mentored by the British Fluid Power Association who represent over 200 companies in the hydraulic and pneumatic industry. This industry has links with almost every other engineering industry and so it will provide a fantastic base for me to get work experience and potentially a job in almost any related industry. The Association also provide the all-important £500 cheque which, of course, has to be spent on something to further my engineering career ...

Alex Iley 5 SAP

GCSE



Liam Craughwell –
Funky Lighting



Kimran Sahota –
Key Storage



James Cross –
Saucepan Lid Stand



James Bater –
CD & DVD Storage



Daniel Bayley –
CD Rack



Xilin Song –
Badminton Rack



Sam Delo –
Bike Storage



Edward Otty –
CD Rack



Nicholas Acutt –
Milk Bottle Carrier



Clym Buxton –
Aerodynamic Handlebars

GCSE



Edward Kempell –
Bedside Table



Oliver Davies –
Guitar Storage



Joshua Bull –
Shoe Storage



Chris Green –
Bookcase



Jim Trafford –
Coffee Table



Peter Barber –
Hi-Fi Storage



Tim Gladstone –
Infant's Cot



William Powell –
Log Rack



John Mulvey –
Bike Maintenance Stand



David Snead –
Bike Maintenance Stand



Ben Mcguire –
Seating with storage



Jack Mills –
Guitar & Amplifier Storage



Jamie Copus –
Shoe Rack



Marc Woolley –
Seating and Storage



Edward Griffiths –
Bookcase



Amir Garmroudi – *Storage*



Jim Grabham – *Key Storage*



Kelvin Hung – *Shoe Storage*



Forrest Radford – *Funky Storage*



Hugh Brash – *Welly Storage*



Jack Trodd – *Children's Rocking Chair*



Dean Cross – *Magazine Storage*



Harry Naylor – *Bedroom Storage*



Dominic Graham – *Bedroom Storage*



Jack Oliver – *Collapsible Wheelbarrow*

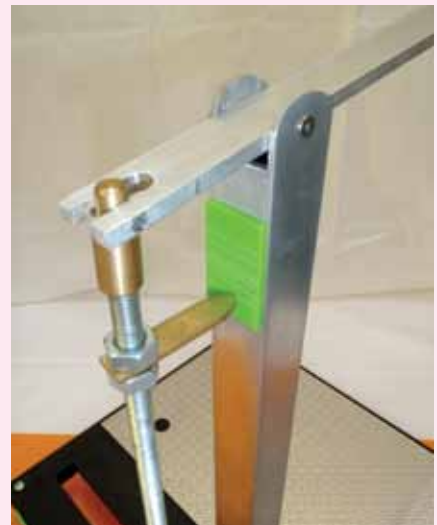
A2 Product Design



David Weston - *Bicycle maintenance stand*



Christopher Davis - *Bug Sucker*



William Walker -
Audio amplifier accessory



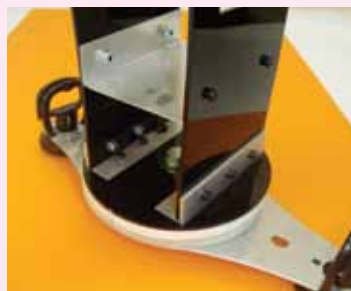
Chris Dunster -
Collapsible student furniture



Oliver Mumby -
Social seating



Nicholas Wilkinson -
Sailing training aid



Rory Copus -
Stroke analysis device



AS Product Design Lighting



Peter Brombley



Andrei Smirnov



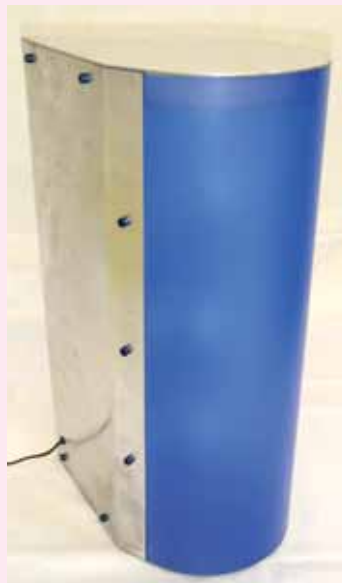
Freddie Howe



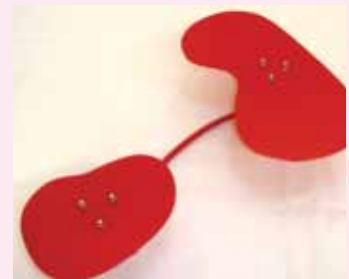
Henry Dunbar



Chris Burgess



Charles Brampton



Andrew Nagi

Drama



The Crucible

The joint Abingdon and St Helen's drama production in the Studio Theatre at our sister school could not have been more different to the production at Abingdon of *An Italian Straw Hat*. With an abundance of screaming girls, out-of-control hysteria and an interminable sense of doom, *The Crucible* was a far cry from the light-hearted comedy centered on a lost item of headwear.

Fortunately, at the helm of the play was Miss Watt, though even she had delayed directing the play for sixteen years due to a fear of butchering a classic with a young cast weighed down by the dense script. No pressure then.

As work progressed it seemed that we were coping well with the intense rehearsals, and Sam Walton as the protagonist John Proctor was becoming more comfortable with his leading role, despite the huge mountain of lines that needed to be learnt.

It was then the line learning that became one of the largest struggles. The performance date of 8 December was growing ever closer, and the sense of doom that emanated from the play began to creep out of the script and into the cast. However, as always seems to be the case, everything came together in the final week. Maybe it was the pressure that kicked everyone into gear, or just the effect of donning the multilayered costumes from the RSC.

By the first night, everyone was raring to go as full cast warm-ups progressed back stage. Once we were on stage, it all ran like clockwork. The most powerful scenes were those with large numbers of the cast all on stage simultaneously. The courtroom scene shows a confrontation between Proctor, Daniel Harris as Deputy-Governor



Danforth, and Mark Heffernan as Reverend Parris. It is during this scene that sheer terror breaks out as the girls, headed by Tessa Brummitt playing Abigail Williams, flee from apparent witchcraft.

It was, however, the final scene that proved most triumphant. The intense atmosphere created by Proctor, his wife Elizabeth, portrayed by Martha Bennett, and Matt Winters as Reverend Hale was phenomenal. As described by a review in *The Martlet*, "The ending, quite simply, was brilliant. The cathartic effect it produced was so powerful and unrelentingly forceful that a good many members of the audience were reduced to tears. Few plays I have seen have been able to convey such sentiment in so sophisticated and professional a manner."

This triumph was felt by the entire cast as everyone gathered back stage after the final performance, locked in a group embrace, congratulating each other, Miss Watt and everyone else involved. It will certainly be a production to remember.

Luke Abbott 6 APS





An Italian Straw Hat

The senior school production at Abingdon this year was a French farce, written in 1851, and set in Paris. Eugene Labiche's *An Italian Straw Hat* relies on split-second timing, bags of energy and confident, exuberant characterisation. It was chosen, in part, as a contrast to the sister production taking place at the same time at St. Helen's of Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*. Pupils from the Fifth year upwards in both schools had the unusual choice of taking part in either a tragic masterpiece or an anarchic farce. *An Italian Straw Hat*, like most farces, demands multiple doors to allow characters to disappear 'just in time', together with cupboards in which to shut butlers, and collapsing lamp-posts. We were tremendously lucky

to have, for the first time, a dedicated Theatre Manager in the Amey Theatre to design and construct the complex set. Rory Fraser-Mackenzie joined the staff just before the start of the Christmas term and we were able to have, thanks to his inventiveness and skilled craftsmanship, a set that worked like magic. Door frames turned to reveal different locations; swathes of material and hats flew in from the flies and a lamp-post exploded with bangs and sparks. We were also lucky to have the skills of Charmian Hart, the Arts Centre Secretary, whose expert eye for colour and attention to detail in adding the final touches to the set and costumes supplied the visual polish that the production required. It provided the actors with all the technical and design elements they needed after their three months of intensive rehearsals. Technical crew who helped with the building of the set and who on the night took charge of lighting, sound

and scene changes, under the direction of Rory Fraser-Mackenzie, were exemplary in their dedication. They were: Iain Galpin, Anthony Grieveson, James Harrison, Alex Iley, Richard Oastler and Alex Stuart-Kregor. Steven Hodgetts gave a tremendously impressive performance as Fadinard, the bride-groom whose frantic search for the straw hat almost puts paid





to his wedding plans: his mounting desperation is the lynch pin of the entire play and he carried the part off with unstoppable energy and flair. With more male roles than female roles and with girls out-numbering boys at the auditions our solution was to create a more balanced distribution of roles by turning the second lead, written by Labiche as the father-in-law, into the mother-in-law, Madame Nonancourt – a part played with tremendous style and great comic timing by Lindsey Russell. The other gender-switch was to make the deaf old uncle a deaf elderly aunt – played hilariously by Rebecca Barkham. Richard Meadows, as the army officer found to be dallying with the young wife of the jealous Beauperthuis, conveyed outrage and indignation as he broke the chairs in Fadinard's apartment; Elizabeth Rushbrook as Anais, the young wife, was wonderfully frantic as her cover seemed about to be blown. Act 1 also sees the beginnings of a romance between Fadinard's manservant, played with cheeky impertinence by Jack Trodd, and Charly Clive's lively maid Virginie. Helene,



the beautiful, but confused bride who spends the play chasing after her husband, was played with verve by Olivia Powell. Guy Cutting's Bobin, Helene's cousin, who spends the play forlornly chasing after Helene, was a picture of comic ineptitude.

The rest of the play dashes through a series of different locations: Act 2 takes place in a hat shop, where Meadhbh Raftery's flirtatious Clara holds sway over her workforce with exuberant, but steely determination, keeping the increasingly hot and flustered Tardiveau in check. Tardiveau, played with great comic timing by George Dugdale, is pursued from room to room by the gaggle of wedding guests, who mistakenly believe him to be the mayor. In Act 3, everyone turns up at the home of the Duchess of Champigny where Pierre Leveque's Achille was the epitome of aristocratic foppery and Katie Bartholomew's Duchess a magnificently overbearing hostess. Jack Rogers played the unfortunate butler who is stuffed into the cupboard, and Patricia Hildred,

the baffled maid. In Act 4 the scene changes to the house of the jealous husband, Beauperthuis, finally nettled into threatening the invading guests with pistols. Jack Trotman's controlled performance of a man about to explode with rage was a splendidly comic turn. Act 5, in true farce tradition, manages to keep the tension up until the very last moment when everything is resolved almost as suddenly as it started. Jonty Cook confidently played Trouillebert the policeman who tries, with Ted Thompson and Jack Rogers as his fellow law enforcement officers, to arrest all the wedding guests, mistakenly thinking they are burgling a house before the confusion is abruptly and satisfactorily sorted out. The wedding guests, played with aplomb, were Emily Braithwaite, Alice Brown, Ally Buys, Eleanor Cornforth, Naomi Dent, Patricia Hildred, Saskia Hill, Fabia Leech, Emma Quarterman and Georgia Score and the play was directed by Alison Quick.

Alison Quick

Sketch, Drugs and Rock 'n' Roll

by Mark Heffernan, Steve Hodgetts and Jack Trotman
Amey Theatre, 10 October 2008, and 23 June 2009



In recent years, we have grown used to an original comedy show in the Michaelmas term. Of those Abingdonians who have had the courage to stand before an audience and declare themselves funny, a reassuringly high proportion have gone on to test that proposition successfully in a professional context, witness the rising fortunes of recent OAs such as Tim Dawson, Dan Benoliel and Jonathan Donahoe. We wait to see, of course, what will happen to Abingdon's former darlings of mirth, *FxP²*. No doubt the stellar success of David Mitchell (OA 1992) has had an encouraging effect on them all. This year, a new troupe of aspiring

merry-andrews arrived in the unusual shapes of Mark Heffernan, Stephen Hodgetts and Jack Trotman, known collectively as *Sketch, Drugs and Rock 'n' Roll*. They were joined by a talented supporting cast – Josephine Hall, Andrew Partridge and Lindsey Russell – with Sarah Godlee, Olivia Powell, Sophie Ball and James Burford making occasional appearances.

There was a deliberately familiar feel to the opening as we watched a filmed sequence that was a tongue-in-cheek nod in the direction of last year's *FxP²* show. This brought the protagonists onstage for a quick-fire round of sketches and dance routines

that combined verbal wit and physical slapstick in almost equal measure.

Impressively, the team kept the pupil in-jokes to a minimum and struck out in the direction of other, more universal common denominators that kept OAPs like me 'in the swim'. Thus, for example, the House of Commons sketch poked fun at the childish antics of Parliamentarians at Prime Minister's Questions. Jack Trotman was the unfortunate incumbent, facing a barrage of catcalls and lewd gestures that would have made Queen Victoria blush. There were also several entertaining spoofs on popular films or television shows that took advantage of the ample scope for ridicule afforded by today's mass media. *Meal Or No Meal* was one example: this time, Stephen Hodgetts took centre stage, and delivered such an effective imitation of Noel Edmunds that many believed he could easily pass for the flat screen's tacky front man. The formula was repeated to good effect in Jeremy Kyle, a skit in which Steve donned the mantle of the UK's answer to Jerry Springer. However, instead of a cast of transatlantic trailer trash freaks, this show's guests were dysfunctional aristos Lord and Lady Sidebottom (pronounced si-dé-ber-tome), played by Mark and Jo, and the big issue of the day was their daughter Wendy (Lindsey) skipping Sunday church services. Another TV-based sketch that worked well was *Cillitt Bang*, which offered a glimpse into the private life of the wonder cleaning agent's creator, Barry Scott (Mark), and his wife (Jo)... "BANG, and the wife is gone!" Another successful device was a running gag based on the TV series *Lost*. This satirised the essential vacuity of reality shows, showing Steve and Mark sitting on a beach in a series of short, almost wordless scenes, of which the following is a good example:

Narrator: Welcome back to season 14 of Lost.

Lights up.

Mark: Is that a boat?

Steve: Noo.

Blackout

Much as I enjoyed these, my own favourites in an evening of no fewer than thirty original sketches were the ones that departed from the familiar templates of television and offered signs of a more quirky comic conception. *Racist Fish*, for example was a delightfully surreal scene in which Mark, Steve and Jack appeared as flapping, bubble-mouthing goldfish, sharing their every-day troubles – carping wives (geddit?), crabs (not that sort, but the kind that move in next door, of course), a daughter having trouble with her scales – that kind of thing. Then came this delicious bit of nonsense:

Mark: How are you smoking underwater?

Steve: Dunno mate, you wrote this sketch.

Mark: Bad for your lungs, innit.

Steve: Haven't got lungs mate... I'm a fish.

Mark: Touché sir, touché.

Jack: Is...is...is he about to feed us?

They flap to side of the stage quickly.

Jack: False alarm.

Mark: You...you heard the bad news?

Steve: What?

Mark: They only went down the fish store yesterday. New plastic bag full of the bastards has been introduced.

Jack: Bloody immigrants. Stealing our women.

Mark: Shitting in our water.

Steve: You're shitting in the water.

Mark: That's different. I do it thinking of the queen mum.

Jack: I heard immigrants killed Princess Di.

Steve: Would not surprise me. Oh, 'ey up.

Andy comes on stage. He is a black goldfish.

Andy: All right?

The others ignore him.

Andy: Do you know where I can get a cab round here?

Steve: Think you're going to have difficulty flagging one down mate, your sort.

Andy leaves sadly

Jack: Something a bit fishy about him.



Delightfully silly, of course, yet also making its point. They say we're never funnier than when we are being serious (and vice versa). At moments such as this, *Sketch*, *Drugs* and *Rock 'n' Roll* really hit the mark, and suggested they might grow into acute observers of human foibles.

The October show played to a full and appreciative Amey Theatre house that raised £2,000 for *Cancer Research UK*. In June, after their A Level exams, the majority of the team reassembled to perform some of the same, and a lot of new material, this time to raise funds for their run at the Edinburgh Fringe in August. Once again, they attracted a large crowd, who eagerly helped them to take the next step towards the comedy solar system.

Jeremy Taylor

Pinteresque

After the tragic news of the death of Harold Pinter, considered to be the finest British playwright of the twentieth century, pupils from the Upper Sixth put on an evening entitled *Pinteresque* in celebration of his life and works. Unusually, and for the first time in many years, this performance took place behind the Amey Theatre curtains, and the success of this use of the stage space will no doubt be repeated in other performances in the future.

The first half consisted of short sketches written by Pinter, fully demonstrating his comic ability combined with his trademark use of pauses. Martha Bennett achieved the cold yet sexy veneer of a streetwalker in the hilariously re-imagined setting of the sketch, *Last to Go*, while Andy Partridge portrayed a stuck-up, heartless bastard most effectively in *Precisely*. The brilliant



comic timing and dramatic on-stage chemistry between Dan Harris and Steve Hodgetts made their own take on Pinter's sketches come to life, particularly with their unique interpretation of an extract from *The Birthday Party*.

The second half consisted of a newly extended version of *Tied*, one of the Unit 4 devised plays. This was a personal tribute from the pupils to Pinter, as he was indeed a heavy influence on the writing of this new



play. The new sections were warmly welcomed and proved very successful, as well as adding to the darkly comic aspects of the play and lending new fear and meaning to the eating of a chocolate digestive. Marina Michelson in particular performed very effectively, struggling to make her female character's voice heard in an oppressively male environment. The show proved that Harold Pinter will live on through his works for many years to come.

Dan Harris

The Pale Blue Dot

The Pale Blue Dot was written and directed by Ash Verjee and performed at St. Helen's. Inspired by the graphic novel *When the Wind Blows* by Raymond Briggs, the BBC television play *Threads* by Barry Hines and the book *Pale Blue Dot: A Vision of the Human Future in Space* by Carl Sagan, it was performed at the end of January by a small cast of four actors and two puppets. This innovative creation was the first production to make use of the St Helen's Atrium as a performance space – a bold decision on Ash Verjee's part and one that paid off in unexpected ways. With the audience clustered to one side of the acting area, we were able to see not only the images that were projected onto

the stretched muslin screen that hung from the ceiling and skimmed the edge of the balcony, but also those images reflected high up in the glass of the Atrium itself.

The height of the Atrium contributed to a powerful sense of the characters' defencelessness. The two puppets were skilfully and delicately manipulated by Marina Michelson as Betsy and Ross Muir as Tom. With pre-recorded speech for the puppet characters, we were able to focus our attention on the puppets themselves and this worked very well both in their conversations with one another and when the adults, played by Alison Cooke and Ellen Harris, entered the scene. Alison, as Anna the mother, imbued her part with a real vulnerability, which was in stark contrast to Ellen Harris's manipulative



Helen. The final image of the mother taking her child out (literally) into the dark night beyond the glass doors of the dining area, illuminated in a beam of light, was a powerful end to a most evocative creation.

Alison Quick

Hope Springs

If we said to you, “Put on a play in six weeks for a cast of 30”, you would probably reply with some synonym(s) along the lines of “No” or “Haven’t got the time” or “I don’t like drama, [because] I play sport [fool]”. But, scepticism aside, last Spring term, under Mr May’s direction, twenty-eight Third and Fourth years from Abingdon and St Helen’s, did just this. Moreover, the slim six-week rehearsal window included a one-week half term and a weeklong period of ‘snowy spells’, leaving us with not much over four weeks in which the play had to take shape.

Four weeks, the equivalent of one non-leap-year February, a daunting task one might conclude.

On the other hand, you could use it as a driving force, a target to keep everyone focused on the task at hand. That is exactly what we did. With at least three rehearsals a week, and several Sundays, the show began to take its shape. The cast was working hard. The Ringleader (played by Henry Jenkinson), a supposedly savage, sadistic teen that enjoys toying and manipulating the minds of other pupils at the Youth Detention Centre on the island where the play is set. The Inspector (played by Charlie Leslau) is sent out to the island after communications go down, accompanied by his Assistant, a slightly slow, dopey ‘blonde’, though with good intentions (played by Sophia Crébolder). The play examines how ten pupils and the Ringleader act after the supposed suicide of one of their friends, Sam (played by Georgia Aynsley). It follows their attempts to convince the inspector that they have done a number of shocking things, like eating their teachers and killing their Principal (played by William



Hewstone). The pupils (played by Sophie Dudhill, Katy Donnelly, Poppy Simonson, Christopher Young, Megan Wright, Nicholas Krol, Izzy Kynoch, Joe Westcott, Charlie Bateman and Will Abell) were divided into those who were led by the Ringleader and did as he said, and those who were sympathetic to the Inspector and the Staff (played by Tom McGivan, Kia Little, Toby Ross and Sophie Evangelisti), and the Parents (played by Mathew Hartshorne, Daniel Leyland, Beth Statham and Evie Stretch). The chorus-like figures who narrated or commented on the scenes were known as Island Voices (played by Ben Mallett, Toby Marlow, Grace Smith, Nick Leah and Pippa Corps) and also provided an eerie, percussive soundscape accompaniment.

With a set and lighting rig designed and installed in the Abingdon Drama Studio

by Mr Fraser-Mckenzie and his crew, the show ran from Tuesday 11 to Thursday 13 February 2009, and, through the hard work of Mr May and his talented cast and crew, was incredibly well-received. This was the first combined Third and Fourth year production at Abingdon in some time, and although there have been discrete productions for these year groups in living memory (such as the Fourth-year production of *Decline and Fall* in 2005), the advent of this new opportunity for Middle School pupils showed that Third and Fourth year students at Abingdon and St Helen’s are just as capable of producing an enjoyable show as their counterparts in the senior years of both schools.

*Henry Jenkinson 4 DJTF and
Charlie Bateman 4 NPS*

Our Day Out

In the Lent Term, the Lower School Drama Club staged a production of Willy Russell's *Our Day Out*, a musical play combining comedy with pathos. The story is an exuberant celebration of the joys and agonies of growing up and being fourteen, footloose and free from school. But more than a romp, it highlights the depressing present and empty future of the many children from the city's backstreets, for whom a day out is about as much as they can expect.

The play deceives its audience by its apparent simplicity. Its very nature posed many challenges for the cast and crew, from its demands to involve all performers on the stage for the majority of its duration and the necessity to suggest a number of different outdoor locations, to the added complication of our 'plummy', young southerners having to avoid imitating the Scouse accent (the play is originally based on Russell's home turf, Liverpool).

Once again, the Lower School Drama Club was undaunted by a cast of characters including a number of female roles. Mrs Kay, the motherly, progressive teacher in charge of the outing, was portrayed wonderfully by Thomas Kelly, who was also able to lend his superb singing voice to the role. He was helped by his young colleague, Susan, played by Gabriel Burrow. There were some priceless comic moments provided by the two teenage girls, Linda and Jackie (respectively Alex Grantham and William Nash), in their pursuit of the heartthrob young teacher Colin (Freddie Clamp-Gray) and the audience's emotions were moved to the other extreme as they watched the innocent young Carol (beautifully acted by Tim McGovern) threaten to jump off a cliff rather than return to her every-day inner city life.



Mr Briggs, the authoritarian teacher sent on the trip to keep an eye on Mrs Kay and her 'woolly-minded liberalism', was very well portrayed by Luke Derrick. More comedy was provided by his run-ins with naughty lads Digga and Riley (Sam Kashti and Max Robinson) and their mate Andrews (Jack Squizzoni), who all enjoyed being allowed to 'smoke' and swear in front of their parents and teachers in the audience. And no school trip would be complete without a friendly coach driver with a penchant for Rock 'n' Roll (Alex James).

The other members of the cast (Joe Barber, Tim Bird, Edward Curran, George England, Alex Gatenby, Alex Rudd, Oliver Sayeed, Cory Squire) showed great versatility in playing several different roles and they all supported the main characters admirably. As one of them wrote after the show: "I learned that even if you have a little part you have to give it all you've got."

No production would be possible without a lot of work behind the scenes. The music was arranged and

performed by Andrew Hall; the set, lighting and sound effects were put together by Rory Frazer-Mackenzie and his tech crew; Charmian Hart provided the costumes and James Nairne designed the posters and programmes. The directors Andrew Loughe and Jane Wright would like to take this opportunity to thank them for all their hard work.

But the final word must go to the actors. Here is what they thought of the show:

"a great experience ..." – "very exciting for everyone involved and heaps of fun" – "I liked everyone clapping" – "I really loved the performances" – "I learned I liked drama" – "I learned I can act and be funny" – "I think that drama club is awesome because you learn new skills and you hang out with your mates." – "It was great to see how the play came together from us just reading through the script to us on the stage performing it." – "I liked being part of something so well-executed."

Jane Wright and Andrew Loughe

A2 Theatre Studies: Devised Plays



Dystopia

Following the success of our AS Theatre Studies performances, the A2 year began immediately with work on the devised element of the syllabus. After the sombre nature of previous plays, it was refreshing to be given the opportunity to create an original piece of theatre that we could enjoy performing. Naturally, the group proceeded to create high-emotion drama focusing upon sexual abuse within an island community. Using stimulus material relating to the Pitcairn Island trials of 2004, we worked hard to create a script that would capture our audience's attention and allow them to empathise with a true story. As a group, we wanted to portray the image of the perfect Pacific Island community and then tear it to pieces as the story unfolded. We considered this to be symbolic of the destruction of the utopian dream and as a result, entitled the piece *Dystopia*.

The process of creating a forty-minute piece of theatre and then perfecting its performance within a matter of months

was certainly the most difficult task we had been given thus far. Many ideas were presented, experimented with and then discarded before the play at last took its final form. *Dystopia* follows Alison, a British journalist, and her husband, Michael, as they visit an unnamed island community (based upon the Pitcairns). Following an enthusiastic welcome from the island's Governor, all seems well. However, as the play progresses, Michael's troubled past leads him into temptation. The island is home to religious subversion, which leads directly to the abuse of young children.

Clearly, when creating such a strong piece, it was vital that we could balance our desire to tell the story accurately with an ability to keep the content acceptable for an audience. In the latter stages of the rehearsal process, we were fortunate to work with Dugald Bruce-Lockhart, a professional actor, who helped us to add the finishing touches to the piece. His critical eye was much appreciated and allowed us to flourish as a cast.

Dystopia explored several key themes and issues that allowed us to either divide opinion among the audience, or unite them in their moral objection to what was being shown on stage at different moments in the play. The conflict between the Pitcairn people and the Western world, the issues raised concerning religion and the allegation of sexual abuse itself made *Dystopia* an extremely emotional piece to work with. The play balanced realism with the abstract to create a spectacle. This was particularly effective in a scene that represented the abuse itself, without ever showing a child on the stage.

As with any piece, the success of *Dystopia* relied heavily upon those who performed it. The role of Alison was played in turn by Kingsley Hoskins, Sophie Ball, Natasha Edwards and Martha Bennett throughout the piece, allowing each to bring their considerable individual qualities to a challenging character. Sam Walton once more demonstrated his natural ability to lose himself in the world of his character whilst playing Michael, delivering a powerful performance that balanced anger and frustration with a sense of vulnerability. The Governor was played with controlled, yet sinister power by George Dugdale whilst Ross Muir's portrayal of John, an islander ostracised as a result of his opposition to island traditions, exhibited his ability to seize and hold onto an audience's attention during high-emotion monologues. From the audience response, it is clear that if the purpose of theatre is to provoke debate then *Dystopia* was an overwhelming success.

George Dugdale VI DRM



Suffering Silence

The U6 Theatre Studies course begins with a devising exercise that requires students to create an original piece of theatre. *Suffering Silence* was a thirty-minute drama fashioned by Haley Bater, Tessa Brummitt, Josephine Hall, Andrew Partridge and Cody Yellowlees-Bound that took as its starting point the statement, often attributed to Edmund Burke: "All that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing". In this case, the evil was an abusive marriage, and the good men in question were the cast of friends assembled for a dinner party at the couple's home. The play was performed in the St Helen's studio theatre in November.

Central to the action was a table covered with white cloth, cake, plates, cutlery and glasses – all the comforting symbols of domestic bliss. Indeed, the action began with swirling shards of light from a mirror ball and two couples swaying to the strains of *I Love You Just the Way You Are*, through which we understood we were at the wedding reception of the protagonists, Robert and Elizabeth Banks, played by Andrew Partridge and Tessa Brummitt.

The harmony of the opening was swiftly undermined by the arrival of the Narrator (Hayley Bater), whose striking appearance – elegant black dress and accusing stares – s that truck a discordant note that culminated in a scream as the bride's fist smashed into the cake.

From this arresting opening, the story moved forward in time to focus on the emerging fault lines in the couple's relationship, and the way those closest to them reacted. Problems were apparent from the start, but were mostly winked at by the others, whose silence – and by implication ours – reminded us all too often we put up with the status quo rather than risk difficult confrontations, especially when the context is a genteel birthday celebration. Especially caught in this dilemma was birthday boy (and Robert's brother) George, affectingly played by Cody Yellowlees-Bound. As he struggled with the conflicting senses of honoured guest, combined with hero worship and disgust for his elder brother, George's discomfort was so tangible it provoked uneasy laughter, notably after his brother's first show of aggression, when all George could

say to break the shocked silence was, "Lovely cheese".

Tessa Brummitt managed the difficult role of Elizabeth, the abused wife, with skill, subjecting herself to her partner's terrifyingly physical outbursts with genuine bravery. Andrew Partridge overcame his naturally chivalrous nature to convince us his character was a bullying and unstable wife-beater of genuine menace. Hayley Bater also shone – almost literally in her sparkly black outfit – as a fittingly strong voice of conscience. For most of the play, we viewed her as a Brechtian commentator, standing apart from the action, yet the play's final moments held a twist, through which we understood she was in fact the older incarnation – perhaps even the ghost – of Molly, Elizabeth's best friend and like her, a victim of Robert's brutal attacks. Her character, movingly played by Josephine Hall, was the only one to speak out against the abuse, and held the key to the story's moral, since her boldness clearly came at a price, and prompted the show's final, thought-provoking challenge to the audience, "What would you do?"

Jeremy Taylor



Hodgetts, Jack Trotman, and Marina Michelson), trying to write a farcical play but being unable to progress. The audience quickly sees the futility of the characters' lives, as well as their strange relationships with each other. They clearly hate and despise one another, yet simultaneously need to stay together, if only to reassure themselves of their own existence. All the characters wore painted, grotesque clown faces to highlight their ironic circumstances and hint at the idea that presenting a comic, happy play covers the dark and tragic lives of the writers. These painted masks were highly effective at adding to the darkly comic atmosphere throughout the play. All the actors performed tremendously well, allowing them to feed off one another and perform a fantastic piece of theatre. In the twenty minutes that the audience watched these characters, they came to understand that these people would remain in this cramped, messy room forever.

Dan Harris

Tied

About a week after what the teachers describe as 'the point of no return', we realised that our vain attempt at devising a play for Unit 4 of our A2 Theatre Studies course included all the drama clichés ever thought up, and could

not possibly be performed in front of an audience. We had only one coffee-filled, Pepsi Max-driven night to turn our fortunes around and write an entirely new play. Thus Tied was born. The play was about a group of four comedy writers (played by Dan Harris, Steve

The Clients

As part of the A2 Theatre Studies exam a group of seven Theatre Studies students devised a twenty-five minute piece set in a funeral parlour. *The Clients* combined witty dialogue, slapstick comedy and a chilling finale. The director of the funeral business, Melissa, was played with tremendous poise and clarity by Lindsey Russell; her secretary, the scatty Jeanette and the eccentric mortician Maisie were played with impeccable comic timing by Anna Last and Olivia Powell respectively: both later revealed their more serious sides when the piece became darker. The three boys Matthew Winters, Patrick Child and Mark Heffernan took the roles of the pallbearers and injected

a sense of anarchy into the piece, bursting into the scenes with energy and exuberant high spirits. This provided a very effective springboard for the serious second half. The catalyst for the more sombre tone was the doomed relationship between the more sensitive of the three pallbearers, Les played by Matthew Winters and the stone mason Gail, played with forceful honesty by Ruth Jackson.

The play revolved around the idea that 'death was a business' and this provided the chance to create a disturbing scene in which Death, played by Mark and Patrick as two efficient businessmen in suits, arrive as Les is committing suicide. The synchronised movements of Mark

and Patrick were compellingly sinister and complemented the desperation Matthew brought to bear in his portrayal of Les. This was devised work of a high order: a striking, committed piece of theatre.

Alison Quick



A2 Theatre Studies: Plays

Alice in Wonderland

The final A2 Theatre Studies practical assessments in March included a version of *Alice in Wonderland*, performed by Andrew Partridge, Jack Trotman, Cody Yellowlees-Bound, Tessa Brummitt and Marina Michelson in the studio theatre at St Helen's. Their performance text, adapted by Adrian Mitchell from Lewis Carroll's original, preserved the story's familiar mix of nonsense and colourful fantasy whilst lacing the action with a darker, more sinister tone, inspired by the film *Trainspotting*. In this interpretation, Alice becomes a male character hiding from the world in a seedy bedsit awaiting his next fix from the supplier, Mr Dodgson. When it comes, he is propelled on a roller-coaster ride through his own imagination, and encounters some of Carroll's popular characters – the Duchess, the Cheshire Cat, the Caterpillar – along the way.

The group's choices of play and concept combined to deliver a lively and engaging spectacle for the audience. Ash Verjee's encyclopaedic store of recorded music was again plundered for an opening track that set the mood for the drug-fuelled journey to follow. Andrew Partridge was compelling in the title role, and gave arguably the best performance of his school career. As the audience entered, he lay beneath a sheet on a dirty mattress, wearing a torn and blood-streaked vest, his left bicep wrapped with a leather belt. The scene, lit by a single light bulb hanging above the bed, was immediately set. The removal of the sheet resembled a magician's unveiling of a hat from which all manner of exotic and brightly coloured creatures tumbled to delight and sometimes torment Alice. Jack Trotman's Mr Dodgson

was an amalgam of these contrasts – alternately child-like, crouching with silly voice and crude hand puppets, then nasty, rising to his scarily full height to deny Alice the drugs he craved. Cody Yellowlees-Bound's characterisation of the Caterpillar was similarly double-edged: with his cropped hair and crop stick, plus jeans, boots and checked shirt, the sleeves of which were rolled high to emphasise muscular arms, he looked at first sight every inch the thug, but closer inspection revealed a small pink bowtie that softened the picture delightfully, now calling to mind a young child dressed for a birthday tea. Tessa Brummitt's Duchess was another display of this actress's immense versatility and panache. Her transitions between stern 'matron of the institution' and girlish playfellow were faultless. A particular highlight was her madcap dance with Marina Michelson's sinuous and sensual Cheshire Cat, staged behind a cyclorama and backlit with a strobe to create a flickering shadow play for Alice's and our delight. We probably knew it all had to end in tears, so in a sense, the play's finale, that saw Alice collapse on the mattress to be covered by the sheet once again, this time for good, was no surprise.

All in all, this production was a feast for the senses, and a fitting finale to the school drama careers of this strong and very likeable set of U6th actors. Their innovation, skill and good humour have been evident throughout the A Level Theatre Studies lessons, and provided their teachers, Jo Watt and Jeremy Taylor, with many happy memories. We wish them well for their dramatic adventures in the wider world.

Jeremy Taylor

Look Back in Anger

'Four people. Four chairs. No windows. No doors. They love and hate each other but no one can escape'

The final performance of our A2 Theatre Studies course required our four-strong group to create an edited interpretation of a play bearing our own concept throughout. We chose John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* for the strong relationships and high emotion that feature in the play. Despite the pressure of doing justice to a great play, the challenge was one to which we looked forward with great anticipation.

With the inspired guidance of Oliver Hogben and Alison Quick, our interpretation focused on the idea of the four main characters – Jimmy, Cliff, Alison and Helena – being stuck in a world of tension from which they don't know how to escape. Osborne's play follows the relationship, not between a particular pair of characters, but of the group as a whole. Each person has an opinion about the others, making harmony impossible. Jimmy, a character who as originally portrayed by Kenneth Haigh in the 1950s helped create the term 'angry young men' to describe this style of theatre, forms one third of a love triangle with his wife Alison and her close friend, Helena. Amidst the chaos this creates, we find Cliff, an amiable lodger who desperately tries to keep the peace. His poorly hidden affection for Alison, and failure to distance himself from Jimmy's rage, result in Cliff being caught at the centre of many disputes without knowing where his loyalty lies. The sheer complexity of emotions and allegiances within *Look Back in Anger* instinctively lead to high-intensity theatre that is a joy to watch and to be a part of. Throughout the career of any drama student at Abingdon, there is an opportunity to throw yourself into a

role with passion and commitment. In what was our final performance at our respective schools, it was highly rewarding to see all four members of the cast being given the opportunity to flourish. The role of Jimmy was played by Matthew Winters who demonstrated his ability to switch between a variety of emotions with consummate ease. He also demonstrated aggression through the subtle acting techniques that he has acquired in his acting career thus far. Following his performance as a topless rabbit in panto, *Look Back in Anger* was a chance for Matthew to show his versatility and regain some credibility. He grasped the opportunity with both hands. Ruth Jackson gave a powerful performance as Alison, capturing the audience's attention with raw emotion. Despite a close friendship throughout the A Level course, it was clear that the opportunity to tear into each other on stage was something Matthew and Ruth relished. Martha Bennett once more provided a performance of the highest quality as Helena, showing great control to maintain her calm in the face of adversity. Finally, George Dugdale played Cliff with vulnerability and tenderness – qualities that were in stark contrast to the characteristics of his previous roles.

We may have had to cut *Look Back in Anger* substantially, yet it was clear from the amount of energy required to make each performance a success that this was the perfect manner in which to conclude our acting careers at school. In rehearsal, we explored many ideas that, with hindsight, we might have known would not work. Nevertheless, *Look Back in Anger* demonstrated that with the expertise of our teachers and a lot of hard work by the cast, it is possible to create school theatre of which we can be proud.

George Dugdale VI DRM

Phaedra's Love

Five members of the A2 Theatre Studies cohort performed a pared-down, adapted version of Sarah Kane's *Phaedra's Love* for their scripted exam piece. All five actors, together with their decision to create two 'external consciences' for Phaedra and Hippolytus, worked well and handled the uncompromising nature of the play skilfully. The set was eye-catching: a back-lit cloth of an abstract painted design formed the backdrop to the action, while two swings hung in front of this, for the external consciences to use. Olivia Powell as Phaedra's external conscience managed to create a poignant and varied counterpoint to the tortured Phaedra, played with devastating sincerity by Lindsey Russell. Sam Walton played Hippolytus with a compellingly weary nihilism while Anna Last as Hippolytus's external conscience was a teasing and amoral seductress. In juxtaposition to this quartet of tangled forces was the wonderfully forthright performance of Strophe by Natasha Edwards. Her appearance on stage let a chink of light into the dark, self-obsessed musings of her mother and stepbrother and Natasha's performance reflected this in her energy and truthfulness.

Alison Quick

Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?

Tackling Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* for Unit 5 of our A Level Theatre Studies course was always going to be a tough task and at the outset we foresaw only two possible outcomes: the highly likely one was that we would butcher a classic and make our drama teachers ashamed of us; the other, minute possibility was that we would edit and perform a version worthy of the play's reputation.

Throughout the editing processes of cutting a play from nearly 3 hours to 20 minutes, the first option looked guaranteed. However, when we started to formulate the script and learn the words, we began to take on the characters Albee had created and we started to believe we could pull it off. More or less.

Finalising our concept was key to allowing the strands of our version to come together. We had taken the character of Honey's absurdist game 'Peel the label' as the basis for our concept, and had applied this idea to the entire play with a view to peeling away the layers of lies, deceit, and masquerade from the characters' lives. This was shown effectively at the end of our version when the coloured garments each character had worn from the start were removed, leaving only their white base-costume underneath as a symbol of their true, unadorned natures.

In performance, Hailey Bater demonstrated the fiery nature of Martha very well indeed, terrifying the entire audience, while Stephen Hodgetts played the drunken and depressed Nick with excellent skill. Jo Hall danced and drank as the character of Honey marvellously well, and Daniel Harris's performance as George, the vicious ringleader of all the madness, was given with a fantastic and charismatic quality. We felt very proud of the performances we had given and felt we had done Albee's classic justice.

Dan Harris

A2 Theatre Studies: Performances

4:48 Psychosis

4:48 *Psychosis* by Sarah Kane was the play chosen by this group to edit down to a half hour performance for their A2 Unit 5. The play is in effect a monologue and the challenge was to make it possible for the group of five actors to bring it alive as a piece of ensemble work. The idea of having each actor play the patient in turn, while the rest of the group embody the different characters or voices she, the patient, talks about, was brilliantly effective. The audience were helped to understand who the patient was at any one time by the simple device of setting a bed centre stage on which the patient lay or crouched. The group managed masterfully to ring the changes in a script that could have been relentlessly desperate, finding snippets of comedy and moments of tenderness that added depth and complexity to the performances. Mark Heffernan, Patrick Child, Ross Muir, Sophie Ball and Kingsley Hoskins performed with searing honesty and integrity making this both compelling and uncomfortable to watch.

Alison Quick

// snippets of comedy and moments of tenderness that added depth and complexity to the performances. //

AS Theatre Studies: Performances



East

If you had told me at the beginning of working on Stephen Berkoff's *East* that our AS Level practical exam performance would involve doing chin ups from the balcony, groping the audience and forming a human motorbike, I probably would not have believed you. Yet, with the crazy but controlled direction by Oliver Hogben all these elements came together to create an amazing piece of theatre.

East tells the story of two best mates, Mike and Les, portrayed by Robbie Winearls and Luke Abbott respectively, the lives they lead and how, having previously been sworn enemies, they became such good friends. Unlike a conventional play, *East* does not have a clear plot running through the entire piece, it is more of a statement about life in East London in the 1980s as Berkoff saw it. Clear messages are shown by the other characters as the audience delves into their lives: in a dirty shop, for example, where the three girls, Sylv, Trish and Vix (Cathy Lewis, Millie Holdsworth and Ali Cooke) work, before being sucked into the front room of the racist Dad, (Beckie Barkham) and melancholy Mum, (Sarah Earl) as Dad rants about immigration in his Neo-Nazi speech.

Berkovian theatre is described as being 'in yer face', and *East* is certainly no exception. The audience are bombarded by the characters and from the moment they are brought into the theatre they know that this will not be a play that they are there to just watch, they know that the characters are aware of them, trying to get their message across. As an actor, the play not only stretches you in working in this way, aware of the audience (especially as the St Helen's theatre is nearly 'in the round'), but also due to the nature of Berkoff's writing, which is immensely physically demanding.

Entwined within the gravity of many of the situations is the underlying comedy, for *East* is meant to be a comedy and it is working to find the balance between the tragedy and the comedy that makes it so challenging.

There are few other plays that demand so much variety by the actors. Whether they were wincing during Mike and Les' knife fight, or laughing as they tried to chat up the girls, *East* constantly kept the audience immersed in its world and left them nearly as tired as the actors by the end!

Luke Abbott 6 APS



Fen

Faced with the daunting task of presenting the harsh existence of living off the land in *Fen*, by Caryl Churchill, for our AS Theatre Studies production, we were ably guided by Mrs Quick's vision of the play and its stage atmosphere. The performance began with a striking evocation of the bleak, flatlands of the Fens, and the miserable survival of its inhabitants, presented by our tattered costumes as we crawled on the ground picking potatoes; a labour of endurance. The set's use of a vast projected sky and cloudscape, designed and realised by Rory Fraser Mackenzie, immediately focussed the audience's attention on the basic existence of these figures, and hinted at the cycle of misery to which the characters were resigned. The furrows of the flat landscape were presented in minimalist form with long strips of hessian material.

The tragic relationship between Val, played by Francesca McLaven, and Frank, played by Tian Ji, was presented sympathetically with great skill as both actors explored their characters' brave, but doomed attempt to aspire to a better life despite the hostility of a closed and oppressed community.

Emily Barrett's interpretation of the role of Nell was very effective in presenting a powerful, indomitable woman, in a male-dominated community. She forcefully voiced the discontent of many of the land workers about the running of farms by the landowners. Her role differed from that of Angela, played by Sophie King, whose utterly terrifying performance of a woman ground down by her labours, showed a woman intent on releasing her emotions by inflicting torment on her stepdaughter Becky, played by Isabel Derbyshire. Isabel's frightened child was vulnerable and gained a strongly sympathetic response from the audience.

Ted Thompson played a variety of different roles, ranging from his highly comic performance as the elderly, belligerent Geoffrey – which had the audience in stitches – to the disturbed and traumatised Mr Tewson, a role, which gained empathy from the audience. Alice Carter showed a real flair and variety of character in her different roles, ranging from the six-year-old Shona to the fifty-year-old Shirley. Emma Mackenzie gave convincing and versatile performances in the roles of both Mrs Hasset and May.

Ted Thompson 6 JJ

Five Characters in Search of an Author

The eagle-eyed will spot that Luigi Pirandello's well-known play is called *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, yet the heading is no typo, rather the mark of a deliberate re-interpretation of the play, prompted in part by the unexpected departure of one of the students from this L6 Theatre Studies group directed by Jo Watt. It was staged in the studio theatre at St Helen's in April, and as always with this highly creative director, a challenge was transformed into an opportunity. First performed in Rome in 1921, Pirandello's play originally received a very mixed reception. Its strikingly modern premise is that a rehearsal for a play is interrupted by the arrival of a mysterious group of 'characters' who claim that they are more real than the actors. In 1921, uncomfortable questions about the nature of reality proved both bewildering and infuriating for those who had gone to the theatre for a pleasant evening's entertainment, with the result that audience, actors and critics exchanged blows in a riot that forced the playwright to escape through a side exit.

Happily, Jo Watt's production did not prompt that kind of finale, though it certainly stirred a strong sense of unease as we were alternately amused and unsettled by the shifts between the terra firma of a rehearsal room and the strangely yearning half-lives of the lost-in-limbo characters.

The production's first pleasing smack to the senses was the absence of any obvious beginning. As the audience entered, the Lead Actor (played by Jack Rogers) was already onstage with his feet up, reading the paper and listening to music on his mobile phone. An air of boredom prevailed and the houselights stayed on as Ash



Verjee (OA 1998), technical guru at St Helen's, ambled on with a ladder and prepared to adjust a few lights as if this was a room waiting for a rehearsal rather than a performance to begin. The Director (Ellen Harris) was next, clutching her takeaway coffee and box of props. Finally, there was the late-arriving Lead Actress (Elizabeth Smith), juggling handbag, diary and mobile phone and twittering about her latest childcare disaster. These well-observed slices of life delighted the audience, who relished the apparent authenticity of Jack as a jobbing actor, Ash as a hard-pressed techie, Ellen as feline director and Elizabeth as chaotic slummy mummy.

However, once the rehearsal began and the 'characters' arrived, the mood darkened as they huddled at the back of the stage, forlorn and white-faced, like nervous animals. Each was individually striking in appearance: Arjun Preetham as the Father sported a hairstyle that has long divided his critics, but here its matted layers

were pressed beneath a battered top hat that gave him the look of a vaudeville comedian fallen on hard times. Katherine Thornton was no less arresting, and with a similarly faded air, though this time the visual resonances suggested Norma Desmond in *Sunset Boulevard*. Hermione Lake as the Stepdaughter sported a trilby and leotard that reminded one of *Cabaret*, whilst Katrina White's Daughter was defined by a black leather biker's jacket that screamed teenage rebellion. The Little Girl, played by Sophie Conway, wore a black A-line dress with white headband that gave her the look of an innocent child locked in mourning. Together, they formed a powerful spectacle. As they pressed to be included in the action, the light and unadorned staging fuelled the growing intensity of their story until the final, shocking conclusion, which stretched to breaking point our sense of the boundaries between fiction and reality.

Jeremy Taylor





The Clink

Stephen Jefferys' *The Clink* is truly epic in scope – a vast story that preaches to the audience about the dispensability of monarchy – set against the background of the sinister, authoritarian Elizabethan state. Treacherous nobles lurk in the shadows, Catholics and Protestants won't stop burning one another, the plague's killing anybody who's not already in flames, criminality is rife despite the threat of a sentence to the notorious Clink prison (owned by a rather...immoral...bishop), the Queen is dying and caught up in all of this is a fool trying to make his way in the world of Elizabethan stand-up comedy. The odds aren't exactly in his favour.

With Jeremy Taylor at the directorial helm, ambition was plentiful. The whole process was fairly intense, with constant rehearsals and meticulous examining of lines and period history – something that proved essential in creating a plausible piece of theatre and resulted in physical tiredness but emotional highs for all involved. A particularly appealing part of the text to us was the unashamed mixture of

mock-Shakespearian verse and earthy modern slang. We highlighted this with the rather surreal juxtaposition of ruffs and bower boots, ladders and thrones, tunics and combat trousers. All of which created a visually impressive and elaborate spectacle.

The acting too was of a very high standard, with Dylan Robinson's lengthy anti-establishment monologue as the leather-clad fool Lucius Bodkin a highlight for many. Likewise, Richard Meadows brought the necessary amounts of ridiculousness and pomposity to the roles of Frobisher and the Captain of the Duel, while Richard Oastler injected the character of Davenport with the required venereal ooze. I played the villainous Warburton whom I tried to pitch as an amalgamation of Alan Rickman and Richard III but with a hint of showman camp. I'm not sure how well I've sold myself there, but the character seemed to go down well on the night. The challenge of playing the 63-year-old Elizabeth I was tackled impressively by Claudia Stott, who looked magnificently creepy in her Tudor bodice with huge lace collar and chain skirt over torn

black leggings and Dr Marten Boots. No less striking was the performance of Mollie Hodge as Zanda, a Moroccan slave girl who becomes embroiled in the plotting on the promise of her freedom. Alongside her, Emily Heath was acidly convincing as Warburton's rebellious daughter Beatrice, who discovers for herself the thrilling power men wield when they violently dispose of their enemies. Sophie Waddy (the alchemist Butler) and Helen Freer (the corrupt Bishop of Winchester) also excelled in a variety of roles that had to be adopted and dispensed with almost as soon as they were established. Indeed the whole cast, in true Brechtian style, took on several other roles, often switching from cockney vagrants to gentle nobles in front of the audience's very eyes.

Dutch rap, rather 'physical' male action, an overenthusiastic and crude ghost, punk music and attitudes – *The Clink* had it all. It was a thoroughly enjoyable production to be part of and a fantastic, tight-knit ensemble cast.

Matthew Copson 6 JHW

Abingdon Film Unit

The Abingdon Film Unit's sixth year began with an induction weekend at the end of August. The new cohort gathered in the drama studio for immersion in the worlds of animation and documentary. Animators made short films in a day, while documentarists looked at clips from great films to learn some of the language of storytelling in sound and image.

During the first Activities Weekend in September, the documentary students embarked for a training weekend in Glasgow with Jeremy Taylor, Abingdon Film Unit alumnus Tom Wakeling and Danish camera tutor Jonas Mortensen. The second city served up its bracing contrasts in characteristically bold fashion, encouraging students to see with fresh eyes. The trip also offered a chance to link up with Abingdon's former Middle Master Mike Martin and meet some of his new colleagues at Hutchesons' Grammar School, who showed interest in forming a film unit of their own. A few days later, the animators enjoyed their own weekend course at school, focusing on how to use the camera, and light sets for claymations and hand-drawn animations.

The first term brought other outings. Documentarists travelled to Wheatley Park School for the annual *New Shoots Festival* and returned with awards for best cinematography and editing (Matthew Copson's *Perception* and Tom Bateman's *Delicate Boys*). In October, a party travelled to London to watch the screening of *Gravel and Stones* at *Raindance*, the UK's largest independent film festival and the Film Unit's most prestigious festival success to date. In the half term holiday that followed, Jeremy Taylor met the staff of Doriane Films in Paris

to mark another first – the commercial DVD release in France of *Gravel and Stones*, in a pairing with Mike Grigsby's 1970 documentary *I Was A Soldier*. In November, animators travelled to Bradford's impressive National Media Museum to take part in workshops and attend the *Bradford Animation Festival* in which Pierre Leveque's *Oh No My Dog!* was a finalist. December saw the documentarists travel to the National Film Theatre to take part in the inaugural *Young Filmmakers for Development Festival*, pioneered by the AFU in collaboration with the BFI and the Westminster branch of the United Nations Association. This brought together school students, film professionals and representatives of NGOs to view films by young people from Colombia, USA, Israel, Palestine, Cambodia, Kurdistan and UK.

In fact, it was turning into quite a year for festivals. Many AFU members had taken up the challenge of researching and entering their films for national festivals and competitions, and with impressive results. James Yan's *Dance with Stacey* won best film at the *BACUP Festival* and was also screened at *Dancin' Oxford 2009*, whilst his *Silent Massacre* was selected for the *CAN 2008 Leicester International Short Film Festival*. After being selected for the Bradford Animation Festival, Pierre Leveque's *Oh No My Dog!* emerged from the Leeds International Young People's Film Festival with the prestigious *National Young Filmmakers' Award*. The same festival screened Matthew Copson's documentary, *Perception*. Finally, in February, Will Abell's debut stop-motion film *The Lamp* was chosen from over 200 entries for the *Future Film Festival* at BFI Southbank in London. Will Abell's

success came to the attention of BBC Oxford who sent a reporter to interview him and other members of the unit during a Wednesday afternoon session, resulting publicity for the Unit on both local radio and television programmes. That had come about largely through the effectiveness of the Film Unit's website, re-vamped by Arvid Eriksson in October to include new features such as RSS alerts, and the chance for the general public to view all the Unit's short films.

As the weeks passed, work on the new films gathered momentum and before long, final deadlines were fast approaching. The collection of seven documentaries and seven animations that was unveiled in May at the annual Amey Theatre screening continued to reflect the core principles of the AFU's professional mentors – Michael Grigsby, Jonas Mortensen, Mikkel Eriksen, Nikolaj Larsen, Arvid Eriksson, Andre de Souza and Joanna Harrison. Yet it also broke new ground, almost literally. For example, we enjoyed the first film by boarders from Hong Kong (Matthew Choi, Simon Lam) who took the opportunity of the October and Christmas holidays to shoot footage in the former colony as part of their documentary, made with Will Abell, about the experience of arriving in the UK to continue their education. There was also dramatic handcam footage from Afghanistan, courtesy of Tian Ji's uncle, Sergeant Major Nelson Macloed, who was the focus of Tian Ji's film about the life of a frontline soldier. In addition, we enjoyed a film about greyhound racing by the Unit's first all-female crew from St Helen's (Kingsley Hoskins, Marina Michelson and Olivia Powell). On the animation front, Charlie Floyd created the Unit's first film using

the *Flash* animation technique, while Pierre Leveque treated us to a taste of the rarely used rotoscope method. At the end of the evening, in which the new levels of technical pizzazz brought to Amey Theatre events by Rory Fraser Mackenzie and his crew were much in evidence, there were many who felt that once again, the bar had been raised in terms of standards and variety.

The second half of the summer term traditionally sees a reduction in activity as the Unit's members turn their energies to passing exams, but on this occasion, Matthew Copson and Tom Bateman made a number of trips to neighbouring Larkmead School to make a film for Oxfordshire's Hearing Resource Base about the challenges faced by deaf and hearing-impaired students at the school. A couple of days after the end of term, they linked up with William McDowell, Jonas Mortensen and Jeremy Taylor to travel to Moldova and start work on another major documentary project, this time about the experiences of young people in Europe's poorest country. All in all, it was quite a year.

Jeremy Taylor

Filmmakers

Will Abell
Freddie Barber
Tom Bateman
Charlie Beirouti
James Boreham
Joe Brown
Matthew Choi
Matthew Copson
Charles Day
Henry Dunbar
Charlie Floyd
Kingsley Hoskins
Chris Hyde
Tian Ji
Simon Lam

Thomas Lambert
Pierre Leveque
William McDowell
Chris Mears
Marina Michelson
Jack Oliver
James Paget-Brown
Olivia Powell
Jack Rayner
Joe Ridley
Aidan Robertson
George Rothwell
Evan Westenbrink
James Yan

Tutors

Mikkel Eriksen
Michael Grigsby
Joanna Harrison
Ben Hollins
Nikolaj Larsen
Jonas Mortensen
Andre de Souza

Composer-in-residence

Simon Whalley

Webmaster

Arvid Eriksson

Poster

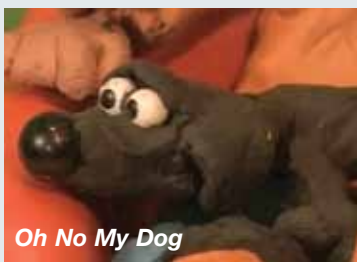
Matthew Copson

The AFU would like to thank:

Charmian Hart
Jan Gloverr
Shirley Kerby
Beverley Copsony
Rory Fraser-Mackenzie
Mark Turner
Jonathan Webster

Ken Kerby
Martin Copson
Technical Crew
Tanya Hawley
Sue Campbell
Jane Warne
James Nairne

Mercers Company
Geoff Dunbar
Steve King
Dr Berni Stubbley
Adam Jenkins



Films 2009

1. **Working Title** Claymation, 3.13



Three young filmmakers sit round a table trying to think of a good idea for a film. In turn, they each present an idea, and in turn, each one is rejected. Eventually, they realise the solution is staring them in the face...

George Rothwell, Chris Mears and Charles Day

2. **The Fighter** Documentary, 3.23



Less a documentary in its conventional sense, more an experimental short film about the passion and innocence of a young boxer. Shot on 16 mm film using a 1970s Bolex camera, The Fighter combines gritty imagery with an original orchestral score.

*Matthew Copson and Evan Westenbrink;
music by Joe Mason*

3. **Phantasmagoria** Rotoscope, 0.48



A dark and mysterious film about an innocent young girl's deepest fears, using the rotoscope animation technique.

Pierre Leveque

4. **A Necessary Evil** Documentary, 3.02



Large industrial sites always divide opinion, and Didcot Power Station, the focus of this film, is no exception. Many consider it a blot on the landscape. Others see it as south Oxfordshire's only landmark. Either way, its sheer size and strange industrial beauty mean it will be a sad loss when it is eventually decommissioned in 2014.

Jack Oliver, Jack Rayner and James Paget-Brown

5. **Spare Change** Stop-motion, 1.02



An animation that serves as an advertisement for those travel offers we'd like to believe in such financially difficult times, but can't.

James Boreham, Charlie Beirouti and Joe Ridley

6. **Attachments** Documentary, 6.15



A film about language and its importance in life, focusing on Sonia, a Spanish student learning Arabic, the Gamios, a Peruvian family who have recently moved to England, and Pól, an Irishman struggling to keep his native language alive. It encourages an appreciation of culture and identity in relation to the words we speak.

Will McDowell and Tom Bateman

7. **Astral Music and the Flat** Intermission Cut-out, 3.00



A musical mystery tour inspired in part by the Beatles' Yellow Submarine, and featuring original music by father and son.

Freddie Barber

8. Love The Dogs

Documentary, 5.02



A film inspired by the catching atmosphere of greyhound racing. Influenced by Mike Grigsby's *The Score*, the focus is largely on the spectators, and follows their journey from tension and anticipation, through expectation, to joy and relief. The AFU's first all-female film production.

Kingsley Hoskins, Olivia Powell and Marina Michelson from St Helen's

9. The Sacrifice

Documentary, 7.27



From the dazzling glamour and bustle of Hong Kong to the tranquillity of rural Oxfordshire, this documentary journeys into the mind of Jonathan, a new student at Abingdon School who arrived from Hong Kong last September. From learning styles to social lives, it explores the differences he experiences, and in particular, the sacrifices he makes when he leaves his family and friends to continue his education on the other side of the world.

Matthew Choi, Simon Lam and Will Abell

10. Red

Flash, 1.16



A computer-based animation about a day in the life of an assassin. Created by drawing onto the computer and then using software to animate the drawings. This film focuses mostly on the visual elements of the story with bold-coloured backgrounds and dark, heavy foregrounds.

Charlie Floyd

11. 7 o'clock

Documentary, 4.47



A family sits down to dinner on a Thursday evening. It is 7 o'clock in the kitchen of a detached house in Abingdon. Angela is preparing the meal. As the clock ticks, the food goes in the frying pan, but there is something unsettling. The front door opens and dinner is served.

James Yan and Chris Hyde

12. Solitude

Claymation, 1.22



Look for echoes of the Adam and Eve story in this delightful fantasy of a lone plastiscine man as he acquires a new friend.

Henry Dunbar

13. Kitchen Sink Dramas

Stop-motion, 2.50



The Abingdon School catering has never been better. Or that's what most of these lippy kitchen utensils seem to think. A witty combination of vox pop interviews and animated talking cutlery.

Joe Brown and Tom Lambert

14. The Soldier

Documentary, 7.21



This documentary examines war through the eyes of Sergeant Major Macleod, a soldier who has served in the army for 26 years. Combining unique footage from Afghanistan, Iraq and an interview filmed in an Oxfordshire garden far from the frontline, this film concentrates on a soldier's experiences in war zones and their impact on him, as well as his feelings on returning to England.

Tian Ji, Matthew Copson and Ben Hollins

Music



The Music Year 2008–09

The academic year 2008-9 followed the tried and tested formula of previous years, with busy music calendars reflecting the vibrant activity of the whole department. *The Abingdonian* gives a snapshot of some of these events while covering others in fuller detail.

In that the music performed is driven by people, as much as by ensembles or repertoire, this was the year that saw several senior musicians setting the pace, in particular the musically dextrous Guy Cutting (tenor voice, piano, violin/viola) and Fergus McIntosh (baritone voice, cello, piano). They proved to be an inspirational team and brought the year to a concluding peak with a performance of the *Flower Duet* from Bizet's *The Pearl Fishers* at the end of term Prize-Giving.

The Music Department staffing saw the arrival, in a full-time capacity, of Christopher Fletcher-Campbell. As a former Director of Music, he brought with him a wealth of administrative experience as well as being a first-class accompanist. Simon Whalley moved to a part-time role and was appointed Abingdon's composer-in-residence, his first composition in this role being the *Abingdon-Tokai Festive Overture*, which

opened the Anglo-Japanese concert in the Sheldonian in March.

In the course of the year we were to say farewell to David Luckett, a teacher of lower brass, whose role in the team of visiting music teachers must count as one of the longest on record (over 35 years). Many former pupils (including our own inimitable Nigel Somerville OA) have much to thank David for – his excellent teaching, warm encouragement and pastoral gifts that did much to settle and reassure many a troubled pupil over the years. David retires to find more time for his academic research and lectures on anthropology. William Balkwill, a trumpet teacher, also withdrew from his work with us halfway through the year. A gifted and multi-talented musician, he was finding that his freelance work as a tenor singer was requiring frequent absences on concert tours, which was frustrating his wishes to be able to teach on a more regular basis. We wish both these teachers well in their future endeavours.



Guy Cutting (L), Fergus McIntosh (R)

Andy Hall was our highly successful and popular Music Assistant this year. He successfully developed the role in new and exciting ways, enabling much more than just the administrative machine to thrive. Andy's interest in jazz saw great results in his work with the Senior Jazz Ensemble and with the Big Band. His composing resulted in a wonderful experimental piece with the Lower School Orchestra (*Keep Going*) and in various arrangements for the cello ensemble. Always cheerful and incredibly capable, he certainly played his part in encouraging boys and staff throughout the year. Abingdon's loss is *Berkshire Maestros*' gain, but he promises to return regularly.

One of the important roles that the Music Assistant fulfils is the maintenance, devising and presentation of the weekly lunchtime concerts. Another thirty of these were put on over the three terms and gave a wide range of regular solo experience to the boys, both debutants and those operating at post-grade 8 level. These informal concerts were complemented by the more formal evening concerts for the music scholars and senior musicians of which there were six (including senior pianists and organists) throughout the year.

We welcomed two groups of visiting musicians during the year. *The Hermitage Choir* from St Petersburg, a talented quintet of professional male singers, joined us on 12 May for an eclectic selection from the Russian Orthodox Church Music tradition and, in the second half, some folksong and popular song arrangements. We learned that many of these singers enjoy an operatic solo career in Russia and we were then not surprised that the quality of the singing, much of it sung without scores and all unaccompanied, was quite outstanding.

On 17 June, Ray Burley (our classical guitar teacher) and Keith Fairbairn gave an interestingly devised programme at their concert for guitar and percussion. Much of the music presented comprised musical arrangements and the effect was staggeringly good, with unique textures generated from acoustic guitar and tuned percussion.

Trips outside the department included one to Birmingham to hear the St Petersburg Philharmonic (Elgar's *Cello Concerto* and Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique Symphony*); to Milton Keynes Theatre to see Bernstein's *West Side Story*; and to the Colosseum to see and hear Britten's *Peter Grimes*. A particular highlight came at the very start of the year when a group of sixth-form boys travelled to the Royal Albert Hall to hear the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra with the conductor, Sir Simon Rattle, in Messiaen's extraordinary *Turangalila Symphony*, one of the last of the 2008 concerts of the BBC Promenade Series.

Primary School Singing Day

A significant outreach event was put on by Mr Jenkins and Miss Matthews on 13 November – a Primary Schools Singing Day – when choirs from local primary schools (St Nicolas, Carswell and Long Furlong) joined our own First-Year Choir for a short early evening concert featuring *Songs from the Four Corners of the World*. The schools had been rehearsed separately by



Miss Matthews and came together for a most enjoyable evening, in which the pupils showed a remarkable commitment to and involvement in their singing performances.

House Singing Competition

This year's competition was adjudicated by Jon Cullen, Director of Music at Magdalen College School, and marked a new departure for this competition in its inclusion of year-group songs presented by the first-year and second-year boys in a non-competitive role. This year the rehearsals took place over the limited period of a week which saw some enthusiastic and committed rehearsal from all the Houses. Next year we hope to give the Lower School year-groups a competitive role in the competition.

Mr Cullen made some very encouraging and well-judged remarks and the Houses were marked as follows:

First place: Webb's with *American Pie*
Second: O'Doherty's with *Keep on Moving*

Joint Third: Franklin's *Rhythm of Life*,
 Older's *Sweet Home Alabama*.



Puccini 150th Anniversary Concert – 19 November

Guy Cutting (tenor) received the prestigious invitation to join a special concert in Abingdon to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the birth of Giacomo Puccini, who was a native of Abingdon's twin town of Lucca in Tuscany. The concert was presented in St Nicolas' Church by the Abingdon Twinning Association.

This was a marvellous tribute to the outstanding gifts possessed by Guy Cutting. Tenor roles in Romantic Italian opera are taken by much more experienced singers who have developed a coloratura technique following intensive training at graduate opera schools. It is rare for a young voice to tackle these high tenor parts much before his mid-20s, when the voice has matured and a superb technique has been harnessed.

So it was an accolade for Guy to be invited to sing alongside a professional Italian soprano and her accompanist husband, who had travelled especially for this concert from Lucca. Guy sang superbly in famous solos and duets from the operas *Gianni Schicchi*, *Tosca*, *La Boheme* and *Turandot*. Guy was warmly complimented by his fellow-performers and the large audience was both entertained and moved by his outstanding singing. Guy Cutting is, without doubt, a gifted musician with great operatic potential – certainly one to watch!

Christmas Concerts – 8 and 10 December

To tackle mainstream symphonic repertoire with a youth orchestra is often a challenge and so, for a school orchestra to tackle such a work as Tchaikovsky's *Symphonic Fantasy, Romeo and Juliet*, may seem to be sheer folly. It says much, therefore,



Soloist David Mears at the New Year Concert

about the quality of Abingdon's orchestra that it can tackle such a work and make a convincing job of it. The demands can be summarised by the fiendish passagework in the strings and the big full orchestra sounds that need to be effectively coordinated through careful rehearsal.

It was this work, most ably led by Guy Cutting and his co-leader Adrian Lo, that concluded the Christmas Concerts this year. But, of course, this was just one work in a concert that, as tradition demands, displayed a great variety of ensembles and of repertoire.

Lower School started the concert with *The Rebel Soldier* and *Ring Out the Bells*, with performances characterised by focus and commitment. Chamber Orchestra, led by Adrian Lo, followed with three movements from Benjamin Britten's *Simple Symphony: Bourree, Playful Pizzicato* and *Frolicsome Finale*. The Brass Band, under the direction of Andy Townsend, our bandmaster, played with great flair in three numbers: Arnold's *Padstow Lifeboat*, highlights from ABBA's *Mamma Mia* and Leroy Anderson's *Christmas Festival*.

The second half opened with the School Choir in a spiritual, *Ride the Chariot*, and an African song, *Nidi Jesu Chete*

– these were short but very effective performances from memory that showed what can be achieved through concentration and commitment. Big Band was in typically fine form under Simon Currie's relaxed but effective direction in *Satin Doll*, *Peter Gunn* and *Mr Funk*. Following this, Guy Cutting demonstrated his fine tenor voice with a pairing of excerpts from *The Messiah* by Handel – *Comfort Ye* and *Ev'ry Valley*, accompanied by a First Orchestra chamber ensemble.

An exciting rendition of Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet* was followed by the customary community carol, this time *Unto Us Is Born a Son*, after which the audience spilled out into the night in decidedly festive mood, contributing as they went to a retiring collection which raised over £930 over the two evenings to support OXFAM's Congo Disaster Appeal.

New Year Concert – 22 January

Further funds for the Congo appeal were generated at our New Year Charity Concert. Traditionally an 'overspill' concert, this has now become a substantial one in its own right and saw performances from Second Wind Band (*Shake, Rattle*

and *Roll, Hawaii Five-O*), Junior Strings, Second-Year Drums and Big Band (*Autumn Leaves, Chameleon*). In the second half we heard Second Orchestra (music by Berlioz and Handel), and Brass Band (*Slaidburn* by William Runner, *Little Suite* by Malcolm Arnold and *Star Wars* by John Williams). The concert concluded with First Orchestra playing Rossini's exciting *Thieving Magpie*, but preceded by two performances, Adrian Lo (violin) in Lalo's *Symphonie Espagnol* and David Mears in Mozart's *Clarinet Concerto* (finale). We subsequently learned that David's great-great-grandfather had been the composer of *Slaidburn*, played earlier in the concert by Brass Band.

The year saw its fair share of individual achievements, notably the award of two Oxford Choral Scholarships, to Guy Cutting (tenor) to read Music at New College and to Fergus McIntosh (baritone) to read Classics at Merton College. Guy had been Head Chorister in all but name in the New College Choir and Professor Higginbottom was delighted to secure this fine musician as a young choral scholar.

Many boys secured their grade 8, many with distinction, and several gained their professional diplomas, including Anthony Lloyd (flute), George Bone (horn), Gerald Chan (piano) and Joe Mason (horn). Caspian Mitchard and Joe Mason secured places on prestigious music courses (Oundle Organ Festival and Eton Choral Course), with generous bursaries from ASMS, the Abingdon School Music Society.

This was a very memorable year and it was concluded by a most successful Big Band Tour to Tuscany, 6-11 July, a tour that included some enjoyable open-air concerts in Florence, Montecatini and Lucca; sight seeing in Pisa, Siena and San Gimignano; and an opportunity for some rare moments to reflect

with colleagues and senior pupils on another year of happy and successful music-making. Mark Power Smith (saxaphonist) reports on this tour, but I am particularly grateful to Simon Currie and his family, to Mr Balderson and Mr Dawswell who accompanied this tour, and to all boys, colleagues and parents who have worked so hard to support our music this year.

Michael Stinton

Chamber Music Concert and Festival

This year a particularly distinguished quartet of visiting musicians joined Abingdon's string players and pianists for an afternoon of intensive chamber music coaching, followed by a short early-evening concert.

Our assembled team included the international pianist, Ian Brown, cellist and conductor, Robert Max, and violinists Olivier Bonnici and Angus Gibbon, who are Heads of Strings at Oundle and Headington Schools, respectively. The coaches were each stationed in a different room and the ensembles moved around them for

four 50-minute coached rehearsals, resulting in a total of sixteen sessions. All instrument departments were featured in the ensembles, including strings, piano, clarinets, flutes, double reeds, brass quintet and guitars. Then, the ensembles having made significant progress after their afternoon's coaching, they performed to a well attended concert play-through in the evening.

Abingdon is very fortunate in having a first-class string department headed by Mariette Pringle with Valerie Findlay (cello) and Elizabeth Harrè (double bass). It was significant that two of the concluding ensembles included both a quartet of double basses and a cello octet playing Villa Lobos' moving *Bachianas Brasileas No 1*, second movement. The evening concluded with Brahms' beautiful trio for clarinet, cello and piano, played by David Mears, Ben Etherton and Ozy Tack.

Parents and visitors were treated to a wonderful event. The range and quality of the music was quite staggering and both the boys and coaches seemed euphoric about their afternoon of music-making.

Michael Stinton





East Meets West: An Anglo-Japanese Concert – 23 March

The Genesis

It was in June 2008 that Michael Stinton received a long email from an Irishman living in Nagoya, a large industrial city in central Japan (equivalent in size to Birmingham, UK) proposing that Abingdon host a Japanese school symphony orchestra the following March. Patrick Jackson had followed his Japanese fiancée to her home town and had forged a career as a teacher of English as a Foreign Language and raised a family there.

His sister was a parent at Cheam School (a feeder for Abingdon) where the Director of Music, Tim Bennett, an OA, suggested a collaboration with Abingdon as he knew that we had toured to Beijing and Hong Kong with our own orchestra in 2006.

This looked like a tremendous opportunity and so the seed of the idea was sown. As the idea developed, countless emails occupied

the cyberspace between Abingdon and Nagoya. The inscrutable Naoro Nishimura was the gentleman who had founded the orchestra at Tokai Gakuen, a Buddhist Boys' School, some 25 years earlier. His quiet but determined enthusiasm ensured that a clear plan was quickly forged. Later that summer, a small delegation from Japan appeared in Oxford – together we visited the School and the Sheldonian Theatre and fleshed out the plan.

We agreed to host about 75 Japanese boys in our own Abingdon families, to book the Sheldonian and to collaborate in a joint performance of Wagner's *Mastersingers* Overture under Michael Stinton's direction. The parts for this joint orchestral item were to be rehearsed intercontinentally and brought together at an intensive weekend of rehearsals prior to the concert at the end of the Lent term. With enthusiastic support from Abingdon's senior management, the project's plan was brought to a most successful conclusion.

We soon learned that the concert was to be a featured event in the Japanese Embassy's series of collaborations, *Japan UK 150*, celebrating 150 years of trade links between our countries.

Further benefits accrued. The concert also provided an excellent opportunity to commission an orchestral work from Simon Whalley: *Abingdon – Tokai, a Festive Overture*, which provides a lasting testament to this cultural collaboration. The exercise brought a heightened cultural awareness and an outpouring of delight from our Japanese guests, all of whom wrote heartfelt letters of thanks to their host families, following the concert.

The Japanese orchestra, though similar in size to our own (about 75), was quite different in style and composition. They were light in brass, quite soloistic in the woodwind and incredibly disciplined in their large string sections. Whilst we pride ourselves on our strings, we learned much from seeing them and



playing alongside them. They arrived with a team of helpers, teachers and a translator to assist at the rehearsals and a group of mothers (a sort of Mr Nishimura fan club and shopping party), who put themselves up at the Randolph Hotel in Oxford.

The concert was preceded by a reception for our Japanese guests and sponsors hosted at Exeter College, which was an opportunity to thank various sponsors, notably the Japan Society and the Sony Corporation.

The Concert

After all these months of careful preparation, the concert itself was a great success and received an effusive review in the *Oxford Times*.

The Japanese orchestra proved to be a very disciplined outfit, their 10 hours of rehearsal each week resulting in outstandingly impressive performances of Schumann's *Symphony No 1* and Dvorak's *Carnival* in the second half of the concert.

The first half of the concert witnessed the premiere of a new work, *Abingdon Tokai, A Festive Overture*, written

specifically for the occasion and commissioned by the Abingdon School Music Society – a work by Simon Whalley, whose new role as Abingdon's Composer in Residence was announced by the Headmaster at the concert. It was an impressive way to start the concert, exploiting Abingdon's orchestral strengths to the full and incorporating the famous *Sakura* folksong from Japan, evoking the notion of cherry blossom in the middle section of the work.

The main excitement of the concert, however, was experienced in a performance of Wagner's *Mastersinger's Prelude* with both orchestras combined – an ensemble of 108 performers, of Wagnerian proportions, including eight horns, six trumpets, six trombones and two tubas.

It was a magnificent and exuberant sound, which really 'raised the roof'. The concert's first half was concluded with Tchaikovsky's exciting *Romeo and Juliet Fantasy* – a performance in which several Tokai musicians collaborated with Abingdon's First Orchestra. The whole project was deemed to be a fascinating and highly successful collaboration of two very different cultures and much was learned and

friendships forged between young musicians from different sides of our planet. Following the concert, the Japanese party headed for Heathrow on their way to Vienna for the second stage of their tour. It is hoped that a return visit to Japan by Abingdon's orchestra might become a reality in 2013, when Abingdon School celebrates the 450th anniversary of John Roysse's re-endowment.

Michael Stinton

The Rake's Progress

*For idle hearts and hands and minds,
The Devil finds a work to do*

All our School concerts are special, but this one was stratospheric.

On Friday 6 March, in the usual auditorium, the usual loyal and discerning audience turned out for a rare treat: an abridged version of Stravinsky's interpretation of William Hogarth's celebrated series of paintings that were exhibited in Chicago in 1947. Our presiding genius was Andrew Yeats who, with phenomenal energy and musical intelligence, had adapted the original for our boys' voices, accompanied by him on keyboards.

Three of the leading roles were sung by more than one boy, and it was Guy Cutting, tenor, who initiated the performance as Tom Rakewell, the eponymous anti-hero. Instantly, the audience's ears were assaulted by his brazen impudence and the sheer power of his ego, as well as bowled over by the quality of Guy's voice. That was the electrifying Introduction; for the opening of Act 1, Andrew Doll conveyed a strong impression of Tom in more romantic mode, in colloquy with Anne Trulove, his betrothed, sung beautifully throughout by Christina Shand, in her father's garden in the hopeful springtime. Andrew

accomplished some smart timing in his portrayal of Tom, soon to be replaced by John Carter, now in conversation with a very smooth customer who seemed to appear out of nowhere: *Nick Shadow, sir, and at your service.* The dialogue that ensued was melodious and strong, Robert Brooks revelling in Nick's quick-fire patter. As the first act drew to a close, Otta Jones, as Father Trulove, and Caspian Mitchard, now playing Nick, sustained the tension up to Guy's concluding and powerful paean to *Love, my sorrow and my shame...*

Act 2 began powerfully with Tom – still Guy – and Fergus McIntosh, appearing for the first time as Nick. This pairing was formidable: not only two remarkable voices, but also two strong actors who really enlivened the drama on stage. In this scene, as well as in the scene that followed the interval, there were many delights, including the thrilling finale to Scene 1, the violent piano accompaniment to the opening of Scene 2, and some delicious syncopation as the second scene developed to bizarre effect. The opening of Act 3 brought Henry Jenkinson to the spotlight, a pleasure well worth waiting for, as Henry, too, was convincing and confident from the start, as well as very pleasing on the ear. With the added vigour and colour provided by the Crowd, this scene developed into another of the theatrical high-points of the production, one of the great strengths of our Music Department being the excellence of the supporting roles, played on this occasion by Jack May, Charles Pope and George Ruck, with a bit of help from Robert and John.

Scene 2 strikes a chilling contrast: a starless night, a churchyard and a newly-dug grave. Tom and Nick (Guy and Fergus), accompanied by spooky harpsichord, perform a vocal equivalent of a 'danse macabre', reaching a crescendo at *Queen of Hearts...* *Queen of Hell.* Then, most effectively,

Anne, unseen, challenges: *A love that is sworn...can plunder Hell of its prey.* Nick stands as though frozen, the piano resumes, reaches a climax, and the scene ends lyrically. However, the final portrait depicts our Rake in Bedlam, where the ever-faithful Anne, with exquisite and child-like simplicity, laments his fate, supported by another strong chorus, this time of madmen.

The moral of the story is pointed in the short Epilogue, after which the principals and every single member of this elite cast of fine performers received the plaudits they deserved.

Anne Soper

School Bands' Concert

The annual School Bands' Concert kicked off with an exciting and energetic start as Second Wind Band, under Nigel Somerville's characteristically lively direction, leapt into business with two thrilling theme-tune arrangements – the classic *Star Wars* theme and the ever-popular theme from *The Rockford Files*. Not to be outdone in the entertainment stakes, the First Wind Band revealed their array of talents with Mitchell's *Wind Cathedral* and the theme tune to *Pirates of the Caribbean*, which opened with a full-bodied, hearty vocal introduction,

sung with the convincing blood-thirsty lust of a bunch of pirates!

Following the interval, in a new item to the standard format, the School Choir, Second-Year Drum Ensemble and a superb band of senior musicians combined to perform an arrangement of everyone's favourite Paul Simon song, *You Can Call Me Al*, the vocal solo being shared between Henry Jenkinson, Will Abell and Guy Cutting, Guy here giving his final performance with the School Choir. Particular praise must go to Joe Mason who taught himself the winding penny-whistle solo, which he played with real flair and character. This number was swiftly followed by items from the Brass Band; it must be said that their performance of *Don't Stop Me Now* would have made Freddie Mercury proud! No School Bands' Concert would be complete without a few classics from the Big Band who this year performed four numbers. There were some excellent improvisations, especially those from George Rossiter on trumpet, Euan Campbell on trombone and Felix Wood on French horn. Special mention must also go to the clear and yet relaxed direction of Simon Balderson, who stepped in to lead the Big Band in the absence of bandleader Simon Currie.

Jenni Matthews



Concert for Guitar and Percussion

A most unusual and intriguing concert of guitar and tuned percussion given by Abingdon's guitar teacher, Ray Burley, and Keith Fairbairn, the percussion coach of Thames Vale Youth Orchestra and a former West-End Theatre player.

It was a successful and hugely enjoyable event and the small but enthusiastic audience was privileged to hear a range of music by mostly twentieth-century composers, many from South America, such as Barrios Mangore from Paraguay and Astor Piazzolla, in a skilful arrangement of *Café 1930* from *Histoire du Tango* originally scored for flute and guitar.

Quite apart from the outstanding quality of the playing, the concert was also a feast for the eyes. Mr Fairbairn played on his own custom-built marimba, with huge rosewood keys and massive brass resonators in its double bass register.

The combination of this instrument and the guitar, together with the vibraphone (used most effectively in the Piazzolla), created some lovely textures and that special, intimate atmosphere which so often characterises the sound world of the classical guitar.

This concert presented an eclectic mix of sounds from different parts of the world, and influences ranging from folk to dance, from Hungary (Bartok) to USA (Rozsa) and Japan (Keiko Abe) to Warwickshire (Skinger). It also gave the audience a wonderful opportunity to hear from our percussionist about the construction and acoustic properties of both marimba and vibraphone. We heard that the five-octave monster marimba was made to a special order from a reclusive woodman in Arkansas, USA, who shipped it to the UK by special order for Mr Fairbairn.

Michael Stinton

Jazz on a Summer's Evening

What has become the School's annual celebration of jazz involved performances by the Blues Society, the Senior Jazz Quintet and the Big Band, with guest appearances from teachers Frank Toms (piano) and Simon Currie (saxophone). Unfortunately, Andy Hall (trumpet), this year's outstanding Music Assistant, who has done much to support the jazz this year, was called away at very short notice. An added element of expectancy was created by the knowledge that this was our last jazz concert before travelling to Tuscany for our tour, two weeks later.

The Blues Society, under the expert guidance of history teacher, Andrew Crook, got proceedings underway with two numbers featuring vocalist, Oliver Jackson. John Lee Hooker's *Boom Boom* gave ample scope for the performers, including Tom Spears (guitar), Joe Brown (bass), Mike Summers (drums) and Richard Slade (saxophone). Presley's *A Little Less Conversation* was a fitting way for us to bid farewell to Andrew Crook, who leaves us to take up a new post as Head of History at Cheadle Hulme School. Andrew Crook has directed the Blues Band since he founded it three years ago and we thank him for his energetic work and enthusiasm – next year Messrs Balderson (ITC) and Castle (Economics) will continue his excellent work.

In typical jazz fashion, Simon Currie, our Big Band leader, invited us at the outset of his performance to 'throw away' our programmes; he clearly had fresh ideas about how it was going to work!

We heard a variety of numbers, from *Rock around the Clock* to ballads and funk, featuring most of the performers taking at least one solo each and being encouraged to come forward to improvise in front of a supportive and enthusiastic audience.



The Jazz Quintet, featuring three boys, Jack Tinker (trumpet), Mike Summers (bass) and Veeral Manek (drums), alongside Frank Toms and Simon Currie, opened the second half. This gave us all a chance to marvel at the levels of performance that can be achieved with dedication. Each took opportunities to improvise and it was enthralling to see the creative process unfold as each performer in turn had the spotlight shine on his own 'musical paragraph'. Again, the set they played differed from the printed programme and concluded with *Song for my Father*, a choice made as a result of Andy Hall's absence (he had given much input to this ensemble over the year).

A final set from Big Band concluded this most enjoyable concert – by the end, the audience was suitably 'warmed up' and needed little invitation to clap along. Among the particularly striking contributions were Joe Mason (piano) playing *Autumn Leaves* and Simon Currie's rendition of *Funk 1*; Euan Campbell (vocals and trombone) in *Come Fly With Me, Fly Me to the Moon* and Hefti's *Li'l Darlin* with Mike Summers (bass) and Veeral Manek (drums). Although we were missing a number of performers, the concert was a great success and augurs well for what will surely be a most enjoyable and exciting tour in Tuscany. Our special thanks to Messrs Bush, Currie, Toms and Hall for all their hard work and enthusiasm this year and to ASPA, the parent body, who provided strawberries and champagne in the interval.

Michael Stinton



Lower School Gala Concert

On a very hot, muggy evening in the last week of the Summer Term, that miracle of persuasion, practice and organisation known as the Lower School Gala Concert came into being, with a total of seventeen items of wide musical range showcasing the considerable talents of our first- and second-formers, brought together under the aegis of Jenni Matthews. Many of the items were quite short in themselves, which enabled more performers to take part in the time available, which inevitably involved a lot of movement of boys and instruments between items.

To open the concert, Nigel Somerville introduced and conducted a trio of pieces played by Lower School Orchestra, which he compared to a musical journey through time, with *La Mourisque* by Susato sounding rather like something that Henry VIII might have claimed he wrote, followed by a rather slow rendition of Brahms' *Hungarian Dance No.5* and then a huge contrast in the form of a very modernistic piece

composed by the outgoing Music Assistant of the year Andrew Hall. Jamie Blackwell then showed his talent on the piano with Handel's *Allegro in F* and Kabelevsky's *Sonatina*, an unfamiliar piece which was well worth a hearing. George Ruck on violin was fluent and lyrical in his performance of *Concertino in G* by another composer unfamiliar to this writer, Oscar Rieding. Robert O'Kelly produced a nice tone on his oboe in the *Nocturne* by Hinchcliffe (another unknown!), followed by the very talented and confident Thomas Kelly, whose violin really sang in *Hope Told a Flattering Tale* by Henry Farmer – a remarkably mature performance for a youngster on an instrument that is often seen as unforgiving and difficult to master. A bassoon quintet then performed their version of Offenbach's *Can Can*, followed by Tim Davies on piano with a great feeling for The Blues in a lively piece called *Lowside Blues* (including some totally appropriate foot-stomping beneath the pedals!). The first half of the concert concluded with the Junior Strings led by Thomas Kelly

in two pieces arranged by Mariette Richter, *La Cumparsita* and *Soldier's Joy* and again the performance was really polished and accomplished for the age of the performers.

The second half kicked off with the hordes of the First Year Choir on stage, conducted by Jenni Matthews in two well-chosen traditional songs, *Jesse James* and *Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel*, in which the choir showed good articulation of the words and a real sense of 'swing' appropriate to the American flavour of the songs. Bruno Rogers came forwards to sing a solo on one of the verses but found it hard to produce enough volume to carry to the back rows of the theatre – a brave effort, nevertheless. The very talented Thomas Kelly and George Ruck then performed two piano pieces with great success, Bach's *Invention no.8 in F major* and *Wild Horsemen* by Burgmüller, both of which gained tumultuous applause for the size of the audience. Next up were three boys on one and the same keyboard! Tim

Davies, Alex Davies and Thomas Chan between them produced enough volume to make it sound as if two pianos were being played, in the *Gavotta* and *Tone Pictures* by yet another unknown named Gurlitt (random thought – do you pay less to hire the sheet music of lesser-known composers?). James Tebbs followed with an oboe rendition of Mozart's *Minuet* that was a very good effort. An excellent combination of talents came next with the violin trio of Thomas Kelly, George Ruck and Alexander Gunasekera who played the *Dorset Reel and Hornpipe* in an arrangement by Mariette Richter, but they were somewhat drowned out by the audience who believed it to be the Last Night of the Proms and clapped far too loudly. Three violinists do not a full orchestra make. George England gave a very evocative performance of an *English Dance* by everyone's favourite composer, 'Anon', in which the folk flavour came across well. This was followed by Alexander Gunasekera's very fluid rendition of Acclaim's *1st movement from Concert in A Minor*, in which the 'gypsy' style of the piece was very well conveyed.

The concert was concluded with a skilful and rousing performance of *Kpanlogo* and *Gahu* by the African Drum Ensemble, and a retiring collection was taken in favour of the *Build the Nations* charity based in Limpopo Province, South Africa. Mr Loughe and six sixth-formers will visit the province in August to offer help to the charity's important work.

The audience of mainly parents and staff certainly appreciated the efforts of the boys, to judge from the great applause, and thanks must go to the music staff for their enormous contribution of inspiration, practice time and the organisation of what was a most impressive show of musical talent and promise.

Peter Willerton



The Big Band Tour – Tuscany July 2009

Tuscany 2009, being the first Big Band tour since the one to Greece in 2000, was much anticipated by both pupils and teachers in the Music Department. As the trip approached, practices became more frequent and focused, whilst the Band became increasingly excited to be making their mark on the continent. When the tour finally came around, no one was disappointed.

After travelling from Gatwick in the early hours of the morning, the Big Band, with bandleader Simon Currie and his family, Mr Stinton, Mr Dawswell and Mr Balderson, arrived in the charming town of Montecatini on Monday 6 July. The tour got off to a surprisingly quick start as the Band set out for the local restaurant for pizza after briefly checking into our comfortable hotel. Following lunch, we took a train up to the top of a mountain in the heart of the old town. Barely a few hours into the trip, this was a welcome excursion with some startlingly beautiful views of the region. As the day drew to a close, the band returned to the hotel for a pleasant three-course meal before retiring to bed.

The second day retained the excitement of our arrival as the Band travelled to Pisa for sightseeing and lunch. Many chose to embrace a thoroughly Italian experience by eating pizza in front of the leaning tower. In the afternoon, we all went off to the beach for volleyball, fantastic weather and ice cream. After an early supper, the band played their first gig at a bar in Montecatini. I think everyone agreed that we were on top form, pulling out the Big Band classics in front of a large crowd. Mike Summers' guitar solo and Jack Tinker's trumpet solo were particularly fantastic, as was Mr Balderson's performance on tenor sax, which displayed some immaculate playing that had been so modestly concealed at practices. Tim Davies in the Second Year, the youngest and brilliantly energetic member of the band, also played a solo to rapturous applause.

On the third day, our group had a marvellous spell of sightseeing in the truly stunning towns of Sienna and San Gimignano. That evening, although a concert had not been scheduled, the Band played an impromptu gig to a sell-out crowd of over-60s at a local hotel. I think the audience were impressed, although a few fled the venue after hearing just how loud the Big Band could play in a confined space. Indeed,



Concert in Lucca

arrival, the stage looked so polished and professional we thought we had come to the wrong place. But despite a slightly shoddy and poorly timed trombone 'walk about,' the performance was a complete success with Euan Campbell's *Fly Me To The Moon* receiving particularly hearty applause, and inspiring one audience member to request a rendition of *Happy Birthday*. Simon Currie, the leader and conductor of the Big Band, certainly deserves special mention for his infectiously enthusiastic conducting and his determination that the 'young cherubs' of the band should get up and go solo.

By Friday, an altogether too short tour was drawing to a close. We spent the day in the historic town of Lucca where we picked up some cheap bargains, admired the humbling architecture and played an evening concert, which, for the departing Upper Sixth, would be their last performance in the Big Band. The evening did them justice, as crowds gathered off the street to watch the Band play and one Italian engaged in some all too enthusiastic, bare-chested dancing, which prompted some mothers to move their children away. A highlight for me was the drum solo, which managed to incorporate all three drummers into a fiercely intricate routine. We were all blown away by Joe Mason's piano cadenza.

It is certainly fair to say the tour to Italy was a fantastic success with the boys' only complaint being that it was too short. For me, the tour was so exciting because of its full and brilliantly organised schedule, for which we can thank the tireless efforts of Mr Stinton, Mr Dawswell and Mr Balderson. Moreover, the Band's sheer enthusiasm in concert, encouraged by bandleader Simon Currie, was really quite special.

Mark Power Smith

a video was later posted on Facebook, entitled 'Big Band Kills Old People,' which showcased the dangerous amplitude of such a large band.

We were scheduled for sightseeing and an evening concert on Thursday (day four), in the startling town of Florence. First, we received a guided tour of the region, which provided some fascinating insights into the work of Michelangelo.

We visited Florence Cathedral – the fourth largest in the world – with its magnificent dome bearing scenes from 'The Last Judgement' on its inside roof. Inside the cathedral I was also struck by some beautiful paintings of Dante's *Divine Comedy*. In the evening, feeling altogether more cultured, the Band arrived at our concert venue, the Piazza L. Ghiberti, to play in front of our largest crowd of the tour. Admittedly, upon our



African Drum Circle

African Drumming is an Other Half activity, which is just for Second Years. There are nine drummers at the moment who are led and taught by Miss Matthews.

Before we could go ahead and learn any pieces, we were first taught the three basic African drum strokes called the bass, edge and slap tones. Once we had got the hang of these, we learned some longer African rhythms

and created a piece which we played in the New Year's Concert. We couldn't think of a name for our piece, so in the end someone had the bright idea of calling it *Bangers and Mash!* This piece was our first performance in front of an audience, so all of us were nervous, but it went really well, and as it was such a success, we played it again in front of Lower School!

We've also had the chance to accompany the School Choir (also led

by Miss Matthews). The first time was at a concert where the choir sang two African songs, and I'm sure that our drum rhythms helped to get everyone into the spirit of the songs! More recently, we accompanied the Choir's arrangement of *You Can Call Me Al* by Paul Simon, one of the African-inspired songs from his *Graceland* album. Ready to try more adventurous things, we're now composing a piece for the upcoming Lower School Gala Concert, but without Miss Matthews' help – I hope it's our best performance yet!

It's been a great experience learning to play African drums, and anyone in the Second Year who wants to give it a go should definitely speak to Miss Matthews and reserve their place.

Matthew Allison 2SW

Practical Music Examination Results 2008-09

Associated Board Practical Examination Entries – 204, Distinctions gained – 39, Merits – 60, Passes at Grade 8 – 26

Laurence Barrow	Cello	Grade 8	130
Alexander Black	Flute	Grade 8	133
Jamie Blackwell	Piano	Grade 4	130
Euan Campbell	Piano	Grade 8	130
Matthew Carter	Eb Sax	Grade 4	131
Timothy Davies	Trumpet	Grade 5	142
Thomas Earl	Eb Sax	Grade 6	136
George Eason	Cello	Grade 4	133
Joe Ereaut	Piano	Grade 8	134
Ben Etherton	Singing	Grade 8	140
Calum Farwell	Singing	Grade 1	130
Alexander Gunasekera	Piano	Grade 5	137
	Singing	Grade 5	130
William Haines	Oboe	Grade 4	132
Charlie Hames	Alto Sax	Grade 3	130
Mathew Hartshorne	Double Bass	Grade 3	130
Olly Jackson	Guitar	Grade 1	132
Jay Jung	Cello	Grade 8	140
Thomas Kelly	Singing	Grade 7	138

Anthony Lloyd	Piano	Grade 7	138
	Organ	Grade 6	134
Adrian Lo	Singing	Grade 8	130
Joe Mason	Organ	Grade 8	134
	Piano	Grade 8	134
Jack May	Cello	Grade 7	137
Ian Middleton	Cornet	Grade 5	135
	Piano	Grade 4	130
Gus Mills	Piano	Grade 3	133
Caspian Mitchard	Organ	Grade 8	137
	Violin	Grade 8	140
Edward Norris	Horn	Grade 6	130
Matthew Prior	Violin	Grade 1	132
Edward Reynolds	Piano	Grade 5	131
Josh Ridley	Cello	Grade 8	135
Oliver Sayeed	Piano	Grade 1	134
Lewis Spring	Viola	Grade 6	134
James Tebbs	Oboe	Grade 2	132
Humphrey Thompson	Singing	Grade 8	136
James Zhou	Guitar	Grade 3	130

Sport – Rugby



1st XV Rugby

After a very successful tour to Canada, the team began the season with high hopes and optimism for the season ahead. The first game, a tough local fixture against Shiplake, was preceded by a number of intense training sessions where Mr Cobbe's new ideas and methods were introduced ahead of the imminent first encounter. The match reflected our preparation and our class and individual strength pulled us through a physical encounter, winning 29-12. Eton was the next challenge we faced. The stifling heat and a typically well-drilled Eton side, who possessed two powerful wingers, provided too great a task and the team tasted the first defeat of the season, losing 10-20, despite Tom Green's memorable solo try. Two new fixtures, Tiffin and Bromsgrove, followed in the next couple of weeks.

Tiffin proved to be a high-scoring affair, which we won thanks to a solid team effort, some great line-breaks from Parathan Rabindran and a superb kicking display from man-of-the-match, James Plumb. It was clear at this stage that we had the potential to excel, but execution under pressure was holding us back. Bromsgrove, a renowned rugby school, was a fixture that was never going to be an easy game. The high-quality opposition brought out the best in us and we went in at half time 7-8 down, after producing our best half of rugby so far in the season. Throughout the game our forwards were dominant in both line-outs and scrums. Hugo Morrison, against an international on the opposing side, and William Shrier were very powerful in both areas and Thomas Bradfield was outstanding round the park. In the second half,

however, the game got away from us and Bromsgrove won 27-7, their pace and power proving too much for us.

Our next game was against an awesome Bedford team, boasting a number of internationals and an outstanding back line. The game attracted quite a crowd because of Open Day but we failed to live up to the occasion. In defence there were many missed tackles in the first half. Jonathan Bucke scored a great consolation try from a move that was successful throughout the season, and in the second half we raised our game to produce a much-improved performance. Following two testing games against Bedford and Bromsgrove, we faced Stowe the following week. This was an intense and gritty match, which Abingdon dominated. Andrew Cook



The victorious Hampton 7s Squad

scored a powerful try and our forwards again prevailed throughout the match. Our defence in this game was solid against dirty opposition, with some big tackles coming from Jacob Swain to help Abingdon to victory 19-3. The following week was another local derby against Magdalen College School. This was a comfortable victory in which our backs had a great game. Bobby Aigbogun finished two superb team tries and Andrew Partridge powered through a gap to score, leaving defenders claspings at thin air.

Our first match after half term was against St Paul's, a side that the 1st XV had not beaten in ten years. Abingdon enjoyed a great first 15 minutes against larger but less physical opponents. Andrew led the team with great defence in the second half and Matthew Purssell's tactical kicking game applied pressure throughout. Robert Winearls scored a fine try to mark an impressive 1st XV debut and the result at the end was a fine 19-0 victory to Abingdon. A competitive match against a strong Oratory side was to follow a week later. The game was played in tough conditions and our forwards yet again had the beating of

our opponents. George Bone, Richard Parkin-Mason and Ross Muir excelled in the pack which, along with a strategic kicking-game from the backs, meant that Abingdon were always on the front foot. In the dying minutes of the game, Parathan scored an opportunist try to ensure a comfortable victory, 28-10.

The low point of our season came in the next match, losing 3-8 to a weak St Edward's side. We failed to capitalise on early opportunities, squandering a number of clear overlaps, which ultimately proved costly in a low-scoring affair. The next game on our circuit was local rivals Radley, a game we knew would be played with high intensity and passion. Despite excellent support from an exuberant crowd, our line-out, which had proved an asset all season, did not function well and our kicking game lacked direction, which meant that we struggled to compete with the strong opposition, losing 0-17. The final home game of the season was against Marlborough and fittingly we put in one of our finest performances of the season, combining aggressive defence with a well-controlled attack. The back row performed outstandingly, managing the breakdown well, and nullifying the

opposition's England No. 8. The crucial score came towards the end of the first half when Jonathan combined with Bobby, after numerous phases, to score in the corner. The successful conversion from a difficult angle added the extras, and our defensive line remained impenetrable throughout so that we won the game 7-0. The win made our annual *Touchliners* dinner even more enjoyable. Awards were presented that evening to James Plumb: most improved player; Parathan Rabindran: player's player; Thomas Green: coach's player and to Andrew Partridge, who led the team so heroically as captain.

A strong run in the Daily Mail Cup, with victories over Marlborough School, Burford and Dauntsey's, came to an end in the last week of term against Bishop Wordsworth. This was a disappointing end to the season, with Abingdon losing 5-30. The team felt the absence of Tom Green and Jacob Swain, who were both out through injury.

Owen Cobbe

1st XV Squad: Thomas Green, Parathan Rabindran, James Plumb, Hugo Morrison, William Shrier, Thomas Bradfield, Jonathan Bucke, Andrew Cook, Bobby Aigbogun, Andrew Partridge (captain), Matthew Purssell, Robert Winearls, George Bone, Richard Parkin-Mason, Ross Muir, Jacob Swain

Sliplake	W	29-12
Eton	L	10-20
Tiffin	W	34-25
Bromsgrove	L	7-27
Bedford	L	10-45
Stowe	W	19-3
MCS	W	39-6
St Paul's	W	19-0
Oratory	W	28-10
St Edward's	L	3-8
Radley	L	0-17
Marlborough	W	7-0

2nd XV Rugby

The season started with high expectations with new coaches and strength in-depth in both years. The expectations were met in the first game, as we swept aside Shiplake 57-7 in a clinical performance consisting of 8 tries. The following weekend saw a much stiffer test: Eton, who with a powerful pack and direct backs took the lead early. However, we fought back to 20-14 down when, with the last play of the game, Nathaniel Watkins crossed the line to put us only one point behind. James Edwards, with nerves of steel, slotted the conversion so that we won 21-20, a miraculous fight back. Ably led by Nick Howe, the team comfortably brushed aside Tiffin's, 19-3, in our next match, to continue our unbeaten streak.

Then came the greatest test of the season so far when we met Bedford at home. Renowned as one of the best sides in the country, they struck up an early lead, which they held onto comfortably in the second half to win 31-7. The following week we travelled to Stowe. The early exchanges suggested we were still on the bus as we went 22-0 down by half time. A break in the game, owing to an injury in the 1st XV, was exactly what we needed as we came out in the second half a different team. With no pressure on us we played a fluid form of rugby, spreading the ball from wing to wing. However, the poor start was insurmountable and we lost 22-5.

Next came Rendcomb and a number of changes to the backline. Ben Read and Robert Winearls came up from the 3rd XV, both of them making an impact on the game. The backs took charge, scything through the opposition's defences again and again, the match ending in a comfortable win, 31-14. The following weekend saw our most

crushing blow of the season as St Paul's did to us what we had done to Eton, scoring during the final play of the game and with the conversion going over from the touchline defeating us 22-20.

We played poorly against the Oratory and St Edward's, where we were defeated 20-0 and 24-15 respectively. However, Richard Milford performed superbly in both matches, securing him player of the season and Ben Read, having made a nervous start against Rendcomb, performed exceptionally against Oratory to confirm man of the match and most improved player.

With our spirits low, just before the Radley match, we began to ask questions about how good a team we really were. But this was one of the few games where the backs and forwards both performed, and we forced a strong Radley team into an intense match that ended with them scoring in the final minutes to level the game at 24-24. The final game of the season, against Marlborough, saw us slip-up again and we were defeated 32-5.

The season ebbed and flowed with strings of victories and defeats. However, there was never a sustained period of time during which the team clicked and this held us back as we came unstuck to teams that we could have beaten.

The season ended with 4 wins, 1 draw and 5 losses. Special thanks must go to Mr Forth who was a fantastic coach all season.

Joshua Smith 6 JHW

3rd XV Rugby

The 3rd XV had a mixed season that could have been quite different if a number of very close games had gone our way. We started in the sun at Eton College with weather more suited to cricket than rugby. Our lack of fitness and a strong opposition deservedly gave Eton a big win. Our next game against Bromsgrove was a lot closer and was one that we should have won. We created a lot but were let down by poor defence and lack of concentration that gifted Bromsgrove tries that were very much against the run of play. The end of the game left us camped on Bromsgrove's, line desperate for the try that would take the result to the final kick but Bromsgrove held out with some determined defence. On to Bedford School, one of the top teams on the circuit. In very windy conditions, it was a game of two halves. The physicality of our game was too much for a big, strong Bedford side, who held on to secure a draw only through a late interception try that was undeserved and against the run of play. Stowe appeared an easier bet on paper but was disappointing in that we simply did not 'gel' on the day and, with a series of injuries, played much of the game with 14 men. Our first home game of the season brought a deserved victory against Cokethorpe. The power and physicality last seen against Bedford returned against Magdalen College School's 2nd XV, who were behind for much of the game. Late tries from a strong and fit MCS sealed a victory that was far closer than the scoreline suggested as we ran out of steam. The highlight of the season was our victory against St Paul's, which was won through commitment and a 'never say die' attitude that lifted everyone's spirits. A very close game at the Oratory did not go our way, one kick being the deciding factor. Our last three games are always tough and

this proved to be no exception. A terrible start against St Edward's saw us 40 points down at half time. An outstanding second half performance saw us scoring the only points of the second half and it was a case of what might have been if we had played that way in the first half. Radley was our penultimate game and we showed determination and good rugby against a strong Radley team. The scoreline did not do us justice but poor defence had again let us down. Marlborough College came to us defending an unbeaten season which we did not challenge; they were by far the best team that we had faced.

Player of the year went to Tommy Pritchard, player of the season went to Jack Longden. Big thanks go out from the whole team to Dean Evans for coaching us through an inconsistent but enjoyable season.

Chris Dunster VI IM

3rd XV Squad: Tommy Pritchard, Alex Clinkard, Jack Rogers, Chris Edwards, Daminabo Etomi, James Fergusson, Ben Hogan, Jack Longden, Ben Clayphan, Jamie Brown, Dylan Robinson, Henry Wood, Tom McKenna, James Humberstone, Jamie Laidlaw, James Carter, Alex Beech, John Bartlett, James Manasseh, Henry Beggin, Oliver Henstridge, Chris Dunster, Yannick Hoegerle, Ben Read, Ryuichi Murase, Chris Weller Jones, Jeremy Sheridan, John Davies

Eton College	L	12-45
Bromsgrove	L	19-26
Bedford	D	7-7
Stow	L	7-29
Cokethorpe	W	25-0
MCS 2ndXV	L	19-31
St Paul's	W	20-4
The Oratory	L	0-3
St Edward's	L	5-40
Radley	L	10-30
Marlborough	L	3-73

4th XV Rugby

The 4th XV had a mixed season. The first hurdle was provided by a formidable Wellington College and we proved unequal to the challenge. The challenge of Eton College was met with renewed confidence, although this had evaporated within minutes of the kickoff and Eton triumphed comfortably. An improved defence led to two wins without conceding a single try against Bromsgrove and Cokethorpe, the highlight coming in an attack where Ryuichi Murase scored a try worthy of the great Rupeni Caucau himself. Bedford may have proved too strong but morale was boosted by the demolition of Stowe, thanks to a man-of-the-match performance from Harry Porter and a return to action for James Manasseh. The first half of the season concluded with a comfortable win against Rendcomb.

The second half proved to be less successful. Saying this, the obvious highlight of the season came in the shape of a bitter struggle at home against St Paul's. Fortunately for our devoted fans, we prevailed, victory coming 3-0 from the boot of Jamie Brown. Our fortunes were then reversed against our three closest rivals. First up a thrilling game of rugby against the Oratory that had purists salivating and in the end was only decided by an odd decision or two. However, against St Edward's we only had ourselves to blame. When a pre-match huddle contains the words 'we will defend this house', you know you're not quite mentally prepared. Then came the crunch match: Radley; with anticipation building and tensions running high this could only be described as a must-win game. Unfortunately, we lost but we could have won it right until the final whistle. As for the final fixture of the season, there's not much you can say about a 66-0 loss.

Sam Badenoch VI DRM

Player of the Season:

Richard Meadows

Most Improved Player:

Chris Edwards

4th XV Squad: Sam Badenoch (Captain), Ali Ibrahim, Andrew Dart, Chris Edwards, Geoff Penington, Oli Boddie, Richard Meadows, Rob Kenworthy, Tom Finch, Alex Black, Harry Porter, Jamie Brown, Jeremy Sheridan, John Davies, Julian Thorn, Nam Hweu Jo, Nigel Emodi, Oli Henstridge, Rob Walker, Ryan Romeo, Ryuichi Murase, Alex Clinkard, James Carter, Ben Hogan, Dale Barker, Dami Etomi, Dylan Robinson, Henry Beggin, Justin Robinson, James Fergusson, James Manasseh, Marcus Cross, Tom McKenna, Tommy Pritchard, Steve Stinson

Wellington 5th XV	L	0-67
Eton	L	12-47
Bromsgrove	W	35-0
Cokethorpe	W	33-0
Bedford	L	6-31
Stowe	W	54-10
Rendcomb 2nd XV	W	33-12
St Paul's	W	3-0
The Oratory	L	17-21
St Edward's	L	0-11
Radley 5th XV	L	0-5
Marlborough	L	0-66



Senior Colts A XV Rugby

The season started for the Senior Colts on Saturday 6 September with a 'friendly' match against Shiplake. Despite the fact that the team had only trained together twice before the game, we started well and looked threatening but, as a result of missed tackles and a lack of intensity, we lost 17-12, our points coming from four penalties from Jamie Hall. However, we could take some positives from the game, not least our line-out unit of Matt Boyd, Harry Dennis, and Xilin Song functioning superbly to adapt to senior line-outs.

The following Saturday we played Eton on Waste Court field. It was sweltering hot and we knew that it was going to be tough. The team started like a steam train and after some early pressure, Mark Francis made a break down the blindside from a scrum and managed to squeeze over in the corner which, with a fantastic kick from Jamie Hall, meant we were 7-0 up. Jonny Bouchier scored another try right under the posts, giving us a 14-0 lead. However, in the second half, maybe down to lack of fitness or maybe down to over-confidence, we conceded a further three tries and lost 26-14.

A week later we faced Tiffin on Lower Field. This was arguably our worst performance of the season as we failed to gain any sort of a foothold on the game. We lacked composure in their 22 and gave away needless penalties on numerous occasions. We lost 25-6.

Desperate for a win, we returned to Waste Court the following Saturday to play Bromsgrove. We were very wary of them but a fantastic performance from the whole team meant that at last, after four games, we were on the board, running out 44-0 winners. John Carter in his second game at full

back grabbed four fantastic tries, Ben McGuire two and Mark Francis one.

On Open Day we headed to Bedford without Mr Hall, who had to be present at the opening of the new Sports Centre, but with Mr Brenchley. It was an extremely tough fixture but spurred on by the mauling they had given us the previous season we made a good start. Within twenty seconds Robin Veale had won us a penalty, which Jamie Hall duly slotted over. After this we started to build a number of phases until Ben Stockwell made a break down the blindside, offloading to James Percival to score a really well worked try. However, as we had done before against Eton, we capitulated and went on to lose 24-16. Our inability to remain composed after scoring was again evident and to make matters worse, Jack Perry ruptured his medial knee ligament, which ended his season.

The team headed to Stowe on Saturday 11 October, realising that only a victory was enough. We started very well, using a line-out as a base from which to operate. The forwards played brilliantly, Matt Boyd and Ben Stockwell both scoring, as did our 'try machine', John Carter. Jamie Hall crossed over in the second half, but all these tries aside there were some other stand-out performers. Jonny Bouchier and Sam Murrell worked tirelessly at the back of the scrum, as did Amir Garmroudi, but special mention should go to David Snead playing at fullback, who by this point had played nearly everywhere in the backline.

Our next opponents were Magdalen College School. We started well with John Carter scoring midway through the first half. However, we lost composure throughout the game and became very undisciplined, giving away a ridiculous amount of penalties. This let MCS back into the game

but, just when we needed it, John Carter crossed again, which gave us a scrappy 13-8 victory.

After half term we faced St Paul's. Despite taking an early lead through a Jamie Hall penalty, we were punished throughout the game by a very strong side, which comprised some very strong runners in the backline. We lost 35-3.

We had high hopes against the Oratory but the pitch was horribly slanted and the wind was very strong and with both these elements against us in the first half we were always going to struggle. We were camped on our line for extended periods, only conceding three points, then Matt Boyd gave us possession in their 22, resulting in a penalty. Leading 7-3 at half time, we were quick to add a penalty to the score. However we, like them, did not use the pitch to our full advantage and consequently put ourselves under a lot of pressure. However, we finally emerged with a hard fought 10-8 victory.

The following Thursday we faced St Edward's. This was by far our backs' best performance of the season, spearheaded by Harry Copson. He scored two tries, one down to brute strength and the other to quickness of mind in reacting to an opposition mistake. David Snead scored his first try of the season, offering excellent support after Mark Francis had made a break, and John Carter also scored in what turned out to be his final game of the season following a whiplash injury. The score was 28-7 and was a fair reflection of the game.

Next came the big one, Radley at home on Lower Field. The forwards started superbly and really dominated their pack, with Ben Stockwell turning out an absolutely colossal performance in the second row. Jonny Bouchier stepped up and played very well at

8, demonstrating a real control at the base of scrums and rucks, as did Amir Garmroudi now playing at blindside flanker, and making a fantastic break in the second half that deserved a try. Their backline however was extremely strong, with good distributors at fly half and inside centre, not to mention strong runners in the back three. Marc Woolley played very well in only his second game and made some strong runs of his own. We went down eventually 45-3.

The final game of the season was away to Marlborough on a bitterly cold Saturday. Depleted by injuries, the team showed fantastic commitment and passion, but Marlborough's greater strength and skill were ultimately enough to see them through 36-3, a scoreline that may not have reflected the real pattern of the game.

Despite the record reading played 12, won 5 and lost 7, there were many positives to the season, including beating three of our four local rivals, MCS, St Edward's and the Oratory. Special thanks must go to Mr Hall, who in a term when the new Sports Centre was being built and opened showed fantastic dedication to each and every one of us. He taught us the importance of trying to mix flair with a strong forward platform and that fitness was a key to our success. Furthermore, the intensity and composure that he demanded will stand us in good stead for the future.

Mark Francis 5 JPGB



Senior Colts C XV Rugby

This year's team were not as talented as past 'C' teams but showed greater passion than most, and produced a good season despite a certain amount of adversity. The main difficulty throughout the season was gaining any momentum in training, but once each member understood how to play to the team's strengths, collectively they produced some very impressive performances, reaching something of a crescendo towards the end of the term. Early matches were disappointingly one-sided: against Eton, Abingdon were asleep for much of the game, getting sucked into rucks and leaving massive holes in the backline; against Bromsgrove, Abingdon were allowed to run through the opposition defence indiscriminately so that they had no need to work together or build any shape to their game. Nevertheless, there were positives: Tom Fishpool and Sam Clarke-Warry showed great skill and pace in the backline that would become vital to the later success of the team. The first game of any quality was against Bedford, which Abingdon visited with a weakened and disrupted side. Despite this, they showed excellent spirit and on occasion shocked a better Bedford team, particularly Sam Bowers and Liam Craughwell, who led the charge from the forwards. The first half of term ended with an exciting match against MCS 'B' team.

In the second half of the term, the team seemed to go from strength to strength. A hard-fought match against St Paul's was thrown away, but the resolve of the team was growing and greater commitment was starting to be given in training. Against the Oratory and St Edward's, despite the one-sided score-line, the opposition were much better than, for example, Bromsgrove. But Abingdon were

by now a well-drilled unit, showing particularly impressive rucking and line-out skills. The three amigos, Will Davey, Calvin Walker and Dominic Graham, were increasingly adept at driving the opposition back at the breakdown, while the backline, marshalled by William Sensecall, well supplied by Matthew Roberts and Nick Acutt, was linking up well with other forwards such as George Kaye. In the final match, against a talented Radley side, Abingdon knew that they would have to be firing on all cylinders. The loss of Tom Fishpool in the previous match was a blow, but Chris Moore stepped up to fill his place very ably. The match was terrific, with neither side giving much ground. Benjamin Brazell went over in the corner late on to peg back the score, but it wasn't enough. Despite the loss, many were of the opinion that it was the best match they had played and that made it a fitting end to the season.

Hugh Price

Senior Colts C Squad: David Grant, Will Davey, Calvin Walker, Dominic Graham, George Kaye, Liam Craughwell, William Powell, Sam Bowers, Rajan Sehmi, Matthew Roberts, Nick Acutt, William Sensecall, Tom Fishpool, Benjamin Brazell, Chris Moore, Chris Jones, Gleb Kozlov, Sam Clarke-Warry, Patrick McMahon, Tim Shin

Wellington D	L	0-5
Eton	L	0-41
Bromsgrove	W	56-0
Bedford	L	10-40
MCS B	W	12-10
St Paul's	L	0-19
Oratory	W	53-7
St Edward's	W	64-5
Radley	L	5-7



Junior Colts A XV Rugby

The U15As season began in earnest in the hazy Somerset countryside in late August. The destination was Lyon House, The King's School, Bruton and there were a number of unknowns to be answered by the much-vaunted U14As of 2007. Could this team deliver under the pressure of the U15 Daily Mail Cup competition? How strong were their rugby skills? What would the coaching of two new members of staff be like? Most importantly, how committed were the boys and what level of pre-season conditioning had actually been done rather than talked about?

Three enjoyable days of skill and team development followed. Like the curate's egg, the team looked blessed with physical presence and commitment in some parts whilst short on technical skill, match-winning concentration and attitude in others. Some boys arrived rugby fit, more didn't.

A selection match against Shiplake allowed a provisional squad to stake their claim to a regular U15A berth. The team ran out comfortable winners, with the pitch arguably offering greater hazards than the opposition.

The first real test came against Eton on a hot September afternoon. The

initial exchanges were physical and uncompromising. The team were composed under pressure and gradually established their dominance. The back line showed sparks of excellence, with Ed Hughes breaking the line on several occasions and Toby Ogg finishing two tries with his electric pace. It was one of the best performances of the season and there were several lessons learned too.

Initial Daily Mail Cup rounds were mismatches against Bicester and Waddesdon and perhaps the team's ease of victory was poor mental preparation for the test to come at Bromsgrove – a new fixture and an unknown quantity. The team quickly found themselves 15-0 down against a well-organised side with effective opposition in key positions. The Abingdon pack fought its way back into the game and was at least a match for Bromsgrove for the remaining three-quarters of the match, establishing good field position for Hamish Grant to score a sniping try and get us back in the game. Ultimately the team ran out of time and substitutes in a hard-fought contest which we had the capability of winning.

Once again against Bedford we gave our opposition the courtesy of a 17-point lead before we decided to play. And play we did. Joe Hogan was

ever-present at the breakdown and we scrummaged, rucked and mauled effectively. Gregor Hearn, Alexander Hatzis and Patrick Stinson battered the Bedford pack for the remainder of the afternoon to establish positions from which Ed Hughes and Toby Ogg cut loose once again for a well-earned win and revenge for 2007.

Stowe and Magdalen College School offered little opposition and despite characteristic forward dominance, the team squandered many scoring opportunities through handling errors, suspect alignment and ineffective kicking.

After half term, a rainy November day in London re-focused the mind. It is a tribute to the potential of the U15As that they simply took St Paul's to pieces up front to win 49-10. It could have been many more and we could have conceded fewer had we understood when, where and how to kick effectively.

Confidence bolstered by a good win, the next opposition were Aylesbury Grammar School in the Daily Mail Cup. Charlie Studdy blasted us into the lead with two excellent finishes from the wing. It was a difficult match in many ways and the team never really found its rhythm, winning narrowly after surviving a final onslaught in which Pearce Taylor made the match-saving tackle of the season.

The Oratory School arrived in Abingdon undefeated and looking for revenge for last year. We started the match in a manner that anticipated an easy victory and soon discovered that it was going to be a much harder day. The Oratory were well organised and gave no quarter. The U15As managed to hang on to win a scrappy and ill-tempered affair.

Despite the eventual loss, the zenith of the season was surely the performance against RGS High Wycombe in the fifth round of the Daily Mail Cup. RGS arrived with one of their most talented year-groups in memory. The Abingdon team had always known that this was the must-win game if their Daily Mail dreams were to come true. High Wycombe were slick, skilful and strong. It was as good a game of U15 rugby as you'll see and Abingdon were courageous in all areas, keeping themselves in the game and eventually taking a narrow lead in the second half. Unfortunately, as soon as we put our opponents under pressure we made careless errors that allowed them back in the game. RGS were worthy winners at 24-18.

From the high followed the low of the season. For reasons only the players will know, the U15As did not do themselves any credit against an effective Radley side. Radley played some good rugby and for once the dominance of the Abingdon pack never materialised. Radley launched wave after wave of attacks and eventually Abingdon's defences were breached. Lessons will have been learned from this bitter disappointment and the boys have a chance to show what they're really capable of against Radley in their Senior Colts season (providing not too many of this talented side are called up to more senior duties!).

The 'Abingdon Flu' laid many tired boys low at the end of a long term and hit the U15As hard for the final game against an indifferent Marlborough side. Despite surging to a 17-0 lead, there were simply too many key players missing and the good Marlborough players found the chinks in the Abingdon armour. Effective tactical kicking from them, and poor kicking from us, allowed them back into the game and a half-time lead. Despite the

pack discovering that it could control the game more effectively by keeping the ball tight, the damage had already been done. It was a deflating end to an otherwise good season.

Much has been learned by the U15As about handling, concentration, hardness of attitude and the physical demands of competing against the premier league of rugby schools. Many of this side have the capability to raise Abingdon rugby to a level where it can play premier fixtures on a more regular basis. We've also learned that there's a huge difference between theoretical capability and actual performance. It is how this side choose to use their time during and between rugby seasons that will shape their destiny as a year-group.

Gareth Callan

Junior Colts A XV Squad: Ben Bryant, Gregor Hearn, Chad Hutchinson, Sam Hughes, Andrew Halls, Alexander Hatzis, Felix Newman, Joe Hogan, Patrick Stinson, Hamish Grant, Peter Allan, Ed Hughes, Charlie Manasseh, Charlie Studdy, Toby Ogg, Pearce Taylor (Captain), Henry House, Jack Ponting, Calum Smith, Jack Wilson, Guy Giles, Mark Shuttleworth.

Shiplake	W	65-0
Eton	W	29-12
Bicester Community College	W	57-7
Bromsgrove	L	15-21
Bedford	W	29-22
Stowe	W	51-0
Waddesdon Secondary School	W	52-0
MCS	W	66-0
St Paul's	W	49-10
Aylesbury Grammar	W	15-12
The Oratory	W	12-8
RGS High Wycombe	L	18-24
Radley	L	8-23
Marlborough	L	29-33

Junior Colts B XV Rugby

In three of the five games played before half term we managed to score exactly 150 points without reply but in the second half of the season, the team didn't enjoy the same degree of success, winning one game out of four against much stiffer opposition.

The St Paul's game was particularly hard, with periods of play reminiscent of the tough, brutal exchanges witnessed in the test series between the Lions and the Springboks. Despite having most of the ball in the last ten minutes, we were not able to claw back the deficit, but this performance was probably the best forward display of the season. After this defeat, heads were down but the Oratory was up next. However, it was soon evident that this was likely to be an easier game and tries from James Tracey, two from Jack Wilson, Charlie Studdy, two from Will Hollier and Mike Deeks were enough to secure an emphatic victory.

The last two matches were always likely to be difficult games. At St Edward's we faced their A XV because their B team was too weak to give us a proper match. The game proved to be very even in the first half, with Abingdon coming out on top, leading 14-7. However, in the second half the powerful St Edward's centre broke the line time and time again, resulting in him scoring 3 tries by himself. To our credit he was a county player and not the sort of player you are usually faced with in a B team game. Nevertheless, we didn't do ourselves justice in a game we could have won. The last game of the season against Radley was a very tough one. We started brightly and in the first half we surprised ourselves by the way we played; the score was 0 - 0 right up until just before the half-time whistle and then Radley rounded off a good move with



a try in the corner, which unfortunately knocked our confidence. After half time we responded with a penalty, but unfortunately Radley responded with 2 quick tries and dominated the game from there on, despite some determined and courageous defence from the home team.

The season was over, and despite lots of promise, we didn't live up to our full potential. I'm sure the season will grant all of us more experience and game awareness for future years, and will benefit our long-term rugby appreciation. Thanks must go to Mr Watkins who was a good coach throughout.

Freddie Calder 4 DAB

Junior Colts B Squad: Dan Lloyd, Will Bibby, George Read-Smith, Alex Sunderland, Danny Leyland, Sam Hardy, Charles Buchan, Mike Deeks, James Tracey, Luke Terry, Jamie Galyer, Jack Wilson, James Edwards, Freddie Calder (Captain), Will Hollier, Olly Bailey, Charlie Studdy, Joseph Foxon, Toby Blong, Henry House, Dan Leach.

Eton	L	17-36
Bromsgrove	W	54-0
Bedford	L	10-21
Stowe	W	53-0
Rendcomb A	W	43-0
St Paul's	L	12-24
Oratory	W	44-5
St Edward's A	L	14-24
Radley	L	03-19

Junior Colts C XV Rugby

The team's first fixture of the season was a tough one against Wellington but with tough tackling and strong running from the likes of Charlie Manasseh and Mark Shuttleworth we achieved a victory. We played attractive and fluent rugby, with the forwards setting up bases from which the centres could run at the defence and pass to the wingers to finish it off.

Next came Eton, an important fixture as they beat the C team last year. It was a very close game with many mistakes in handling and not much fluency but we came out on top, 7-5, with notable attacking and defensive performances from Robert Brough, Daniel Leyland and Lloyd Cadman. However, in training during the following weeks we needed to improve our rucking, scrummaging and handling skills in the build-up to the next game against Bromsgrove.

Bromsgrove turned out to be an easy game for us as the match was ended 5 minutes into the second half, with Abingdon winning 54-0 despite losing Manasseh and Shuttleworth to the As and Bs respectively. Notable performances came from the wingers Sebastian Black and James Chitty, and also from Toby Blong in his first game back from injury.

The team then went into their toughest fixture yet against the Cokethorpe A team. With the aid of a few players from the As and Bs we showed great spirit and won by 5 points, despite a late Cokethorpe comeback.

In the match against Bedford, our scrum half James Edwards, having deservedly ascended to the B team, George Bull made his debut and gave a great performance, which helped us defeat Bedford 24-5, despite going down a try in the early minutes. We

then eased past Stowe and Magdalen College School Bs 60-0 and 36-0. As we got to half term we had a superb unbeaten record that we had every intention of maintaining.

However, as we came back from the break ready for St Paul's, our then top scorer Toby Blong was taken by the Bs and proved hard for us to replace: we lost 7-29.

We defeated the Oratory 26-0, the team being made up of a mixture of Cs and Ds with some players going up to the Bs.

With players returning to normal for the midweek fixture against St Edward's Bs, our confidence was high. This was almost wiped out as we went down at half time 7-19, but the leadership of the skipper, Lloyd, the pack-leader, Robert, and Jamie Ward inspired the players to a brilliant 31-26 win.

The next game, against Radley, was the biggest of the season. Despite us playing their D team, they outplayed us in every area of the pitch and won 26-0, our second loss this season.

As a result of a virus going round both schools, in the Marlborough match at the end of term our B/C team took on their B/C team. Although scoring first, we found ourselves 7-15 down at the break. Not for the first time we came back from behind, piling on the pressure in the second half to finish the game and season with a great win, 28-15. We had achieved one of the best records in the School for the season but we could not have done it without the great coaching of Mr Drummond-Hay.

Lloyd Cadman 4 NPS

Junior Colts C XV squad: Jamie Ward, Chris Hall, Hussein Ibrahim, Asin Zahir, Stuart King, James Richards, William Huck. Robert Brough, George Bull, Michael Shortis, James Chitty, Lloyd Cadman, James Beer, Ronan Baird, Sebastian Black, Gerald Chan, Oliver Jeffreys, James Edwards*, Daniel Leyland*, Alexander Sunderland*, Toby Blong*.

* Promoted to B XV

Wellington College	W	26-0
Eton College	W	7-5
Bromsgrove	W	54-0
Cokethorpe	W	17-12
Bedford	W	24-5
Stowe	W	60-0
MCS	W	36-0
St Paul's	L	7-29
The Oratory	W	26-0
St Edward's	W	31-26
Radley	L	0-26
Marlborough	W	28-15

Juniors A Rugby

The Juniors A had a very enjoyable season: playing 11 matches, winning 6 and losing 5. We opened with a difficult match away at Eton, who beat us 34-0. Our second match was against Tiffin School. This was one of our easier games; we played some of our best attacking rugby and won 62-5. A memorable try from Matthew Carter capped a strong all-round performance. We followed this victory up with another good win, 63-0, this time against Bromsgrove, with William Barnes scoring two excellent tries. We then travelled to Bedford School where the quality of our rugby was disappointing. We were beaten heavily, 41-5. We missed a lot of tackles and didn't use the advantage of the overlap lessons as we did during the rest of our season.

After this we played Oakham, the first time Abingdon have played them. A poor first half allowed them to get 24 points ahead. In the second half

Richard Knight led a revival and we scored 3 tries, pulling the score back to 24-17. The fixture against our local rivals Magdalen College School was a good game. We played a brilliant style of rugby, using swift hands to score many tries. We came out on top and the final score was 33-0, Matthew Kitchen and Luke Carter putting in particularly good performances.

The next match was an altogether tougher game. St Paul's have always been a good team and they showed their class, although our lack of concentration at the beginning and end of the game flattered their score. For significant sections of the game our forwards, spearheaded by Mensun Yellowlees-Bound, Henry Sensecall and Angus Weir, performed well in the scrum and the loose but we were unable to convert possession into points. The final score was 48-0. Against the Oratory School we came out all guns blazing and several huge tackles from Charlie Fitchett, Charlie Stenton-Putt, Toby Brown and others set a very abrasive tone for the game. The opposition had been unbeaten all season but after some excellent play, Peter Moore crossed the line for the match's only try.

St Edward's provided a tough contest but we came out on top, scoring tries in the first 10 minutes after the kick-off. Even though we won we were disappointed by a poor performance, missing too many tackles and dropping too many passes. However, Joel Cooper produced a rugged and determined effort from the open side that contributed greatly to our eventual 25-7 victory. Radley was a very hard game against a strong team and we allowed them to get off to a flying start. However, we recovered our composure and gained a measure of control over the game after half time. We played the best second half of rugby of the season

and matched them with one try each. The final score however was 30-5.

Marlborough saw us put together all the best aspects of our game. Paddy Sardeson led by example with some crunching tackles while Kristian Wood's and Tom Kynge's hard running and off-loading provided a strong platform from which to attack. Out wide Jacob Templeman and Sam Lerche-Thomsen managed to keep their opposite numbers under wraps while providing a good attacking threat. It was a tight game but we were always leading in the points. We made tackles and ran good lines, which put Marlborough under huge pressure. This pressure allowed us to get the tries we deserved and we achieved a hugely enjoyable 24-17 win.

It was a good way to end the season. I would like to thank all the squad members for their support and hard work throughout. We hope to improve our skills and look forward to next season with great anticipation.

Peter Moore 3 JAW

Juniors A XV squad: Henry Sensecall (VC), Charlie Fichett, Elliott Mills, Patrick Sardeson, Matthew Carter, Niall Keown, Charlie Stenton-Putt, William Barnes, Matthew Kitchen, Peter Moore (C), Kristian Wood, Joel Cooper, Tom Kynge, Luke Carter, Richard Knight, Mensun Yellowlees-Bound, Toby Brown, Sam Lerche-Thomsen, Angus Weir.

Eton	L	0-34
Tiffin	W	62-5
Bromsgrove	W	63-0
Bedford	L	5-41
Oakham	L	17-24
MCS	W	33-0
St Paul's	L	0-48
Oratory	W	7-0
St Edward's	W	25-7
Radley	L	5-30
Marlborough	W	24-17

Juniors B XV Rugby

The season started quite unsuccessfully against Eton with a 36-15 defeat.

The Bs didn't tackle well or commit themselves physically in any part of the game. Opportunist tries from Luke Carter and Jacob Templeman were highlights and helped to earn them call-ups to the As.

Tiffin and Bromsgrove were both brushed aside easily. The boys played better against Tiffin, with Gregor Buchan starring with a hat-trick. The forwards made more tackles and James Dewar won us some turnovers. Angus Weir started to prove that he is a very strong scrummager and the game was won 54-7. Unfortunately, Bromsgrove provided very little opposition and the scoreline of 57-0 actually flattered them. Their tackling was so weak that the Bs got into bad habits like running some poor lines.

Cokethorpe A team provided a much stiffer test and the boys played their best half of the season to lead 7-0 at half time. Big defensive hits from Charlie Stenton-Putt and a huge physical forward effort saw the Bs have the best of the first half. Unluckily, we lost James Dewar to a broken wrist in the second half and the opposition benefited from a couple of slightly lucky breaks, running out winners 26-7.

A strong Bedford School came next and we had confidence that our form was improving. It is still hard to believe that such a one-sided contest could end up with the wrong scoreline. The boys battered the opposition and spent almost the entire game in their 22 but two mistakes and some wrong decisions in attack resulted in a 14-0 loss. Hard-working flanker Joel Cooper started his tour of Midlands Health Centre facilities, having picked up an injury from the explosive Henry Otty.

A pretty solid performance including six tries, two from Will Horlock, and a 100% kicking performance from Will Plumb, helped us to a 42-14 win at Oakham in the last game before half term.

The second half of the season reflected the strengths and weaknesses displayed before the break. A very weak Rendcomb side were thrashed 53-7 and a strong and well-organised St Paul's scored forty unanswered points against a team starting to struggle because of a lack of strength in depth. Each week an injury in the A team would rob the Bs of a crucial player, sometimes as late in the day as the pre-match warm-up. Joel Cooper deserved to play the rest of the season in the A team and his defensive qualities were found irreplaceable until too late.

The two most disappointing games were both narrow defeats by traditionally weaker oppositions – MCS 9-17 and Oratory 7-10. In these games, lack of adherence to the game plan and frail forward play allowed inferior teams too much possession.

A very weak St Edward's team were beaten 87-0 in a confidence-boosting encounter before the tough tests of Radley and Marlborough. Despite two defeats, the Bs showed that constant work in training on defence paid off. As ever Radley were strong up front and well drilled but the boys were more than a match for them, in particular defending their own goal line with determination and big hits not evident for most of the season. Gregor Buchan had a better game on the wing and the strong ball-carrying of Henry Otty and Tom Sishton was a big factor. In the end pressure told and Radley's talented winger sealed a hard-fought victory by 24-10. Throughout this part of the season, top try-scorer, Will Horlock, showed that his tackling

had improved and that he could bring some aggression to this part of his game. Despite the Marlborough No 8 dropping the ball inside the in-goal area twice, they finally won a very tight game in the dying minutes, 10-7. Having defended for almost the whole match as if our lives depended on it, I know the boys were sorely disappointed to lose out to what, in reality, was the better side.

Many boys had good seasons and improved as players. Tom Sishton burst onto the scene in the back-row but will need to add consistency to his bursts of power to play at a higher level. Will Horlock was unstoppable at times and worked hard to improve on his defensive weaknesses. Henry Otty showed great commitment but must improve and practise his contact skills to match this. I would like to thank all the boys for an enjoyable, if frustrating season (in terms of results) and wish them good luck in the Colts.

Nick O'Doherty

Juniors B XV squad: Will Horlock, Thomas Sishton, Sam Ward, Gregor Buchan, Edward McLaughlin, Russell Orr Burns, Harry Shortis, James Weaver, Rory Brampton, Oscar Newman, Henry Otty, Joel Cooper, James Dewar, Christopher Garratt, Kit Bowen, Sasha Barras, Jack Maxted, William Plumb.

Eton	L	15-36
Tiffin	W	54-7
Bromsgrove	W	57-0
Cokethorpe 'A'	L	7-26
Bedford	L	0-14
Oakham	W	42-14
Rendcomb	W	53-7
MCS	L	9-17
St Paul's	L	0-40
Oratory	L	7-10
St Edward's	W	87-0
Radley	L	10-24
Marlborough	L	7-10

Juniors C XV Rugby

It took until half term for the Juniors C team to achieve a stable structure as, until then, there was much movement of players across all the teams. The members all had to get used to playing together as many were newcomers to Abingdon School. Not that this seemed to make a great difference to our results. We played ten matches and won 50% of them. The biggest win was against Bromsgrove with a 97-0 victory. Our first match saw us on 'the playing fields of Eton', where we were soundly defeated 46-5. This only helped to fuel our enthusiasm and learn from our mistakes. The following week we travelled to Bedford and won 29-12. The furthest away match took place at Oakham in Leicestershire and despite a long journey, arriving late and playing immediately, we won 45-10. Our first-ever match against Radley saw us put up a good fight in freezing sleet but we were defeated 31-5.

There were many memorable performances from individual members of the squad. The front row worked well in the scrums and flanker Patrick Lawson-Statham and second row Christopher Tayler put in some hard tackles. The backs attacked well and Jordan Anning was fast on the wing. Christopher Garratt, Edward McLaughlin and Russell Orr Burns earned well-deserved promotion to the Juniors B team. Sam Pope was awarded 'Most improved player of the year' and Nick Bradfield was awarded 'Coach's player of the year' and 'Players' player of the year'.

The squad are looking forward to the next season with enthusiasm and have built good foundations upon which to improve.

Nick Bradfield 3 RSS

Eton	L	5-46
Bromsgrove	W	97-0
Bedford	W	29-12
Oakham	W	49-5
MCS (B team)	L	5-17
St Paul's	L	7-37
Oratory	W	12-8
St Edward's	W	47-0
Radley	L	5-31
Marlborough	L	19-29

Minors A XV Rugby

The season started with a close encounter against Tiffin School where the team fought hard, but lacked mobility and struggled to produce enough quality possession. Following this came comfortable victories over Cokethorpe, Akeley Wood – where the team showed real character and resolve to recover from a disastrous start, having found themselves 12 – 0 down in the first five minutes – and Rendcomb. Against Bromsgrove, a strong, well-drilled outfit, we suffered a heavy defeat. Then came the much-anticipated encounter with Magdalen College School. Having lost to them last season we had something to prove. We dominated the first half and despite being put under pressure in the second, hung on for a well-earned victory. The final game before Christmas was against the Prep School. Abingdon controlled possession and territory for large parts of the game, but paid the price for being turned over near the opposition try line on a number of occasions.

The Lent term started with Summer Fields, usually one of our toughest opponents, but they were brushed aside in convincing fashion in a game, which Abingdon dominated from start to finish, running in 6 unanswered tries. Berkhamsted were similarly put to the sword, 4 tries to nil, in a scrappy game. The final two weeks of the season were badly disrupted by the snow and frost, with the game against Moulsham cancelled and the final game against Cothill having to be postponed for 24 hours. The latter became a fiercely contested match, which Cothill started strongly but the Abingdon defence stood firm. However, it wasn't until the second try in the final minute of the game that victory was secured. This was an excellent all-round team performance that showed real guts and determination and was a fitting finale to a very enjoyable and successful season.

The team:

William Sharp, captain, was the cornerstone of the pack, displaying excellent technique; he was justifiably selected as the player of the season. He was flanked in the front row by Gem Vongseenin, a no-nonsense prop who was rewarded with the accolade of the most improved player of the season, and Malcolm Marecki, a strong and dedicated prop who became increasingly effective during the season.

Freddy Horsell, a regular in the second row, was an excellent ball handler and a reliable goal kicker. His partnership in the second row was shared by Francois Macé and Henry Lambe, both of whom are good ball carriers with excellent hands, but who need to get lower in the loose to make more effective use of their size.

The back row was strong and mobile, constantly putting the opposition under pressure. Jamie Irwin at number 8 provided plenty of forward

momentum with his powerful running and aggressive tackling. On the flanks, Ben Yaxley worked tirelessly all season and his tackle count must have been the highest in the side, whilst Tim Grant had the knack of appearing from the middle of a maul with the ball as well as popping up all over the field, providing good support to the ball carriers.

Laurence Lilley led the back line from the scrum half position and won the players' player of the season. A tenacious and highly competitive individual, he kept both the pack and backs going forward with his improving service.

First-year Theo Brophy Clews, at fly half, displayed calmness under pressure and a nifty side step. His handling and distribution were excellent and he provided a real sense of assurance.

Jamie Aspinall and Leo Bethell formed a useful centre pairing. Jamie Aspinall was the teams' leading try scorer and his strong direct running made him a difficult man for any defence to stop, but he needs to keep working to improve his handling and ball presentation in the contact. Leo Bethell, another first year, was especially strong in defence and provided a useful kicking option with a good left boot. The back three were James Hearn, Jamie Pearson and Michael Dewar. James Hearn was the 'gas man' who also produced some bone crunching tackles. Jamie Pearson is a talented ball handler who worked hard to develop the defensive aspects of his play and always gave 100% for the team. Michael Dewar was the third first-former in the back line and was a courageous and dependable last line of defence but he still needs to work on his positioning, especially under the high ball.

This is a talented group of players who

have displayed an excellent attitude during practices and worked hard to develop both their individual skills and the team aspects of their play. The very fact that they won all their games during the Lent term without conceding a single point is testimony to how much their defence improved during the season and, providing they continue to apply themselves well and keep working at their game, they have the potential to become a real force to be reckoned with. They've been a fun group to work with and I wish them well with their rugby in the future and look forward to following their progress as they move up through the School.

Finally, I'd like to thank all the parents who turned up in their droves to support the team, both home and away, whatever the weather.

Andrew Broadbent

Minors U12A / U13C XV

This report covers U12A team and U13C team; (some U12s played for the U13Cs); Stuart Evans managed and coached both teams across the Michaelmas and Lent terms.

This squad of players, some of whom had never played rugby before, was full of talent and enthusiasm, so talented in fact that some of the members – Theo Brophy Clews, Colin Nuttall, Michael Dewar and Leo Bethell – were immediately snapped up for the U13 As.

The team achieved a good win in their first game against Cokethorpe, showing plenty of drive and inventiveness in attack. We then came across a very strong team from Akeley Wood School (who went unbeaten all season). We competed well but their teamwork and overall ability was a notch above ours.

The next two games produced exciting draws: first against Christ Church Cathedral School where we had enough possession to win the game but didn't really take our chances. The second draw, against Magdalen College School, was a similar type of game, which with more experience we might have won. For the next match we travelled to Berkhamsted and encountered a very skilful and athletic team. We were not able to raise our game sufficiently, though we defended bravely against their numerous waves of attack.

The U13C XV was made up of several first years, while the rest were second years. This proved a good combination: the second years providing some brawn and bulk (and added experience) to complement the lightweight skills of the first years.

They lost the first match, narrowly, against an accomplished team from Bromsgrove. A rallying second half performance was left too late to achieve a win. This encouraging effort led on to two really good wins against Abingdon Prep School and Summer Fields. The match against APS produced a storming first half, which showed the best rugby of the season with some great interplay between backs and forwards.

The team played with real character to achieve a gutsy away win against Summer Fields where we had to soak up loads of pressure, which showed how much we had improved. Unfortunately, after this, two key games, against Moulsham and Cothill, were cancelled owing to bad weather.

Some key players deserve mention: Jack Walsh (captain), a key player in a number of games; Alex Turner, voted player of the season; Archie

Ashford showed great improvement; John Francis – brave and committed. Charles Normanton showed good improvement too. Gus Mills made a very versatile contribution; Ben Seares and Declan Field, the flying wingers, both did really well having started learning the game from scratch. Freddie Pinkerton was always effective in attack. Alastair Smith put in some powerful runs. Tommy Nicholson proved a very reliable, intelligent player at full back.

Overall this has been a very enjoyable squad to coach during the course of two terms, full of enthusiasm and always keen to play. Good luck to them as they move up through the School. I am sure they will do well.

Dean Evans

Minors U12B / U13D XV

How did the season go? In one word – undefeated. A passionate and talented band of players ensured that their Abingdon rugby career got off to the best possible start, without conceding a game and snatching victory against some talented units, most notably Summer Fields and Berkhamsted, both of which could have gone either way. Despite being regularly outsize, the combative Abingdon brethren were more than a match for any opposition in the crucial contact zones.

The team's success was based around its ability to score frequently and from range, a steady stream of turnover ball and aggressive defence. In particular the team was served well by the half backs. Callum Russell at scrum half led by example and scored critical points at crucial junctures, his ability to keep the team moving forward and to unleash the backs central to the season. In this regard he was aided and abetted

by Archie Ashford, whose poise in possession bodes well for his playing future, and also Alex Davies, who strengthened the midfield with powerful running and tackling. Out wide we were lethal, with Ollie Carpenter electric with ball in hand and Rhodri Lewis providing real bite from full back. Defensively the backs operated a drift defence with natural guile and snuffed out opposition strike forces using the touchline to great effect. In due course they will need to develop an effective blitz defence as well but I am sure they will have no real difficulties in this.

In the engine room the mighty Angus Black provided the anchor role with powerful surges, and Declan Kissane showed his ability to hit rucks hard and carry with purpose. Gus Mills was ubiquitous at the breakdown and Marcello Cau Tait showed he is capable of instilling impetus with his speed and strength. The scrum was a real strength, providing clean ball to the free-running backs, and excellent technique was on display from the tight five at every opportunity. The lineout was a little wayward initially but this was soon addressed and became a regular source of fast ball as Angus Black cleared up most hookers' best attempts to clear him. The forwards also defended the fringes with real aggression and neutralised close surges with aplomb, often stripping the opposition carriers in the process.

In summary, the pack consistently provided ball for a talented back line and as a unit they should go on to test any team they come up against next year, despite a number of cancellations late in the season against strong teams. They should have as their goal a further undefeated run in 2009/2010.

Matt Perris

Minors A

Tiffin	L	17-22
Cokethorpe	W	22-0
Akeley Wood	W	24-17
Rendcomb College	W	14-0
Bromsgrove	L	7-41
MCS	W	17-12
Abingdon Prep	L	14-33
Summer Fields	W	34-0
Berkhamsted	W	28-0
Moulsford	cancelled	
Cothill	W	14-0

U12A

Cokethorpe	W	29-14
Akeley Wood	L	17-24
Christchurch CS	D	19-19
MCS	D	7-7
Berkhamsted	L	0-19

U13C XV

Bromsgrove	L	15-20
Abingdon PS	W	31-5
Summer Fields	W	15-0

U12B

Cokethorpe	W	42-0
Akeley Wood	W	20-5
MCS	W	39-5
Berkhamsted	W	12-10

U13D

Summer Fields	W	22-10
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Hockey



1st XV Hockey

It was always going to be a difficult season for the 1st XI, with eight players from last year's successful team no longer available. This meant that a very young, inexperienced squad were going to take time to find their feet and their roles within the team. In preparation for the season, they worked hard indoors over the winter period, culminating in a competitive display at the National Indoor Regional Tournament at Trinity School, Croydon.

The season started with our annual pre-season training camp in Dorset where we played some practice games against Bryanston and Canford and made good use of our time on the astroturf.

Joshua Smith was appointed captain, and even though only in the lower sixth, he led the team superbly all season, instantly gaining the respect of all and scoring some vital goals. Parathan

Rabindran was self-appointed as vice-captain, demonstrating an excellent capacity to motivate the team in his infamous pre-match talks.

The first match of the season was against a hugely impressive Repton side, a team that proved to be by far the best team we came up against. They moved the ball at pace and executed every part of their game with great competence, playing some fantastic hockey. This was a really good lesson for our young side and they were now fully aware of how competitive the pace of the game can be.

They played at a much better tempo in the next game against St Edward's and although we did surrender a fair amount of possession, we created some good chances. Toby Ogg started his first game for the 1st XI up front, and some intelligent movement from our forwards did open up a well-organised defence.

A lack of composure up front really cost us against Pangbourne, in a game where we played some attractive possession hockey. The midfield moved the ball with patience and it really was our inability to convert the whole host of short corners we won that meant we went down 0-1.

The Dean Close game was a strange encounter that started really flat and left both coaches scratching their heads. Abingdon started the game slowly and found themselves 0-2 down at half time. After some strong words, the boys showed their desire and fought back to 3-3, only for Dean Close to snatch the vital winner.

We then travelled up to Rugby to play in what turned out to be a real battle of a game, with neither team able to gain control. Abingdon again struggled to convert up top and it was left to the captain to set up an easy chance for Matthew Pursell to take the lead. Rugby came back with a bullet of a drag flick and chaos ensued in the last 20 minutes as both teams went all out for the win.

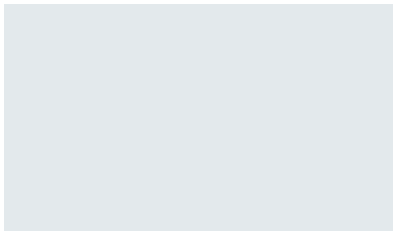
After disappointing performances against Bloxham, Radley and Bradfield, in which we gave away possession in deep situations to put ourselves under pressure, we played a far more composed style of hockey against a strong KES Southampton side. The goals flew in from both sides with great regularity and Matthew couldn't stop finding the corner of the goal from the top of the D. Tom Green slotted a well-taken short corner in the later stages of the match to leave the teams level 4-4 with five minutes to go. Nathaniel Watkins had been waiting all season for a vital time to score his first goal and his timing was impeccable as he slotted the winner to gain an impressive and deserved 5-4 win.

The last game of the season was a tight affair against Magdalen College School. Both teams showed a great deal of industry but to be honest not a huge amount of quality emerged. Freddie Howe was far and away the man of the match, putting everything on the line to stop the majority of the MCS attacks. There were a few chances on offer for both sides, but a draw was the result that the game really deserved.

On reflection, it has been a tough season for a very young side, but with the majority of the players returning next season, I'm sure all the work they have put this year will be rewarded with some better results next time around.

Tom Green, Matthew Purssell and Parathan Rabindran have all given great service to the Club and have, along with captain Joshua Smith, been awarded full colours.

Steve Brenchley



2nd XV Hockey

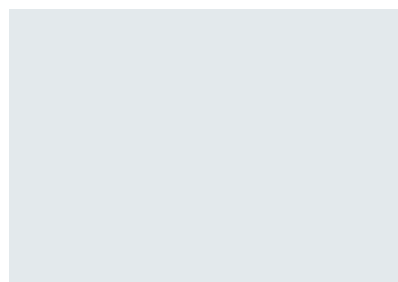
This year there was a strong squad from which to choose, with some enthusiastic players coming up from last year's U16B team. The first half of the season was therefore disappointing with 4 losses and one draw. Two matches against Cheltenham and Stowe were called off owing to weather. Our play was characterised by very good defence; we never did let in more than 2 goals in a game and this often in the first 10 minutes before the legs and brains had warmed up! The second half of the season went much better and once we had a win against Rugby we went into matches with much more self-confidence and began to work harder off the ball. Our attacks too often felt like breaks and it wasn't until later in the season that we managed to build attacks and support the two Robbies (Henley and Stevens playing as joint strikers). Our back four was stable with Justin Robinson and Veeral Manek in the middle but later ably joined, as we lost a player to injury or the 1st XI, by Harrison Gray. Their timely tackling was reliable and

distribution was generally sound. Nick Croft-Simon took left back. It is hard to believe that he had played left wing the previous season. His stick skills and calmness on the ball kept many right-wingers in check. His goal-of-the-season against Radley, with a weaving run down the left for over three-quarters of the pitch, was magnificent. Right back was filled by James Carter, who had previously played on the left. His excellent skills on the ball, and going forward as he gained in confidence, were important to our attacking play. He will need to work hard on his distribution if he is to push for a 1st XI place next season. For most of the season we played a 4-man midfield with Dylan Robinson and Henry Mills taking the central roles and a mix of Ben Read, James Plumb, and Cody Yellowlees-Bound playing to their left and right. In the last two matches we switched to a 4-3-3 system and James Plumb played right wing. He looks classy on the ball with a good reach and strong skills. With growing confidence he had the better of most left backs by the end of the season. Ben Read played with commitment and

emotion, looking his best at the end of season when he had a more attacking role. He scored 3 times in the last 2 games. Henry Mills was tireless in midfield and although at times in the first half of the season he ran about a bit like the proverbial headless chicken, he is strong on the ball and despite an unconventional right hand hold on the stick is most effective as a defensive midfield. Dylan Robinson is a passionate player – Italian footballer in temperament perhaps – despite his American heritage. He improved all season; he holds the ball well and when he is fitter, and so running off the ball better, he will be the perfect centre midfield, winning balls and making the plays. His best game was the last of the season against Magdalen College School. Harry Strong in goal was dependable and grew in confidence as the season progressed, making some superb saves.

Many of this team will be in the seconds next year and if they get fit early, as the new rules require, they have a chance of an excellent season.

James Nairne



St Edward's	L	1-2
Repton	L	1-2
Pangbourne	D	1-1
Dean Close	L	1-2
Wellington	L	0-2
Rugby	W	4-2
Bloxham	D	0-0
Radley	L	1-2
Rendcomb College	W	5-1
Bradfield	L	0-2
KES, Southampton	W	3-0
MCS	W	3-0



3rd XI Hockey

This season looked as though it could have been a very successful one, with almost half a dozen players having 3rd team experience from the previous year and I would argue that it certainly lived up to my expectations.

Our season had a perfect start with an 8-0 victory in the match against Shiplake. Alex Kempell bagged five goals, albeit on a dodgy surface against a weak team. We defeated our first three opponents without having a goal scored against us. Much of the credit must go to the likes of Alex Kempell, who seemed to be scoring goals for fun, Tom Buffery, who was excellent all season in his holding role in midfield, and to our exceptional defence from a steady back line, especially Harry Gray who was rock solid in every game he played.

Unfortunately, we suffered our first defeat in a very close-fought match against Dean Close; however, the character of the team could not be faulted. We responded very well to this, winning our next two games

comprehensively against Rugby and Bloxham before the local derby against Radley. In this game we were 3-0 up within 15 minutes, which led us to believe that the game was almost won. However, in the second half our local rivals looked a completely different outfit, eventually defeating us 6-4 which was a blow to our season. Yet again the team responded well to this setback, winning our final three games without conceding a goal against Bradfield, Rendcomb, and another of our local rivals, Magdalen College School.

There were many notable contributions to this 3rd team. Robert Walker stands out as a key player who split open numerous defences with his pace and his many assists. Alexander Kempell was our top-scorer, getting 20 goals during the season. Joe Kempton worked tirelessly all over the pitch, while Ollie Bourchier, Harry Gray, Robert Crawford and Robert Kenworthy all played their part in creating a defence that only conceded eight goals throughout the whole the season, (6 against Radley). Credit must also go to Jonathan Ient and Cody Yellowlees-



Bound, who played as goalkeepers, both making numerous crucial saves for the team. Ollie Read and Jasper Marlow both worked relentlessly in the midfield throughout the season, with Nicholas Howe contributing eight goals from attacking-midfield. I would like to thank Mr Evans and Mr Drummond-Hay, who managed the 3rd team this season. There was never a dull moment and I for one thoroughly enjoyed playing with the team!

Thomas Devlin VI SJG

3rd XI

Shiplake	W	8-0
Pangbourne	W	2-0
St Edward's	W	8-0
Dean Close	L	1-2
Rugby	W	6-0
Bloxham	W	2-0
Radley	L	4-6
Rendcomb	W	3-0
Bradfield	W	3-0
MCS	W	4-0

4th XI

Shiplake	W	3-1
Pangbourne	W	2-1
St Edward's	W	1-1
Radley	L	0-4
Bradfield	W	3-0

Senior Colts B Hockey

This was a team whose excellent start to the season led to great mid-term optimism, but which finally came down to earth with a bump with two heavy defeats at the end.

Despite the ultimate disappointment, many players were a success in the team, so much so that there were several promotions to the As. A total of 23 boys represented Abingdon at this level, and many of these will go on to contribute to the School's strength-in-depth in the senior teams during their time in the 6th form.

Nicholas Acutt played very competently in goal, and had much to do with the early successes. His replacement for the Radley match was Christopher Audley, out of hockey retirement for the occasion, and not remotely to blame for the magnitude of the defeat – he had as much to do in that match as Nick did all season! The remaining defenders were some combination or other of: Matthew Haywood, Patrick MacMahon, Christopher Moore, David Grant, William Summers, Andrew Crawford, Tom Fishpool and John Mulvey. To a man, they were tireless and, for most of the season, very much in control of things;

one or two of them even saw some action in the As. There was a similar embarrassment of riches in the midfield department, despite a slight touch of the prima donna occasionally on show. The most frequent formation was: Matthew Roberts, Benjamin Brazel and Samuel Bowers; Jonty Cook, Stephen Horlock and Jay Jung also did their bit; and the talents of Digby Coulson and Daniel Bayley were too good to keep secret from A team coach Damian Shirazi for long. Find-of-the-season had to be forward Hugh Brash, who once he started scoring could not stop. When he joined the As, Marc Woolley and Matthew Boyd provided what looked like being an unstoppable combination of speed and physical presence. The Rugby victory and the consolation goal against Bradfield were the main fruits of their labours. Mark Kardos and Henry Gibson could also do the business up front when things were going well.

In short, a winning season, just. There was also a lot to be pleased about in training sessions and on match days, both for a number of individuals and for the team as a whole, and we might have given Bradfield a run for their money with our full team performing at its very best. But Radley was always going to be a bridge too far this year...

Douglas Aitken

St Edward's	D	1-1
Repton	W	2-0
Dean Close	W	7-0
Rugby	W	4-2
Bloxham	D	1-1
Radley	L	0-7
Bradfield	L	1-4

Senior Colts C Hockey

Many of the above players turned out in the two Colts C matches, both of which were victorious, and against the two schools who beat the Colts Bs. The 6 – 0 defeat of Bradfield was particularly satisfying, and also featured the skills of Xilin Song, Daniel Miles, Campbell Garland, James Bater and Harry Granger. Once again, the expression 'strength in depth' comes to mind.

My thanks go to all the members of the squad for their genuine efforts and their good humour, and to the A team coach Damian Shirazi for being such fun to work with.

Douglas Aitken

Junior Colts A Hockey

As captain, I was very pleased with this year's season as we were unbeaten, and not only that, but we turned around games we had lost last season into fine wins, which showed how much we had improved since last year.

Last year our first game against Repton was close so we knew it would be a tough match this year too. We played good attacking hockey, with not much defending to do; however, our finishing let us down, with the score only being 2-0 despite lots of shots at goal. The two goals came from Sebastian Black. The next match was a comfortable win against Pangbourne, 7-0, but we didn't take all our opportunities, which could have put us into double figures. They had a couple of breaks with some quick attackers but Jonny Hunter and Chris Hall stayed strong and defended well. Another match followed without drama and we won 6-0 against St Edward's, which were a few goals fewer than they should have been. Dean Close was a tough game from

last year and would provide our second real test of the season. Two goals from Oliver Bailey helped us to a 3-2 win, but Toby Ogg created many chances with his pace and ability to beat defenders. The next two matches provided two more easy wins against Stowe and Wellington, where we won 7-1 and 6-1 respectively, with Gregor Hearn scoring a hat-trick against Stowe. Our next match, against Rugby, looked as if it might be the toughest of the season as we had lost 6-0 last year. This year we did well to turn it around, winning 6-1, Toby Blong getting two goals. Having won and lost to Radley last year, it was going to be close. We took an early lead, but they came back to win 6-3. We played Shiplake next which was a tough game, despite winning 5-1. Good width was provided from Hamish Grant, Michael Deeks, Daniel Leach and Lloyd Cadman. Another match we lost last year was the one against Bradfield but once again we managed to turn it around, winning 6-1; Tim Li made some good saves in the first half to keep them out. Bloxham followed, along with a hard-fought 3-1 win, with a goal from Toby Warren. Having not played them last year, we had to be careful going into the match against KES Southampton. It was an end-to-end game with the final score 1-1. We missed a couple of crucial chances towards the end of the game, which would have won it. Magdalen College School was the last match, which we won comfortably 5-0.

Gregor Hearn, 4 VEH

Junior Colts C Hockey

For a team where the majority of the players had played little or no hockey before, the Junior Colts season was extremely successful. Coached by Mr Castle, they played ten games,

won six, drew two and had two close losses. To begin with the C team faced an extremely tough fixture against the Pangbourne B team. In a thrilling but slightly scrappy game, Abingdon emerged victorious, winning 4-3. Nian Patel, who was to become the team's talisman over the next few games, scored two superb goals. In their next game, the hockey was far more free-flowing, and it showed, as the team stormed to a 3-0 victory over St Edward's. This time, George Jorgensen was the star of the show, also scoring two. For the next game we travelled to Stowe to win 2-0, with Sarab Sethi scoring a fabulous half volley from the edge of the D. However, the real stars of the show were the new defenders, Rob Noyes and Ronan Baird, who were extremely effective at the back. The winning streak, however, ended in the next game. Wellington proved to be tougher opposition than we had expected and it was only Nian's last-minute goal that preserved a 1-1 draw. In the final match of a three-games-in-four days run, against Rugby, despite being very tired we controlled the game from start to finish, and it was only an unbelievable performance from the Rugby goalkeeper that limited us to one goal, which was scored by speedy winger, Will Nott. Next, the C team faced Bloxham, and completely ran them ragged, winning 4-0. William Bibby, possibly the C team's best player, scored two and confirmed himself as the team's worthy captain. Will Huck also showed his versatility by making a smooth transition from defence to midfield, helping Bibby to crush Bloxham. However, all good things must come to an end. In the next match, against Radley, despite the added experience of B team regular Hal Parke, the C team lost 2-1 in a tightly fought game. The next game, against Shiplake, also went badly, and we lost 2-0 to an extremely strong Shiplake B side. Despite

these setbacks, possibly the C team's best match of the season was still to come. In a friendly, arranged against the Junior Colts B side, the C team showed their superior teamwork and togetherness, running out 3-0 winners! In the final game of the season, a thrilling goalkeeping performance from Calum Smith kept the side in the game, ending in a well deserved 1-1 draw. Overall, an extremely successful season for a side in which many members had either never played or only played a little hockey before.

Alex McIntosh 4 RSS

Juniors B Hockey

The season started well: we had a good couple of coaching sessions and even though we were all rusty, because most of us hadn't played for about a year, the stick skills began to return. We won our first match of the season, 3-1, at home against St Edward's, with two goals from Charlie Bethell and one from myself. This game was a great start and promised much for the season. Unfortunately it didn't pan out as we hoped. Training resumed and it seemed like we were improving, but we lost our next game 7-1 to Repton at home. Harry Shortis scored our only goal from a short corner. This was a bit of a shock after our previous convincing win. Our defence was shaky, so that became our main focus in training. However, we also practised our short corners and learnt various moves and calls. We then played Shiplake away and lost 2-0, conceding two early goals. Our tackling in defence still needed a lot of work and we needed to be awake at the start of the game. Our next game was home against Dean Close. We again conceded early and lost in a close match, 3-2. Harry Shortis got two goals, both from crosses made by Elliot Mills, who had come up from the

Cs. Training continued to be focused on our defence rather than attack because we were still shaky at the back at times.

We then played Bloxham away and lost 1-0 in a very tight game which we should have won. Our defence was pretty solid but we missed far too many chances. In this game we changed our format in midfield into a diamond and played without a left winger.

Training turned from concentrating on defence to attack. Our seventh game of the season was against Radley at home and we lost in another fairly close game, 3-1. We had again squandered many chances. In training we focused on finishing because although we got into many goal-scoring opportunities we just didn't take them. Our penultimate game of the season was against Bradfield, where we got a bit of a hammering, 6-0. Our final game of the season was against an apparently undefeated Magdalen College School team, against which we drew 0-0 away. We defended well but again had we taken our chances we could easily have had about 4 or 5 goals. However, we played well and it was a decent result, so I guess you have to look on the bright side. So all in all it wasn't the best season, but there is always next year.

Peter Honey 3 NPS

Juniors C Hockey

The team had a good season, with good wins, plenty of goals and large amounts of fun. Despite a few of us having never played hockey before, we did some training and went off to play our first match. We started off strongly with a good (and perhaps fortunate) win against Repton, but there was still work to be done. However, the team enjoyed it.

Some faithful warriors moved up to the B team, having played very well. The focus then switched to training: we needed to pick up some basic tactics and spent plenty of time working on a variety of techniques. This was clearly shown to have done its work in the 6-0 victory over Bloxham, where David Wheatley had to come off as he had scored so many goals!

The team was however yet to settle down into a solid formation. Real improvements in technique and some simple (and safe) tactics stood us in good stead before the difficult visit from Radley. We acquitted ourselves very well, but we lacked the accuracy to finish off our chances and our defence was also yet to really find its feet. However, with more techniques under our belts, we went away to Bradfield. This is where the team's spirit really showed through. Despite playing against a much better team (their second string), we showed skill, passion and confidence, and we came away with a couple of great goals, knowing we had played our best. The team had come together well over the season, developing from a young side into a confident team who supported and communicated with one another, had fun and played attractive hockey by the end.

Oscar Newman (Capt) 3 DJWF

Juniors C squad: Nick Bradfield, Rowan Hall, David Jorgensen, Sam Lerche-Thomsen, Jamie Marsh, Chris Mears, Oscar Newman, Harry Paladina (GK), Harry Stout, Connor Taylor, David Wheatley, With appearances from: Humphrey Thompson, Elliot Mills, Mensun Yellowlees-Bound, Harry Stout, Gabriel Drewitt, Dominic O'Rourke, Henry Otty, Patrick Lay

Cricket



1st XI Cricket

With a new training facility in place, a new management team, and a series of personnel changes to the 2008 side, the 2009 season was a fresh and uncertain start for the 1st XI squad.

After some very hard work over the winter on the physical, technical, and mental aspects of their games, the 1st XI took part in an intensive yet rewarding pre-season camp at the School's new Sports Centre.

The boys quickly came out of the blocks in the first game, dispatching a much vaunted Bradfield College side by 5 wickets. The game featured half-centuries from James Edwards (51), Josh Smith (64) and Nathaniel Watkins (82 n.o.) and was a crucial boost for the team's confidence. An inspired

performance by Matthew Purssell (56 and 4-17) saw off Stowe in the next game and then victories over the Oratory and Reading soon followed. At this stage the boys were showing improvement but it was clear to all that they were not firing on all cylinders.

Magdalen College School and the national Twenty20 regional round were next up and the first part of the equation was dealt with in fine style. With MCS scuttled for 96, in a ruthless professional showing, the Abingdon openers knocked off the total in a mere 20 overs, to win by 10 wickets. This put the boys in an ideal frame of mind for the following day's games at Bedford School.

In the regional round the side narrowly beat Stowe in the opener, setting up an unofficial final against hosts, Bedford. Despite not being favourites, the

Abingdon boys dominated the game from ball one with James Manasseh (54) finding his form in incredible fashion. A victory over St Benedict's in the final game of the day saw us progress to the quarter finals.

After this positive weekend the group then went back to normal school fixtures. A disappointing draw at St Edward's was soon followed by a clinical display at Wellingborough and a 6-wicket win. The boys then finally relinquished their unbeaten status, losing to a very strong Shrewsbury side in the national Twenty20 competition. At the time this would have been a very bitter pill to swallow, but later proved to be the key moment in the season.

The team arrived home after the Shrewsbury match at 11.30 pm and were faced with their local rivals, Radley,

at 11.30 am the following morning. For many sides this poor preparation and the loss of a few key players would have been enough of an excuse to put on an average display, but this is no ordinary side. Despite fielding our youngest side yet, with the average age being 16.1, we came out on top. This game will always be remembered for a magical innings by wicket-keeper Josh Smith (91 n.o.) who moved us past the Radley score with real class.

After the Radley game, a new vigour was found in our performances, and victories over Bradfield (again), UCS, King Edward's Lytham, and Birkenhead soon followed. These final three victories also led to us winning the annual festival, which this year was hosted at Abingdon.

From a batting perspective the side often got off to solid starts, with skipper Watkins (474 runs) and Pursell (311 runs) negotiating the new ball with assurance. This was backed up by the contribution of the middle order, with Smith (518 runs), Edwards (462 runs), and Manasseh (271 runs) all having positive seasons. In the festival at the end of the season, fifth-formers Jonathan Bouchier and Will Sensecall also played some promising innings.

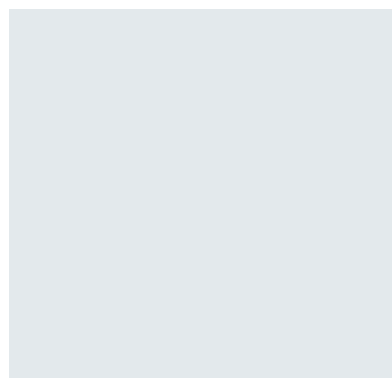
With the ball, the wickets were shared around, with Watkins (43), Pursell (29) and Deeks (22) being the major contributors. Of particular note were the bowling contributions of James Manasseh and John Bartlett, who often provided the control the captain required. Fifth-former Andy Russell had an excellent debut season and fourth-former Charlie Manasseh also made pleasing strides and will play a key role in the future.

Over the year twenty-one players were used, of whom eighteen will still be available next year. The work rate

and maturity shown by all, whether in practice or in games, was a pleasure to behold and was a key factor in our success. At this stage I'd like personally to thank the three leavers – Timothy Deeks, James Manasseh, and Matthew Pursell – and commend them on their excellent attitude throughout the season. These players set the tone for the whole squad and made the transition of younger players into the side a smooth process.

I know that both Dr Burnand and I are already salivating at the prospect of the 2010 season and we look forward to building on this year's progress.

Damian Shirazi



Bradfield College	Won by 5 wickets
Stowe	Won by 73 runs
Oratory	Won by 5 wickets
Reading Grammar	Won By 6 wickets
MCS	Won by 10 wickets
Stowe (National T20)	Won by 5 runs
Bedford (National T20)	Won by 6 wickets
St Benedict's (National T20)	Won by 7 wickets
St Edward's	Match Drawn
Wellingborough	Won by 6 wickets
Shrewsbury (National T20 Quarter-final)	Lost by 78 runs
Radley	Won by 3 wickets
Bromsgrove	Match drawn
Bradfield College	Won by 6 wickets
MCC	Lost by 24 runs
KEQMS Lytham (Festival)	Won by 211 runs
Birkenhead School (Festival)	Won by 197 runs
UCS London	Won by 8 wickets

2nd XI Cricket

There was a real sense of expectation in the 2nd XI squad this season as there was genuine competition for places in the 1st XI and practices benefited greatly from Mr Shirazi's influence. Despite only having two upper sixth-formers in the side, there was an abundance of talent in what was still a relatively young squad.

Windy conditions and a backdrop from a Jane Austen novel greeted the players on the opening day of the season at Stowe. Stowe won the toss, hoping to take advantage of the agreement to play a timed match. A very strong cross-wind gave the seam bowlers a few problems early on. Joshua Bull was swinging the ball at pace as he would do throughout the season, and he was backed up by the rest of the attack and by some electric fielding. Stowe accumulated runs slowly but offered little in the middle order and, had the bowlers not fed their wicketkeeper's favoured cut-shot towards the end of the innings, we would have been chasing less than one hundred. The result never looked in doubt although, having all got a start, none of the top four made more than 25. Jack Channon played a solid innings for his 23, and Matthew Lake and Joshua Bull saw the team home with four wickets to spare.

A frustrating set of circumstances resulted in a Twenty20 format being played against the Oratory. With no prior warning or opportunity to practise, we were not properly prepared and lost the match convincingly. Freddie Howe reminded us that he can be a very destructive batsman if he settles in and his 36 was the only notable feature of 119-7 in the first innings, which looked 40 runs short of a good total. Three Oratory batsmen hit the ball very cleanly on their way to sealing their comfortable 7-wicket victory.

The next two matches went according to our wishes, with the team playing some outstanding cricket, especially against Magdalen College School. First, Reading School were dismissed without too much difficulty. A fifty opening partnership between Callum Keown (31) and Michel Baumgart (50) got us off to a reasonable start against an attack lacking depth. Useful middle-order contributions from Mark Francis (23), Freddie Howe (24), and Ben Read (17) lifted the total to 200 for the only time in the season. Henry Gibson (2-23) and Julian Thorn (2-18) showed why the 3rd XI was having such a good season as they made the most of their call-up to the 2nd XI. Although we failed to bowl out Reading, we did achieve a 102-run victory.

Our prime performance of the season was against rivals MCS. On a good track, which looked bouncier than it turned out to be, the top order built the innings at a sensible pace. The MCS opening bowlers provided a significant challenge but were not backed up with sufficient accuracy in the rest of the attack, or by good ground fielding. Once again, Jack Channon (34) looked a genuine opener with good shot selection, and Tom Price (37) and William Sensecall (30) exploited a short boundary and fast outfield. Ben Read's aggressive 31 at the death meant that MCS would have to perform well to chase down 183 for victory in their 35 overs. Among the differences between the sides were Abingdon's desire to win, our aggressive fielding and the fact we had a cutting edge. Unlike captain Oliver Read's regular attempts at awful puns, this was not meant as one. However, Guy Cutting showed why he was allowed to be the non-training 'Paul McGrath' of the 2nd XI with an unplayable spell (3-13). He was ably assisted by Joshua Bull (3-23), who gave every ounce of effort as always, and Parathan Rabindran (3-23)

who wrapped up the tail. The 103-run victory against what looked to be a team with some good players, but a slightly casual mental approach, illustrated the importance of teamwork and focus.

The match against St Edward's saw an almost identical situation to the first innings of the match last season, where some equally poor batting and suicidal running between the wickets gave us a meagre 111 on the board at tea. Abingdon looked to have thrown away a match against a mediocre opposition. In the dressing room we reminded ourselves that St Edward's still had to get the runs, however, and that we were confident that we had an excellent attack. Throughout the season, the team were led well by captain Oliver Read behind the stumps, and this game was no exception: he took a brilliant one-handed catch just as St Edward's were gaining momentum. Earlier in the match, Guy Cutting and Jonathan Bouchier had taken three wickets each but were having no success with the opposition's number four, who was approaching his 50 and edging his side closer to victory. With 8 runs needed for victory, one wicket in hand, and on 49 not out, he tried to charge down the track to the wily Parathan Rabindran. He appeared to have got away with a thick outside edge until Callum Keown stirred from his slumber at slip and plucked a brilliant catch out of the air high to his left. The crowd went wild – well they would have done if anyone, apart from Mr Dawswell, had been there to see this breath-taking finale.

The boys had got away with a poor performance but this wasn't to be the case against Radley. A pretty slow start was followed up by reckless and inept batting on a perfect pitch. Beyond the openers, no-one looked like building an innings with patience or good technique. Radley's captain took 7 wickets with a spell of tidy but

by no means devastating off-spin. An embarrassing 97 was relatively easily surpassed by the opposition for the loss of just three wickets.

The season finished on a high note. Bradfield were reduced to 38-8 before some really good batting by the last pair allowed them to scrape 94. Guy Cutting and Parathan Rabindran took three wickets each in their last games for the School. Tom Price returned to form and played some well-judged attacking shots, scoring 40 out of the first 66 runs. Callum Keown's well-judged 23 not out saw the team home to a seven-wicket victory.

My thanks go to the whole squad for their positive approach to training and their conduct on the field. I'm particularly grateful to Oliver Read for leading his side with authority, commonsense and enthusiasm, and for his reliability with everything that I asked him to do.

Nick O'Doherty

2nd XI squad: Oliver Read (Captain), Michel Baumgart, Callum Keown, Jack Channon, Tom Price, Mark Francis, Samuel Clarke-Warry, Freddie Howe, Joshua Bull, Parathan Rabindran, Guy Cutting, Ben Read, Stephen Poland, John Bartlett, William Sensecall, Henry Gibson, Ben Stockwell, Julian Thorn, Henry Beggin

Stowe	Won by 4 wkts
Oratory	Lost by 7 wkts
Reading	Won by 102 runs
MCS	Won by 103 runs
St Edward's	Won by 7 runs
Radley	Lost by 7 wkts
Bradfield College	Won by 7 wkts

3rd XI Cricket

Only three of last year's team remained for this season so there was more pressure on them to perform and nurture the talent of the fifth year. Picking a side for the first game was difficult because the squad had had no practice out on the square, so we hoped the side selected was the best.

Our first opponents were Stowe, who beat us convincingly last year, but we had a stronger team this season. On a cloudy afternoon, Abingdon won the toss and put Stowe in on a wet wicket and Henry Gibson took an early wicket to settle the team down after a couple of boundaries. After this good bowling, a fielding display ensued and, despite the concession of too many byes, Abingdon restricted Stowe to 81 all out, with Gibson ending with great figures of 3-7. There were two wickets each for George Dugdale, Sam Bowers and Rob Kenworthy. At tea we were confident, but losing Marcus Seller for 0 in the second over caused some worry. The fall of the wicket brought Kenworthy out to join Sam Clarke-Warry in the middle and they had a fifty-run partnership, with Clarke-Warry particularly attacking the short boundary. However, he fell lbw for 32 and then shortly afterwards Veale was given out caught behind. Then Kenworthy, 36, and André saw Abingdon home for an impressive 7-wicket victory.

Next up we had a Twenty20 match against the Oratory and again Abingdon started well, having been put in to bat. After 9 overs Abingdon were 82-1 but then we lost Clarke-Warry, 33, and Kenworthy, 25, in quick succession and Abingdon's scoring rate dropped so that when we finished we were 134-9. Abingdon bowled well and took wickets at regular intervals to have the Oratory 56-6, but then the seventh wicket partnership began to threaten

the Abingdon total. With the score on 90-6 Abingdon took another wicket and after this the Oratory were all out for 95, giving us a 39-run victory. Again there were 3 wickets for Gibson and two for Dugdale and Kenworthy and, in addition Rajan Sehmi took two wickets. The match will be remembered for three incidents: first Kenworthy being caught on the boundary, after which the fielder walked over the boundary; secondly for Mr Drummond-Hay pausing the game in order to search for a pencil to score with; and thirdly an Andrew Doll bouncer which hit their batsman and caused him discomfort – this was a famous Doll 30mph bouncer.

The third fixture was against our rivals Magdalen College School, who were put in to bat. They only managed to score 109 all out, which could have been 109-11, after a batsman was given out lbw when the ball hit him on the helmet but Kenworthy, the captain, decided to recall him. However, Dugdale got him again two balls later on his way to 4-20 and Kenworthy took 3 wickets. Seller was great in the field, ending with three catches, and Clarke-Warry took an excellent running catch on the boundary. Abingdon easily scored the runs, with Kenworthy scoring 52 after Henry Beggin turned down runs to help him make fifty. Abingdon won by nine wickets.

The next match against St Edward's was the most exciting of the season, although the result didn't go our way. After being asked to field, Abingdon dropped 9 catches, including one batsman 5 times, and he scored 64 runs. Abingdon had to chase 159 to win and it started badly when Clarke-Warry was out, and Kenworthy, in his second match as his opening partner, was caught in the next over. Despite a great innings of 73 by Steve Poland, who was a former 1st XI player coming back from injury, well supported by



Matt Roberts and Dugdale, Abingdon fell one run short.

At this point exam leave started, and it was difficult to get a side out for our next game on the Wednesday. The side had six changes, including four fourth years, and all of the six players made important contributions. Against Bloxham, Abingdon won the toss, chose to bat and started well. An opening stand of 67 from Hamish Grant and Ben Read was ended by another controversial caught-behind as Grant went for 20. Good acceleration from Read, 64, and Will Bibby, 39, helped the team up to a very respectable 189-5. An excellent spell of quick bowling from Charlie Manasseh helped Abingdon to slow the Bloxham scoring rate. Good bowling at the death from Ben Read, who had played for the 1st XI a few days earlier, after his first ball was hit for six, helped Abingdon claim a 37-run victory. Read was the pick of the bowlers with 3-38.

It was a further four weeks until the team played its final match against Radley. Abingdon were put in to bat and looked to be making a positive

start when Kenworthy hit the second over for 11, but then two quick wickets fell and the scoring rate dropped dramatically. A stubborn 32 from Kenworthy and a quick 36 from Gregor Hearn enabled Abingdon to score 129. Unfortunately, this was not enough to stop Radley winning by 6 wickets.

The top scorer was Kenworthy with 164 and an average of 55, and top wicket taker was Dugdale with 11. Gibson managed 10 in one game fewer and if he hadn't had so long on study leave probably would have had more wickets. This left-arm bowler has the potential to be very dangerous.

Robert Kenworthy VI SAE

The 3rd XI can be proud of a very successful season, and I would like to congratulate all players for their part in making the season so enjoyable. My thanks to Robert for all his help on and off the field – he led from the front and was successful in bringing the very best out of his players.

Jeff Drummond-Hay

3rd XI squad: Robert Kenworthy(C), George Dugdale, Julian Thorn, Sam Clarke-Warry, Marcus Seller, Alex Veale, Ben André, Matt Roberts, Sam Bowers, Rajan Sehmi, Henry Gibson, Andrew Doll, Jasper Marlow, Alex Ward, Henry Beggin, Steve Poland, Edward Humphries, Ben Read, Oliver Read, Will Bibby, Hamish Grant, Gregor Hearn, Michael Shortis, Charlie Manasseh

Junior Colts B XI Cricket

The first practice of the Junior Colts B season was a sobering one for this coach with many of the Junior Colts B squad looking distinctly ring-rusty. As time progressed, however, bowlers loosened their shoulders and found their length more effectively and it soon became apparent that this would be a side with considerable bowling talent that would counterbalance a lack of batting depth.

Stowe made a good start to their innings but rapidly capitulated after losing their initial wickets. Robert Noyes bowled with characteristic precision and pace – attributes that were sorely missed later in the season when his shoulder was injured. Captain Daniel Leach led the batting response. His opening partnership with the consistently reliable Oliver Wheatley laid the foundations for a 6-wicket victory.

Oratory's scratch side never looked like a major threat. Daniel Leach bowled intelligent lines, ably supported by Noyes and Swarbrick. Abingdon won by 7 wickets, having lost Wheatley for a patient 49 late in the innings.

St Edward's were wayward at best, with their extras featuring as highest scorer in an Abingdon innings totalling 156-9. Sarab Sethi was a new addition to the side and his 22 runs were one of several examples of his consistent batting. Another new addition, Harry Bell, steamed in for Abingdon, finding line, length and pace to knock over a few important wickets, again complemented by Daniel Leach's unerring accuracy. Abingdon won by 81 runs.

Bloxham struggled to find much batting form despite the absence of Noyes and Leach from the bowling attack. Chris Hall returned from A-team duty and compiled the necessary runs with Robert Noyes, who showed he was no slouch with the bat either when he gets his head down and concentrates.

Injuries dominated selection for the latter part of the season. Oliver Wheatley made excellent field placements throughout his captaincy during Daniel Leach's extended injury. Our batting technique was always vulnerable to examination by a higher class of bowling and so it turned out against Radley where we were unable to demonstrate the patience and determination required at the crease. The final match against Bradfield ended the season in disappointment, with a fine innings from one of their batsmen being the difference between the sides. Nonetheless, the team played with characteristic fun and enthusiasm and at times demonstrated the progress they'd made throughout the season.

Gareth Callan

Junior Colts B squad: Daniel Leach (Captain), Oliver Wheatley, Christopher Hall, George Read-Smith, Robert Noyes, Toby Blong, George Apps, Alaric James, Harry Bell, Sarab Sethi, William Swarbrick, James Beer, Luke Terry, Jamie Ward, Toby Ogg, Charlie Studdy

Stowe	Won by 6 wickets
Oratory	Won by 7 wickets
Reading School	Abandoned
St Edward's	Won by 81 runs
Bloxham	Won by 6 wickets
Wellingborough	Rained Off
Radley	Lost by 7 Wickets
Bradfield	Lost by 89 runs

Juniors A XI Cricket

This was a season that promised much after some positive pre-season work, but the team failed to perform consistently enough and despite a good run in the Cup, the season ended in a disappointing fashion.

First up were a strong Stowe side fresh from a successful tour of South Africa. They set a stiff target after batting too long in a declaration game and, although we were well set at the midway stage, a quick flurry of wickets changed things and the tail ended up batting out the final 12 overs with relative ease for a respectable draw.

Oratory came next and having had them 70 for 5, we let them off the hook and were left to chase 160 off 30 overs to win. Abingdon got off to an indifferent start, reaching 50 for 5 off the first 10 overs, but then an excellent partnership between Harry Shortis and Matthew Kitchen went a long way to seeing the side home with an over to spare.

Then came Bartholomew in the Cup. They stuttered to 45 for 7 off 20 overs (which included 7 maidens!) before Luke Carter and Angus Weir quickly knocked them off inside 5 overs.

This was followed by a tense but very frustrating tie against Magdalen College School. The side bowled tightly, but a disappointing display in the field, with numerous dropped catches and mis-fields, allowed them to score more than they should have done. Once again, we found ourselves in trouble at 61 for 5 after 12 overs, but Sasha Barras and Harry Shortis batted very sensibly to take us to the brink of victory before some suicidal running saw the final 5 wickets (3 run outs) fall for 5 runs and leave the game tied.

St Edward's were next up on a cold and windy afternoon at Cox's. The

bowlers were unable to make inroads on a wet wicket, which didn't really suit our spin attack, and they targeted a short boundary on one side to post a challenging target. Our reply started slowly against some tight seam bowling and we were never able to keep on top of the run rate, despite a dogged innings from Luke Carter, and fell well short.

After half term the weather picked up and we had several games on hot sunny days, which were ideal to bat first on. St Birinus, who won the U13 cup last season, were the first of these. Despite the loss of a couple of early wickets, Luke Carter and Henry Sensecall displayed great patience and application to steady the ship before embarking on a brutal attack which saw them plunder 96 runs in the final 10 overs. This really knocked the stuffing out of a good St Birinus side. Angus Weir ripped through their top order with some excellent swing bowling before Chris Cooke and Sasha Barras bamboozled their lower order, with the latter finishing the game off with a hat trick.

Bloxham were our semi-final opponents and although they got off to a quick start on their small pitch, they struggled once our spinners came on, scoring a meagre 21 for the loss of 8 wickets from their final 17 overs! Our reply stuttered, losing 4 wickets, but the victory was never really in doubt.

The next game was away at Radley. Having lost the toss and being asked to bowl first, Radley got off to a flyer, reaching 56 for 1 from the first 10 overs, but once again, the spinners clawed us back into the game and had them struggling at 98 for 6, before some sensible batting saw them post a challenging but very gettable target of 170. Harry Shortis, who'd been promoted to opening by this stage, started very positively, but wickets fell

at the other end until Niall Keown joined him and a run-a-ball partnership of 52 had us well placed, needing 80 off 14 overs with 7 wickets remaining, but unfortunately both fell in quick succession and the opportunity was lost.

The final block fixture came against Bradfield and the less said about this game the better as too many of the team didn't appear up for a fight and we were comprehensively beaten.

The final of the Cup saw a rematch with MCS at Banbury Twenty20. They started solidly after electing to bat, but a couple of run outs halted their flow and the spinners pegged them back further to put them on the ropes at 98 for 8 after 30 overs. But unfortunately a late onslaught from their 'tail' saw them bludgeon 64 runs from the final 5 overs and turn the balance back in their favour. We needed to get off to a good start, but we also suffered from two unnecessary run outs and never recovered, falling disappointingly well short of the target.

There is plenty of ability amongst the batsmen, with five different players (Henry Sensecall, Harry Shortis, Luke Carter, Sasha Barras and Matthew Kitchen) making a top score of 40 plus, whilst Niall Keown played some classy cameos but unfortunately struggled with injury for much of the season. However, none of them was able to perform consistently and this is emphasised by the fact that no one got past 30 on more than two occasions all season. They all need to work on their defence and shot selection, especially during the early stages of an innings and then learn not to throw their wicket away once they've got set. The lack of a genuine opening batsman to provide some stability was clearly evident also and is reflected in the fact that we lost 6 wickets in the first overs of our innings.

The bowling had plenty of quality in the spin department with Sasha Barras, Tom Bibby and Chris Cooke all showing good control and consistency and they were often responsible for applying the brakes and taking vital wickets. The opening bowlers, Charlie Fitchett, Charlie Stenton-Putt and Angus Weir, are all capable of doing a good job, but need to develop greater control of their line and length because invariably the opposition were able to get off to a flyer. William Plumb developed well during the season and his gentle medium pacers proved difficult to get away towards the end of the season.

In the field, Henry Sensecall was excellent behind the stumps, whilst Sasha Barras, Luke Carter and Chris Cooke proved reliable and switched-on in the field, but others lacked the necessary focus and intensity, tending to drift in and out of matches, missing vital catches and allowing singles to be taken far too easily. Fielding is an increasingly important facet of the game and is an area they all need to work harder to develop if they're to support their bowlers more and build up the pressure on opposing batsmen.

I've enjoyed working with the side this season and wish them well in the future. There is potential amongst this team and they got themselves into good positions in several of the games that they eventually lost but they need to learn to handle the pressure better and apply themselves throughout a game, not just in patches. This comes from practice generally, so I hope they'll learn from this season and adopt a more disciplined and determined approach to how they practise in the future if they want to progress and perform to their potential.

Andrew Broadbent

Juniors B XI Cricket

The team enjoyed a season of fluctuating fortune: of the four wins and three losses, no result was close, which suggests either some inconsistency or a reluctance to test the nerve.

The first innings of the season was the best, mainly due to a fifth-wicket partnership of 132 between Matthew Kitchen (81, including 12 fours and 1 six) and Varadh Khaitan (57 n.o., 6 fours and 2 sixes). We lost Matthew to the 'A' team, but Varadh went on to become an all-rounder as entertaining as his character, scoring 135 runs (average 45) and taking 4 wickets whilst frequently hitting the middle of the bat.

James Dewar was involved in four opening partnerships of over 50 runs, three with William Plumb. James scored most runs (161) and revealed a good tactical brain as captain. William averaged 58 in four innings and captured 3 Bloxham wickets for 11 runs.

Although Charlie Stenton-Putt played only twice, he took most wickets (7), including 6 (5 bowled) for 10 runs against St Edward's. Matthew Fitchett's 6 wickets included 4 for 21 against Radley. Charlie Bethell took 3 Stowe wickets in one over but subsequently lost confidence.

Despite losing the last match of the season, five boys achieved their personal best: Simon Clarke-Warry (53 runs), David Wheatley, Tom Godfrey, and Alex Davies had their best innings, and Alex (3 wickets) and Max Mannering (2 wickets), both in the Lower School, bowled their spinners well. This augurs well for next year.

The Revd Henry Kirk

Juniors A Results

Stowe	Draw
MCS	Tied
St Edward's	Lost by 27 runs
Radley	Lost by 25 runs
Bradfield	Lost by 78 runs

Lord's Taverners Cup

Oratory	Won by 3 wkts
Bartholomew	Won by 10 wkts
St Birinus	Won by 109 runs
Bloxham	Won by 6 wkts
MCS (Final)	Lost by 83 runs

Juniors B Results

Stowe	Won by 89 runs
Oratory	Lost by 7 wkts
Reading	Won by 8 wkts
St Edward's	Won by 7 wkts
Bloxham	Won by 8 wkts
Radley	Lost by 59 runs
Bradfield	Lost by 4 wkts





Under 12 A Cricket

This has been a hugely successful season for a very talented bunch of guys and their results speak for themselves (played 8, won 8). The success of the team sprang out of a very productive pre-season focused on fielding and some net practice. The benefits of this program were evident as soon as the season got under way with a convincing 79-run victory against St Birinus in the county cup. Notable performances were an aggressive 50 n.o. by skipper Callum Russell, while Max Mannering took 4 for 8 and Matthew Butcher and Archie Wimborne got 2 a piece. We then had a very close match against Magdalen College School, with the bowlers restricting the opposition to 70 all out and two wickets being taken each by Leo Bethell, Max Mannering, John Francis and Matthew Butcher. The batsmen struggled but we eventually won by 2 wickets, finishing off at 73 for 8. Next came a 76-run victory over Oxford High School for Boys with Leo Bethell scoring a quick-fire 31 n.o., before the bowlers restricted OHS to 41 all out, and Matthew Butcher and Freddie Pinkerton taking 3 wickets and 2 wickets respectively. The beautiful

setting of the Oxford Meadows saw us convincingly beat an under strength Christ Church Cathedral School by 119 runs. Callum Russell (60 n.o.) and Alex Grantham (16) were the pick of the batsmen in the total of 178 for 8, while Archie Wimborne (4 for 7) and Max Mannering (2 for 6) reduced the opposition to 59 all out. We then had two easy wins against King Alfred's School (won by 9 wkts) and Cokethorpe (won by 9 wkts), before embarking on the semi-final of the county cup against MCS. It was a very close but low-scoring match, with MCS scoring 69 for 8 (Archie Wimborne 4 for 4 and Max Mannering 2 for 16), while we struggled to 70 for 9 in the last over with no batsman getting into double figures. Our final game was the county cup final against Bartholomew School and it was meant to be our day. We scored an excellent 136 for 1 with Alex Grantham (59 n.o.) and Rhodri Lewis (42) being the pick of the batsman, before our bowlers skittled them out for 30 with the ever-dependable Archie Wimborne taking 4 for 8 and Matthew Butcher ending up with 4 for 4, and the cup was ours. All in all it was an excellent season and the guys fully deserved their end of season accolades. While the whole team



played well throughout the season, a few players are worth a mention. Callum Russell (Av 85) and Alex Grantham (Av 25) were consistently the best batsmen, while Archie Wimborne (20 wickets at 2.6 runs each) was the outstanding bowler, ably assisted by Max Mannering, Matthew Butcher and Leo Bethell.

Robin Southwell-Sander

St Birinus	Won by 79 runs
MCS	Won by 2 wkts
OHS	Won by 76 runs
CCCS	Won by 119 runs
King Alfred's	Won by 9 wkts
Cokethorpe	Won by 9 wkts
MCS	Won by 1 wkt
Bartholomew	Won by 106 runs

Rowing



Senior Rowing

After some preliminary training at School, the season kicked off as usual with the annual trip to America. This year saw the Abingdon senior squad attending the Head of the Schuylkill Regatta in Philadelphia for the first time. We were shown very generous hospitality by St Joseph's Prep School, with whom we stayed all week. During that week we were really immersed in the American culture, we ate every meal to the point of discomfort and spent the majority of our free time cruising around shopping malls. During the week there was also the opportunity to visit New York, although this trip was enjoyed more by some than others (ask George Bone and Andy Hatzis for full details). We trained at least a couple of times every day and so by race day we were familiar with the course. Despite the torrential rain, all crews raced strongly. The Lower 6th VIII overcame an early collision to overtake two crews and secure 2nd place in their event. Abingdon's first-ever senior Quad entry acquitted themselves well and came 9th out of 19 crews. The Upper 6th VIII coped well with the

rapidly worsening weather conditions and finished 2nd out of 37 crews in their event. After emulating Rocky Balboa by running up the iconic steps just like in the film, the rowing part of the trip concluded in the traditional way with two hand-picked crews racing the full course in the worst weather seen by Philadelphia since before they last won the Superbowl. Vass Ragoussis' crew won bragging rights. They seized the lead early on and held it to the finish. During the very expensive flight home we reflected on a successful trip and a job well done.

After gaining experience through the Michaelmas term racing in smaller boats, the last two races before Christmas saw a return to Abingdon's more traditional IVs and VIIIs. The 1st IV powered through the hailstorm to win the Senior 3 event and the 2nd Quad came 10th out of 42 crews despite equipment failure. These were good results considering it was the first time Abingdon School had ever entered the Fours Head of the River (which is raced over the Schools' Head course). Three weeks later the senior squad raced again in Fours at Wallingford Head. The American weather proved

good preparation for all that the Oxfordshire countryside could throw at us. The 1st IV won the J18 event and the second IV came 2nd in the Senior 3 category. We also entered two mixed VIIIs that finished 4th and 5th.

Illness plagued the senior squad in the new year, leading to a set of disappointing results at Reading University Head. All efforts were made to recover for the Schools' Head just 10 days later. Abingdon entered four senior VIIIs, more than any other school. The 3rd and 4th VIIIs finished 3rd and 5th respectively, both in the 3rd VIII category. The 2nd VIII felt they had made progress over the last 10 days and finished 4th in their event. The strength of this year's 1st VIII field was shown by the fact that Abingdon broke the previous course record but still only managed 4th place.

The Easter holidays saw a return to Temple-sur-Lot in France, a favourite proving ground for ASBC. The long stretch of river provides ample space to train for many hours each day and is wide enough for effective seat racing. After a week of intense training, go-karting and amateur

cinematography, tired crews of all ages lined up to conclude the week with a race. After leaving an appropriate head start for the junior crews (as well as a little extra in some cases!) the senior crews set off in pursuit. It was a close race with 4 Vllls overlapping going into the last 200m but the 1st and 2nd Vllls claimed the top two spots.

The summer term kicked off for the 2nd VIII with the BASHER regatta at Dorney, where they showed the progress they had made at training camp by finishing 2nd. The same weekend many of the 1st VIII competed in pairs in the next round of the GB selection procedure. Abingdon had the largest representation of any school or club and five boys achieved automatic section for the final set of trials in July.

As part of our preparation for the National Schools' Regatta, the senior squad sent crews to Wallingford Regatta, who proved competitive against strong opposition. The highlight of the day was the 1st IV, who broke the schoolboy record to win the J18 event. The following week the 2nd and 3rd Vllls raced at Bedford Regatta, the 2nd VIII making the semi-finals. The same weekend the 1st VIII competed at the Ghent regatta in Belgium. They raced in IVs, Vllls and IIs but in every instance were prevented from claiming the top spot by French junior national crews. Despite this, there was some good racing and we learnt some important lessons for National Schools' Regatta just around the corner.

Nat. Schools' was the most important regatta of the season so far. The new-look 2nd VIII looked powerful winning their semi-final and racing their way to a bronze medal in the final. After winning the semi-final, the 1st VIII kept their composure in the final and reeled in several crews who started very fast. They rowed through the field

and took the silver medal behind a very strong Eton crew. On the Sunday the J18 coxless IV were unlucky to be just pipped for the silver medal, finishing 3rd. A photo finish was used to separate the coxed IV from 2nd and 3rd place but they unfortunately finished just outside the medals.

As final preparations for Henley were well under way, the Seniors travelled to Reading Amateur Regatta: the last opportunity to practise two-boat racing on the river. The 2nd VIII beat some university crews and 1st Vllls with strong performances and the 1st VIII won the J18 event.

Unfortunately, the 2nd VIII failed to qualify for the Temple Challenge Cup at Henley this year. After our performance at National Schools', the 1st VIII entered the Princess Elizabeth Challenge Cup as a seeded crew, giving us an easier route through the early stages of the competition. As expected, we proceeded through the Wednesday and Thursday rounds without mishap. For the last three years Abingdon had been knocked out on the Friday and many towpath pundits thought it was to be a repeat performance when Belmont Hill USA were leading by 1¼ lengths at the barrier. However, we never lost our faith in the race plan or in the other members of the crew and refused to let the Yanks shake free. Still down almost a length with 400m to go, we turned off our brains and turned on the speed. When we drew level with 100m to go it was evident that Belmont Hill were broken and we made it to the line ¾ of a length ahead.

There was no time to rest on our laurels as the next day we faced another American crew, Brunswick School. Despite giving away a slight lead at the start to the heavier crew in the stiff headwind, they found it difficult

to live with our cruising pace through the middle part of the race and we eventually won by 2½ lengths to book a place in the final against the unbeaten Eton crew. We pulled out the best start our crew had ever done in practice or racing and rowed well down the length of the course with a determination that can only be achieved by hours of sweat and tears in the gym. Despite giving our best possible performance, the bigger Eton crew proved too strong for us and we had to be content with the badge of Henley finalists.

With only two days to recover, the majority of the 1st VIII proceeded to Nottingham for the final selection for the international rowing teams. Abingdon was strongly represented and several boys made it into international teams. The results were as follows:

George Rossiter stroked JM8+ to a silver medal at the World Championships.

Felix Wood stroked the JM4+ (coxed by Rory Copus) to 5th place at the World Championships.

Jamie Cook won two gold medals in the VIII at the Coupe de la Jeunesse.

Jack Maynard, Tim Clarke and Dan Boddington won gold medals for England in the VIII at the Home Countries regatta.

The rowers would like to thank everyone who has contributed to making this year a success. Thank you parents for putting up with our obsession. Special mention must of course go to the coaches who have given up so much of their free time in the pursuit of greatness. Thank you Peter Haining, Athol Hundermark, Mike Webb and ATB.

*Felix Wood VI SAE
Ian Houlsey (Boat Club captain) VI PEH*



Senior Rowing - Henley

The 1st VIII produced stunning form to secure the School's third representation in the Final of the Henley Royal Regatta.

Henley Regatta is the most significant school-rowing event on the international calendar and marks the culmination of many years of training and preparation for the selected few that get the chance to represent the School's 1st VIII. The five-day regatta is run as a knockout event that sees school crews from all over the world competing to win the *Princess Elizabeth Challenge Cup*. The crew's second place at the National Schools' Regatta in May earned them a selected place, which reduced the likelihood of their meeting the other top crews at Henley until the Friday of the Regatta.

In the first round of the Cup, the crew were drawn against St George's College (London). We were fortunate to have an early race slot in the stifling conditions that later reached 36°C. It was only the second time since the event began in 1839 that gentlemen in the Stewards' Enclosure were permitted to remove their jackets. The

nerves were evident as we realised that the event we had been preparing for all year had actually arrived. We began tentatively as we paddled to the start, but settled into routine on the warm-up and focused on the task in hand as we lined up alongside Temple Island for the start of the 2112m race. There was to be no change to the form guide as we got off cleanly and settled into a long and commanding rhythm, drawing steadily away from St George's over the length of the course.

With relief that the first race was over, it was now time to rehydrate and rest in order to prepare effectively for what we all hoped was going to be a five-day campaign. Half of all crews entered went home after the first day.

On Thursday we were drawn against Durham School and repeated our performance from Wednesday. A solid start allowed the crew to settle into a long and relaxed rhythm and power down the course with ruthless efficiency. For every minute spent racing down the Henley course over the five days, we had put in over ten hours' preparation in the gym, on the

ergo and on the water.

For the last two years the eventual winners had knocked out Abingdon on the Friday. This weighed heavily on our minds as it was apparent we faced a significant challenge against the strongest of the American crews racing in the event. Belmont Hill boasted an impressive crew, outweighing us by more than a stone a man, but this could not deter us as the majority of the crews we were likely to face in subsequent races would also be much heavier.

The intensive training regime and precise preparation came down to this race. We knew that Belmont was quick off the start and we knew we weren't. Our race plan hinged on our being mature enough to be over a length down for the majority of the course and still believe we could win. Belmont had never been pushed for the whole length of a 2000m race before and so there was inevitably an element of blind faith involved. Pre-race preparations went well: we were fully aware of the challenge ahead and, more importantly, all were totally committed to the race plan. The start was as predicted and Belmont Hill went off at over 50 strokes

per minute to open an early lead of just short of a length at the end of the Island. They went for the jugular as they pushed hard to open clear water and succeeded in getting to a-quarter-of-a-length clear water at the Barrier. This could so easily have been the end of the race had the crew not held firm. Rory Copus in the cox's seat kept calm and inspired the crew to hold Belmont as they moved over in an attempt to wash us down. His mature approach paid dividends as Belmont Hill received a warning for their steering and an immediate push was instinctively called, which pulled us back to a length down. With 750 metres to go and still a length down, the call came again for a significant push: both crews fought it out with Abingdon gaining a quarter of a length overlap. At the start of the Enclosures we were still three-quarters of a length down, with 400 metres remaining. Stroke by stroke the battle went on, with Abingdon clawing back foot by foot. Rory was asking for more and George Rossiter in the stroke seat was raising the rate and lifting the boat towards the finish. When the crews drew level with 100m to go, Belmont Hill had nothing left as the Abingdon boat surged through, buoyed by belief and growing confidence. The three-quarters of a length verdict flattered what was an epic race that will live with all of us forever.

The reward for this victory was a semi-final berth against another American crew (Brunswick School) in front of a 100,000-strong crowd of spectators. Brunswick School also had had a tough race on Friday, coming back from a length down to beat Latymer Upper School, and would be tough opposition. There could be no room for complacency as the form guide counts for little across the Atlantic and both crews were brimming with confidence after their previous races. A strong headwind greeted us at the

end of the Island as Brunswick led by less than a canvas, having thrown everything at us early on, much in the same way as Belmont Hill. Brunswick, however, was having less success and struggled to compete with the high-cruising speed of the Abingdon boat as we steadily drew away in front of the packed riverbank.

Sunday! The boat tent is nearly empty as all the losing crews have de-rigged and gone home; only 38 boats remain from the initial 468 that entered the regatta. The challenge is an Eton crew unbeaten this year and one of the fastest school crews in recent history, recording new record times to the Barrier and Fawley in their race on Wednesday. We knew what we were up against and that made us even more up for it, with everything to gain. We took to the water without any regret or questions unanswered and were as prepared as we could be. All were once again committed to our role in the belief that our best performance could challenge them and produce the kind of result that would be remembered for years to come. Coming off the start the crews were level and pushing hard; at the end of the Island, Eton had crept out to a canvas lead; and at the Barrier (550m) Eton had further extended their lead to three-quarters of a length. With thoughts of rowing down Belmont on Friday, the crew pushed on – our race, our rhythm. From the Barrier to Fawley, rowing into a strong headwind and conceding a stone a man, try as we might we couldn't hold them as they moved out further. Alas, a victory was not to be as in 2002, and Eton rowed out winners. The memories will live on and so too will the lessons learned. Was it worth it? Every second!!!

Well done and thank you to all who played a role.

Athol Hundermark



GB Rowing

Only days after racing in the final at Henley, members of the 1st VIII were back out on the water to compete for places in the Great Britain boats at the trials held in Nottingham. With no time to rest on their laurels, the boys had to perform in a multitude of trial races to determine a rank order and separate out those who could stay and those who would go home. The School can boast that it has produced the most GB representatives in the Junior system over the last decade, and this year was no exception. Felix Wood, George Rossiter and Rory Copus were all selected to represent Great Britain at the Junior World Championships to be held in Brive-la-Gaillarde, France, from 5-8 August. Jamie Cook was selected to represent Great Britain in the men's eight event at the Coupe de la Jeunesse held in Vichy, France. This completes a family double at the event after older brother Oliver Cook raced last year.

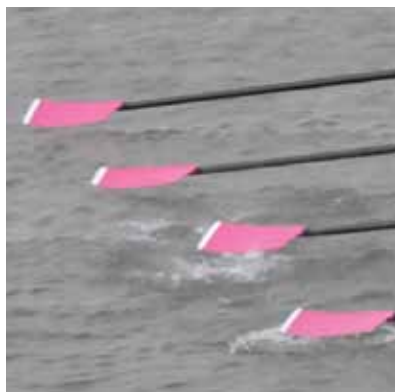
On the theme of brothers, both George Rossiter and Matthew Rossiter will be

stroking their respective men's eights for Great Britain following their success in leading their respective crews into the Henley Finals.

Jack Maynard, Timothy Clarke and Daniel Boddington were also selected for national honours to represent England in the Home Countries International Regatta, held at the less exotic Holme Pierrepont, Nottingham. The boys made up the core of the men's eight and produced an excellent display, leading the field from start to finish and holding off a fast-finishing Irish crew by one second. The same Irish crew were selected to race at the Coupe de la Jeunesse, where we hope they will suffer the same fate at the hands of Jamie Cook in the GB Eight.

Four Old Abingdonians were also representing their countries at the U23 World Championships at Racice, Czech Republic on 23-26 July. Max Gander and Ryan Bucke were selected to represent the Great Britain Coxed Four at the event, while Matthew Rossiter and Nicolai Jurgens lined up alongside each other in the A final of the men's eight. Nicolai Jurgens came home the victor in this domestic battle with a silver medal, while Matthew Rossiter bagged the bronze, bringing his tally to two World Championship Medals after his Gold in the Coxless Four in 2007.

Athol Hundermark



J16 A and B Rowing

The competition this year was very high with only one J16 eight racing. Everyone was therefore very eager to prove his place in the boat to a new coach. The first few weeks of the season were based around getting everyone's fitness up after the long Christmas break. Several ergo tests and sessions took place with everyone pushing themselves to produce quick times – Robin Veale winning the prize for throwing up the most times after tests. There were also huge improvements from many of the squad with Oliver Stanier and Nick Williams improving by over a minute, and Dominic Graham showing his power with the fastest 5km time in the year.

The first race of the year was Reading University Head on 28 February. The crew was: Cox: James Chitty; Stroke: Jamie Copus; 7: John Carter; 6: Vassilis Ragoussis; 5: Calvin Walker; 4: Dominic Graham; 3: Charlie Uden; 2: Robin Veale; Bow: Will Davey. We raced the 4km course, first, in the

morning, in the J16 event, and then again in the afternoon, entered in the novice category. We raced well to come fourth in both classes. The main race of the Lent term was the Schools' Head of the River on 10 March. We had strong competition with an Italian crew behind us and with Eton in front of us. Having rowed strongly down the Tideway, we came fifth overall and it became pretty evident that KGS and Eton would be our main competition this year.

The first Regatta race of the year was at Nottingham at the Junior Inter-regional Regatta. A coxless four comprising of Jamie Copus, John Carter, Vassilis Ragoussis and myself raced against five other regions, which included a fast four from King's Chester. With a fluid rhythm set down by Jamie Copus in the stroke seat, we won the semi-final and had the quickest time over both heats. The power put down by the middle pair aided the boat to ride across the waves in the final to our first gold medal of the year.



On 3 May, we competed at Wallingford Regatta. After a hard, but fun, training camp in the South of France, and extra training in the holidays, we were ready to make a splash at Dorney Lake. We unfortunately had a difficult draw and narrowly lost out to Eton, Shiplake and Henley, despite racing well, with an aggressive debut from Ed Griffiths and strong leadership from our new cox, Hugo Mendus.

One of the most memorable regattas of the year for the whole crew was definitely Bedford, and not just because of the accident damaging the boat. At first it appeared that we would not be able to race as we didn't have a boat, but we managed to get one by borrowing boats from the 2nd eight and 3rd eight. With a completely new order and new boat, we raced in both J16 and novice categories. It was evident in the first race against Bedford that we had speed, with an impressive performance from Andrew Elliott, filling in for Calvin Walker in the third seat. At lunch, we had the biggest race of the day against the Eton A boat. We did some of the best rowing of the year and with an epic performance from Vassilis Ragoussis at stroke, driven on by Hugo Mendus as cox, we were only

one second off, and closing down the gap at the end of the race. Narrowly missing out, we were determined to win the novice event. We raced Eton's 2nd boat in the final and won our first Tankards of the year – a perfect build-up towards National Schools'.

On Saturday 23 May, we competed in the Eight at the National Schools' with a crew of Cox: Hugo Mendus; Stroke: John Carter; 7: Vassilis Ragoussis; 6: Charlie Uden; 5: Domanic Graham; 4: Calvin Walker; 3: Edward Griffiths; 2: Will Davey; Bow: Jamie Copus. In the heat we raced well but lost to Shiplake by only a length, but we did go on to win silver. We unfortunately did not do as well as we had hoped and did not row as well as in the semi-final. On the next day, we were still disappointed from the previous day. We put out a coxless four of Jamie Copus, John Carter, Vassilis Ragoussis and myself against twenty-four other crews. In the time trial we attained the third-fastest time, which put us in a good position for the semi-final that followed. We won the semi-final, beating Eton by a length; they came in second. In the final, we raced well and finished 3rd, getting a bronze medal behind KGS and Westminster.

After half term, we raced a coxed four at Reading Amateur Regatta. The four was the same as on the National Schools' Sunday but with the addition of Hugo Mendus in the cox's seat. We beat an Eton four in the first round and then went on to face Henley in the final. We won convincingly with a verdict of 'easy'. This helped us towards Marlow Regatta on 20 June, our last eight's race of the year. It was a straight final but with hard competition from Eton and Radley. We raced incredibly well to finish 2nd behind Eton. Calvin Walker's aggression and determination helped us to beat Radley, together with Charlie Uden's guns and drive. What a fantastic race to finish the eights with!

Obviously, none of this would have happened without the hours dedicated by Mr MacDonald and the support from Mr Litchfield. I am sure I speak on behalf of the whole crew when I say how grateful we are to them for this whole rowing season and everything they have put in to the crew this year.

Will Davey 5 PW

J15 Rowing

With a year of sculling under our belts, we went into this season hoping that we would quickly learn how to sweep row. We all trained hard and both teams came in the top ten at the Schools' Head of the River and at Reading Head. We went off to training camp at the Centre Omnisports in France and were ready to train hard enough to be able to compete with the tough competition we met.

So we came back in the summer term hoping that we would be able to perform well. However, after being knocked out in the semi-final at the National Schools' Regatta, we started doing more two-kilometre and thirty-minute ergos so as to improve our fitness, our technique and our game plan. We went to Reading Regatta hoping that we would get to the final. After winning comfortably in the first round, we went on to face the Eton crew in the semi-final that had beaten us at the National Schools' Regatta. We won that race by four lengths and then beat Shiplake in the final. After this victory at Reading, we went off

to Marlow with confidence, believing that we would perform well. In the first round we won that event, beating King's College School by 10 seconds and Radley by half a second. As a result, we went into the final confident we could win. We led the race to the 1500 mark and with 500 metres to go a well-drilled Radley crew just took the lead and won by one second. We would like to thank Dr Smith, Mr Morgan and Mr Callan for doing a good job of coaching us this season.

James Tracey 4 RKJ

James Richards 4 RKJ



J14 Rowing

This year's group of third years followed very much in the mould of the group last year, with high numbers and plenty of potential: it never ceases to amaze me how tall a 13-year-old boy can be! Competition from the other schools, however, was going to be fierce, with many of them having trained during the first term that was unusually without flooding, giving them a sizeable headstart. The standard we were aiming for was shown to us in an early fixture with St Edward's, where our two matched A/B crews were well beaten by the St Edward's A crew, while our lower boats all beat their B crew. On the rowing machines, Mathew Hartshorne, Luke Carter, and Kristian Wood were contesting for top position. By the end of the term and the annual Bedford Quads event, there seemed to be good strength throughout the group. Last year Bedford had taken many of the honours at this event and we were looking for revenge, both against them and against St Edward's for the earlier defeat. In the end, we came away with over half the medals on offer, the A and B crews clocking the two fastest times.

The Easter holidays were spent getting the hang of single sculling, with Milan Banerjee and Charlie or Jamie Marsh in particular showing good skills. This was unfortunately to little avail when we first met the other big names at the BASHER regatta a couple of weeks into the term; despite our physical strength, the finesse of the other crews was impressive and our crews were left trailing. This left plenty to do before the National Schools' Regatta, and although plenty of progress was made so that we achieved the 8th best time in the time trial, this was not enough to get us through to the final. One highlight was our first entry in the quads event, where our D quad managed to qualify against other B quads and race well in the semi-finals.



L – R James Richards, Howard Winfield, Simon Spafford, Harry Gibbs, Alex Fletcher, Henry Morgan (coach)



J14 B in the lead against St Edward's

The rest of the season was a little disappointing: where we had scored successes the previous year we came up against strong opposition or, as in the case of Marlow Regatta, faced equipment (and personall) failures.

Hugh Price

Inter-House Ergo Competition

Four-man teams, from the nine houses, competed in three age-group classes in the inter-house ergo competition, producing some excellent racing in the School's new ergo suite. The senior age group was won in an exceptionally fast time of 5:50min by the team from School House, made up of Jacob Schleu, Dan Boddington, Julius Gerstmeyer and George Bone. Webb's and Older's had to settle for second and third place respectively, separated by only 0.1 of a second.

The combined J15 and J16 age-group was dominated by an impressive Older's team of Jamie Copus, John Carter, William Davey and Tom Pagel, who won in a time of 6:14min, followed by Crescent House and Christodoulou's in third place.

The J14s' event was the closest of the day with 15 seconds separating the first eight crews. The valiant efforts of Leo Calnan from O'Doherty's managed to stave off a charging finish by Mathew Hartshorne of Phelps' House in the dying moments of the

race. Leo and his team mates Kristian Wood, Jonathan Moloney and Will Barnes came home in a winning time of 7:03.6min. Phelps' were second with 7:03.7 and Older's third with 7:06.1

Hugh Price

Inter-House Quads Competition

On Wednesday 1 July, while the 1st VIII was busy winning at some tin-pot regatta downstream in Henley, the real action was on the Abingdon stretch as the third and fourth years combined to battle it out in crews of four (plus coxswain) for the glory of being known as the best House at sculling. Almost every House was able to put out a strong team, but a no-show from O'Doherty's (despite being the current holders of the third-year house ergo competition) in the first round gave automatic qualification for the semi-finals to Crescent and Phelps'; however, the race was on for an easier qualification to the final, which Phelps' won by 1½ lengths. The second heat saw hot favourites Older's push out a

two-length victory over Christodoulou's, with School House in third place. In the final heat, Franklin's and a Boyd's/O'Doherty's/School House composite knocked out third place Webb's.

The semi-finals were one-on-one and produced some hard-fought races. Older's continued their fine form to beat Crescent by two lengths; Franklin's versus Christodoulou's was the closest yet, coming down to ¾ length as Christodoulou's put a final sprint in, while Phelps' eased past the Boyd's composite.

Thus the final was between Older's, Franklin's and Phelps'. This was close for the first half of the race, where Phelps', stroked by Mathew Hartshorne, and containing only third years, tussled with Older's, both coxes doing well to keep apart. Older's, strong favourites, found that their power was not being matched by their finesse, and after a brief clash, dropped back slightly. Meanwhile, as if in another race on the other side of the course, Franklin's, showing the best synchronisation of the crews, were edging in front, with the other two crews seemingly oblivious. Eventually Phelps' put the pressure on to catch them, but the blade-work and rhythm of Franklin's, coxed by Edmund Lewis, was enough to take them over the line in 1st place by a ½ length, with Older's another length back.

Hugh Price



The final of the inter-house quad competition

Badminton



At the start of the Michaelmas term, and with a gratifyingly good grace, the badminton players resumed the trek by various means – minibus, pedal and bi-pedal - to the Vale of the White Horse centre. On Open Day a selection of players briefly sampled the refurbished sports hall and established that, as anticipated, it has been rendered more cluttered overhead and clattery to the ear than before; nonetheless the feeling was one of relief at the prospect of having a home again. New recruits to the 'A' team are David Choy, fresh from Hong Kong in the lower sixth, and Daniel Chen in 2E. They have seemingly readily absorbed the tradition of competitive play and cheerful goodwill that so impresses the staff at the schools we visit.

The Michaelmas term was not incident, injury or illness free; Adrian Lo was not able to play at all after sustaining an ankle injury while playing football. Jianghao Zhu has not always been available through academic commitments. Edward Callow's back has protested from time to time. Bloxham felt unequal to Abingdon's challenge in early September, but an 'A' and a 'B' team visited Cheltenham on 4 October and both teams won 6-3.

On 15 October Abingdon played The Oratory and won 14-2. The remaining Michaelmas term's results are below.

Michaelmas term's results

(Abingdon's score is first in each case)

21 Oct: A & B v Rugby (3-6, 7-2)

12 Nov: v Bloxham (14-2)

20 Nov: v Wellington (10-6)

26 Nov: U19 v Wantage OSBA (7-0)

29 Nov: 3-way v Cheltenham and Malvern (7-2, 4-5)

03 Dec: U19 v MCS OSBA (7-0)

When the 'full' team has been available Abingdon has won, although this has not always been the case when we have played 'B' team boys in the 'A's, as against Rugby and Malvern, but David Choy has given the team a huge and welcome boost and joined (captain) Alex Smith in setting standards of speed, power and deftness that the rest are steadily absorbing. We accommodated Bloxham and, up to a point, Rugby School in the 'B' team games by fielding U16 rather than sixth-form players. People who don't normally get to play in matches benefited from this and seemed to enjoy the experience thoroughly.

Lent Term

Jun Tao, Captain of Badminton 2007-8, arranged a meeting of recent and not-so-recent players on 28 December.

Originally it was hoped that the gathering might be in the refurbished sports hall but repairs and 'finishing off' made this impossible, so the gathering was in the VOWH centre on Audlett Drive. Jun managed to entice Tim Middleton, Tobi Ojo, Chris North, James Li, Alex Smith, Richard Moon, Edward Callow, Ramon Bonfield and Julian Martin to eschew family firesides and cold turkey in favour of cheerful sport with friends and legends. 'Business as usual' ought to have been the slogan of the new school term but the weather had other ideas and a number of fixtures fell through because of travel impeded by snow. Nonetheless, on 28 February Abingdon A beat Cheltenham College 9-0 and Abingdon B beat Cheltenham 6-3.

In the independent schools' round of the county competition the usual suspects were Abingdon and MCS. The outcome was 'one each apiece all round' when Abingdon's U14s beat MCS 4-1 but the U16s lost 1-4, so only the U14s qualified to play in the Oxford Area's Center Parks National Schools Competition. Abingdon Bs beat Rugby School 5-4 with everything to play for in the last game, although John Mulvey and Nick Williams who were playing it didn't know this at the time! Part of the U19 boys and some reserves lost a 'friendly' with Wood Green School, but the Abingdon/St Helen's mixed U19 team beat Wood Green 5-4 in the Oxford Schools League. On Wednesday 18 March Abingdon and St Helen's U19 mixed badminton team ended the season on a positive note by beating Burford School 7-2.

In the March 'triangular' fixture Abingdon beat both Cheltenham



College (9-0) and Malvern College (6-3) in a powerful return to form. The team consisted of Alex Smith, David Choy, Julian Martin, Jianghao Zhu, Adrian Lo, Richard Moon, Edward Callow and a late and very capable stand-in, Jonathan Chung. All are from the sixth form except Jonathan, who is from Crescent fourth year.

The sixth-form house doubles competition was won by Older's in the persons of Alexander Smith and Edward Callow. Runners-up: Phelps'. The Middle School competition was won by Crescent in the persons of Nick Acutt and Jonathan Chung (fifth and fourth form), who took three games to beat James Zhou and Edward O'Brien of Older's (third and fourth form).

A couple of days after the end of term, a decent number of players from the school entered the Oxon Schools' Tournament and scored the following results:

Oxon Schools' Tournament results

U17 Boys Doubles Winners:
Edward Callow and Ramon Bonfield
U17 Boys Doubles Runners-up:
Julian Martin and Richard Moon
U19 Boys Singles Winner:
David Choy
U19 Boys Singles Runner-up:
Richard Moon
U19 Boys Doubles Winners:
David Choy and Richard Moon
U13 Boys Doubles Runner-up:
Daniel Chen

We were invited to enter Solihull School's U14 and U15 tournament on the first Sunday of the summer term and after some practice to get over the influence of tennis or squash the U14s won their part of the tournament and beat four schools from the Birmingham area in the process. They were also allowed to enter the U15 competition, in which they still beat a couple of schools, although they lost to Abingdon's U15s who came third in quite a challenging competition against seven other teams. The U14 team consisted of James Zhou and Maxwell Brittan (third year) and Daniel Chen and Adam Uberoi (second year.) The U15 team was Jonathan Chung, Edward O'Brien, Timothy Li and Nicholas Topping; Mark Lee came as travelling reserve and scorer.

Once exams were out of the way, the final of the Oxfordshire U19s boys league could take place. Abingdon was runner-up to Bartholomew School, Eynsham.

Badminton Colours are now held by Alexander Smith, David Choy and Julian Martin. Half Colours are held by Edward Callow, Richard Moon, Ramon Bonfield and Jianghao Zhu. Lower School Colours for badminton are held by Daniel Chen.

Personalia

I hope that Alexander Smith (Captain, 2008-9) will not be offended when I describe him as a 'made' player. That the material was there became clear when in quite a short time after coming forward during the third form, he exploited some good Oxfordshire and Korean coaching and made himself into a technically very correct badminton player with an attractive range of shots and strategies. To this observer, occasionally he seems to prolong a rally with dainty shots in the hope of an even better opening, rather than killing the first vulnerable return, but his results speak for themselves.

By contrast, Jianghao Zhu could be described as an intuitive player. He first attracted attention in the Lower School but seemed to move on apace when in the Middle School he played for a sixth-form 'B' team. He tried to take on an opponent two or three years older in a power game and, predictably, failed. When he asked for advice I suggested that he use his natural speed by meeting the shuttle at the net and stealing time from his opponents who would quickly be out of position – then power would not be necessary. His considerable cleverness allowed him to do this at once: since then he has seldom been passed at the net and is a much appreciated partner.

With the departure of only these two 'senior' players, the prospects for success in 2009-10 are good because, as the account above makes clear, the current Lower Sixth contains a strong group of skilful, competitive, increasingly experienced players.

Ian Macdonald

Tennis

Senior Tennis

The Tennis Club has again had a fine season throughout all the age-groups with a 61% win record over a total of 128 matches played. The standard continues to be set at the top end of the School with such legends of the court as Jonny Bucke, Justin Robinson and Dale Barker. The enthusiasm for the game shown by all the lads competing for places in the 1st VI has resonated throughout the School and allowed the Club to put out up to four teams per age-group.

Ben Richards and Tom Francis, our two coaches, have been the driving force behind raising the bar, and their coaching sessions have been structured to provide a competitive, focused environment. We are very grateful for all their efforts this term and we hope to be able to utilise their expertise again next year.

The season started in April with a couple of days pre-season at the Vale of the White Horse courts. This was an opportunity to get time on court and for the boys to familiarise themselves with the demands of match play. Ben Richards was on hand to fine-tune any technical glitches that had crept in over the winter and the Club was soon up and running in our first block fixture against Magdalen College School.

The 1st VI, fielding a side consisting of Jonny Bucke and Euan Campbell at first pair, Sam Murrell and Joel Morris at second, and Justin Robinson and Dale Barker at third, left it to the two young guns at second pair to win the match for Abingdon. This was a confidence-

building start for the team, especially for Sam and Joel on debut for the 1st VI. There were also wins for the U16 and U15A teams, with fine performances of note from Xilin Song and Josh Ridley. The 1st VI followed this up with another good win against Shrewsbury, a game where Euan Campbell and Jonny Bucke really started to hit their straps. Their left-hand/right-hand combination imposed itself at the net and the pair played the percentage game that Mr Brenchley was craving.

Meanwhile in the 2nd VI squad, skipper Cody Yellowlees-Bound was working tirelessly to get the combinations right. The decisions made prior to the Stowe game were fully justified, as Cody led his men to a resounding victory. This pattern continued against St Edward's and Oratory, only for Eton to demolish a team so high on confidence.

The 1st VI continued to perform well throughout the remainder of the season, with good wins against Eton 2nd VI and a well-fought draw against Marlborough. The exam season broke up the winning combinations and a 1st VI Abingdon side went down to St Edward's, Wellington and Bradfield.

The season ended with the first annual Leavers v. Staff match. The staff packed their stars into the second pairing with Mr Brenchley and Mr Forth looking in great touch. The two tennis coaches headed up the staff team at first pair and the third pair failed to deliver a win on the day. The match went down to the wire and the Leavers team got the lucky breaks on the day to gain a scratchy win.



Tennis colours were awarded to Euan Campbell, Justin Robinson and Dale Barker, with half colours being awarded to Cody Yellowlees-Bound.

Colts Tennis

The U16s have a bunch of fine players in their ranks and although they were not able to match last season's unbeaten record they did win five of the six matches they played, and only narrowly lost to Radley. The wins came as a result of some hard hitting from Xilin Song, Josh Ridley, Hugh Brash and Joshua Bradlow. With this year-group coming up into the sixth form, it will make competition for places even tougher.

Steve Brenchley

U15A Tennis

We had a good start to the season, with a convincing win over MCS. Our third pair, Charlie Leslau and Rupert Waterson, was the strongest pair at the beginning of the season. They consistently performed at a high level, making life awkward for the opposition with their contrasting styles. A few matches into the season, all three pairs found form and all helped in an impressive victory over Stowe. Once we had found our form, we proved to



be the team to beat. We had a slight blip against St Edward's, where we lost narrowly. James Edwards and Ed O'Brien put everything into the game, but it was not enough to win against our rivals. Unfortunately, we were out of our league against Eton, when we only managed to win one set. After Eton, we travelled to Shiplake, where we played their 1st VI. The game was close but we narrowly lost out. Ed O'Brien was our star, producing good results for the first pair. Next we went to Wellington, to find that our form had returned. We won the match, with impressive performances from third-formers Peter Honey and Freddie Locock-Harrison. Unfortunately, after our game against Bradfield, our key member, Jack Wilson, suffered an injury. Luckily there was only one match left in the season, which was against Radley. For this game we brought down Joel Morris from the 1st VI, who helped to guide us to victory.

Our greatest achievement of the season was winning the Oxfordshire Independent Schools Tournament (OXIST). Special mention must go to Joel Morris and Jack Wilson, the top pair, who led the team well. We competed against tough opposition such as Radley, Oratory, St Edward's and MCS. However, we managed to overpower all-comers and emerge triumphant.

Tom Jeffery 4 RKJ

U15B Tennis

The season for the U15B team was a mixed bag. There were convincing victories, nail-biting tiebreak draws, and a couple more losses than we would have liked.

Our first match against MCS came slightly prematurely – only four days into the term – and after only a single training session we were less than prepared. However, we still managed to win two and draw one on Magdalen's grass courts to end with a 2½ -6½ loss. On the back of this defeat, training obviously helped a bit, as we went to Stowe's astro-turf and won 8-1, with a promising partnership developing between Jamie Campbell and Aniel Dhanjal, dropping only nine games in four sets. Tom McGivan also showed some promising play. A close draw followed on St Edward's bounceless astro-turf. The result of this fixture went down to the last point of the last game, ending 4½-4½. U14 players Peter Honey and Freddie Locock-Harrison deserve special mention for not dropping a game in each of their four sets.

Eton came to St Helen's for a match on the hard courts in very difficult windy conditions. Jack Ponting capitalised on this with his powerful serving. However, this didn't change the result as we still lost 1-8. Shiplake put out their U18B first and second pairs, and on the grass courts Abingdon immediately made a point, Alistair Duff and Alexander Jeffreys winning 6-0 and Rupert Waterson and James Edwards winning 6-1 in the first matches. We went on to win 4-2 overall. Going to Wellington College was a learning curve on the astro-turf, with a 2-7 loss overall. Special thanks are due to Jake Ampleford, who stepped in at the last minute as a reserve.

Our longest fixture of the season was at Bradfield, with a very close last match being cut short, with Abingdon in a strong position. We lost 1½ -7½. At the OXIST tournament at Radley College, we sent two pairs out against St Edward's, Radley and Pangbourne. A strong performance from Nick Earl assured us a couple of wins, with an overall Pangbourne victory. Our last match of the season, against Radley on clay, resulted in a 1-8 loss. Thanks to Nick Krol for stepping in at short notice. We can take these results into next year, having established partnerships earlier, and hopefully get an even more successful season.

U14 Tennis

Led on court by Elliott Mills, the U14s have been run superbly by Dr Wiejak and Mr Phelps this season. They have racked up a good number of scalps on the circuit, and players such as Peter Honey, Freddie Locock-Harrison and Mensun Yellowlees-Bound have played with consistency and drive; their ranks supplemented by Giles Waterson and George Ruck, who have made a huge impact on some U14 school fixtures.

The Tennis Club's internal singles knockout competition, the Buckley Cup, was won by Joel Morris, who beat Peter Honey in the final. In a tight semi-final, Joel overcame the resolute defence of Giles Waterson to grind out a tough win. This was without doubt the best match I have seen played for the Buckley Cup and with Giles being an U13, I'm sure he will get his hands on the trophy in the near future.

The Lower School Tennis Cup for singles was won by Giles Waterson and the doubles by Francois Macé and Archie Ashford.

Steve Brenchley

Swimming



Our new pool was opened in October 2008: boasting eight lanes, an automatic timing system and underwater lighting, it was set to be an excellent environment for developing competitive swimming at Abingdon School. Training happened three times a week and the first term we concentrated on improving technique and developing an aerobic base. The first competition was against Radley. Abingdon won every race at both senior and intermediate year-groups. This was an encouraging start and promoted a greater intensity of training in preparation for a gala against Eton. At Eton we struggled to match their depth of ability and the boys soon realised the amount of training that was needed if we were going to compete at a high level, and also that we needed to recruit more swimmers from the younger years.

The Bromsgrove and Stowe relays provided a great opportunity to pitch our best swimmers against a number

of other schools around the country. At Stowe, the U15s came second in both the medley and freestyle relays and the U18s came third in their events. On 30 April, the U15 and U18 teams went to the Bromsgrove relays, competing against eighteen other schools. The U15 team made it to the final in both relays and then came third overall in the Medley Relay.

The first-ever gala to be held in the new pool was against Stowe. The timing system was perfect and really enhanced the occasion. Stowe had a strong senior team but our U14 and U16 teams won convincingly, ensuring that we claimed overall victory with a score of 117 points to 105. The final event in the swimming calendar was the House Swimming Competition. Over 200 swimmers raced against each other, setting new school records and highlighting the talent for the coming years.

Nicholas Stokes

House Swimming Competition:

U18 Cup – won by Phelps'

- Highest individual score:
Sam Walton - 58 (out of 60)
- Thomas Bradfield broke the school record for the 50m backstroke in a time of 38.98s

U16 Cup – won by Phelps'

- Highest individual score:
Guy Giles and Drew Finnigan tied - 59 each (out of a possible 60)
- Guy Giles also broke the school record in the 50m freestyle with an impressive time of 26.88s

U14 Cup – won by the Lower School

House Cup – won by Webb's

- Highest individual score:
Fraser Capill by winning all his races, and he also broke the school record for the 50m butterfly with a time of 37.82s.
- Sam Ward broke the school record for 50m freestyle with a time of 30.95s.
- Thomas Chan, who had only been training with the squad for a week, broke the school record for 50m breaststroke in a time of 38.67s.

House Swimming Cup – overall winners – Phelps'

The House Cup was provided by Joseph Canlan-Shaw, an Old Abingdonian who swims at Loughborough University and recently represented Wales in the Celtic Tri-Nations Championship.

Two Abingdon boys have been selected to swim for the English Schools' Swimming Association and National Championships: Guy Giles and Drew Finnigan both swim for the City of Oxford Swimming Club and are hoping to make it through to the finals in November 2009.

School Swimming Records: Individual Events

Distance	Stroke	U14			U16			U18		
		Competitor	Time	Event	Competitor	Time	Event	Competitor	Time	Event
100m	Individual Medley	Fraser Capill	1:20.08	Stowe Gala (2009)	Drew Finnigan	1:07.39	Eton Gala (2009)	Vasily Kiyko	1:11.06	Stowe Gala (2009)
50m	Butterfly	Fraser Capill	37.82	House Swimming (2009)	Guy Giles	29.78	Radley Gala (2009)	Ronald Liu	34.08	Stowe Gala (2009)
50m	Backstroke	Fraser Capill	34.79	Stowe Gala (2009)	Drew Finnigan	30.15	Stowe Relays (2009)	Thomas Bradfield	38.98	House Swimming (2009)
50m	Breaststroke	Thomas Chan	38.67	House Swimming (2009)	Tim Gladstone	40.34	Eton Gala (2009)	Ronald Liu	36.47	Stowe Gala (2009)
50m	Freestyle	Sam Ward	30.95	House Swimming (2009)	Drew Finnigan	26.88	House Swimming (2009)	Vasily Kiyko	27.49	Eton Gala (2009)

Swimming at Abingdon 1893-2009

The Abingdonian first mentions swimming as a School activity in 1893, when it refers to the swimming races that were part of the School Regatta. The Regatta was held at Culham Reach but its not always possible to tell where the swimming races were held. In 1893 they seem to have been held in JT Morland's private swimming pool in his garden but after this there is no mention of the location until 1908 when they were held at the Bathing Place, a stretch of the river in Abingdon where boys bathed until the Municipal Pool was opened in 1955.

Swimming as a sport at the School seems to have disappeared completely after the First World War and in 1926 a correspondent to *The Abingdonian* bemoans this fact. It doesn't appear again until 1950, when the first House swimming sports for many years were held at St Helen's swimming pool.

Both the Municipal Swimming Pool and St Helen's were used until the School got its own, unheated, outdoor pool in 1961. It doesn't look as though the boys ever raced against other schools; the reports in *The*



The 1961 swimming gala at the new swimming pool



The 1895 Regatta at Culham Reach



Swimmers at the Bathing Place, 1914

Abingdonian only refer to inter-house competitions, which, during the 1990s, became single-year swimming galas. During 2006 and 2007, whilst the old swimming pool was being pulled down

and the new one built, there were no swimming activities at all at the School.

Sarah Wearne

Water Polo



“Water polo is very personal to me. I used to play regularly and it’s a fantastic game. It’s physical, competitive and really engaged me.” This was how Prince William described his affection for the game he played as a schoolboy at Eton and as captain of his university team. It is hoped that now that we have our own swimming pool, Abingdonians who learn the sport here will speak of it with similar enthusiasm in future years, and that they too will go on to represent their university teams.

Water polo dates back to 1870. It was the first team event in the Modern Olympics in 1900 and the British men’s team were Olympic champions in four consecutive games. It was first played at Abingdon School in October 2009 and, thanks to a donation from ASPA (Abingdon School Parents’ Association), Lower School boys are able to play mini-polo.

In the Lent and summer terms, the U16 and U18 teams embarked upon their first few competitive matches against Stowe, Dean Close and Eton, with the U14s having inaugural fixtures against the Oratory School and Abingdon Preparatory School. The Lower School boys also took part in an inter-tutor group mini-polo tournament, with 2E and 1L the eventual winners of their respective competitions. In the spirit of House events, some boys had their first experience of the game on the actual day, with over forty boys taking part. Matthew Prior emerged as top scorer.

The U14 team, coached by David Boyd, are a promising and well-drilled team, with captain Marcello Cau-Tait and vice-captain Matthew Prior showing good leadership skills in matches and introducing new first-formers to the sport. Jamie Telford emerged as a commanding goalkeeper, with Henry Lambe and Ben Robinson

providing excellent defensive cover. The swimming speed of Laurence Lilley meant that we often won swim-offs. Marcello is learning to boss the midfield and to allow top striker, Matthew Prior, the freedom to attack. We look forward to Archie Ashford returning. Abingdon narrowly lost their first match against Abingdon Prep, and then beat the Oratory in a game played in exactly the right spirit.

The U16 team, captained by Sam Delo and Joe Hogan, were unlucky to lose their first match against Stowe. The final score was 2-6, including a coolly taken penalty from Guy Giles. However, the progress the team made was obvious in the return fixture when the Abingdon team beat Stowe 5-0 (Sam Delo 4, Joe Hogan 1), clearly enjoying the more expansive game in the Abingdon pool. Sam Delo was the season’s top scorer and his enthusiasm and skill made him a deserving vice-captain of the U18 team this year. James Edwards made some excellent saves, with Sam Hughes providing uncompromising defensive cover. In the latter part of the year, Stuart King emerged as a tenacious player.

The U18 team, captained by Guy Stephens, struggled against teams that had been playing together for over four years, but showed potential in their fixtures against Stowe, Eton and Dean Close. In their first match they were beaten 0-14 by Stowe, and three matches later in the return fixture they reduced the deficit to 0-5. Liam Smith was a commanding goalkeeper, with Mihai Clapaniuc an enthusiastic understudy. Tom Hughes made the tough pit-defender role his own. Andrei Smirnov has been demonstrating Johnny Wilkinson-like determination to refine his shooting technique, and is due a spectacular goal next season.

Celia Shephard

Athletics

It is always difficult to assess an athletics season. As a sport it is extraordinarily diverse, effectively a dozen or so different sports all taking place in the same arena. Looked at this way, a fair assessment would take each sport separately. From this angle, our greatest successes probably came on the track, with students being competitive from steeplechase, where Tom Watkins won by a straight at Harrow, to the 400m, where Peter Barnshaw left all opponents trailing in his wake, to the 100m, where Michael Summers continued to show us all how to run fast. Nor should we forget those who may not always win, but produce equally sterling performances, like Toby Ogg and Pearce Taylor in the ESAA 100m race, and Alexander Muir and Tom Foxon breaking records at 800m.

On the other hand, athletics is a uniquely individual sport. It is impossible to hide a poor performance in a team success, and targets are usually about individual times and distances which, when added up, create team success. In this sense, our throwers might be seen as showing the greatest success. Under the excellent tutelage of Messrs Cobbe and Perris, a few select individuals showed that Abingdonians can throw. Patrick Stinton made huge steps in his personal best at the discus. Tom Sishton likewise made great strides forward in the shot. Patrick Sardeson, who joined us with an enviable record in the javelin, saved the junior team from oblivion with top points at key competitions. Others, such as Edward Hughes and James Percival, found other strings to their sporting bows

after a short period of coaching. Equally, our sixth-year throwers enjoyed the event, finding themselves far from last, at last.

At school level, though, athletics remains a team sport, with competitions won on team points and not individual glory. As a small club, it can be difficult to compete on an equal footing with our larger competitors, except in relay events. This year we continued to dominate the local ESAA competition, reaching one regional final, which we won after some fine performances. At the blue ribbon schools' event, the Achilles Relays, we moved one step closer to taking home the silver, with a second place in the 4x400m Inter relay. An extraordinary final saw us taking 4 seconds off our heat time and just pipped to the post by a strong Millfield team, in spite of beating our own school record prior to the tournament by over 16 seconds (4 seconds per runner). Second is not enough for us, so much training remains to be done, but we are hopeful for next year as we have a young team.

Because athletics at school level is a team game based on points, so often it is those who come in the middle of the pack in races who make the difference. It can make a difference of a place or more if all slots are filled, so all those who've worked hard in their training and competed with determination and commitment deserve a mention. Thus the teams included: (Junior) David Jorgensen, Charles Kruczko-Cousins, Patrick Sardeson, Afolarin Shasore, Andy Yi, Thomas Sishton, Niall Keown, Oscar Newman, Gregor



Buchan; (Inter) Peter Allan, Oliver Bailey, Peter Barnshaw, Toby Blong, Charles Buchan, Zander Cornish-Moore, Alistair Duff, Edward Hughes, Stuart Jones, William Nott, Toby Ogg, Christian Reedman, Patrick Stinson, Pearce Taylor, Joshua Bull, Tom Foxon, David Snead, Ben McGuire; (Senior) Alex Ereat, Frederick Humfrey, Joe Kempton, Alex Muir, James Plumb, Michael Summers, Thomas Watkins, Matthew Winters, James Humberstone, Alex Anderson.

Athletics is a truly elite sport, with exceptional accolades for those who perform at international level. Our current elite athlete, Peter Barnshaw, continues to outperform expectations, coming 6th in the National Schools' 400m hurdles final in 56.55s at U17 level (though U16). As I write, he is preparing for the multi-event finals which occur in mid-September. We wish him well.

Finally, my thanks to all the staff who have coached with commitment over the year: Owen Cobbe, Simon Balderson, Nick Pritchard, Matthew Perris, Estelle Slatford, Emily O'Doherty, Andrew Loughe, Douglas Aitken and to our outside coach, Colin Mitchell.

George Moody

Cross Country



St Albans Relay - Wednesday 26 November

Eighteen cross-country club runners and two staff travelled to St Albans School for their annual 3 km relay. The terrain was completely flat, slightly muddy and conditions were ideal. The Club entered three teams: A, B and C. Zander Cornish-Moore made his first appearance and raced very strongly in the already highly talented and experienced B team. The A team comprised mostly senior and seasoned runners who put on a great show, scoring a fourth position out of 30 teams. It was an excellent day out for novices and experienced runners alike, and it served as a good 'pipe-opener' in preparation for the formal Lent term cross-country season. Most runners' times were a shade off 10 minutes but the fastest time of 09:55 was posted by Joe Kempton.

Knole Run - Saturday 17 January

Arguably the longest and toughest course in the schoolboy circuit did not dampen the determination of our runners, irrespective of age: 9.02 km of a cross-country course is a long way to run. What was unusual about this particular trip to Knole Park was that both teams comprised lower sixth and middle school boys only. The teams were organised

under the watchful eye of the recently appointed captain, Thomas Watkins. The result of everyone's hard work showed: the A team scored strong 5th place out of 42 teams. Joe Kempton, Alexander Veale and Michel Baumgart were equally impressive and demonstrated that they are now equals to Alex Muir and Thomas Watkins in talent, ability and commitment. Once again we had old boys turn up to watch and wish our runners good luck. This year, parental support was noticeably stronger: we are very grateful for this.

Wellington College Relays - Saturday 31 January

It was a typical January day – freezing temperatures and a strong breeze. The course was very different from the Knole Run. First the distance: 1.2 miles required a unique type of effort, namely a fast and strong time-trial in the hope of gaining an advantage of 8-12 seconds per runner. The runners and their order really mattered here; they were selected by the captain, Thomas Watkins, and Alex Muir and, yet again, their judgement was first-class. The U19s won their category in spectacular fashion, with Joe Kempton recording the fastest lap of the day. Michel Baumgart and Alexander Veale ran a solid, consistent and clever leg. The U17s focused when it mattered

most and showed their true pedigree and bright future by also winning their category. The U15s demonstrated the most valuable asset that any successful runner has: on their day off school they chose to travel for nearly three hours and compete in a very hard race. Fourth place was perhaps disappointing for them, especially since they lost third place by 10 seconds, but this should generate a zest for more races. They are certainly promising, since three of the five runners were U13s: Laurence Lilley, Robert O'Kelly and Thomas Fabes.

Radley Relays - Thursday 12 February

Competitors included Harrow, Winchester, Westminster, Wellington, Eton, Radley and Mill Hill. The course was a difficult 1.8-mile, 4-man relay, which provided another opportunity for our runners to consolidate their dominance over all other schools in the circuit. In the senior boys division the As (Joe Kempton, Michel Baumgart, Thomas Watkins, Alex Muir) won gold – comprehensively – with a time margin of nearly two minutes over the second-placed school. Intermediates (Tom Foxon, Stuart Jones, Luke Terry, Josh Ridley) won silver and narrowly missed first place, while our Juniors continue to build up their experience while placing 4th.



County Championships - Tuesday 24 February

Around 36 teams from Oxfordshire raced in three categories which saw our U19s win comprehensively: Alex Muir is now the fastest senior runner in the county and Thomas Watkins and Joe Kempton came 2nd and 4th overall respectively – all three qualify for the national championships. Michel Baumgart, Alexander Veale and Alexander Davis ran brilliantly, ensuring that the senior team was securely placed in first place on the podium. In the U17s race a formidable team of very talented runners ensured that Abingdon School were the winners, with Josh Ridley and Alistair Duff also qualifying for the nationals. The U15s continue to do well: they scored a respectable 3rd place.

Marlborough Run - Thursday 26 February

Here our opposition were Radley, Marlborough, St Edward's, Cheltenham and Kingswood. Our U19s continue to be undefeated: they won with Alex Muir, Thomas Watkins and Joe Kempton scoring 2nd, 3rd and 4th places, with Michel Baumgart and Alexander Veale very close behind. The U17s won too: spectators were treated to five runners from Abingdon crossing the finish line in a cluster, led by Josh Ridley, who won emphatically. Special mention must go to one runner who has persevered and worked very hard all season and

eventually made the long-awaited breakthrough: Christian Reedman came fourth overall in the U17s race. In the U15s Matthew Fitchett won his first-ever race - congratulations to him...

Worcester Spring Relays - Wednesday 18 March

This was to be the last race of the season: a six-man relay of 2km per leg around the scenic lake of Sutton Park in Birmingham. Twelve schools attended the race in an attempt to win the Lucton Trophy in the U16s and U20s categories. Alistair Duff, Christian Reedman, Luke Terry, Stuart Jones, Matthew Fitchett and Thomas Foxon ran for the U16s: they turned out to be unbeatable, not simply because of their experience and commitment to winning, but also because all six are first-class runners in their age category. It was fantastic to watch all of them run so well and collectively win with a huge margin. Joe Kempton, Joshua Ridley, Michel Baumgart, Alexander Veale, Thomas Watkins and Alex Muir ran for the U20s. They won silver, losing first place by five seconds; it was a sobering experience for them at best, downright disappointing at worst, since up until that moment they were undefeated. 2km time trials are not their forte – longer distances are – but the most valuable thing they came back with, apart from silver medals, was the hunger to restart the training in August in preparation for 2009-2010.

Our runners will not forgive me should I fail to point out that our success is also largely due to external assistance and coaching: fitness instructor Colin Berryman, based at the Park Club in Milton, has been our weekly external coach for the last two years and he puts our runners through some expert indoor circuits, which are clearly working! The staff at *Fit to Run*, Steve, Dave and Rob, have been for years now helping our boys choose the best kit for the job. The long journeys back to school give an idea of what the cross-country club is like: a team spirit full of wit and character. We laughed at everything and we laughed a lot: even the staff were in hysterics at times. The strong results, the humour and the team spirit are what have made this season historic, really. We have had five members of staff who have been excellent coaches: Estelle Slatford, Emily O'Doherty, David McGill, Simon Balderson and Nick O'Doherty. I always remind our runners that without such a unique teaching staff none of this would have been possible. We are very grateful to them for all their hard work, whatever the weather, but I am not at all surprised that they are so good at their job. Every single one of them is a seasoned athlete: half-marathoners, marathoners, triathletes... I am also grateful to the many parents who turn up to support, especially Douglas Muir who provides us with the best photos. Our Director of Sport, Andrew Hall, a Comrades Ultra-marathoner, has been extremely supportive of the Club and has provided valuable professional expertise.

I have always thought it imprudent when a coach says to his athletes, "I am proud of you ...". If I look back to September when our training started, and to the subsequent races we competed in, I really do need to make an exception this time...

Alexis Christodoulou

Sailing Club



The Sailing Club has had a very busy year, during which we have competed successfully in a number of prestigious youth regattas and racing events.

At Easter our keel boat team of Nick Wilkinson, Rory Spriggs, Sam Delo and Finlay Curran won the National Schools' Youth Match Racing Championships. In August the team, with the addition of Tom Altmann, and with Jonty Cook replacing Finlay Curran who had fallen ill, came second in the RYA National Youth Match Racing Championships.

As last year's winners of the RYA National Youth Match Racing

Championships we were invited to represent the UK at the Governor's Cup International Match Racing Competition in California.

Against strong international competition we managed to come fifth out of the twelve invited entries.

Nick Wilkinson and Rory Spriggs have been selected for the RYA National Youth Keelboat squad. They were both in our winning team at the National Schools' Championships and the RYA National Youth Championships, and impressed the selectors at the trials held at the National Sailing Centre in Weymouth.

Guy Stephens was a member of the Oxfordshire team that won the National Schools' Team Racing Competition, and he went on to compete in the Magnum inter-university competition run by Oxford University.

As their confidence grows, more of our pupils are competing in Sunday club races at Farmoor Reservoir, sailing Lasers and RS500s. With training on Wednesday afternoons, this should help preparation for national and international regattas.



Next year, our more experienced sailors look forward to the European RS Open on Lake Garda in Italy. We hope to enter two RS500s and an RS800 for this event.

The Sailing Club is also involved in yachting and this year, Sam Delo, Jonty Cook and Will Summers achieved RYA Day Skipper level in navigation and yacht-handling with Plymouth Sailing School. This was put to good use during our main yachting voyage over the summer, a week sailing around the Greek Islands.

Early in the year the Friends of the Abingdon Sailing Club was formed and have already organised a successful dinner and barbecue.

The 'Friends' are now well established and planning more social events.

David Bickerton



Leavers 2009

The destination of recent leavers listed here is correct as of September 2009. Those reapplying, or whose destinations are unknown, are not listed.

Aberdeen

McKenna T	Geography	2009
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Aberystwyth

Porter H	Politics with Law	2009
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Bath

Bourchier O P	Business Administration	2009
May O W O	Economics & Politics	2009
Weller Jones C	Architectural Studies	2009
Wood H	Natural Sciences	2010

Birmingham

Baboolal A	Geology	2010
Barber D	Geography	2010
Bucke J	Physiotherapy	2009
Kempell A J	Economics	2009
Rabindran P	Business Management	2010
Shim H	Economics	2009
Vaux B A	English Literature & German Studies	2010

Brighton Sussex School of Medicine

Shrier W E J	Medicine	2009
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Bristol

Boddie O	Mechanical Engineering	2010
Callow J	Zoology	2009
Hutchence C N	Classics with study in Continental Europe	2009
Swain J W E	Ancient History	2009
Wilkinson N	Mechanical Engineering	2010

University of California, Berkeley

Copus R A	Mechanical Engineering & Theater	2009
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Cambridge

Cao K	(Clare) Mathematics	2009
Wood F	(Downing) Medicine	2009
Houlsby I T T	(Trinity Hall) Natural Sciences	2009
Howe N	(Trinity Hall) Natural Sciences	2009

Cardiff

Bradfield T	City & Regional Planning	2009
Davey T S P	Medicine	2009
Dugdale G	History	2009
Havelock L G	English Literature	2009
Purssell M	History	2010
Raban O	Economics	2009

Central Lancashire

Thorn J	Police & Criminal Investigation	2010
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Durham

Barrow L	Zoology	2010
Berry D	Economics	2010
Bird A L M	Geography	2009
Rossiter M E T	Biology	2009
Wilder J W R	Ancient History	2009
Zhu H	Business Finance	2009

Edinburgh

Chang W W	Medical Sciences	2009
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Exeter

Carter R	Geography	2010
Hunter J	Classics	2010
Longden J	Business Economics	2009
Wood D J B	Theological Studies	2009
Yellowlees-Bound C	Philosophy & Political Economy	2010

Imperial College London

Liu K W	Mathematics	2009
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King's College London

Caprotti G	European Studies - Spanish Pathway	2009
Davis-Poynter L	War Studies & History	2010
Edwards S L W	Physiotherapy	2009
Hodgetts S	Geography	2010
Merritt J S	Hispanic & Portuguese Studies	2010
Plapcianu T A	Law	2009
Stinson S W	War Studies	2009

Leeds

Cook G	Geography	2010
Devlin T	Human Resource Management	2009

Leicester

Laidlaw J	Human Geography	2009
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Liverpool

Davis C	Architecture	2009
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Loughborough

Campbell A	Electronic & Electrical Engineering	2009
Dunster C W	Industrial Design & Technology	2009
Green T	Chemistry	2009
Muir R A W	International Business	2010
Weston D M	Industrial Design & Technology	2009

LSE

Cook D	International Relations & History	2009
Fung B	Economics	2009
Heffernan M C	Government & History	2010
Ho H K Y	Economics	2009

Manchester

Bond H R J	Ancient History	2009
Buffery T	Physics	2009
Clee T D G	Spanish, Portugese & Latin American Studies	2009
Halsey G	Biochemistry	2010

Newcastle

Altmann T J	Medicine	2009
Brash C	Physical Geography	2009
Clarke T	Chemistry	2009
Clayphan B J	Biomedical Sciences	2009
Hatzis A	Spanish & Business Studies	2009
Turrill J H	Geography & Planning	2009

Nottingham

Jones T	Music	2010
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Oxford

Faraggi T M	(Balliol) Chemistry	2009
Phillips A W	(Brasenose) Chemistry	2009
Ahmed F	(Hertford) Physics	2009
Scott M	(Lincoln) Chemistry	2009
McIntosh F	(Merton) Classics	2009
Cutting G	(New College) Music	2009
Feng Z	(Pembroke) Engineering	2009



A Librarian's View – photograph by Gaynor Cooper

Oxford (continued)

Winters M	(Pembroke) Mechanical Engineering	2009
Craven G B	(St Catherine's) Chemistry	2009
Hird O	(St Hilda's) Classics	2009
Deeks T	(Trinity) English & Spanish	2009
Stockdale J	(Worcester) PPE	2010

Oxford Brookes

Jeffreys S R L	Motorsport Technology	2009
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Plymouth

Howell J	Psychology	2009
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Queen Mary UL

Murase R	Chemistry	2009
Walton S	Mechanical Engineering	2009

Reading

Warwick B C	Real Estate	2009
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Royal Holloway UL

Harrison J A	Computer Science	2009
Yung E	Economics	2009

Sheffield

Crowe J E M	Biochemistry & Molecular Cell Biology	2009
Romeo R	Economics	2009

Southampton

Smith A C J	Chemistry with Maths	2009
Spriggs R T U	Mechanical Engineering	2010

St Andrew's

Manasseh J	Classics	2009
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Swansea

Burniston A	Business Economics	2009
Henstridge O A	Spanish & Latin	2009

University College London

Crawford R	Geography	2009
Hoegerle Y	Environmental Geography	2010

Warwick

Clinkard A A B	International Business	2009
Kiyko V	Management	2009
O'Neill E	Classics	2009
Yuen H	Statistics & Economics	2009

York

Dillien A	English	2009
Hones A C	Chemistry with a year abroad	2009
Trotman O	Politics	2009



ABINGDON

