



2015

The Abingdonian





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Editorial



What sets the *Abingdonian* apart from any of the other School publications out there is our reliance on the greater School community. Indeed, the majority if not all of its articles are written, not by the editorial team, but by the boys and staff personally involved in various aspects of school life. Without the tenacity, enthusiasm and resolve that the boys dedicate to their academic studies and the Other Half, there would be no magazine.

It is therefore hoped that this issue does justice to the many accomplishments of our boys, from the phenomenal production of *Les Misérables* in February, to the hugely successful senior rugby tour to Australia and New Zealand in the summer, the two events we have chosen to highlight on the inside cover.

Included in the back of this issue is an Abingdon School themed crossword as a parting gift from Mr Pritchard who—after more than four decades of continuous service to the School—leaves us for a well deserved retirement.

Finally, many thanks go to the lead editor, Mr Jenkins, my co-editors Charlie Macpherson and Freddie Ward, the sub-editors, Charles Clarke, Felipe Jin Li, Henry Muller, Jate Jaturanpinyo and Oliver Bishop, as well as, needless to say, all the contributing staff and students who make this publication possible.

Asten Yeo, 6BW

Head's Foreword



Penning my last introduction for the *Abingdonian* has caught me off guard. As I read of all the fabulous experiences the boys have had during my penultimate academic year here, I am reminded that even though time passes, boys and teachers come and go, even Heads eventually find themselves doing things for the last time. That is poignant for me.

As I cast my eye over all that has been achieved and enjoyed this past year, the many challenges and simply just having fun, I recognise that the *Abingdonian* records the essence of the spirit of our School for all the days to come. This edition will become part of our archive and our 759-year history. Congratulations and thank you to the team of editors and all contributors.

Next year, my successor Mike Windsor will have the privilege of writing the introduction to the 2016 edition of the *Abingdonian*. I know that he'll be as impressed as I am by what he reads of the lives of our remarkable boys and the whole Abingdon community.

Felicity Lusk

Michaelmas 2014



My First Term in Middle School

My first week as an Abingdon Middle School boy wasn't so different from the first week as a Lower School boy. Everywhere there were new faces, new lessons and new teachers. I had to make do without the iPad that I had last year, which took some getting used to. Lower School had been about getting to know the school, but now it was time to knuckle down and get ready for exams that can influence the rest of my life.

Everyone was welcoming and kind. The new boys were obviously a little shy at first. I had my friends from the last two years at the school so I was fine. However, a few nerves had come back from my first day at the school. I knew how the prep school boys felt. I tried to help them as much as possible; pointing out where things were, showing them around places. I think that's what most Lower School boys tried to do. It might have been a bit strange for the new boys with so many boys smiling at them and constantly trying to get to know them!

Jamie Masters, 3KEB

For the first two or so days leading up to the start of term, I was incredibly anxious and nervous. As soon as I sat on the bus, I started to relax because everyone was so kind to me and always made sure that I was OK. Also at school the other boys were really kind and helped me find my classrooms, and the teachers were extremely kind and made you feel settled in. Overall, the first day was super exciting and not at all scary.

Colm Lambert, 3SJB

Abingdon has been a huge change from my previous school and has given me the opportunity to try new things. I think that my best achievement so far has been being chosen to play in the A team for rugby, where I have improved enormously. Lessons have also been a change for the better, especially having the longer lessons, making larger amounts of work possible. Although it is a long day it is very much worth it and the amount of homework is very reasonable. Doing sport every day means that I can let off enough steam to do homework to a good standard. The larger number of people to spend time with means that it is easy to find people that have the same interests as

you. These are just a few of the many reasons why Abingdon has been a great change and I am very happy to be here.

Oscar Frost, 3MEE

During my first week at Abingdon, I realised how different it was from my old school. The Sports Centre, the buildings, everything was so much bigger. When I found out that Abingdon was also building a new, high-tech science centre, I was even more shocked. I thought that the school was big enough already!

At Abingdon, there were so many new sports and activities to try out, compared to my old school where there were only a few core sports, and you had to do all of them. Abingdon was such a big step up, as you could choose what sports you did, and when you did them. So far, I have enjoyed tennis, hockey, and I have even found a new sport at Abingdon which I am really enjoying, badminton.

Abingdon has also got access to so many resources; this particularly shows in D.T where there is even a laser printer and a 3D printer. The best thing we had at my old school was an automatic saw!

Tom Pettit, 3JSW

I quickly got to meet some new people that came in this year, which gave me a chance to come out of my shell and my comfort zone. The teachers were nice and friendly in our first lessons, and they didn't overload us with written work, but we had a mixture between interactive activity and concentrated work. I think this gave us a good mix between fun and serious work. Overall Middle School is fun and enjoyable.

Richard Oh, 3JSW

When I first started in the third year at Abingdon I was nervous but I knew the school as I was at Abingdon Prep School before. As well I had a few friends from Abingdon Prep in my sets, other half activities and house so I always knew at least one person. The induction day was useful to start to get to know everyone in my house and so on the first day I knew a few people's names. My first day was made easy as we had a long time in the morning to get to know everyone and then a tour so I knew where all my classrooms were and where to go at certain times. Then we had a few lessons in the afternoon to find out who some of our new teachers were. In the first few weeks we had lots of break times and lunch times to make better friendships and we were assigned a Lower Sixth mentor to talk to about how everything was going.

Joe Hornblow, 3JSW

Middle School is very different from Lower School and it was a very big transition as you get put into a new house with some boys twice the size of you.

Also in Middle School you do get more homework than in the first year. The amount can vary from two to five pieces per day. At first this was a bit of a struggle because you have to develop a whole new work routine, but now it is starting to get easier.

One of the best things about the third year is that you get one extra sport lesson a week. Altogether I really like the third year.

Ben Lovejoy, 3KEB

When I first arrived at Abingdon I had a rough idea of where the main buildings were but not much else. After a couple of weeks, however, I now know where pretty much everything is. I never would have thought that I would be able to navigate my way round all of the twisting corridors and the endless amount of classrooms. It seemed a bit weird to see people that I recognised from playing matches against at my old school now at this one. The best thing about Abingdon is definitely the food - the lunch is always really good!

William Richardson, 3RJG

I have had an exciting and busy first term at Abingdon. I've enjoyed every aspect of the school day. The teachers have been very helpful with our transition to Abingdon, giving us directions and helping us to settle in. On the academic side of things I have started Spanish which I am enjoying, and it is also challenging me with vocab tests each week. I have started some new topics in maths, such as trigonometry and correlations. Also at the beginning of the year we were covering chemistry, but we have now moved onto biology and I have completed my first dissection which was very exciting. I am really looking forward to using the new science centre next year.

On the social side of Abingdon, I have now made new friends in my tutor group and many more around the school due to the seating in most lessons. On the sport side I chose to play rugby as my core sport, which I have really loved. I started off in the C team and have improved my play and have finished the season playing for the A team, as fly-half. The coaches have given me a lot of helpful points and I have gained more confidence and self-belief. I have also taken up a few Other Half activities including rugby, CCF and Second Orchestra. I have continued to enjoy being part of an orchestra and thoroughly enjoyed playing some very high standard pieces.

Thomas Batchelor, 3JSW

It was a daunting prospect for me when I went to Abingdon for the first time. I was nervous and it felt strange not to be at the top of the school as I was at my prep school. Another thing was that there were only two others from my old school who were going to Abingdon.

The time finally came for my first day at Abingdon and I was really nervous about making friends and generally settling in. I left home and started my journey to the bus stop. When I got on the bus I instinctively sat next to my brother, Piers, who was also a bit nervous. I soon met my tutor group for the first time, and they seemed like nice, friendly people. After I was given a brief tour of the school it was time for my first lesson which was Spanish.

I had really bad butterflies in my stomach because it was such a new environment but that soon went away as people (especially the boys from Lower School) said hello to me and treated me as one of them. My overall feeling now is that I have settled into a fantastic school with excellent opportunities that I should certainly not take for granted.

Lars Mucklejohn, 3SJB

The third year opens up huge new opportunities. Whether it be new sports, new bands or orchestras, or anything else, there are hundreds of activities available to choose from.

When the term started, it was easy to get to know new people from other schools as tutor groups get a good amount of time to be together. There are many different house competitions to get involved in, and no one is excluded. There are several sports teams, bands and orchestras, chess and bridge clubs, amongst many others. The school day is very well set out, and being able to choose freely which activities you could do and when was very helpful.

So far, the third form has been a great journey and is a great transition into the GCSE scheme of work.

Jack Lester, 3HJW

Boarding Life

I was very nervous for most of my first term here. I come from the other side of the world where the culture differs massively. When I arrived here in Abingdon, I was shocked by how different everything was; I was used to heat and sunshine, now I was faced with dark, cold mornings. I was used to spicy, fresh seafood and English people seemed to live on bread and potatoes. I had never come across cricket or croquet before, and I struggled to see how they could be exciting. I had to get used to being independent and being away from my parents. I missed them but even when I felt really homesick, I never missed my sister!

When I first arrived, I knew nobody. I was shown to my room in Crescent house where I would live for the rest of the year. There were three other new boys, one from Spain, another Thai and an English boy. What I did not know then, was that they would become my best friends. In the boarding community, we live as a family not as a class, because everyone helps each other out when they need something. I found my first half term very challenging but there was always someone who I could ask for help. Everyone was so enthusiastic and helpful that my homesickness soon disappeared.

When the other boys vanish for the weekend, we are not abandoned in our houses. We have many trips out,



including going to London, Thorpe Park and going to Warwick School to have a friendly football match. We have even found the courage to talk to one or two girls at socials!

Looking back at my first term at Abingdon, I realise it was a valuable time of my life. It gave me time to get used to the school and to experience new things. I am still not sure I fully understand cricket though!

Jate Jaturanpinyo, 3EAK

It was a whole new world for me. Coming from Spain, I could really feel the differences: language, customs and climate. And I can tell you that I was no different from the other boarders, I was nervous and I did have some preconceptions. However, as I arrived

at Crescent those opinions drastically changed. I no longer felt like living in a boring school, but instead I felt like a member of this big family: the boarding community. Having toured around many other boarding schools in the UK, I could really tell the difference from the boarding experience in Abingdon compared to the others. Abingdon just had this thing, that the other schools lacked. Perhaps, just a more caring community. And that is a very important characteristic as during your stay in any school, you would eventually come to a struggle. At that moment, the Abingdon community helps you advance through those hard moments. This helps you swiftly settle into school from the very first day to the last of your days at Abingdon.

Homesick. That's the word that most new boarders fear, but fear not because there won't be any time for you to even think about it. I can tell you from personal experience that weekend activities are what every single boarder looks forwards to every single week. These activities range from thrilling rides in Thorpe Park to a great battle in the paintball arena. Afternoons are also entertaining as we get to play football games in the lovely front lawn of Glyndwr after we've had our delicious sandwiches plus Kit Kats and, last but not least; juices.

Afterall, I think boarding has played a great role in my life especially by helping me integrate much better into school life.

Felipe Jin Li, 3EAK





Sponsored Walk 2014

On Thursday 25 September, the school's biennial sponsored walk took place along the banks of the Thames. All pupils, teachers and staff members taking part arrived in home clothes for walking—or, in some cases, rowing, canoeing or running! Each person taking part had raised money as sponsorship for the three charities chosen by the Charities Committee. These were: Blue Sky Thinking, which provides research for children diagnosed with brain tumours; Emmaus Oxford, a local charity which provides a home for the homeless; and Agape, which supports children and young people in Moldova, Europe's poorest country.

The challenging walk began in Dorchester, at Day's Lock, for Middle and Lower School—ten miles from the front gates of school—and in Benson for the sixth form, meaning a fourteen-mile hike. This walk was only made possible by the generosity of Bailey's, Whites and Plastow's Coaches, all of which helped to transport roughly one thousand people to their starting points at no cost. Equipped with maps and directions, the

school began the event that it had been waiting for since the beginning of term.

For the first half, the school was treated to clear views of Wittenham Clumps just on the other side of the river, as well as warm weather, dry ground and no rain! This was a vast improvement over the last walk in 2012, which, although clear and warm, was muddy and in some places almost flooded. This was great news in particular for the many people who chose bravely and independently to run it, which for the sixth form was just over a half-marathon, and which for the rest of the school was just three miles short of one. For a number of others, however, ground conditions were irrelevant; eight people took on the 10-mile sponsored walk in canoes, starting from Shillingford Bridge and paddling upstream. A further thirty-five to forty members of the rowing team even rowed both ways, starting from the boathouse and going around six miles downstream, and then another six miles back up.

A packed lunch was provided at the half-way point of Clifton Hampden, in the scenic meadow next to the bridge. After a brief rest in the grass, the walk continued through the fields next to the Thames all the way to Abingdon Bridge – at which point the trail turned

back towards school. With few (if any) incidents, all returned back to school safely, having done their part in raising a record amount of money. As a result of everyone's perseverance, generosity and courage to take on a challenge that was potentially very new to them, we raised £34,812 – and with gift aid added to this, the grand total was £39,800. This is a fantastic result, considering that in 2012 we raised £32,000, which was also a record at the time.

Congratulations and thank you to everyone involved for a superb effort and for donating so much for a very worthy cause. Particular thanks must go to: Lower School who, as usual, raised a very large proportion of the total; to Mrs Pradas, who had the unenviable task of co-ordinating the entire event; and finally, to all teachers, members of staff and prefects who organised it, gave directions and gave up their own time to take part in the event so that it could go ahead for everyone else. I hope that it was a thoroughly enjoyable day for everyone, and perhaps that it has inspired you to do something similar between now and the next sponsored walk in 2016!

Jonty de la Harpe, 6RP

A Tale of Two Schools: Abingdon– Bielefeld 1914-1918

As a mark of friendship, Abingdon and its German exchange school, the Ratsgymnasium in Bielefeld, decided that when the Bielefeld pupils came on their annual exchange in October the two schools would mark the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War with a joint project. The idea was to discover and appreciate the impact of the war on each school and its pupils.

The project would of course depend on the records available and this was the first surprise. Abingdon has a collection of letters and photographs compiled by the headmaster of 1919, William Grundy. He wrote to the families of the dead asking if they would send him a record of the casualty's war service together with a recent photograph. Not all families replied but enough did to make this a representative collection. The School also has a complete run of the school magazine, the *Abingdonian*, which was published, even if in a slightly diminished form, throughout the war years. This constantly updated news of Old Abingdonians serving in the armed forces – their promotions, awards, wounds and deaths. And at the end of the war, the School published a complete Roll of Service with the names of the dead highlighted in capital letters, erected a brass plaque in the Chapel inscribed with the seventy-three names of those who died, and later bought Waste Court and its grounds as a war memorial.

Bielefeld had nothing like this. They had one yearbook, the equivalent of a school magazine. This was published in March 1915, but there don't appear to have been any later wartime editions. The magazine records that nine members of staff and forty two pupils had left to join the forces, and that sixty three former pupils had already been killed. After the war, the Ratsgymnasium erected a memorial to its dead, a modernistic



carving of a Valkyrie raising a fallen warrior to Valhalla. There are thirty eight names on the memorial. How could this be when by March 1915 sixty three former pupils had already been killed? It seems that at the Ratsgymnasium, to qualify for inclusion on the school's memorial, you had to have joined up straight from school. At Abingdon, to qualify for inclusion you simply had to have been a former pupil or former member of staff.

Whilst Abingdon has photographs, letters and magazines in its archives, the Ratsgymnasium discovered that the town archives had a collection of exam essays written by pupils in August 1914. The war began before the sixth formers had taken their final exams so over the first weekend of August they sat a shortened form. One of the questions was, 'The present - a serious but a good time for Germany. Discuss'. The pupils' answers were unexpected. Some predictably outlined the sense of patriotism: Eric Rose wrote, "Everybody sees himself as one member of a great, wonderful people. United and loyal, Germany stands by the Kaiser". But Walter Weiterer warned of the danger for Germany of fighting on three fronts, Karl Schmidt predicted that the casualties would be enormous, whilst Heinrich Thöne believed that the British navy would easily outclass the German –

surprisingly prescient comments for a group of German schoolboys.

These readings, together with extracts from German and English poems, formed part of a joint assembly that a group of five boys from each of the two schools presented on 1 October. The readings were recorded and played against a series of images: photographs and propaganda posters from both sides. The combination highlighted the very similar hopes, fears and experiences of two groups of people who were mortal enemies.

The Ratsgymnasium brought with them an exhibition that staff and pupils had researched on the impact of the war on their school and their town. This included information about prisoners-of-war, the treatment of enemy aliens, manufacturing and agriculture. The exhibition was displayed in the Amey Theatre foyer for the duration of their visit and in the Ratsgymnasium on their return. Later in the year they were invited to present their work at a conference in Oberhausen on British, French and German school projects commemorating the centenary of the war.

Abingdon's partnership with Bielefeld began in 1967 and is believed to be one of the oldest language exchange associations between two schools.

Sarah Wearne, Archivist



House Singing Competition

The annual House Singing Competition, a clash of epic proportions between the ten different houses of the school, is evidently the most important competition of the year, but only if you are a member of the winning house. The rest of the school pretends not to care, jettisoning the decision as 'biased' or simply dismissing the event with comments along the lines of 'Who cares? We beat them in house rugby'. I should know: I was in this position for numerous years until my last, when I had the joy of experiencing the feeling of actually winning. The competition does not simply exist between the students; the housemasters too uphold a strong desire to successfully show off their house in front of the rest of the school. I have been a member of the Southwell-Sander's House for almost five years and the pressure was both on me, as the conductor, and my pianist, Will Johnson, to finally secure a first win for the house.

Instead of giving a lively description of

the competition on the day, I thought I would instead give my account, as the conductor of the choir, of the rehearsal process, maybe providing you with more of an insight into the workings behind the finished product.

The first hurdle to overcome is the song choice. Perhaps the most important aspect of the singing practice, it is important to ensure that the majority, if not the whole, of the house is supportive of the song choice. I would advise a house vote. Get all the tutor groups involved and have them nominate two or three songs they think would be best. Then, as a sixth form along with the housemaster, narrow the number down to three or four. During a house assembly, play the songs and have the members of the house order them to their preference. This seems the most democratic way to choose a number that the whole house can get behind, vital for winning the competition. I say 'I would advise'—this is for the reason that, in the end, this isn't how we went about it.

While it is true we had the whole house vote on the four songs, we were unable to pursue the first choice. One would

think the logical process would be to choose the second most popular, but naturally, we chose one which wasn't on the list: *Love Song* by Sara Barailles, which the house hadn't voted for, I myself hadn't ever heard in my life, and hadn't been suggested until the day our submission had to be entered. It seemed we were already off to a flying start. You can see why I had my doubts, not least because I was conducting a song that I had never even listened to before and even after listening to it, I was convinced that because of the difficult rhythms and tune, we would not be able to pull it off.

But clearly that's not the job of a conductor, to have already been defeated by the first rehearsal. I dreaded that first practice. I dreaded nobody knowing the song and simply fostering a 'reluctant teenage boy' stance and refusing to sing enthusiastically, if at all. I remembered previous years where conductors vaguely waved their arms to the music being played, soon losing the attention of their choir as they realised he had as little of an idea of what he was doing as they did. I dreaded that.

In fact, I was pleasantly surprised. Yes,

the rehearsal was slow, painfully slow, but that was my choice. I chose to take the choir through each phrase, first speaking the rhythm, then singing it over and over until they got it. It was tedious work, especially since we actually didn't get through the song like this until the end of the third rehearsal. We were already halfway through all the precious rehearsals we had, and had not done any of the tidying up the song desperately required or addressed the harmonies at all. It was tedious work that paid off in the end, although I had no idea it would at the time. The risk I took by taking the choir through the song that slowly allowed them to not only get to know the song better, but also to become more independent from me so that, although I'm sure they wouldn't admit it, they didn't really need me by the final performance.

I must say I was very lucky to have such a talented and, perhaps more importantly, patient pianist to whom I would attribute most of our success. It definitely made the procedure much smoother and it was pleasant to have at least one person who knew the song trying to teach it to about ninety boys.

Thus, the process continued and by the sixth and final rehearsal on the day of the competition, we were ready. The harmonies had been added, some even the night before, everyone knew the lyrics, the band was well prepared and



despite our lack of practice together, I was hopeful that even if we didn't win, our performance would be good enough to put the house on display. It's a testament to the house that everyone arrived on the day in white shirts and house ties as is the typical house singing attire.

As I said, this article isn't a detailed description of the singing competition itself, but I will say that the relaxed rules on unison singing, introduced only this year, really raised the standard of the competition. I had almost fully accepted the fact that we weren't as good as some of the other choirs, who sounded

like they had been practising for months, let alone only one week. But even I had to admit that our final performance was our best. I guess that we were lucky the adjudicator appreciated it too. It was nice to have all the hard work pay off and receive the trophy even amongst the various playful boos and heckles from the same people who would later insist that they 'couldn't care less' about the result.

So yet another hectic week was brought to a close by the annual competition. Tears had been shed, valuable 'Mars Bar' bets had been made and lost and the Music Department was able to breathe a sigh of relief as another year passed without a house deciding to diminish school reputation with their own rendition of *Baby Got Back* or the *Cheeky Song*. Overall, the competition is a great laugh, mixed in with a little of the usual boyish competitive edge, and perhaps the only chance for many boys to relive their shower singing moments in front of hundreds of people. In the end, I think we always manage to surprise both ourselves and the members of staff with what a large group of teenage boys in varying stages of growth and vocal range can produce with very little rehearsal. I must say it has been a pleasure to be lucky enough to secure the victory this year and I wish all the houses the best of luck in future competitions.

Jamie Blackwell, VIRY



Classics Trip to Italy

This year's Classics Trip took a total of 81 boys (ranging from the second year to the Upper Sixth), and 8 members of staff to Rome and the Bay of Naples. After the flight to Rome from Heathrow (during which British Airways only managed to lose five boys' luggage), we arrived at our hotel in Rome, before visiting the Palazzo Massimo Museum. This museum contained many fine examples of Roman art, paintings, mosaics and coins, demonstrating clearly the evolution of the late Republican era into the beginnings of the Principate.

The whole of the following morning was spent in Ostia, the port which provided Rome with many imported goods by sending them along the Tiber. It was also believed to be the first Roman colonia, founded in the 7th century BC. Here we saw sites such as the Capitulum - a temple designed to mimic in miniature the Capitol of Rome—and the 2nd century BC theatre, as well as the forica—the best-preserved latrines in the whole of Europe. After lunch, we returned to Rome to visit the Imperial Fora, such as the Forum of Augustus, which contained the Temple of Mars Ultor, vowed by Octavian to commemorate the Battle of Philippi.

The next day started with a visit to the Colosseum, the famous amphitheatre, begun by Vespasian in AD 70. Following this, we visited the Forum Romanum, the political and religious centre of Rome, where we saw the sites which were centrally important to the running of Rome, such as the Curia (senate-house) and the basilicas (law-courts). As well as this, we were able to visit the Palatine hill, the oldest and most central of the seven hills of Rome which looked down on the Forum Romanum and the Circus Maximus.

Following lunch (which included an excessive amount of ice-cream from what is known as Rome's best ice-cream shop), we visited the Pantheon, a temple dedicated to the worship of all the gods, which was commissioned by

Marcus Agrippa, and rebuilt 200 years later by the emperor Hadrian.

The following morning, after leaving our hotel in Rome for the last time, we visited the Ara Pacis, an altar dedicated to the goddess of peace, Pax, commissioned by the senate in honour of Augustus. Outside this museum, we had time to see and even translate some of an inscription of Augustus' Res Gestae, a list of the emperor's achievements. Before arriving at our next hotel in Sorrento, we visited the Roman Naval Museum at Lake Nemi, where, just before the Second World War, the hulls of two sunken ships, which originally belonged to the emperor Caligula, were removed from the bottom of the lake.

The whole of the following day was spent on the island of Capri, the famous holiday resort of the emperor Tiberius, where it was alleged that he pursued his notoriously inappropriate hobbies. After what the guidebook described rather optimistically as 'a lovely walk of just under an hour', we reached the Villa Iovis, a palace built by Tiberius in AD 27, in which he spent most of his reign until his death ten years later. Here we saw the thermae (baths) and the imperial apartments, as well as the very cliff from which it is said Tiberius threw his victims.

Following this there was a full-day trip to Pompeii, the town famous for being buried in the eruption of Mount Vesuvius

in AD 79. Here we had the opportunity to visit buildings such as the forum baths, the two theatres and, of course, the house of Caecilius, made famous by Book 1 of the Cambridge Latin Course. In the evening of the penultimate day, the traditional trip quiz took place, with questions assembled by the various teachers on the trip, testing our knowledge of Classics, Italian history, and the sites we had visited during the trip – glorious victory went to the team ably led by Edward Jefferson and Joe Blanch.

The morning of the final day was packed with visits to various sites including Oplontis, the largest and most luxurious villa so far found in the area, which, like Pompeii, was buried and preserved under the ash from the eruption of Mount Vesuvius. This was followed by a visit to Herculaneum, another town destroyed in AD 79, and famous for the discovery in 1981 of over fifty skeletons buried by the eruption. Our final visit of the trip was a rather hasty one to the Naples National Archaeological Museum, where we saw various wall-paintings and mosaics found in Pompeii, such as the famous mosaic of Alexander the Great and Darius at the Battle of Issus. After leaving the museum, we hurried to Naples airport to catch our flight back to Heathrow airport, with our fingers crossed that our luggage would this time arrive with us.

Joseph Barber, VIAPS



Nepal Trip

It is safe to say that the 12 boys and 2 teachers were beyond excited when we scrambled onto the mini bus at Abingdon. We'd been promised life-changing experiences, elephant rides, dug-out canoe rides along crocodile-infested rivers, treks along the Himalayas, white water rafting and a trip that we would simply never forget. We'd had the jabs, we had the kit and we had the battery phone chargers, and after our final goodbyes, we started the 12-hour journey to Kathmandu.

Nepal was most definitely a culture shock for us. There aren't simple things we take for granted - like good roads, hygiene or electricity pylons that are standing at 90 degrees to the ground. As soon as we had got off the plane in Kathmandu we realised we had to adjust. Simply walking into or near the toilets, or looking at the Bagmati River that flowed through the city was enough for us all to grip our alcohol gel bottles.

However, these emotions were changed very quickly. We were fortunate enough to be in Nepal during the Festival of Light, or Diwali, so there were lights everywhere and it seemed that spirits were high throughout the whole of Nepal. This feature really stood out for me as the Nepalese people were wonderful. From our tour guide to the larger helper who walked with us, everyone had a smile on their faces. I'm not sure if it was because we were tourists, but simple things like saying "Namaste" would always brighten their day.

The next day we were to fly to Pokhara. After a few hours delay at the still-being-built domestic airport, we got onto the propeller-powered plane and had probably the best flight that anyone could ever go on. Out of either window were snow-tipped mountains and a view that postcards would be jealous of. Touching down after flying past the Ganesh, Manaslu and Annapurna ranges, we drove for an hour then started the trekking. Initially, I thought this would be like the dreaded D of E - but there's something about trekking up a mountain through fields of bamboo clusters that open into a rhododendron



forest, passing mountain animals such as buffalo and local villagers along the way that makes it a little better than the Peak District. As we got to our campsite, we were astounded at the hospitality of World Expeditions. Tents with beds in them, along with hot, fresh food, washing water and tea or hot chocolate greeted us wherever we went.

Waking up to the view of Annapurna South was one of the many unforgettable moments of the trip. Nothing beats waking up to the view of one of Nepal's most beautiful mountains, then being able to set off on another day's trekking, this time over a glacial river and then up the foothills of the Himalayas.

Three days of amazing, scenic trekking along the foothills ended with a final night in Pokhara, then a trip to the Seti River where we would commence the white-water rafting. We had an afternoon of rafting, then stopped half way down the river course to camp overnight on the bank. Before we slept, we were told that tigers were known to live in this valley - an exciting yet terrifying thought to go to sleep to. After lying for hours on the beach next to a log fire before we slept, watching a skyline we would never see the like of again, we woke to go rafting again from morning until lunch time the next day.

Now we set off to Chitwan National Park. Chitwan is known for its elephants, close-to-extinction one-horned rhinos and even tigers. Our

first day at the National Park was filled with elephant-back riding in search of the rhinos. Sadly, none were seen at this time, but monkeys were there in masses and we were on the back of an elephant, so who cares! We then went on a dug-out canoe ride on the river where we saw enormous crocodiles lying on the side of the river—something Rev Gooding loved the sight of. After this, we went on a walk through the forest where we saw a one-horned rhino literally metres away from us, then to an elephant breeding centre—not a bad day in my opinion.

The next day we left for Kathmandu and had a full day of sightseeing, visiting amazing sights such as the old city and the Monkey Temple, then back to the hotel to pack for home.

The Nepal Expedition that was organised by Mr Dempsey and Rev Gooding was by far the most extraordinary trip I, and I'm sure all the other boys as well, have ever been on. The trip was packed with experiences that will take a very long time to forget about—for this, I want to thank Mr Dempsey and Rev Gooding for making this crazy trip become a reality.

If you want to donate any money you can to Unicef for the awful earthquake that occurred, visit www.unicef.org.uk/landing-pages/Donate-Nepal-Earthquake

Charlie Macpherson, 6GTD

The Making of *Blindside*

I remember walking to town with my good friend and film-making partner, Aim Wonghirundacha, one chilly Saturday morning in October 2013. As we passed the school, I couldn't help noticing the emptiness: the bare courtyard, the vacant classrooms and the deserted dining hall. All the places that would normally be crowded with rowdy schoolboys were now completely empty. It seemed a different place. One that was eerie and unsettling replaced the vibrant weekday atmosphere. As I looked around, sensing the cinematic qualities of what was before me, an idea struck. "Wouldn't it be cool if we did a film set in a deserted school?" Aim's face lit up. With that, *Blindside* was born.

Over the following weeks, we spent a lot of time trying to turn the idea into a story we could film. It was no easy task. Time and again, we hit dead-ends. Eventually, with the help of our wonderful Film Unit tutors, we came up with the basic storyline: an isolated teenager, living alone in a boarding house, tries to come to terms with his best friend's tragic death in a swimming pool accident.

I began writing the screenplay. As always, the devil was in the detail. The

biggest challenge was working out how to do the "reveal" convincingly. On the one hand, I wanted to avoid the clichéd flashbacks used all the time; on the other, I had to ensure the film was clear enough for the audience to understand the crucial plot twist. Aim and I spent much time trying to resolve this, with little success. Just when I thought the idea would not work, I stumbled on Steven Chbosky's *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*. The film's "reveal" was done very neatly and originally: instead of having a traditional flashback, Chbosky utilised numerous quick flashes, jump cuts, and jarring edits to create a sense of chaos and disarray, and the character's chaotic experience of piecing together different memories. That was the perfect solution to our conundrum, and we decided to adopt the method in our own "reveal" scene. It worked beautifully. Without Steven Chbosky's film, I'm sure *Blindside* would not have been made!

We started filming in January, with Gary Wu as our lead actor. At first, Gary was reluctant; he worried that his lack of acting ability and experience would let us down. He had not acted at all prior to *Blindside*. In the end, we only convinced him to take part by assuring him the film did not require much acting. That was only partly true; there were in fact quite a few scenes that required significant acting ability. Gary gave a great performance, far exceeding our

expectations. He is currently studying Economics at Oxford, but I'm convinced that one day he will realise his true calling and turn to Hollywood.

We decided to adopt a shaky hand-held style of cinematography, inspired by the work of Darren Aronofsky and Christopher Nolan. As well as a stylistic choice, it was also a practical one. As student film-makers on a budget, we couldn't afford a steadicam, and carrying a tripod everywhere would be tremendously inconvenient. The shaky camera work suited the film perfectly, creating an unsettling tone, and contributing to the dark, gritty look.

Blindside was a tremendous learning experience for Aim and me. As well as being our first AFU film, it was also our first attempt at making a serious fiction. We are immensely grateful for all the help we received throughout the production, especially from Mr Taylor and Film Unit tutor Duncan Pickstock. It was very encouraging to see *Blindside* perform well in various international film festivals; its success has definitely encouraged us to continue making films. We hope *Blindside* will inspire future AFU generations to push themselves as filmmakers. Above all, we hope they have great fun, as we did with *Blindside*; after all, that's what film-making is all about!

John Cheung, VISJ





As You Like It

The day we walked into auditions a lot of us were new to the school and did not know many people. So as we started the process there were a lot of nervous-looking people. We got split into pairs to work on different extracts and then we had to perform to Mrs Quick and the rest of the group. After we left, there were a few days of anxious waiting until our parts were pinned up on the wall.

To start with, when we all got our scripts, as it was all in Shakespearean language, we didn't quite understand it. But, with the help of Mrs Quick (and Google translate!) we all became very tight with the language.

When we received our parts we set about getting used to the characters. To start with, the main characters, Orlando de Boys and Rosalind played by Callum Ravden and Ruby Sumeray, had to get the hang of playing their tricky love-life. There are also a lot of complicated brotherly issues in the play as well—Duke Senior (Benjamin Adams) gets banished by his brother, Duke Frederick (James MacLennan) and Oliver de Boys (Henry Muller) makes several attempts on Orlando's life. Once we understood

the difficult relationships between them all, we were able to really get into our parts.

The military atmosphere of Duke Frederick's court was emphasised by the bodyguards in sunglasses and the wrestling match introduced by Le Beau, played by Charles Clarke. This contrasted with the rural atmosphere in the forest where Duke Senior was living in exile attended by two courtiers, Jacques played by Charlie Ball and Amiens played by Henry Steinsberg, who got the chance to sing a solo, especially composed by Mr Hall from the Music Department. Colm Lambert and John Allen formed an entertaining double act as Touch and Stone who accompany Rosalind and Celia into the forest, and Connor Brown and Jacob Henney played the two shepherds who provide accommodation for the banished girls.

Orlando and Rosalind, Oliver and Celia (Eleanor Thornton) and Silvius (Jacob Henney) and Phoebe (Rosie Aylard) all find their way into each other's lives and hearts. In the final scene the god of marriage, Hymen, appears—in our production as a huge, two-dimensional 'Green Man'—voiced by Yazan Odeh. Roland de Boys, played by Marc Tuazon, enters unexpectedly with the

news that Duke Frederick has given up his claim to the dukedom and that Duke Senior can return from exile. With this happy news the play ends with a final dance; in our production all the cast filled the stage with an enthusiastic version of *Strip the Willow*, linking arms and spinning round while the audience joined in clapping. The cast really threw themselves into this final scene.

When we first heard about *As You Like It*, none of us knew the play and we were a bit daunted by it, but once we got to know it it all started to fall into place. As the run-up to the performances began, some things were still going wrong and so on the night of the first performance there were a lot of last-minute run-throughs. In the end it all pulled together and was word-perfect. After the first night the nerves started again for the next and final night—but this night went even better than the previous one! The lighting and set were perfect, thanks to Mr Lloyd and the Amey Theatre technical crew.

All in all, *As You Like It* was a great play and we formed a lot of new friendships. It was a very good production and given the short time we had to rehearse it, it came together perfectly.

Henry Muller, 3HJW

CCF Centenary Dinner

2014 saw the centenary of the creation of Abingdon's CCF. At a dinner to celebrate, senior cadets gave speeches on the contingent's history, of which extracts are given below:

The CCF is actually a fairly new name for a rather old organisation. In 1859 the Secretary of State for War set up the volunteer corps in universities and public schools. Rossall School in 1860 was the first school to take up the baton with solely an army contingent. Eton, Harrow, Rugby and Tonbridge soon followed. The first instance of any CCF kind of activity around here was in Headington in 1861: Oxford City Rifle Cadet Corps.

In 1908 all units were renamed as the Officer Training Corps. Just five years later, on 25 June 1913 at a dinner to mark 350 years after John Roysse's benefaction, William Grundy, the new Headmaster, recently arrived from Loretto where he had been a lieutenant in the Loretto Company of the OTC, formed Abingdon School OTC because he felt it was necessary to train future officers for this country. This is a motive that CCFs now distance themselves from.



As the number of buglers in Abingdon School OTC grew to seven, the ones doing the marching noted that the buglers were not very good at playing marches. Although some of the buglers were fairly good individually, "It would be better if they could learn a march instead of accompanying us for so much of the way with haphazard blasts." according to the words of an Abingdon Cadet in 1915.

By December 1915, the band had grown to eight buglers and two drummers, but the buglers still weren't very popular. One anonymous cadet is recorded as having said: "The buglers have been trying to learn two marches and, after following them round the parade ground twice a week, the Corps "know those tunes now, whether the buglers do or not."

The contingent undertook its first formal inspection in 1915 by Colonel Sir

Charles Cutler, and he described the OTC as being "a long way in front of any other that I have inspected."

By December 1917, training had been increased to include field days, night operations and physical drill, with one participant saying that drill was "more entertaining to spectators than to the participants".

Combined field days with Radley College, St Edward's and other schools date back as far as 1917, the weather for such activities appearing to be as unreliable as ever with many of these events being washed out. At this time the big combined field days took the form of long tedious marches, culminating in an exhilarating final attack.

*Cdt Sgt Henry Hart, VISJ
and Cdt Sgt Henry Fulford, VISJ*

In December 1918 the *Abingdonian* reported that interest and excitement regarding the corps had fallen significantly since the previous year; this was thought to be as a result of the students "being upset by the unexpected turn the war news has taken" – the Armistice! A large proportion of the contingent had looked forward to finishing school and being able to join the army, and go to fight in France. The end of the fighting marked a disappointing turn of events for such people.

In the early 1930s the contingent was back on track. RAF spotter





planes took part in a number of field exercises, and from the 1940s bicycles were used as armoured vehicles bringing a certain panache to camp. Examples of venues for such camps included Mytchett, Aldershot and Tidworth Park, where the unforgettable Tattoo was viewed. In 1934 the contingent in camp at Warminster had the great honour of winning the guard mounting competition.

In 1938 there was a sufficient surplus of cadets for the formation of an air detachment, taking regular visits to the Abingdon Air Station. The air section was privileged to be present at the Abingdon airfield in 1940, when King George VI and his family paid a visit to inspect the new prototype bombers. The air section of the corps was removed in 1946, partly due to the untimely death of its Commanding Officer.

Throughout the Second World War, the contingent changed considerably. In 1942 the Officer Training Corps was renamed as the Junior Training Corps. During wartime, the senior boys donned home guard armlets, others enrolled under the classification of messengers and both boys and staff took turns sleeping in the trenches, doing night patrol, and keeping look-out from the top of County Hall. The corps also constructed its own assault course down on Lower Field to make up for the fact that there were no field days during

the war years.

Despite the setback of the Second World War, the Junior Training Corps bounced back. It changed its name to the Combined Cadet Force in 1949, by which point the contingent had risen in numbers to 106 members. A Gunner Section, complete with its own 25-pounder, was founded, along with a new Engineering Section. To accommodate the new sections, the current armoury was adopted in 1951, replacing what had previously been a converted art studio.

Around this time, a Royal Navy Section was also created, which was so popular its numbers had to be limited. The Navy cadets were taken on their first field day to Culham. Excursions got more exciting though, as the section went on summer camps to Gibraltar, Malta and Sicily. The Army Section, on the other hand, got taken on an arduous training scheme to the hills of Wales, where each man carried 50 lbs worth of rations and kit, averaging 15 miles a day. After their 8 days in the mountains, the boys returned by train, and because they were so fit after their trekking, they found the trip back from Radley station so easy they did it at the double.

On another camp in 1965, the newly founded RAF Section, which had been created in 1962, flew with the whole contingent to Kirkcudbrightshire. On yet another camp, this time a joint one in Exmouth with 1250 cadets from other

schools, 900 of the boys were poisoned by the army rations that had been cooked in cast-iron vats. Back at school John Griffin, who had joined Abingdon in 1947 aged 27, having served in the Royal Navy in World War II, took over from Barry Montague as the Contingent Commander (OC). He set up summer camps with British units in Germany, and introduced the Canoe Section as well as the Commando Section. The Commando Section learned judo, unarmed combat and rock climbing. In 1971 they undertook a 20-mile weekend trek, spending what must have been freezing-cold December nights in just sleeping bags and polythene bags.

In 1994 David Haworth took over as OC. The same year Colonel Carson joined the school as the Estates Bursar and he took over as OC in 2001. In 2002 cadets in the contingent's RAF section won the Ground Training Regional Competition (South East) at RAF Uxbridge, Middlesex. Later, during the biennial inspection in 2008, Colonel Carson handed the leadership of the CCF over, leaving the contingent in the hands of Major Williams, who had joined the school in 2005 to be the Housemaster of Crescent House having served in the Royal Marines. In 2011 Major Kaye took over from Major Williams, developing the CCF into the contingent we enjoy today.

*Cdt Sjt George Hale, VIRMT
and Cdt Sjt Adam Pearson, VIKL*

Rugby

The 1st XV had a hugely successful and memorable season. After putting behind us a few disappointing losses the side showed both tremendous character and strength in depth to record some of the best wins I can remember for an Abingdon School 1st XV. These included Cheltenham College, Eton for the first time in school history and, arguably the best of them all, beating Radley College away. The squad improved on the pitch, but also set themselves high standards off the pitch. This has come from a successful pre-season tournament in Brentwood and a tour to Sedburgh, one of the leading rugby schools in the country. Our season has been epitomised by our final standing in the Daily Mail Trophy competition. We have moved up from 74th place last year to 7th this year, a huge achievement.

Many senior Abingdonians have achieved representative and academy honours this year. Jack Holford, Michael Dewar and Jamie Cox represented Wasps U18 Academy with Jamie captaining the side on a number of occasions. Sam Telling and Theo Brophy-Clews represented London Irish in the U18 Academy. Michael Dewar earned his first Scotland U18 cap in a

game against England U18s in which he faced Theo, and then went on to secure himself a starting spot during the U18 Rugby Europe Championship. Theo had the great honour of captaining the England U18 team in the match against Scotland and was named Man of the Match.

The 16s had one of the strongest seasons in the rugby club this year. The As had some highs and lows during the season with a narrow defeat to St Paul's being particularly devastating. However wins against Radley, Rugby and Marlborough and an unbeaten record at home showed the character and spirit of the team to bounce back. The highlights of the season came with a first ever win against local rivals St Edward's and a nail-biting win against an unbeaten Bedford side. Another satisfying result came with a draw against Eton, a side by whom the team had been beaten by 50 points in their two previous encounters. The Bs headlined on the last day of term with Mr Barnes' team recording a big 70-0 win against Marlborough College to cap their unbeaten season. The Cs capped a strong season with a particularly hard fought win against rivals Radley, showing the strength in depth in the year group, while the Ds also won a number of matches.

Special mentions must go to James Knight for unofficial try of the season plus Thomas Bishop, Tom Guthrie and George Straine for representing divisional sides at the Wellington Festival.

The U15s had a challenging season but showed great improvement and promise for the future. The As were hit heavily by injuries and availability, but from start to finish showed bold determination and desire to do well. Despite not winning any of our block fixtures, we kept our heads up and managed to win the County Cup, defeating Warriner School in the final by over 60 points. We also had the privilege to compete at the Langley School Rugby Festival coming away with experience and enjoyable memories. The competition for places was fiercely competitive as during the year the A team was constantly changing, with players being brought up from the B and C team. This shows the depth in the year group.

The Bs came up against very well drilled opposition, coming away with only one win and one draw from their block fixtures. However they showed great perseverance through the season making the selection for the A team challenging and continuing to improve until the final match. The Cs performed well this season winning





7 out of 10 of their block fixtures. The Ds also had a good season winning 6 of their 8 block fixtures. They often found themselves competing against C teams and sometimes B teams and still managed to come out on top and win. The Es offered an opportunity for many people who had not played much rugby before this season and they won one out of their three matches despite coming against much more experienced opposition.

The U14s have come out with a set of results that they can be proud of. Throughout the season they have progressed into a strong side pushing teams such as Marlborough, Radley, Eton and Guildford up to the final whistle. The season started with an impressive win against St Edward's 7-5 and another 7-5 win against Berkhamsted. However the team then had a few heavy defeats in the middle part of the season at the hands of St Paul's and Cheltenham, but then showed true character to come back with a well-grafted win against Bedford and a great performance to finish the season at Marlborough.

The team was lucky enough to go on a great tour to Dorset playing Truro, Millfield and Beechen Cliff School, which was a great bonding opportunity for the squad. These were always going to be a few hard matches but it was great to



Theo Brophy-Clews and Michael Dewar

see the As gain a win from Truro and the Bs bounce back from a very tough match against Millfield to achieve a win against Beechen Cliff. We did ourselves proud, as the Millfield coach admitted we were the strongest side an unbeaten Millfield side had faced.

A special mention should go to the U14Ds who were so close to being unbeaten, a great season for them and something to aim for next season!

The Lower School has had a very good season, playing some great rugby and winning a large percentage of games. They had some memorable wins over Cokethorpe, St Hugh's and some brilliant games at the Wellington Festival

including a win against the Shamas Foundation, a side from Kenya, and a narrow loss to the Oratory in the semi-finals.

Abingdon Rugby Club finished the season having played 210 games of rugby across the 22 school sides, winning 55% of all fixtures. The fixture card continues to grow and involves us playing strong independent schools such as Eton and Radley, as well as new blocks against Rugby and Bedford that were introduced this season. My thanks go to all the coaches, players, and the parents who support us week by week on the touchline.

Peter Coke



Christmas Concert

Serendipity had a large part to play in this year's memorable Christmas Concert, which was held at Oxford's prestigious Sheldonian Theatre on 5 December.

For some time the Music Department had felt that the boys were due the experience of a Sheldonian Theatre concert and this provided a great opportunity for a performance from each of the selected ensembles in a large capacity venue, rather than the customary two concerts in the Amey Theatre.

This year, three of our senior pianists were to take a movement each of Beethoven's magnificent *Piano Concerto No. 3 in C minor* as the key work of the first half of the concert. Imagine our delight when we heard that, not only had we made a successful bid for a new piano to replace the ailing one in the Amey Theatre foyer, but also that the School's Secondhand Uniform Scheme was prepared to meet the cost!

Rewind to the rationale, earlier in the

year, for our bid to The Annual Fund for a piano to replace the Richard Lipp that had been a sturdy, but now unreliable, piano, housed in our foyer space for the last ten years or so. This piano has been used regularly for curriculum singing with Lower School, for rehearsals, including House Singing, for informal concerts, for evening events, for overspill teaching and for Other Half activities. After quite a bit of searching, we discovered a magnificent Yamaha grand piano in Faringdon. Though more than 25 years old, it had been hardly used in a domestic environment - a peach of an instrument at a fraction of its new price.

The timing was perfect. Rather than hire a piano at considerable expense, we could ask the suppliers, the Piano Gallery of Faringdon, to supply the piano to the Sheldonian Theatre. It would have its first ever Abingdon performance in front of a capacity audience, before being delivered back to Abingdon the following day! And so it proved.

Our concert featured the piano from the very first item - the accompaniment of the entire first year in *The Virgin Mary had a Baby Boy* and *Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree*, under the direction of Mr Cotton. The Beethoven *Piano*

Concerto No. 3 featured the following soloists - Leon Wu, Anthony Bracey and Daniel Tong. All played impeccably well and from memory and were rewarded by enthusiastic applause.

The second half featured Chamber Orchestra in Mike Sammes' *Three Piece Suite*, followed by Joint Chamber Choir in music by Bruckner and Rheinberger. All gave some accomplished performances under the direction of Mrs Pringle and Mr Cotton, respectively. The last items were directed by bandmaster, Andy Townsend - first the Wind Band in *Flourish* (Vaughan Williams) and *Troika* (Prokofiev), and then the Big Band in *I Put a Spell on You* (Burnett) and Mancini's *Pink Panther*.

With some 250 performers, this was always going to be a logistical challenge, but all went remarkably smoothly under the watchful eye of our own Mr Fletcher-Campbell. I extend my very great thanks to boys and colleagues for producing another spectacular end of term concert - and most especially to the helpers of SUS and their lead parent, Marilyn Moore, for their great generosity. Our new piano will be cherished by several generations of boys.

Michael Stinton

Lent 2015



Lenten Life

As part of its observance of the season of Lent, the Chaplaincy organised a week of activities enabling boys to explore the Christian faith in a variety of ways. "Lenten Life", as the week was called, featured visiting teams from Christians in Sport and Lymington Rushmore, an organisation that supports the work of chaplaincies in many independent schools. Boys responded very positively to chapel talks and special presentations in Religious Studies and sports lessons from the visiting teams. "Lenten Life Lunches" and "Café Chat" conversations in the coffee shop gave boys a chance to ask questions about religious issues. A different slant on spirituality was provided by Paul Hobbs, a professional artist who was based in the Art Department during the week. Through one-to-one interaction, group sessions, and an illustrated presentation to art and academic scholars, Paul demonstrated how Christian themes influence his work. The relationship

between science and Christianity was explored in a lecture entitled "God's Universe?" by Stephen Haywood, a particle physicist at the Rutherford Appleton Laboratories. Abingdon boys were joined for this excellent lecture by a good crowd of girls from St Helen's. The week concluded with a stimulating debate on the validity of Christian truth claims, hosted by the Debating Society. A packed house heard robust presentations from Sixth formers, a member of staff, and a

visiting speaker from the Oxford Centre for Christian Apologetics. This heated, but always respectful, debate proved an excellent climax to a stimulating and enjoyable week. It is hoped that Lenten Life might become a regular feature of the Abingdon calendar. The Lenten Life week was partially funded thanks to donations to the Abingdon School Annual Fund, to which we owe this experience.

Reverend Simon Steer

Y

Y is a great Other Half activity for Middle School students which takes place on a Monday lunchtime at Rev Steer's house, where we eat snacks, drink Coke, learn about, and discuss the Christian faith. Whether you're already a committed Christian or simply someone interested in Christianity who wants to learn

what it's all about, Y is a safe and fun opportunity to explore the Christian faith. Over the past year we have read and discussed various passages from The Bible, ranging from the Gospels to Revelation, as well as having presentations from some members about a Christianity related topic that they find interesting.

Robert MacLennan, 4EJW



Swimming

The 2014–15 season has been another highly enjoyable one for the Abingdon School Swimming Club, with numerous records broken, and the very youthful squads making a positive stamp on the swimming circuit under the guidance of coaches Scott Farnell and Amanda Ford. Further down the School the Lower School additional swimming lessons have helped to develop the younger pupils, and it is a pleasure to see the younger pupils' enthusiasm and motivation while working under the guidance of some of the older swimmers within the club.

ESSA Secondary Schools' Relay Championships

In late September, Abingdon hosted the county round of the ESSA championships, and whilst the U18 squad were slightly below par, the U16s stormed to victory in the 4x50m medley relay in a time of 2 minutes 15 seconds, setting a new county record on the way. On their first outing for the school, the U13 squad, consisting of four first year boys, stood up to the challenge, and, while they placed outside the top two, demonstrated great promise for the future.

The Bromsgrove Relays

Abingdon travelled to Bromsgrove with great anticipation, and they didn't disappoint. The U15s qualified through both the 4x50m freestyle and 4x50m medley relay heats before eventually finishing 2nd and 4th in the finals respectively. Further up the age

groups, having finished 2nd to a very competitive Bromsgrove team in the U18 medley relay final, the boys rose to the challenge, pipping Bromsgrove to first place in the freestyle 4x50m relay final in a time of 1 minute 48 seconds.

Warwick 100s

In early February, the Swimming Club demonstrated their determination, taking on the likes of Harrow, Whitgift, Bedford, Cheltenham and Warwick in what was a highly competitive field. The youthful U14 team, including U12 swimmers Josh Roche and Daniel McNamara, swam exceptionally, consistently coming in the top two and finishing 2nd in their age group. The U16s and U18s swam admirably. Overall the team eventually finished in 3rd.

The Abingdon Sprints

Mid-February saw Abingdon welcome nine schools to the annual Abingdon Sprints Swimming Gala. On this occasion the boys swam exceptionally, resulting in 14 first place finishes out of 18 events, with all 3 squads winning their respective age groups. The U14 squad set two new school records in the U14 4x50m freestyle relay and medley relay in times of 2:01:61 and 2:15:61 respectively, whilst Min Laohavisit, Win Cheevadhanarak and Murray Eccleston also set new school records.

The Bradfield Gala

In early March, the U16 and U18 squads took on the challenge of both Bradfield College and Cranleigh College. As expected, the event was fast paced, with both squads more than holding their own in what was a very dominant

day for the club, bringing home the overall winners' trophies in both the U16 and U18 age groups.

The Bath and Otter Cup

In mid-March, 8 members of the Abingdon squad had the privilege of competing in the prestigious Bath and Otter Cup, held at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Pool. This was a fantastic opportunity for the boys to test their ability against 80 other independent schools from across Great Britain. While a time of 4 minutes 2 seconds in the Bath Cup placed the boys 2nd in their 4x100m, and a time of 2 minutes 3 seconds in the Otter Cup 4 x 50m medley relay left the teams in contention, unfortunately on this occasion these times weren't quick enough to reach the finals.

The Griffen Gala

The final gala of the year saw the Abingdon School team join forces with St Helen and Katharine to take on the challenge of Abingdon Vale Swimming Club. On a very competitive evening, whilst the U18 and U14 squads both came off second best against tough opposition, the U16 squad finished the season in style, beating their opposition from Abingdon Vale Swimming Club by 20 points to 16. This was a highly enjoyable way to bring the curtain down on another very busy season for the Swimming Club, and with all of our swimmers set to return next year, we look forward to the challenges to come.

Tom Donnelly



Cross Country

First, I would like to thank my fellow coaches who—as always—made everything possible: training sessions, supervisions, away matches... I have worked out that a member of staff running alongside our boys over the seven months from September to March can run up to 500 miles, endure long coach journeys, inclement weather and soggy sandwiches, but stands a pretty good chance of being rewarded by watching the squad win.

Then, I would like to thank our captain, Alex Gatenby, who was an inspiration to all and who kept all administrative matters running smoothly. Alex commanded respect naturally and did a first class job—thank you!

Finally, I would like to thank the squad runners; aside from their raw athletic talent, their grit and determination, their sharp focus and questionable humour during long coach journeys, the one aspect that describes all of them is their resilience: resilience to hard training, poor weather, seven months of training and racing, and their resilience to the inevitable conflicts in time and racing

disappointments. I think that this is a rare personality trait, and what struck me most was that all the boys have it in abundance. They were an absolute pleasure to work with and an inspiration to their peers. What follows is an account, by the captain, of the races that stood out the most for one reason or another.

Alexis Christodoulou

Country Championships - 10 February 2015

The Cross Country Club attended the Oxfordshire Cross Country Championships today and the senior team secured their 9th victory at this event. Specifically the overall rankings of individuals were: U15: David Bunn 6th, Alexander Pennington 7th. U17: Ivo Brown 2nd, Calum Steer 9th, Joshua Crichton 16th. U19 - First Placed Team - Christian Von Eitzen 2nd, Nat Jones 4th, Teddy Curtis 5th, Michael Fabes 8th, Alexander Miell-Ingram 9th, Harry Thomas 11th, Alex Gatenby 12th, Thomas Teece 13th.

Radley Relays - 12 February 2015

The Club took two senior teams and an intermediate team to the Radley Relays. Each team was made up of four

legs, and the 12 runners battled the muddy but familiar course. The A team - Alexander Miell-Ingram, Teddy Curtis, Henry Hart and Nat Jones ran well and gained bronze medals, while a B team of Michael Fabes, Alex Gatenby, Harry Thomas and Thomas Teece finished just behind in 4th place. Meanwhile, Ivo Brown, David Bunn, Alexander Pennington and Joshua Crichton placed second in the inters category, which is to be highly commended, especially when taking into account the ages of David and Alexander.

South East Championships - 28 February 2015

The Cross Country squad took part in the South East Championships, a very prestigious race including fierce rivals such as Harrow, St Albans and the Judd. Abingdon fielded an A and B senior team for the race, giving many younger runners a lot of experience and opportunity, such as Ivo Brown, Calum Steer and Joshua Crichton. Overall, the small squad still managed to achieve a bronze medal in the senior race with six of the eight boys managing to come in the top 35 of the race. Christian Von Eitzen again had an exceptional race, coming fifth overall, and credit must



also be given to Ivo Brown, still only an intermediate runner from the fifth year, who came in an impressive 16th place overall.

Marlborough College - 5 March 2015

The Cross Country Club travelled to Marlborough to compete in the annual event. With the season coming to an end, it is always a very important fixture in the most scenic of places. A strong A team, consisting of Christian Von Eitzen, Nat Jones, Teddy Curtis, Alexander Miell-Ingram, Thomas Teece, Jonty de la Harpe and Harry Thomas finished first overall in the seniors category, gaining 1st, 5th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 18th and 23rd for individual positions respectively. Meanwhile, in the intermediate category, Ivo Brown, Calum Steer, Joshua Crichton and Alexander Pennington won the race. Ivo Brown came first, while Calum, Josh and Alexander came 4th, 8th and 9th respectively, ensuring the win for Abingdon's team. After seven months of hard training, the boys were very happy with their performance in the penultimate race of the calendar.

Teddy Hall Relays - 10 March 2015

The Cross Country Club travelled to St Edward's to compete in the Teddy Hall



Relays, an event held in the beautiful grounds of the school. This was the very last race of the season for the team, and the last ever race for the Upper Sixth members, so the squad were keen to perform at their best together. Running in this inaugural event was also a great chance to add a new race to the annual fixture list. With perfect weather conditions, the first leg runners were ready to set off against a number of other schools, including St Edward's, Cooper's and Cherwell. Abingdon fielded A, B and C teams in the open race. The A team, consisting of Alexander Miell-Ingram, Teddy Curtis, Christian Von Eitzen and

Nat Jones came first overall in the race, beating Cooper's second team by just under 2 minutes – a brilliant result. The Bs – Henry Hart, Jonty de la Harpe, Ivo Brown and Thomas Teece – finished third overall, and a C team of Calum Steer, Joshua Crichton, Alex Pennington and Harry Thomas finished in fourth place, both very commendable achievements. Special congratulations go to Christian Von Eitzen, who got the fastest time of the day. This set of results rounded off a fantastic day for the Cross Country Club, who look forward to competing there next year.

Alex Gatenby, VIAPS



Les Misérables

It is often said of musicals that they're "OTT" works of art; brimming with glaring caricatured personalities and two dimensional plots which, when combined with romantic scores, flashy lighting and belting mezzos, find themselves criticised as a false and "innately idiotic" form of storytelling. But, having taken part in three large scale musicals during my time at Abingdon—*Candide* (2012), *Guys and Dolls* (2014) and *Les Misérables* (2015)—I see such criticism as thoroughly misguided and unneeded, as these made up some of the most fulfilling (and indeed most fun) months of my time at school. As well as the obvious pleasure that *Les Mis* entailed, it is important to stress how the experience transcended the enjoyment of a school production and became something utterly irreplaceable and unique. Something that we knew we would never again experience for the rest of our lives.

But wait... *Les Mis*? Surely not? A work well regarded as perhaps one of the hardest shows to pull off in its native habitat of trained actors and singers (with each cohort equally useless as mutually exclusive entities); it seemed doubtful as to whether even a drama



college, let alone a school, could produce a version that would do the work justice. The pressure was built even higher by Mr Phillips' scouting efforts, revealing how previous attempts to stage it often found themselves thwarted by the overambitious, the pessimistic, and the dreaded cart scene...

Yet, soon September was upon us and the auditions began in earnest. The usual suspects from previous productions appeared to a real buzz as innumerable new and younger faces came forward to try their luck at this year's musical from across both

schools. From the outset, Mr Phillips insisted upon emphasising the role of active involvement, especially during the first audition, where he could often be heard politely asking, "would somebody please sing?" There had been doubts about casting, particularly surrounding the male parts that require a lot of vocal dexterity (or, dare I say, recklessness?), so I'm sure Mr Phillips and Mr Cotton breathed a sigh of relief as a fair few singing boys (perhaps most notably Thomas Keogh, whose authoritative yet sensitive tenor suited perfectly the role of Enjolras, leader of the revolution) emerged in the Amey Theatre over those two or so days of auditions.



With the cast list published by the third week of term, rehearsals began slowly but with a growing sense of optimism about the familiarity of the show. It came as no surprise that most of the cast seemed to know half the songs before the rehearsal process began. One of the best things about these productions is the sense of comradeship which is forged between members of the cast; regardless of year group, school or sex, everyone would continually find themselves converging in an emotional kaleidoscope of different personalities once to three times a week. Even meetings with complete strangers began to bud into close friendships

that would blossom over the coming months, crafting a close-knit community that made us yearn for the greater success of the show as a whole far more than individual performances, which was evident in the growing cohesion of the group.

Following a stressful Christmas for many of the Upper Sixth involved in Oxbridge interviews, and the promise of January mocks for our fifth years, reality had suddenly struck the production team, with the realisation that the three performances were now less than a month away. And time wasn't the only thing threatening us: with the New Year came the inevitable exchange of illness.

Like a spout of method acting gone madly wrong we, like actual citizens of 18th century France, found ourselves struck down by 'the plague', leading to frenzied research into and subsequent use of a myriad of 'scientific' treatments to miraculously cleanse the vocal chords, the vanguard of which was honey tea. In true diva style, Jamie Blackwell and I could often be found in isolation from the rest of the group warm-up, burrowing away in the music school's staff room in search of "our" coveted tea (when, more often than not, we were also seeking to pillage the fridge of Mr Fletcher Campbell's highly exciting but strangely elusive banana

cake).

By the end of January *Les Mis* fever seemed to have gripped both schools. Within just a few days all three nights were sold out in a parent-sponsored cyber raid that rivalled Glastonbury in its intensity, meaning there appeared in the following days something of a pseudo black market selling of tickets (endorsed mostly by my own family who - perhaps due to my own incompetence - had failed to get tickets through the cast early bird system). The appearance of the band the weekend before opening night really brought the stage alive, and the show, bit by bit, was beginning more and more to resemble something we could all be proud of. It is often the case that the most worrying scenes in rehearsals miraculously turn out to be the most impressive in the final performance (lovely ladies? I'm looking at you). Overcoming setbacks started to become fairly routine; we faced issues with mincing, illness, personal alarms, door alarms, the brief disappearance of our percussionist, and Mr Phillips' persistent hayfever which would always act up towards the beginning of the last number. Perhaps the two greatest fears were whether the copious lubrication of voice-boxes would drain Abingdon's water supply dry before the actual show, and simply whether our bodies would endure, still conscious, to the first performance. Following a 12 hour rehearsal two days before, the latter was starting to look less and less likely. But we all survived the pre-production



week with voices (mostly) intact and, with a great deal of assistance from our inspiring dance captains, we were kept not only rigorously in shape but enthusiastically warmed up every night.

The night of the first show had arrived. Tensions were high; as was the noise level coming from MP12, Javert and Valjean's changing room. Anyone could have gained a free viewing of the show by being backstage during the vocal warm ups. Finally, the lights in the auditorium were dimmed and a hushed silence spread backstage as we waited in anticipation for the resounding brass that would kick-start the first performance.

It cannot be overstated what a truly humbling experience it was to act beside such talented and committed

individuals, and while I could dwell on the issues we faced during the three nights of performance, I think it's far more worthwhile noting that the entire cast not only dealt with any setbacks in a professional and mature manner but also gave 120% every night. Equally, words do not do justice to the heart-warming feelings triggered by such great appreciation from the audience every evening. From the enticing lovely ladies, to the hilarity of the Thénardiens, the deeply inspiring battle scenes, the indomitable pursuit of love and the moving sadness and redemption of the ending, I can say with all honesty that no scene lost its magic for a single second.

The show itself was put on each night in aid of Blue Skye Thinking, a truly worthwhile cause and one that needs no introduction, particularly in this school magazine. The cause spurred the cast further, as we all realised that it was vital that the impact of the show should not be wasted.

Les Misérables represents an unforgettable chapter of my life. Among the countless opportunities this school has offered me, I believe this has been by far the most significant. It is an episode I have no doubt will always continue to resonate in the lives of all those it touched, as it has done since the final encore of *One Day More*, the memory of which epitomises how we came together to produce something truly entrancing. I look forward to the inevitable 2025 Dream Cast production.

Hugh Cutting, VIMFFC



Economics Trip to Frankfurt

During the Lent half term break, the Economics and Business Studies department, led by Mr Fieldhouse, took 23 students and three staff on an educational trip to Frankfurt. The trip started shakily, with one boarder oversleeping, Savva Yakubson slamming his hand in a taxi door on arrival at Heathrow, and all three staff having to frantically run through Terminal 5 from a restaurant at the other end of the airport, having failed to hear the final call for the flight. On arrival at Frankfurt we found that the Mercure Hotel's 24-hour shuttle service had in fact finished for the day, effectively leaving us stranded at the airport. However, a quick call to the hotel from Mr Fieldhouse resulted in 7 separate taxis arriving to pick us up—a novel arrival process for the group. After checking in to our 4-star abode, we headed for the city and our first activity, which was a detailed walking tour of Frankfurt's financial district. This took in a number of key institutions and ended with a spectacular trip up Main Tower to take in the high-tech and innovative skyline.

Sunday is never the best day to be in the financial centre of a city, and so instead we boarded a coach to the beautiful German town of Heidelberg. Here there was time to explore the



impressive castle, a host of churches and the quaint cobbled streets of the shopping district. In the evening and back at the hotel, Mr Ponniah set the students a topical Economics task in groups of four. They were asked to prepare a short presentation on why Frankfurt is such an important financial centre, referencing what they had learnt from the walking tour the previous day along with any further research (using the hotel's semi-reliable wifi service). The quality of all the presentations was very high indeed and it was difficult to pick just one winner—so two winning teams were selected and suitable prizes awarded.

On Monday morning we headed back to Frankfurt city centre, where the group were given a presentation at Deutsche Bank on the structure of the German banking system and on Deutsche Bank's current strategy as a major global player in this industry. This was followed by a trip to see the new European Central Bank (ECB). Unfortunately, the bank is not open to visitors until 2016; it made, however, for a great photo opportunity and two students (Ryan Ling and Aim Wonghirundacha) gave a short presentation on the role and workings of this important institution. Monday afternoon saw the group travel to the Commerzbank Football Stadium, home of Eintracht Frankfurt FC, where we were given an in-depth business talk and tour. The group then checked into the A&O Hotel/Hostel, close to the centre of Frankfurt, for the final night. It wasn't the 4-star Mercure, much to Mr Simmons' derision, though it did have a pool table in the lobby.

On Tuesday morning we visited the Frankfurt Stock Exchange, where a presentation on the role of this institution and on the determination of share prices was given, before students were allowed a unique chance to view the trading floor. The trip ended with an operations tour of Frankfurt Airport before we flew back to Heathrow. Thank you to all involved for making this such an enjoyable trip.

Nick Fieldhouse





Fencing

Academics were scandalised when it emerged that the 2015 Oxford English Thesaurus had to be drastically updated due to the prominent successes of a local school fencing club. The words ‘unbeaten’, ‘camaraderie’ and ‘dedication’ were quickly added as synonyms of ‘Abingdon School Fencing Club’; ‘épée’ assumed a fresh definition: “the weapon of choice of the renowned fencing club based in Abingdon (*disclaimer*: approach with caution)”.

While critics argued that fanciful words were valueless without raw achievement, thankfully the Club has plenty of the latter to reinforce its place in The Oxford Mail headlines and as the headword on page 4 of the Thesaurus. An unbeaten season against six schools, including Winchester College, Wellington College and Bradfield College, was topped by the flawless victory against Harrow—flawless in the sense that they refused to fence the Club after we previously undercut their three-year unbeaten season (whoops) in typical Zorro style.

And while you do need a mask, being a fictitious Spanish swordsmen is not compulsory to fence for Abingdon;



the Club’s growing numbers and popularity mean that team fencers are picked from across all ages and levels. Proof of such was the gold medal earned by Harry Baston-Hall, Jake de Jongh and James Gibson in the U14 Southern Region Team Event - whose coordination emulated that of the Three Musketeers—alongside the bronze medal achieved by Luca Frauenfeld, Matthew Green and Mike MacLennan (this team claiming inspiration from Obi Wan Kenobi). The U18 bronze medal was seized by Alessandro Cantarelli, Greg Davies and Alec de Jongh (these boys were only 15 and approximately the same height in inches), who fought

courageously against older, taller and hairier opponents.

Yet Abingdon fencers are also remarkably independent, not only using the giant mirror in the Fitness Suite to fix their own hair, but also performing strongly in individual events such as the British Youth Championships Regional Qualifier, where eight out of seventeen fencers won medals. Mike MacLennan’s skilful dodging earned him bronze in the U12s, while the pace of Guy Tilley and the sublime footwork of Jake de Jongh saw Abingdon take bronze and silver respectively in the U14s. Battle cries sounding like “skoo-eh” from Michael Temporal-Darrell and the contrasting



performs the strongest across all weapons. As well as this accolade, a further testament to the Club's success across the three weapons was James Fotherby's remarkable bronze medal in the Boys' Senior Sabre, securing Abingdon the Hilary Hammond Cup for the second year in a row. This trophy is awarded to the club with the highest number of points scored with less than 25 weapon entries, aptly recognising the talent imbued across the whole of the Club.

Benjamin Schneider, on top of his other achievements, won gold at the Junior Commonwealth Games in South Africa. Benjamin could be considered one of the pearls of the Club, affectionately cultured by the whole team into a brilliant fencer who deserves to relish in his own shine.

It is safe to say that the Club is undoubtedly a family. Every member is indebted to our two coaches, Herman du Preez and Alan Knowles, who have nurtured us while assuming positions as pastors and friends. If the Club is a great ship, then the two supporting beams are Herman and Alan, keeping us afloat and enabling us to pluck pearls out of the ocean. Our extraordinary helmsman, Mr Fieldhouse, keeps us heading in the right direction (with few stalls) by securing new fixtures (such as Millfield and RGS High Wycombe), organising competition logistics and even beginning to fence some boys himself—you, Sir, are a hero. This year's leavers (Jack Dawson, Herman Chan, Andrey Ogarev and William Johnson), who have benefited so much from the Club, would agree that it is sad to say goodbye; that the Fencing Club has made us the Abingdon boys that we are; and that we will always view these days with nostalgia. The Club's final thanks go out to ASPA (Abingdon School Parents' Association), whose generous donations provided us with new boxes, stimulating further progress from the Club's humble origins in the CMR. From a leaver's perspective, Abingdon has been great. And the Fencing Club has been the best part. Boys: keep fighting; keep shouting; keep winning.

En Garde!

Jack Dawson, VIRY

calmness of Patrick Johnson proved that there were two different routes to obtaining bronze in the U16s. Perhaps the height of Robert MacLennan, who won gold, was the deciding factor. Benjamin Schneider and Jack Dawson met in the final of the U18s, with the latter narrowly defeating the former in a very noisy fashion (added to by the whole Club cheering "Yes, Abingdon!" regardless of who scored). Benjamin would have the last laugh, though, strolling away with a phenomenal bronze at the national event in May.

Abingdon's feared yet respected name on the fencing circuit translated into further domination at the Public

Schools' Fencing Competition. Having grown a couple more feet, Robert MacLennan brought home the trophy in the Boys' Junior Épée, while Benjamin Schneider converted his questionable wit into some form of success by narrowly missing out on first place in the Boys' Senior Épée. However, treachery was afoot when he won bronze in the Boys' Senior Foil (nearly beating his position in his native weapon). His defiance was nevertheless rewarded with the prestigious Senior Master at Arms Trophy—given not, contrary to belief, to the individual with the longest arms (although Benjamin would be a contender), but instead to whoever

Football

2015 proved to be another thoroughly enjoyable and successful season for the Abingdon School Football Club. There were a number of standout performances, with the U15 As beating Hampton, the Lower School beating Cokethorpe 7-6, the 2nd XI winning the Thames Valley Football League for the very first time, and a number of other highlights to celebrate throughout the Club.

After a very promising pre-season under the guidance of ex-England coach Derek Fazackerley, the Lower School started their campaign with wins over Oratory, and went on to make great progress. The U12s were scoring goals for fun, amassing an amazing 39 goals in their last 5 fixtures with the U13s also securing convincing wins towards the end of the season.

After a slow start, the U14s demonstrated notable progress. The U14C's highlight was scoring 5 against Oratory, whilst the Bs also capped off an enjoyable season, putting 7 past Reading Grammar in a convincing win. The U14 As, after performing admirably on a very challenging fixture card, finished the season on a resounding high, with a thoroughly deserved 3-1 win against Reading Grammar.

The U15s also turned around a slow start to the season, with the A team securing victories against Cokethorpe, Radley and Oratory whilst also beating the Independent Schools' National Cup finalists, Hampton College 2-1, an outstanding



result! Both the U15 Bs and U15Cs showed excellent improvements; the Bs scoring 6 goals against Rugby School and 7 against Cokethorpe School. The U15 Cs season was topped off with a 5-1 win over Oratory. A fantastic set of results, and great progress on last year's season.

The U16s has had an excellent season, with both the A and B team beating Haileybury and Berkhamstead in the first 3 weeks. The A team then went on to beat Aylesbury Grammar, Reading Grammar and MCS, playing some highly impressive football along the way. The B team, not wanting to be outdone by the U16 A team, scored plenty of goals this season, whilst also beating the likes of Rugby School and MCS.

Moving on to the seniors—the 5th XI showed great spirit, and left the best performance of the season until the final game with a terrific 4-0 win against Oratory, whilst the 4th XI won 5 and lost 5 in Mr Pritchard's last season in charge. The 3rd XI showed great promise, and beat the likes of Forest School and Haileybury 4-0, before eventually

finishing a thoroughly deserved 2nd in the Thames Valley Football League.

After a very tough start, the 2nd XI made a powerful surge towards the end of the season, beating Forest, Rugby and Shiplake Schools along the way. Going into the final game the boys needed to beat Reading Grammar to win the Thames Valley 2nd XI Football League. They didn't disappoint, a 2-1 win securing the first ever league title for the school!

After a mixed start to the season, to the surprise of many, the 1st XI got their season up and running with an outstanding 2-1 victory against Independent Schools National Cup finalists, Hampton. They then backed this up with several convincing league victories against Reading Blue Coat, Reading Grammar and Oratory, before going on to beat MCS. The side eventually finished a very creditable 2nd place in the league, the School's best ever performance.

In addition to this, after a successful trial, second year pupils Aaron Mara, William Lebeau and Theo Zamani were all selected for the ISFA U13 development squad, and attended the Gothia World Youth Cup in Sweden later in the year.

Finally, bringing the season to a close, in mid-April the U15s undertook the Football Club's first international tour, attending the International Youth Festival of Football in Paris. Having qualified through their group unbeaten, against opposition from across Europe, the squad eventually finished a creditable 3rd.

Tom Donnelly



Bridge Club

The Bridge Club continues to thrive and we have regularly had five tables playing on a Wednesday afternoon. It has been particularly pleasing to see so many Lower School boys learning to play and to have a big group of third years mastering the game. It is one of the few sports where people of all ages can compete against each other.

Mr Shepherd generously gives up his time every Wednesday to run the tables for the more experienced players. He puts his years of experience to good use, encouraging the boys to bid more accurately and to play more aggressively. In the other room, beginners and intermediate players get a chance to master the basics of the game. Ethan Lo, a fifth year student, is worthy of particular mention as he has patiently coached a table of lively first year students this year, getting them to stop asking questions long enough to bid.

We will be very sorry to say goodbye to Nicklaus Pannu-Yuon this term. He has played bridge every Wednesday since he was in the third year and has been a wonderful ambassador for the Club, particularly among the boarding community. He can be credited with making bridge cool. We all wish him well as he heads off to university where, no doubt, he will continue to crush his opponents.

Cameron Butcher, one of our first year members, took part in a simultaneous pairs competition in March and came top in the country along with his partner who goes to the European School.

When garnering opinions about the club, what is most apparent is how much the boys value having a relaxed social opportunity to exercise their brains.

Katy Lee



"Bridge Club means you can have a relaxing sit down at the end of a busy day."

Cameron Butcher, 1HFCP

"Bridge has taught me not to trust the facial expressions of my friends! I like it because I am often very lucky!"

Simon Maddison, 3JMG

"Learning bridge is both difficult and entertaining. It teaches you to communicate in a different language."

Peter Bicarregui, 4EPB

"Bridge teaches me to make strategic decisions, develops my team work skills and teaches me patience."

Patrick Gwillam-Thomas, 4NP

"Learning bridge has helped me to practise teamwork, strategy and clever thinking. It's fun."

Piers Mucklejohn, 3HJW

"Bridge teaches you to focus and to think hard about what you are doing. You learn to co-operate and read signals."

Saul Rea, 3JHW

"Bridge Club is a perfect environment for playing an excellent game. It teaches you to be logical and precise."

Charlie Franklin, 1HFCP



Rifle Club

Abingdon School Rifle Club spent the year with its nose to the grindstone. In spite of the unexpected cancellation of the British School Leagues (the postal competition in which Abingdon, for its small squad, exhibits a huge amount of prowess), the boys continued to train with determination week in and week out. It wouldn't be unreasonable to say that had we competed, we would have racked up the top prizes. More tangible accomplishments can be found in James Hogge's victory in the Oxfordshire Junior Championship, 50m shot, at Beckley, near Oxford.

With regard to the customary German tour, last year was our turn to host the Stade team. Although the Germans triumphed with little opposition, the highest score narrowly went to an Abingdon shooter, and the encounter was, as always, good-spirited.

The club's facilities, equipment, and management also underwent notable changes, not least a new master in charge. Mr Aitken is proving to be a patient and dedicated successor to Miss Man, who left us last year. Needless to say, we are anticipating a painless and prosperous future under his management. Furthermore, a splendid array of shelving has been installed in the clubroom, which is a powerful aid to



keeping the premises tidy.

No fewer than three top-of-the-line rifles were purchased by Abingdon shooters last year, which is testament to the ambition at the core of our club. Indeed, Samuel Wilmot and I shot in the English Schools A and B teams respectively in a match last year. Later in the year, Drew Farwell and I picked up a fine collection of silverware at the NSRA's August meeting at Bisley, where the very best shots in the country gather every year to compete in an overwhelming spread of events, and the two of us recently attended try-outs for the GB Junior Squad.

With Captain Johnathan Goves having ended his time at Abingdon, I stepped into the role myself. Looking forward, we are working towards running additional sessions, either during the school week or on one Sunday of every month, dedicated entirely to team training.

All of this success we attribute to the hard work of our coach, Mr Alan Smith and his wonderful partner, Mandy, who is never far from the action, not to mention the efforts of Mr Aitken and, of course, the commitment of the boys themselves. My congratulations to all.

Henry Waterson, 5MRE

Rosslyn Park

On 23 March I was proud to be part of an U13 team which made Abingdon history by reaching the semi-finals of the Rosslyn Park National Sevens Tournament.

We travelled up to London the night before and arrived bright and early for the group stages, playing as one of a mind-boggling 700 teams who had gathered for the competition. In our group, we defeated Olchfa School 17-0, Greenhill School 29-10, and Skinner School 21-10 before going into the knock-out rounds. Most of the tries were scored by Theo Brown, who was the highest scorer, in any age group, for the entire tournament. Charlie Atkinson kicked solidly as usual, converting virtually every try scored but also showing flair and imagination in the field, aided by the superb James Lloyd and William Vanhinsbergh.

In our next two games we met and comprehensively defeated Ysgol Gylun Garth Olwg and St John the Baptist High School before heading home for a well-earned night's rest. Jake Blackwell's great hands consistently getting the ball back to Charlie and Daniel McNamara's strength over the ball played a huge part in the victories.



The next day, we headed back to London for the quarter finals where we met Orleans Park School for a hard-fought match which we eventually won 31-21. This took us to the semi-finals, where we met Whitgift School, the winners of the Berkhamsted Sevens; unfortunately, due to a combination of tiredness and a few uncharacteristic errors, we lost 7-22. That said, we can be proud of how we played throughout the tournament. We routinely pulled our opponents from one side of the pitch, leaving space for Theo to accelerate through and score. Our dominant set piece work disrupted the opposition and we were great at retaining our own ball, particularly from scrums.

Thanks must go to Touchliners for our spectacular new kit, though sadly we weren't allowed to keep it, and for the Jedi suits which helped us win a few psychological battles before we even stepped onto the pitch. Most importantly, a massive thank you to Mr Broadbent and Mr Hunter for taking us to the competition and for their endless patience and good humour, and also to Mr Coke who helped so much with our training.

It was a great run, and we are all itching to have another go as U16s in the years ahead!

James Coombs, 2MJE



Chapel Choir

Chapel Choir definitely hit the ground running this year. With only a few weeks to prepare for an evensong at Gloucester Cathedral at the start of October, rehearsals were intense to say the least. Arriving at the cathedral on the day brought back memories – my last visit had been as a treble with Chapel Choir in the first year. The canticles were Purcell's *Evening Service in G minor* and the anthem was *My Beloved Spake*, also by Purcell. This included much semi-chorus writing, featuring Alexander Glover, Didier Delgorge, Hugh Cutting, Thomas Keogh, Jamie Farrow, Carl Olavesen, Mitchell Keely and Anthony Bracey. I had the huge pleasure of playing the organ for parts of the service and I am very excited that I will be spending my gap year there as Organ Scholar. The choir sang very well in this historic venue to a large congregation of family and the general public.

The next event was a Remembrance Day evening service in the school chapel. The choir performed three movements from Fauré's *Requiem*, followed by the *Russian Kontakion of the Departed*—great for the low basses! Hugh Cutting (alto) sang the *Pie Jesu* from Duruflé's *Requiem* with William Johnson playing the cello solo.

The rest of the Michaelmas Term was



dedicated to Christmas preparation. For the third year in a row we sang for the service preceding the General Court meeting at Mercers' Hall in London—and this year the choir managed to outshine a St Paul's Cathedral chorister! For the first time ever there was a carol service specifically for parents and family of the choir, held at St Helen's Church, alongside the usual Lower School and end of term carol services. This year I especially enjoyed performing Elizabeth Poston's setting of *The Cherry Tree Carol*, which I had not sung before.

In the Lent Term, Chapel Choir sang Rutter's *Gaelic Blessing* and *The Lord Bless You and Keep You* at the Choral

Concert in the Chapel in March and also at the service for founders and benefactors at the end of term. Rutter was new to the choir and everyone thoroughly enjoyed singing it. The Choral Concert also featured Hugh Cutting performing Gibbons' *This Is the Record of John*, with interspersed choral refrains from the choir. It was the perfect piece to show off Hugh's rich low register and was expertly sung.

This Gibbons verse anthem was then sung again in a very special service of Evening Prayer at Magdalen College, Oxford on May Day. Mr Fletcher-Campbell and Mr Cotton were both Choral Scholars here, and other choirs very seldom get to sing for services. It was only because of the college choir's break after the early-morning May Day celebrations that we were given this opportunity. The canticles were Tallis's *Short Service*, and the responses were plainsong with Mitchell Keely as a superb cantor. The psalm was Walford Davies' beautiful setting of *I Shall Lift Up Mine Eyes Unto the Hills*, with Owen Ravden and Thomas Keogh as soloists. Everything was sung to an extraordinarily high standard and the culmination of months of preparation made the occasion a huge success.

Many thanks to Mr Cotton for all his work this past year and for getting the best out of everyone in the choir, and also to Mr Fletcher-Campbell for his fantastic accompaniment in rehearsals and services throughout.

James Anderson-Besant, 6JEF





Hockey

Abingdon Hockey Club had another excellent season, fielding 19 sides, with over 200 boys participating, scoring 289 goals and winning more than half the matches over the course of the term.

With the support of the ever-faithful Abingdon Griffins on the side line, Tilsley Park became our home fortress, with some fantastic matches taking place as the boys competed for the sixth year in the Independent Schools Hockey

League competition.

There were some stand out individual honours throughout the season: William Carter-Keall, in his last year at Abingdon, played and captained the England U18 national team against Germany, 6 boys were selected for the regional round of JRPC, and over 20 boys throughout the Club represented the county.

On top of this there were notable performances from certain teams. The 1st VI entered the prestigious St George's National 6's competition,

reaching the semi finals in the plate. The 1st XI squad toured Barcelona in a pre-season tournament; in what was a highly competitive field, playing against the top three clubs in Spain, along with Sherborne and Slazenger HC, they ran out 3rd. The U16 As had a fantastic season, led by Mr Birkbeck, and got through to the last 16 rounds of the National Cup. After 2 wins against Portsmouth Grammar and Eastbourne, they finally lost to a very strong Whitgift side. The U13s led by Mr Broadbent made it through the county round and competed well in a very tough group in the regionals.

Although not able to mention all the teams, I would like to thank all the boys for the time and effort they put into each hockey session. They are a pleasure to coach and have come on leaps and bounds over the past few years. On top of this, a huge thank you to all the coaches who are there week in week out, working hard to develop each player to their full potential.

I look forward to next season already- we have a huge amount of potential here at Abingdon and I am excited to see us winning games and participating fully over the course of 2016!

Olly Deasy



CCF

On the afternoon of Tuesday 9 September 2014, as I witnessed the hustle and bustle of the eager new recruits forming up on parade for the first time, looking in awe at the smartly turned out Army and RAF Sections under the watchful command of their proud new NCOs, I knew this was going to be another busy and fulfilling year for the Abingdon CCF.

Training was quickly underway, with our first main event being the successful September TIBUA (Training In Built Up Areas) weekend at Longmoor. The cadets learned new skills and fired plenty of ammunition whilst defending a FOB (Forward Operating Base) and attacking through a disused village.

For the Michaelmas field day, the Army Section took part in a variety of activities at St George's Barracks Bicester. Led by their dynamic new Officer in Charge, Flt Lt Cottam, the RAF Cadets visited RAF Odiham, where they even managed to secure a ride in a Chinook helicopter. Later in the term, the recruits and their NCOs spent a valuable day at the Imperial War Museum, Duxford.

In October, we held the Abingdon CCF Centenary Reunion Dinner. We were lucky enough to welcome back a large number of OAs, spanning an impressive number of decades, including Major General Walter Courage MBE. The evening gave the opportunity for both



previous and current cadets to share their experiences, whilst celebrating this important milestone for the contingent. After dinner, six of the current senior cadets gave confident and impressive speeches about Abingdon CCF over the years. The evening was a huge success and my thanks must go to the OA Club staff for all of their help in organising this event.

In November, the CCF took part in the annual Remembrance parades held in Abingdon town centre and at school. During these extremely poignant events, and in this particularly significant year, we were able to reflect upon the true dangers and reality of conflict and pray for those affected by war; we will

remember them.

At the end of the month we were very fortunate to receive a visit from the Army Air Corps with a Lynx helicopter. Many of the cadets were able to experience a flight - thoroughly enjoyed by all. My thanks go to Capt Clive and his team for making this possible.

The end of the Michaelmas Term saw a number of staff changes for Abingdon CCF. Unfortunately Flt Lt Ashdowne left us for pastures new, but we were pleased to welcome Maj Alan Holder to the Army Section, Fg Off Andy Kaye to the RAF Section and, a short while later, also to the RAF Section, Flt Lt Temple.

The Annual Contingent Dinner in January gave us the excellent opportunity to dine with our new officers. We welcomed Gp Capt Simon Paterson OBE, Station Commander of RAF Benson, as our guest, and spent a very enjoyable evening celebrating the recent successes of the contingent whilst the cadets experienced the traditions of a formal military dinner.

The RAF Section annually enters a team into the Air Squadron Trophy Competition during the Lent Term. The training is led by the senior cadets and we compete against many schools with much larger sections. This year the team came in an impressive second place in the regional competition, progressing to the national stage, where they finished in a very respectable fifth place. This is a fantastic achievement and is a real





testament to the hard work that the team, under the superb leadership of Flt Sgt Hart and Sgt Fulford, put into the training and preparation for the competition. The RAF Section is going from strength to strength and, although sadly the gliders are still grounded, I am happy to report that the cadets have been able to experience a number of Air Experience Flights in the Grob Tutor this year.

For the Army Section and the Recruit Company, the Lent Term includes a great deal of preparation for Easter Camp. The recruits experienced an intense day of training at Abingdon Airfield for their termly field day, later followed by a day of section-specific training and shooting and the obstacle course at Dalton Barracks for the Army and RAF Sections. The Advanced Infantry Cadre experienced a weekend of pre-camp training at Bramley Training Area in early March. This gave them a chance to hone their skills and demonstrate their readiness for the upcoming camp.

Before we knew it, the term was ending and the eagerly anticipated Easter Camp was upon us. Approximately 90 cadets and staff travelled to Westdown

Camp, Salisbury Plain Training Area, and were soon well into training. The level of progress made by all cadets was extremely impressive. Highlights of the week included a range day and TIBUA exercise for the Advanced Infantry Cadre and a 24 hour exercise and competition day for the recruits. At the end of the camp there was a huge sense of achievement felt by all and the cadets were able to celebrate this with their families at the passing out parade at the beginning of the Summer Term, where we welcomed Col Adam McRae MBE as our inspecting officer. Congratulations to Cdt Oliver Leafe, who was awarded the Best Advanced Infantry Cadre Cadet trophy, and to Cdt William Franklin, who received the Best Recruit award.

At the end of April we also said farewell to our School Staff Instructor (SSI) CSjt Matt Fisher. CSjt Fisher joined the school in January 2013 and during his time as SSI he has had an extremely positive impact on the contingent. The Army Section, in particular, has come on leaps and bounds under his guidance and he will be sorely missed by both the cadets and staff alike. CSjt Fisher leaves us to embark upon an exciting journey, undertaking the Walking With

the Wounded 2015 Walk of Britain—we wish him the best of luck.

The Summer Term is our quietest time, as many of our cadets sit their public exams, but as the year drew to a close we still had a number of activities to look forward to: an Armed Forces Day flag raising ceremony for the senior cadets; the RAF Section undertook a field day at RAF Benson, followed by Summer Camp at RAF Waddington; there was the Army Summer Camp at Longmoor; and, for some cadets, the Frimley Park Cadet Leadership Course and the Air Cadet Leadership Course.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff and the cadet NCOs for all of their hard work and dedication over the last year and to wish the Upper Sixth leavers all of the best for the future.

I am extremely fortunate to have experienced a fourth year as Contingent Commander here at Abingdon—witnessing the cadets continue to make superb progress, grow in confidence and excel in their roles, really is very rewarding indeed. The future is looking very bright for Abingdon CCF!

Maj Eleanor Kaye

Second Year Adventure Trip to Plas Pencelli

In the Easter holiday 27 second year students embarked on an adventure trip to Plas Pencelli, Wales. It turned out to be full of thrills and spills, and hopefully some of us learnt something whilst we were away. After the 2 hour journey we were all feeling restless and itching to get into our dormitories, but to our surprise we had to go on a night time walk around the area surrounding the centre. A muddy, dark walk seemed to cause quite a few falls, all accompanied by no sympathy and a lot of laughter. When we got back to the centre we went up to our dormitories to go to sleep. For most of us, however, sleep was not on the agenda, making us quite a nuisance to the teachers.

The next morning we were greeted, thanks to Mr Jenkins, by the Star Wars theme tune booming in our ears, which was not appreciated after a lively night with the lads. That day was our first day of activities and we were very excited. First we had rock climbing; for the most part this was dry, but when the rain came it made the activity a whole lot harder. None of us gave up, however, and we all embraced the extra challenge. Upon arriving back at the centre we all enjoyed some hot chocolate and then had a break before orienteering around the centre—our first evening activity of the week. I partnered with William Sishton and it's fair to say we weren't very productive.

The next day we ventured up two mountains on a day-long walk; one stood at around 850m, the other 900m. But to our dismay we couldn't go right to the top of the mountains because of the wind. At first, most of us thought that this was just health and safety taking it too far, but our thoughts dramatically changed as we got closer to the summit. The smaller, lighter ones in the group had to either be held down or dive to the floor to stop them getting blown right off the mountain. Amazingly, at one point we all had to grab hold of a partner and crawl on our hands and knees just to stay on



the ground! Our evening activity was the Dingle Descent and this was a very big surprise for all of us. The Dingle Descent is a walk through a slippery stream at night whilst tied onto a rope with around 7 others in a line. We also had blindfolds on (many of us took them off just to laugh at the suffering of everyone else) Some thought it was hell and some of us thought it was hilarious. I fell into the latter category. For me the highlight of the Dingle Descent was when Archie Worth told Luke Brownsord to make a leap of faith over a deep part in the stream. But there was no deep bit and Luke jumped straight into a massive log. Archie tricked him again later, making Luke fall into a waist deep pool of freezing water. After a traumatic activity for some of us, sleep couldn't come quickly enough.

Day 4 brought us kayaking and canoeing. We travelled in the bus for a few miles so we could canoe back up the canal then meet the other group halfway and swap into their kayaks. Overall, I thought the kayaking was the best, because you were much lower

down and really close to the water, and they go faster. When we finished our boating in the canal most of us got pushed into the freezing water, but I quickly got my revenge. In the evening we had problem solving. We were set many different challenges to solve in our groups. My group didn't complete any but at least we had a good time.

Our final day involved only one activity—the gorge walk. We had been told by many people that this was the best activity of the whole week, and everyone agreed. We had to walk, climb and swim through a maze of waterfalls, rapids and plunge pools. Although the water was unfathomably cold, we got over it and just faced the challenge head on. With the gorge walk over we got ready to go back to Abingdon and leave our adventures behind in Wales.

I really liked the trip to Plas Pencelli because I completed many challenges I didn't think I could ever do and got to know my mates and people I don't normally socialise with a lot more.

William Vanhinsberg, 2MJE



First Year Adventure Trip

On the 13 April, fifty-six very excited first years set off to explore the countryside surrounding Liddington, near Swindon for a five day PGL Adventure Week, accompanied by five rather nervous members of staff!

One of the most popular activities was the “Swing of all Swings” – the Giant Swing. As soon as you felt yourself flying through the air your stomach felt as if it would come flying out of your mouth!

Raft building was another very popular activity, although it became a case of raft destroying when the Abingdon Godzillas arrived, making a rather large splash in the lake.

Whilst this was all going on above ground there were other activities going on below ground, as some first years scuttled rat-like around in the dark and damp tunnel trail.

Quad biking started off in a calm and organised manner until someone thought that the acceleration pedal was the brake. Disaster! They ended up going 10 mph head first into the



three-layered side barrier of tyres. Well done, Ben. 10mph may not seem very fast when you are in a car on normal roads but it is pretty fast when you are on a quad bike with just a helmet to protect you.

Aeroball was great fun for everyone – Boys + Trampolines + Balls + Throwing Stuff = Enormous fun for all! I think there were some rules, but not many of us stuck to them because it was just brilliant fun.

Lots of us thought that after all these amazing activities the problem solving was never going to compete favourably. So we were all really pleased to discover that it was actually quite fun, because we did things like

having to balance a seesaw with all of us on it and swinging on a swing to a platform where we all had to stand. These were some of the most challenging tasks but a great way to learn more team working skills.

I believe everybody enjoyed the Wacky Races, where we had to pretend we’d won lottery tickets. It was all going so well until everyone’s lottery tickets blew away.

For all of us the activities were very exciting, and some were new. All the instructors were fun, jolly and helpful too—even the members of staff! All of us who went now can’t wait for our trip in the second year!

Max Williams, 1HFCP

Summer 2015



Community Service

"It was especially fun when we played the alphabet game with the residents to help them improve their memory. We had to name an animal or a country for every letter of the alphabet. At the end we held a tea party at school, and I think the guests loved it."

Jerome O'Mahony, 3JAM

"It was eye opening visiting the elderly, because it lets you meet people you wouldn't normally meet and it cheers them up to see us. It's a very nice feeling to brighten up someone else's day."

James Stammers, 3KEB

"We visited the elderly this year and brought quizzes and games to their homes. We also listened to some very talented musicians who visited with us."

Angus Alder, 4SEB

"Each Tuesday we eagerly marched down to Old Station House, ready to help. It was a fascinating experience and I feel that I have gained a lot and I can now look after the elderly."

Xavier Putnam, 3EAK

"We joined in with the musical groups, who organised sing-alongs for the residents. We chatted with the elderly about their lives and some were very interesting."

Cameron Woodrow, 3JAM

"It has been marvellous to be a part of visiting the elderly in Community Service this year. We have taken out several groups of third years, who have enjoyed preparing activities for the residents and getting to know them. A particular highlight for many was on Burn's Night when a bagpipe player from the School came along with us—the playing of it definitely split opinions amongst the old people, but some of them seemed to like it! The termly tea parties at the School have been very successful and gratefully received by our guests, for many of whom this event is now a firm fixture in their diaries. We have all enjoyed the chance to meet and get to know some of them, to hear what they have to say and to listen to some stories from their lives. I'm sure I can say on behalf of all involved that we look forward to continuing to work with the local elderly people's homes into the next academic year."

Archie Williams, 5JPGB

High-Altitude Ballooning

When I received the notice about a potential high-altitude balloon (HAB) launch, my first thought was, “where do I sign up?” as this seemed like an opportunity that only comes around once during one’s time at school! Eleven other Lower Sixth boys also joined up and with assistance from Mr Lomax and Mrs Griffiths our adventure could begin. Samantha Graham, a professional rocket scientist from European Astrotech and expert HAB launcher introduced the project in mid-January and then provided guidance throughout.

We were given our first tasks: to design a small compartment to be carried into space by the balloon and to plan some manageable experiments. Initially, we bombarded Mrs Griffiths with ideas, many of which were dismissed immediately due to their impracticality or absurdity. Then we talked to Samantha and after many conversations about the intricacies of wiring and computers, we decided upon: measuring balloon acceleration due to gravity; the effects of Rayleigh scattering on the colour of the sky; and the fun task of putting fruit into space and recording the effects.

Over the following weeks, we made progress with the various elements of our project, dividing ourselves into payload, experiment, balloon and telemetry groups to specialise in the various areas of expertise required to have a successful launch. We also decided on a call sign for our balloon, one that we thought fitting for Abingdon School: “Griffen”.

After we were given clearance by the Civil Aviation Authority, spirits were high in the group, giving us the boost we needed after weeks of manual-reading and calculations. Luckily, Churk Yean Chung was leading the payload team and with lots of hard work had produced designs for the balloon attachment, fruit holders and camera positions. Seb Hickman and James Anderson-Besant had mastered the radio software so we could track the balloon throughout its flight. To test their competency, we hid a GPS tracker in the school grounds and



challenged them to find it, which they did with reassuring accuracy!

By now, the team was beginning to see the fruits of their labours; by the end of February a prototype box was built to test the weight distribution of our experiments and it seemed like progress was being made. Mr Lomax generously put in an entire weekend mastering the programming system and with the final assembly of our box and balloon approaching, it looked as though we were ready for our launch.

It was a somewhat frantic morning on Thursday 23 April, with many minor things needing to be done and little time to do them. Finally, the equipment was assembled, the official Lego man was attached and we were ready to launch. In front of an expectant crowd, the cameras were switched on, the balloon filled and pictures taken. The balloon, carrying its precious cargo of cameras and scientific equipment, finally flew off into the sky, ascending at quite a rate.

After admirably watching it fly out of sight, we rushed to the chase minibus and, with Mrs Griffiths behind the wheel, drove out of school following the predicted route. We drove west through the Oxfordshire countryside, stopping in Lechdale and then in Bampton to check on our balloon’s progress. We then rushed to Aston, a hamlet near Hardwick, and disembarked the chase bus to pursue the balloon on foot.

After standing in a field looking into the sky for the faintest sign of a balloon,

we saw above us the orange drogue parachute falling.

The entire team began to run towards the balloon, hopping over drainage ditches and trying, in vain, to get underneath the balloon in order to be the first recorded person to catch a falling balloon. Unfortunately, it was not a record that was going to be won that day, but Seb did get within 6m of the balloon. After inspecting the contents of the payload box and eating a celebratory piece of grape that had travelled into near-space, we found a spot to sit down and watch over the footage of our balloon’s voyage, reliving memories of our journey from the initial presentation to the balloon launch and landing.

Back at school, we sifted through the data and found that most of our equipment had worked successfully—except for our Rayleigh scattering measuring device. We had plenty of interesting information to analyse as well as still photographs of the new Science Centre and Abingdon School as a whole, which was a fitting end to an exciting journey.

I would like to thank Mr Lomax and Mrs Griffiths for all the time and effort that they put into the project, Samantha Graham for her unparalleled knowledge and patience, and the parents and OAs who donated so generously to the Annual Fund, without which, none of this project would have been possible.

Hugh Franklin, 6SAE

Hadrian's Wall Trip

On a sunny Friday afternoon, we set out to drive 278 miles to what had once been the most northern frontier of the Roman Empire, where the order of the civilized world bordered the unknown world of the barbarians. To start with, the five hour drive in a school minibus, I must say, provided some truly remarkable sights and an unforgettable experience. Barricaded by bags, packed lunches and cherishing every centimetre of our personal space, we embraced the never ending passage of the British hills behind the misted glass and listened to whoever hijacked the bluetooth speaker first. So, after having a few stops to stretch our legs and for Mr. Franklin to break his solid driving focus, we finally arrived at the mysterious—to some of us—north of England.

After a brief ride through Newcastle and even briefer showcase of some of Newcastle's main attractions (through the window) we decided not to waste more time and headed straight to one of the main sites, Arbeia Fort. It was a short but productive stroll through the astonishing reconstruction of the soldiers' barracks and the commander's house, where none of us missed the chance to lie on the comfortable summer terrace. And so, after witnessing the bronze disk of the sun sinking below the Atlantic waters, followed by a short contest to find out who would break their neck first after jumping across the ditch in front of the wall, we finally completed our day-long journey by arriving in a rather small but friendly and cosy hostel on a hill surrounded by a picturesque view. After a rather swift evening hike and a delicious dinner prepared by the hostel staff, we went to bed in preparation for a challenge in the morning.

With an early start, we set out to follow the winding stone monument over hills and cliffs in the crisp northern air. As is typical to that area of England, the weather was not quite enjoyable. That however, did not serve as an obstacle for us to enjoy the landscape with some even nearly falling victim to the



spiky cliffs just 'to get a good selfie'. Despite all that, we reached the next destination of our exploration into the Roman history: Housesteads Fort. The main focus for most people became the souvenir shop, to which—needless to say—most people rushed straightaway, but witnessing the grand excavation of this fort on the hilltop was very interesting. Following Housesteads, we visited a string of Roman forts, including Chesters and the Roman Army Museum, where we could see the astonishing remains of Roman architecture and culture. We were also lucky enough to visit Vindolanda, the fort with the biggest preserved vicus (surrounding habitation) of all, which was undoubtedly helpful for future reference in our project (for those who were not sheltering from the rain or jumping over the remains of the Vicus itself).

But the main highlight of the day,

perhaps, was the visit to Newcastle to watch the 2015 box office hit *Avengers: Age of Ultron*. Although going to Newcastle at such a late hour was a somewhat unnerving idea for some of us, we were able to reach the cinema after a short run through the cold and non-stop rain and a brief showcase of Newcastle's active nightlife. And so, after a jaw-dropping experience for others and a nice snooze for me (it is worth mentioning that I have seen it twice before), we came back to the hostel, and after watching a few more movies, fell asleep exhausted. The next day, we set off, after a last trip to look at the wall, where we were soaked by the rain that bid us farewell. Despite all that, we returned from this wonderful trip full of memories that would not fade for a long time.

Ilya Korzinkin, 3JMG

Chess Club

The King Trophy, named after Old Abingdonian and former Master in charge of Chess, Tim King, was awarded this year to Edward Reynolds, soon to be reading Chemical Engineering at Manchester University. Edward joined the Club in the First Year, which was also the first year of the Club's new life in Mercers' Court, having moved over from Big School in 2008. So, his parting feels like something of a milestone. The Leavers' Day citation, read out by Mr Dawswell, said: "Edward has seen the Chess Club grow to become once again a real force in British junior chess, and he has played a major role in that transformation, practising assiduously, playing regularly for the top school teams, and for Oxfordshire, and encouraging and inspiring younger players." It is especially pleasing, one might add, that he played in the team that defeated MCS last season in the prestigious National Schools Championship.

This season Abingdon again had an excellent run in the National Schools Championship, reaching the finals stage for the third year in succession, again as Oxfordshire's sole representative. Abingdon was drawn initially against MCS, our As versus their Bs and vice



Abingdon v National Champions Reading

versa. But in the end both schools' A Teams went through by agreement, it proving impossible to find a mutually convenient date for the match. In the next round, Abingdon had the toughest possible draw, playing away against National Champions Reading, who by this time had already knocked out MCS. This Zone 11 semi-final, played on Friday 16 February, was a great opportunity to play school chess at the highest level—and to fully benefit from the occasion, we took along Grandmaster Peter Wells to analyse the games as they finished. Each Abingdon player acquitted himself well, including

Rafi'i Al-Akiti's last-minute substitute Joe Lamond. But the average rating deficit of 77 points was simply too much to overcome, and the final result was defeat 5½-½. It was First Year James Beckinsale who came up with the draw, his clever opening preparation against Alfred Wong serving equally well against brother Ryan.

1. Joseph Truran (127) v Matthew Wadsworth (219)
2. Jeff Abraham (113) v Roy Zhang (203)
3. Edward Reynolds (107) v Anthony Zhang (187)



Edward Reynolds at Prize Giving



Abingdon v Hampton B at "Last Chance Saloon"

4. Ray Ren (106) v Alex Vanlint (167)
5. James Beckinsale (99) v Ryan Wong (161)
6. Joe Lamond (65r) v Alfred Wong (143)

Afterwards, the squad straightaway began training for Eton's "Last Chance Saloon," which is a last chance to reach the finals stage of the tournament. On Sunday 1 March, six Abingdon players travelled to Eton College, and, after five rounds of rapidplay, were placed fifth, ahead of 15 other teams, to win a coveted place in the Plate, the finals stage for zone runners-up. Having scored only one match point after three rounds, Abingdon's players held their nerve, winning the final two matches, and ending with a particularly pleasing win against Hampton B, whose players were graded higher on every board. The successful team was: 1. Joseph Truran (2.5/5), 2. Ray Ren (3/5), 3. Rafi'i Al-Akiti (2.5/5), 4. James Beckinsale (3/5), 5. Richard Oh (2.5/5), 6. Joe Lamond (3/5).

In the first round of the Plate, played at home on Wednesday 18 March, Abingdon faced Sir Thomas Rich's

School. The team selected for this encounter was: 1. Joseph Truran, 2. Jeff Abraham, 3. Ray Ren, 4. Rafi'i Al-Akiti, 5. James Beckinsale, 6. Richard Oh. The Ashworth brothers on Boards 1 and 2 for the opposition were considerably stronger than our top two players, so it was likely that we would have to win on three of the bottom four boards to go through to the next round. The age difference between the two teams was negligible. James won first, followed in quick succession by Rafi'i and Richard, who had fought back after losing a piece in the opening. It was then just a question of who might get the necessary half point. Jeff fought well but was the next to lose. Joseph and Ray also looked to be in severe trouble. However, Ray's opponent suddenly blundered, allowing Ray to draw by perpetual check and with just a few minutes left on his clock. So, when Joseph finally lost to the other Ashworth brother, the match had already been decided in Abingdon's favour. It was an excellent team performance.

For the next round of the Plate, a quarterfinals match, Abingdon travelled

to London to play Mill Hill County High School. Mill Hill was graded higher on every board—a familiar story—and because of age handicapping Abingdon needed 3½ points to win. On this occasion, Abingdon's team was: 1. Joseph Truran, 2. Jeff Abraham, 3. Ray Ren, 4. Rafi'i Al-Akiti, 5. James Beckinsale, 6. Joe Lamond. Joe got into a strong position quite early on and was the first to finish, winning in the endgame. James struggled to make progress after one of his bishops got trapped, and he finished next, resigning in a hopelessly lost position. Ray then forced a terrific win against one of the Balouka-Myers twins, but this was again balanced by an Abingdon loss when Rafi'i finally succumbed, having been outplayed in an unfamiliar opening. So, at this juncture, Abingdon needed 1½ points from the top two boards. Joseph and Jeff both played well, Jeff, in particular, putting his opponent, the other Balouka-Myers twin, under severe pressure—before being undone by a passed pawn. Then Joseph lost on time in a game that was otherwise fairly even from beginning to end. The final result was a 4-2 loss. Two years ago



Abingdon v Mill Hill C.H.

Abingdon reached exactly the same stage in the Plate and were knocked out 5½-½ by the eventual winners, Hampton. This year Abingdon hoped to go one round further, and although this did not happen it was a far better overall team performance.

The Oxford and District Chess League was again an excellent source of practice games. Abingdon's team had been relegated last season, so it had a good chance this season of doing well as "City 4" in Division 4. And for much of the season City 4 did top the table. But we could never quite shake off Cowley 4, and in the head-to-head encounters Cowley 4 were better. So, Abingdon's team finally ended second in Division 4, having played 14, won 12 and lost only 2. This may be sufficient for promotion to Division 3 next season. Twelve players were fielded in total. Five players turned out for more than half the matches: Ray Ren (11.5/14), mostly on Boards 2 and 3, Rafi'i Al-Akiti (11/13), mostly on Boards 3 and 4, Edward Reynolds (7.5/12), mostly on Boards 2 and 4, James Beckinsale (7/8), mostly on Boards 5 and 6, and Mr English (6/13), on Board 1. The other contributors were Richard Oh (6/7), Joe Lamond (4/5), Jeff Abraham (3.5/5), Alex Churchman-Davies (0.5/1) Angus Shen (0/1), Dr Jeffreys (2.5/3) and Matyas Hanisch (0.5/1).

A main event of the Michaelmas Term is the annual simultaneous display. This year it took place on Wednesday 26 November and was conducted by Abingdon's chess coach, Grandmaster Peter Wells, who took on 18 boys and 2 members of staff, which is the established format. There were 75 minutes on each clock, which is the time control used for National Schools' matches and for ODCL matches in Division 4. In a tremendous display of chess skill, Mr Wells, who is graded 231, won all his games. He afterwards awarded the best game prize jointly to Rafi'i Al-Akiti and Ray Ren, both earning £5. Rafi'i impressed with his creativity and Ray with the accuracy of his play. Dr Jeffreys came closest to scoring; only succumbing after unwisely declining a draw offer. The complete School team was: 1. Edward Reynolds, 2. Alex Churchman-Davies, 3. Leon Wu,



Ray & Rafi'i at Wiltshire Junior

4. William Beaumont, 5. Rafi'i Al-Akiti, 6. Ben Massey-Leahy, 7. Joseph Truran, 8. Tom Hampshire, 9. Ray Ren, 10. Daniel Savage, 11. Daniel Lawson, 12. Aravind Prabhakaran, 13. Richard Oh, 14. Andrew Russell, 15. Didier Delgorge, 16. James Beckinsale, 17. Joe Lamond, 18. Charlie Franklin, 19. Mr Poon, 20. Dr Jeffreys.

House Chess took place on Wednesday 10 December as part of the Inter-House Competitions. Houses were represented by teams of three in a Swiss tournament comprising four rounds of rapidplay. In the final round, the top two teams, Webb's and Franklin's, faced each other on 3 and 2.5 points respectively. Rafi'i Al-Akiti lost to Ray Ren of Franklin's on Board 1 and Richard Oh of Webb's defeated Leon Wu on Board 2. The House Chess title was then decided by the game on Board 3 when Daniel Savage of Webb's made a canny draw offer, which was accepted by James Anderson-Besant, who felt he was about to lose on time anyway. The resultant match draw gave Webb's the title.

In the Michaelmas Term, boys also competed in knockout tournaments in the Lower School, Middle School and Upper School, the finals being delayed until Wednesday 14 January. In the Lower School tournament, attracting 34 entrants, Joe Lamond beat favourite James Beckinsale to win the Nightall-Jakubovics Cup. In the Middle School tournament, attracting 48 entrants, Jeff Abraham beat Ray Ren to win the

Pearce Cup—for the third time running. And in the Upper School tournament, attracting 16 entrants, Rafi'i Al-Akiti beat Alex Churchman-Davis to win the Harding Cup.

In the Lent Term, Abingdon again entered two teams in the regional stage of the Team Chess Challenge, a four round Swiss tournament with just 25 minutes in total for each round. It was hosted by MCS, on Thursday 12 February, and teams from Radley and Winchester also took part. Abingdon's two teams of four were chosen to be of equal strength and were intent on enjoying an afternoon of quality chess training rather than on qualification. The best Abingdon performers on the day were Richard Oh (3.5/4) and Joe Lamond (2.5/4). Richard beat his Winchester opponent and drew with his opponent from MCS A, while Joe drew with his opponents from MCS A and MCS B. Both players remained unbeaten. Rafi'i's Team was: 1. Rafi'i Al-Akiti (1.5/4), 2. James Beckinsale (1/4), 3. Joe Lamond (2.5/4), 4. Charlie Franklin (2/4). Ray's Team was 1. Ray Ren (2/4), 2. Richard Oh (3.5/4), 3. Ben Massey-Leahy (1.5/4), 4. Will Taylor (1/4). Ray's Team (8/16) finished a point ahead of Rafi'i's team (7/16) in the final standings.

The main event of the Lent Term was the school stage of the UK Chess Challenge, consisting of seven weekly rounds of rapidplay. From 30 Abingdon entrants, there were 12 who earned



Abingdon's Megafinalists at LVS

sufficient points to qualify for the Berkshire "Megafinal." Ray Ren was School Champion, winning 20 of the 21 available points, with six wins and a draw. Joint second were Joseph Truran and James Beckinsale on 18 points. In fourth place was Rafi'i Al-Akiti on 17 points, and fifth place went to Edward Reynolds on 16 points. The other qualifiers, all on 15 points, were Richard Oh, Alex Churchman-Davies, Joe Lamond, Leon Wu, James Anderson-Besant, Angus Shen and Andrew Russell.

On Saturday 21 February, nine Abingdon players travelled to St Joseph's Catholic College, Swindon, for the Wiltshire Junior Open Chess Championships. Four players were entered in the Beginners' section and five in the Intermediates'. All played six rounds of rapidplay, with a time control of 30 minutes. The joint winners of the Beginners' section, finishing ahead of 26 other players, were Dashiell Hathaway (5/6) and Will Taylor (5/6). Luke Ffrench (3.5/6) and Luca Frauenfeld (3.5/6) also scored over 50%. The winner of the Intermediates' section, finishing ahead of 22 other players, was Ray Ren

(5.5/6). In third place was Rafi'i Al-Akiti (4.5/6). Joe Lamond (4/6) also did well. Matthew Kunov (1/6) and Aravind Prabhakaran (2/6) brought up the rear. Abingdon's Chess Club has won both sections before but never on the same occasion.

On Bank Holiday Monday 4 May, eleven Abingdon players travelled to the Licensed Victuallers' School, Ascot for the county stage of the UK Chess Challenge. After six rounds of rapidplay, with a time control of 30 minutes, Abingdon boys had won three sections and four had qualified for the Southern "Gigafinal" in July. The qualifiers were all from the combined U14 to U18 sections. They were U18 winner Edward Reynolds (3/6), U16 winner Ray Ren (4/6), Joseph Truran (4/6), and U14 winner Richard Oh (3/6). Angus Shen, who only began playing competitive chess in the autumn, also did well, ending on 3.5/6. Finishing on the same score, just short of qualification, were James Beckinsale and Joe Lamond in the combined U12 and U13 sections. The other participants were James Anderson-Besant (3/6), Leon Wu (3/6), Alex Churchman-Davies (2.5/6)

and Andrew Russell (1/6).

On Monday 15 June, Abingdon's numerous and talented U12s played away against Cowley's juniors in a friendly match. The time control was 75 minutes. James Beckinsale and Joe Lamond on the top two boards and Luke Ffrench on Board 5 were Abingdon's winners. The result was a 3-3 draw. The full team was: 1. James Beckinsale, 2. Joe Lamond, 3. Dashiell Hathaway, 4. Will Taylor, 5. Luke Ffrench, 6. Charlie Franklin. Abingdon's reserves Luca Frauenfeld and Lawrence Putt also played Cowley's reserves, resulting in another draw, Luca winning his game.

Chess Club continued at a more relaxed pace in the Summer Term, the focus of training switching, as usual, from tactics to mating patterns. Peter Wells was able to visit right up to the final session of the year, when he treated us to an impromptu simul – with the all-too-familiar outcome. Thanks as ever go to the Club's terrific coaching team: Grandmaster Wells, Mr Truran, Dr Burnand, Dr Jeffreys and Mr Poon.

Andrew English



A Midsummer Night's Dream

This summer term the Lower School staged a play the cast members will never forget. All the boys were excited to be performing a Shakespearian adaptation and could not wait to get started.

Following auditions, on the last Monday of the Lent Term, 23 Lower School boys were sitting nervously waiting for their parts to be read out by Mr Taylor. It was an anxious experience as no one knew who was going to be cast for what part. As the parts were read out you could feel the excitement from the boys around the room.

My part happened to be Oberon, a fairy king who despised Titania (Kit Mannix) the fairy queen. I was pleased with my character as he had an interesting story to tell. There were a lot of lines to learn, in addition to the challenge of speaking the Shakespearian language with complicated words, many of which we had not heard before.

When rehearsals started there were two surprises. One being the privilege of working with OA and actor Max Hutchinson. It was a real honour working with Max as he brought his professional experience and a lot of humour into the play. Max showed us what drama could be if we set our



minds to it. The other surprise was Mr Taylor's novel idea of working on a traverse stage. This meant we were acting between separate audiences, as if we were in a wide corridor. This felt unusual at first but the cast got used to positioning, with some help from Mr Taylor, and where to stand for the best effect.

The first live performance was nerve-racking because each boy wanted the play to go well, but feared missing a line or a cue. The night ran smoothly with everything going to plan and no noticeable slips. The jokes were laughed at and everyone was in high spirits. On the second night everyone was more relaxed and the performance was

even better! Bottom's (Charlie Masters) jokes received a great reaction from the audience and every time we got a laugh we seemed to up our performance even more. My stand out moments were Bottom and Titania getting intimate on stage and the wittiness of the play *Pyramus & Thisbe* performed by the mechanicals.

We have to thank Mr Taylor and Max Hutchinson for all their hard work, inspiration and great humour. Finally, I would highly recommend taking part in a Lower School play. It is challenging but great fun.

Daniel McNamara, 1SCVM

Young Enterprise

This year's Young Enterprise scheme saw the formation of four separate companies – a record number for the school – and a number of successes at both team and individual level. The activity continues

to go from strength to strength at Abingdon and this is down to both the enthusiasm of the students involved and the commitment of our team of five business advisors. I would like to thank Paul Green, Kevan Leggett, Steve Moyle, Sally Rainbow-Ockwell and Allen Salter for all their help once again this year. They have dedicated many hours of their time to the YE programme and without

their considerable contributions we wouldn't be able to run the programme to the standard we currently operate it at. I would also like to thank Mrs Griffiths for all her help in running this activity over the course of the year. What follows is a brief overview of each team and their experiences of the programme during the 2014/15 academic year.

Nick Fieldhouse

TRI

Managing Director: Arthur Musson

Advisors: Paul Green and Allen Salter

TRI set up a company selling a range of unique T-Shirts, with designs they created themselves. The team's corporate objective was "to provide high quality T-Shirts at competitive prices", and they sold well at a number of fairs throughout the year. The team also gave a very memorable presentation at the South Oxfordshire and Vale Area Finals in April, choosing to model their products during their speech! The team learnt a great deal about the importance of good communication, organisation and administrative skills in running a successful business.



Kinetic

Managing Director: William Sargeant

Advisor: Sally Rainbow-Ockwell

Kinetic set up a business that sold a range of phone and computer accessories. In their Company Report they stated that "we chose to do something tried and tested that we all believe works: buying from overseas and selling at our local fairs for a profit, going with the 'why make things when you can buy them better' ethic." Their target market were teenagers and they sold at a number of trade fairs, as well as to their own peers within Abingdon School. Kinetic gave a strong presentation at the South Oxfordshire and Vale Area Finals in April and Iwan Stone, Marketing Director, won an award for Outstanding Personal Contribution. The team's logo was also highly commended by the judges at the event.



Be.spoke

Managing Director: Joseph Salter

Advisor: Kevan Leggett

Be.spoke had a very successful year manufacturing and selling products made from recycled bicycle parts, including clocks, candle holders, phone charging units and bottle openers. They formed a tight-knit and efficient company, and went on to win a number of awards throughout the year, including Highly Commended Product at both the Cowley Trade Fair in January and the Banbury Trade Fair in February, as well as an award for Innovation and Creativity at the South Oxfordshire and Vale Area Finals. Most impressively, they won through to the Oxfordshire YE County Final held at Said Business School in May, where they gave a detailed presentation on their year in business and went on to win The Oxford Instruments Award for Innovation and also came runner up in The Taylor and Francis Award for Best Display Stand.



Flame

Managing Director: George Tanner

Advisor: Steve Moyle

Flame formed a company that offered three products: the Bolder, the Handwarmer and the Folepuncher. It was the third of these, the Folepuncher, which proved to be the standout item. A brand new innovation for the stationary market, the product combined a normal ringbinder folder with a hole puncher. The team won an award for Best Product at the Cowley Trade Fair in January, and they also went on to win the JSP Award for Manufacturing at the Oxfordshire County Finals – a fantastic achievement. An award for Best Customer Service was also picked up along the way. The team learnt a huge amount about the ins and outs of manufacturing throughout the year (including the fact that this process doesn't always go to plan). However, they sold a good number of Folepunchers once the prototype had been perfected and enjoyed a very successful YE experience overall.



Tennis

This year saw wonderful season during which time the Tennis Club won county titles and got to the semi-finals of the National Schools' competitions.

These results would not have been possible if it were not for: the players and their commitment to training throughout the year; the parents' unstinting support; the devoted staff and our outstanding tennis professional Martin Butler. Martin is a superb coach whose expertise enables him to add significant value to players of all abilities.

Ben Ponniah

Junior Pre-season Tennis Camp

During the Easter holidays, a group of U12 to U15 players attended an intensive pre-season camp at the Abingdon Lawn Tennis Club. This involved six hours of tennis on some days and tennis-specific conditioning for other times.

The 15 players from Abingdon displayed dedication and resilience to push beyond their respective comfort zones. The video analysis demonstrated significant improvement in technique over the course of the week.

Independent Schools' League

In the Junior ISL, Abingdon finished third in their group: 1 KCS Wimbledon, 2 Radley, 3 Abingdon and 4 Dulwich. In the Senior ISL, Abingdon finished fourth in their group: 1 Wellington, 2 Tonbridge, 3 St Paul's and 4 Abingdon.

Oxfordshire Independent Schools Tournament

Senior OXIST – finished 3rd: 1 Radley, 2 MCS, 3 Abingdon and 4 St Edward's

U15 OXIST – finished 3rd: 1 MCS, 2 Radley and 3 Abingdon

U14 OXIST – finished 2nd: 1 Radley, 2 Abingdon, 3 MCS and 4 Oratory

Aegon Oxfordshire Tournament

U15 Winners: The U15 team won all of their matches in the competition and



Inter-Schools Matches

Seniors

Early matches saw the senior teams get off to a slow start. However, they soon found their stride with wins against MCS, Shiplake and Oratory. There are some promising 2nd and 3rd team players who remained committed during the busy exam period. Many thanks to the departing Upper Sixth tennis players for their contribution to the Tennis Club over many years. In particular, Nathan Allaby, Dominic Whaler, Jamie Bowles, Adam Pearson, Alex Turner, Joseph Williams, Alex Gatenby and Henry Papworth.

U16s

It was a very short season due to examinations and injuries. However, a convincing win against Bradfield will be remembered. There were good performances from Tom Buckle, Alexander Skelly, George Jeffreys, Oscar Bond, George Strange, Jake Windsor-Lewis, Rory Parsons and Angus Williams.

U15s

An impressively strong season with many resounding wins. A highlight

successfully retain the title.

U13 Winners: The U13 team won all of their matches in the competition and successfully retain the Aegon Oxfordshire title having beaten St Birinus, Faringdon and Cokethorpe.

being against Warwick, where U15A, B and C teams won whilst only dropping two sets. The team consisted of William Pearson, Lafite Lo, Archie Andrews, Joe Roads, Olivier-Philippe Kalafatis and Tom Woods.

There has been tremendous depth in this year group, which has meant that many of the players in the U15B and C teams have played for the U15A team on occasion. A fine season against tough opposition.

U14s

A fantastic season that contained convincing victories over Bradfield, Radley and Warwick. There were some super performances from a formidable top pair of Sam Christie and Max Hall, who were well supported by a robust group.

U13s and U12s

A large number of boys have shown great interest in tennis, which bodes well for the future. Memorable performances have come from Cameron Yu, Ethan McLellan, Will Taylor, Ray Prince and Michael Porter leading the teams to numerous wins.

Eton Pairs Tournament

U15 IV - Finished 3rd out of 16 (William Pearson, Lafite Lo, Sam Christie and Max Hall)

History Trip to Munich and Nuremburg

In my eyes, the point of a history trip is to give life to what you learn in your lessons. When you are told facts and figures on matters such as the Third Reich, they are almost impossible to comprehend. The atrocities of the concentration camps, the vast numbers of Nazi supporters and the crazed creations of Adolf Hitler are no doubt terrible, but they seem nevertheless impersonal when read from a textbook.

When we visited Dachau (one of the first concentration camps to be built and the camp that many others were modeled on) a bubble of cold silence seemed to descend on us. It brought everything to life. The fantastic tour guides took us through the individual lives of some of the people that were there and told us what happened to them. The fact that up to 10 million people were killed by the Nazis (6 million of whom were Jews killed in the Holocaust) finally became reality. Inside the punishment block's whitewashed cells we encountered more personal stories such as the cell of Georg Elser, a man who tried to kill Hitler and someone we had studied in class.

Visiting the remains of Nuremburg, the 'home' of the NSDAP, was also incredibly shocking. The scale of it is still there to see, with vast concrete parade grounds and the Stadium of Light (five times bigger than our Olympic Stadium). We stood where Hitler would have, on the colosseum's imperial box and overlooked vast monuments to the power of evil and fanaticism. We toured the empty amphitheatres where Hitler had spoken to the party faithful and got some idea of the scale of Nazi ambitions.

However, the trip wasn't all quite so intense. We spent memorable evenings at the Munich Hard Rock Café and Burgerbraukeller beer hall, which was the site of the failed Putsch of 1923. We 'enjoyed' a typical meal of pork and potato dumplings (no beer!) while being entertained by an Oompah band on the very stage that Hitler took Commissar von Karh hostage at gunpoint. We also



went bowling on the second night, which was fun.

The trip ended with a trip to the Nuremburg court rooms where we learnt how the story concluded, with the trial and execution of many leading Nazi figures. We left with the impression that although we were in modern day

Germany, there was still the memory of an eerie, haunting past that they couldn't erase. It was a fantastic trip that I would recommend to anyone. I enjoyed it and would like to thank Mr Hallinan for organising it.

Iwan Stone, 4MGD



ESAA Athletics

In the Summer Term, some of Abingdon's Lower School boys were selected to represent the school in the English Schools Athletics Association Schools Cup. This athletics meet was a team qualifier for the ESAA finals which were going to be held on 15 June. So, on 21 May a group of boys from Lower School, who were not only representing their house but the whole of Abingdon School, all met in the coach park. With nerves and excitement racking through our brains we set off to Horspath Athletics Track.

An hour later, the first event, the hurdles, began with podium places by Charlie Atkinson and William Sishton. And from then on, Abingdon received podium finishes in most races, with 1st in five of the events. The end of the meet came surprisingly quickly, with the Lower School boys returning to school feeling proud.

Three weeks passed with no news about the finals. Then in Lower School assembly, Mr Jenkins announced the



success of the qualifying round and how the junior boys would be representing Abingdon in the ESAA final! Only a few days later on 15 June, the same boys were standing in the coach park again with the same nerves. So they travelled up north to the Norman Green Athletics Centre in Solihull.

The ESAA final was a great success, but unfortunately there were fewer podium finishes. The highlight was Alexander Pennington winning the triple jump. Of course we also have to praise

Theo Brown who scored 43 points and Alexander Pennington who scored 41, meaning both earned platinum awards.

I hope everyone who took part last term will continue over the next year, and stride for personal best firsts, seconds and thirds. Hopefully everyone will be inspired by the World Championship, with Mo Farah, David Rudisha and, of course, Usain Bolt, all reclaiming their titles.

Freddie Cunningham, 1HFCP

Normandy

After a long wait behind a car crash and pretty much the entire Spiderman trilogy we finally made it to the Eurotunnel and set off for Normandy. We arrived at the Chateau du Baffy—our hotel—at around 10pm so it was a swift dinner and then off to bed. The next day we drove to Mont St Michel which is an island in the middle of a causeway that has a grand and beautiful monastery on the top of it. Inside it was amazing, with the biggest chimneys we had ever seen, and intricate designs on the ceilings. The weather was great and walking up all the steps to get to the monastery was quite tiring. With our free time we bought ice creams to cool off and wandered around for a while.

After we had finished there we moved on to the Bayeux Tapestry and listened to audio guides. These told us all about the events of 1066 and that period of time—overall it was very interesting. Getting back to the Chateau early evening meant we could have some free time. The majority of us played football refereed by our bus driver, Simon. That lasted a while, until the ball was booted over the fence and into a river! The next day we went to a French market. This was intended to give us an idea about daily life in France. Naturally, we all returned laden with fake, broken



watches and sunglasses that we didn't need. I myself ended up having two Nutella crêpes and wandering around trying to find a good deal on sunglasses.

After that it was off to the beaches of Arromanche where the D-Day landings took place. Needless to say it was a thought provoking and eye opening experience. We started in a museum which gave an overview of what happened. There was a 360 degree

cinema nearby which dramatically used 9 screens to tell the story of D-Day. That really got us thinking, but wasn't as horrific as the American Cemetery. We walked into the Cemetery and were shocked by the amount of graves there were. We had half an hour just to reflect and think while we walked amongst the names of the soldiers. It was a quiet ride home.

Back at the Chateau we were served frog legs and snails which we all bravely ate and in fact enjoyed so much that we ended up taking seconds! I would recommend them to everyone, they taste great! Again we had free time in the evening to play football (we had managed to rescue the ball). This, however, lasted about ten minutes before the ball once again flew over the fence and into the river.

On the final day we visited the Grand Bunker at Ouistreham. This was where the Germans kept an eye on the sea for an attack. It was huge spanning six floors. We even managed to find some old tanks hidden round the corner of the building. After that we journeyed back home and I spent more money in the overpriced services than the rest of the entire trip combined.

Edward Gill, 2SW



The Abingdon Anthology

In January of 2015, an opportunity to write *The Abingdon Anthology* was presented to pupils and teachers of Abingdon School. 25 pupils, 11 members of staff and the School's Writer in Residence, Jason Hewitt, spent their free-time until the launch of the book writing their stories, with the finished result being outstanding.

The overall programme for myself and the other pupils saw us spend around two and a half months carefully crafting our stories with both group sessions and one-on-one meetings with Jason Hewitt.

At the end of January, Miss Yarrow presented the opportunity in an assembly, leaving us until the second week of February to write a paragraph.

Just one week later the journey began with our first two hour session. Each of us, before we even started the story, set out to describe different areas and aspects of our school, seeing as this would be where most of our stories would be set. Although we never started writing our stories in the session, we spent time meticulously creating intriguing characters that we would later create plans for. We were set an assignment to spend more time studying the more hidden areas of the school, looking at the buildings in a different way than we had done before, and to start getting more of an idea of the setting. We then had to set about coming up with and writing the first page of our stories.

The second session took place early in March. Having looked at our stories, Jason showed us how to write an encapsulating introduction and an extravagant ending. We also tackled how to wade through the slower parts of our stories, and looked at how to introduce dialogue into our writing. Much like the previous session, we received an assignment; this time to write as much of our story as possible within the next week and a half.

This ultimately led to the final couple of days of Jason's teaching. Monday saw us looking at polishing off our stories,



looking at different techniques that could be incorporated to make the finished result as effective as possible, and how to make it into a finished product; this including what I, and many others, saw as the hardest part of a story—the title. Nonetheless, Jason passed on his useful advice, and the session came to an end with the task being to finish our stories.

The next day however, I found myself talking to Jason one-to-one about my story. He gave more personal advice in terms of the writing, and came up with brilliant plot twists that made it into the final story, along with highlighting certain aspects that he would tweak. The 15 minute session, despite being nowhere near as long as the main sessions, provided amazing insight and development for my story.

Now equipped with the tools that Jason had given us, we all went our separate ways over the Easter holidays, and all worked on our stories. Having been taught so much, we put as much of what we learnt onto paper as we could,

conjuring up our own finished stories.

On the Monday before school resumed, the last of us handed in our stories and biographies for editing. The unsung heroes of the *Anthology* went to work, as two members of the sixth-form got to work laying out the entire book, creating all the fabulous artwork, and turning the collection of writings, edited by members of the English Department, into a publishable book. After the foreword, preface and introduction had been written by Miss Lusk, Miss Yarrow and Jason Hewitt respectively, the book was ready for publishing.

The entire process culminated on Thursday 25 June, when all the participants in the making of the book came together for the launch of *The Abingdon Anthology*, at which several writers from across the different years read our segments of their stories. At last, the almost 5 month long journey had come to an end, and the final result was a magnificent book to both look at and read.

Joseph Nash, 4DGA



Leavers' Day

"Do not train a child to learn by force or harshness; but direct them to it by what amuses their minds, so that you may be better able to discover with accuracy the peculiar bent of the genius of each". These words of Plato sum up for me what a school should do, what Abingdon does and has done for the 161 Upper Sixth leavers here today. At this milestone in our lives I would like to take this chance not only to say goodbye but to say thank you and leave you with some thoughts of our time at Abingdon.

I'd like to share something I was told when I was in the third year by one of the leavers that has evidently stuck with me. I'm primarily talking to the younger prize winners now by way of a full circle and you may even pass this advice on in years to come, but that's that, at Abingdon, you have the opportunity to excel to such a high level in so many different fields. It's more than likely that you won't ever have the same variety of opportunities again in your life so make the most of it while you can. I would like to think I have made the most of my time here, I've had the pleasure of going on trips away and have shared so many memories, some of which I'll share now. For those who were on the French

exchange, there was the infamous party, antics in Prague on the Economics trip or even sitting on the balcony of our hotel room looking over Barcelona having just played in the Sagrada Familia—these are things that I will not forget in a hurry.

I would like to take this final chance to say thank you. Our huge enjoyment of being at this school is in no small part due to so many who have contributed to every aspect of school life. Firstly thanks must go to all the teachers, who have not only taught us an exam syllabus but are more than happy to go far beyond the call of duty to help whether it be in extra academic lessons or weekend sports coaching. I know every single leaver here has great relationships with members of staff and no doubt we will keep in touch. From our point of view as Heads of School, we would like to thank the prefects. They have been exemplary in helping run the school and we've had a lot of fun in the process. I would also like to take this chance to thank George Hale, as it's probably the last one I'll get. George is unimaginably organised and his ability to make a Google doc and send it via an automatic email is unparalleled. In all seriousness, we have not disagreed once, we make up a dream team of organisation and efficiency with our little black diaries and I'm only sorry that our year as Head

of School is over. On that note I would like to wish all of the new prefects and Heads of School, when they are fully announced, the best for next year.

At this turning point in our lives after the past seven years of education I have been reflecting on what a school should be. The journalist Ken Robinson likens the modern education system to a factory production line in which batches of students are churned out every year all conforming to educational standards. But what sets Abingdon apart from this conformity, while surpassing educational standards, is that Abingdon boys have a taste of diversity, more than a taste, a mouthful, and what this does is give them character. An Abingdon boy does not only know the constraints of an exam syllabus, he knows how to collaborate, to compete and to be courteous. I was told something by a school governor recently describing an Abingdon boy and I think it's not only a testament to the boys but to the school as well, and that's that an Abingdon boy has as much talent as modesty. Today we celebrate the final day of 161 of its finest (if I may say so myself). It is with great fondness that I look back on my years at Abingdon and with great excitement that we look forward.

Tommy Nicholson, VIBJP, Joint Head of School 2014–2015

Today we turn a page in our lives, as our 14 year school careers draw to a close. Over these years most of us will have spent time in a number of schools, for many of us these schools will be in various countries across the globe, but we have all managed to end up here, at Abingdon School. But I'm sure this isn't the end of Abingdon for us all. As cliquey as we may be as a year group I know we will stay in touch because the friends we make at school are for many of us going to be friends for life. Whether you are one of the rowers, the Lower Sixth common room corner sofa boys, the gym lads, the musicians or the Upper Library crew; we shall all stay in touch one way or another.

Today we move off into a new stage of our lives, and many of us will soon be leaving home, travelling the globe on an adventurous gap year (obviously via the sunny islands of Ibiza), heading to university or even going into the world of work. Either way we set out on a new adventure which will inevitably sculpt the rest of our lives.

I would like to give a few pieces of advice to all the boys here about how we should embark on this adventure:

Try to excel in all that you do, try not to coast or meander through life, one must learn to thrive. On this day in 1898 Joshua Slocum completed one of the world's greatest feats, when he became



Tommy Nicholson

the first man to solo circumnavigate the globe and upon his return from his three year expedition he said: "I had profited well from the voyage. I had even gained flesh, and actually weighed a pound more than when I sailed from Boston". Let this be you, in whatever it is you choose to do next in life, make the most of it.

Be kind and caring in all of your endeavours. The manners and courtesy that one picks up at a school like Abingdon are some of our most powerful weapons that we carry in life.

Sometimes it is these attributes which will distinguish an Abingdonian from the rest of the pack.

Finally I urge you all to take risks in life. I am not referring to missing a prep DT with Mr Gooding, sneaking through boarders hall at lunch or even playing bums at break praying that Mr Dawswell doesn't catch you. I am talking about calculated risk as Dante Alighieri once wrote and T.S. Eliot once said: "from a little spark may burst a flame" "Only those who will risk going too far can possibly find out how far one can go."

One cannot finish a leavers' day speech without some thank yous. I would just like to personally thank all of the prefects for everything they have done this year to help us, and for putting up with all of those Google docs! I would like to thank Mr Dawswell for all of his guidance through this year, we certainly wouldn't have had a clue what was going on if it wasn't for those Tuesday meetings. Finally thank you to Tommy, for his exceptional organisation, time management and character. I couldn't have had a better colleague this year as Head of School. I hope you all have a fantastic summer. Goodbye Abingdon.

George Hale, VIRMT, Joint Head of School 2014-2015



George Hale



Sailing Trip to Greece

The Classics Department ran an extra trip in July this year in conjunction with the Sailing Club: this was a week of travelling in yachts around Greece, visiting various classically significant places on the voyage. We made the trip in two 49-foot yachts with a total of ten boys and teachers on each boat.

We started by leaving Athens on Sunday 5 July with calm weather, and crews very excited by the prospect of sunny days and interesting sites for the week. Our first port of call was Sounion, the southernmost tip of Attica. Sounion is home to a large temple to Poseidon, the Greek god of the sea, as it was the first site on the Greek mainland that sailors would see when coming from the Aegean—a welcome sight indeed for the weary! For us however, it was the first break from a morning of ‘learning the ropes’ on the yacht as many of the boys, including myself, hadn’t sailed on such a long voyage, and some had no experience at all, making for a steep learning curve.

This was beneficial however, as the second day was an all-out sailing day

with 60 nautical miles to cover. This meant that the yachts were moving all day at top speed, meaning the boats were travelling at quite rakish angles. Not only this, but many of the teachers were sailing non-stop, with Mr Bickerton helming all day! Nevertheless, we arrived at our final destination in good time, allowing us to spend more time the following day on classics-oriented activities.

When we arrived at our stopover on the third day, the long second day was worth it, as we had arrived at Delos, the sacred birthplace of Apollo and Artemis, the sibling Greek deities. It was plain to see that the island itself was the focus of a rich civilisation, and as someone said when we looked down upon the island from its hill, the whole scene was ‘quite atmospheric’!

Next we headed back towards the Greek mainland and by now we almost all had acquired our ‘sea legs’. At Epidaurus we visited the wonderfully preserved Greek theatre, and had excellent talks from George Wilder and William Johnson about Greek theatre and its impact on the modern arts. Then we headed on to the island of Aegina where we visited the temple to Aphaia, the local goddess associated with fertility and agriculture. Once we

had visited the site and its museum, we made our way back to the boats and began our final journey back to Athens to visit the key sites of Greece’s largest ancient city.

We made our way up to the Acropolis to see the remains of the religious sanctuary, culminating in the Parthenon, a building that in its current state is still impressive by modern standards: it must have been quite a sight to behold when undamaged! We then walked back into central Athens, visiting the Agora, the hub of the ancient city, and the Acropolis Museum to see the restoration and preservation of some of the art and decoration from the temples themselves. Whilst very interesting and informative, we slowly began to realise that the museum marked the final event of the trip, and the end of our own enjoyable and informative Greek Odyssey: plenty of learning but also plenty of napping on the deck in the sun while sailing, and relaxing visits to remote tavernas in the evenings.

I would like to thank Dr Burnand, Mr Bickerton and Mr Simmons for taking the trip, and OAs George Jorgensen and Nick Wilkinson for helping with the sailing over the week.

Hugh Franklin, 6SAE

Biology Trip to Honduras

Situated in Mesoamerica where South America meets the North, Honduras is an interesting country with a vast diversity of flora and fauna; an ideal place for a biology field trip (despite the slightly scary travel advice from the Foreign Office). This summer a group of us took the chance to visit Honduras to work with an organisation called Operation Wallacea, a network of academics from European and North American universities who have been researching the biodiversity and ecological condition of Honduras's cloud forests and coral reefs.

We started the trip with a flight to what appears to be one of the world's least efficiently run airports, Miami International, where we had the misfortune to be so delayed by the dire American immigration service that we missed our connecting flight to San Pedro Sula, the industrial capital of Honduras. We therefore had to spend a night in the "luxury" Miami Airport Hotel. We caught our flight the next day after much stress and eventually made it to Honduras—but it was worth the wait!

Squashed like sardines, we travelled deep into the forest in the back of pick-up trucks to a small town called Buenos Aires, located in the buffer zone of Cusuco National Park. It is situated at an altitude of about 1,500m above sea level and is surrounded by cloud forest. We spent several nights here, living with the locals and familiarising



ourselves with bucket showers, refried beans and cockroaches. Here we started our field work: getting up early for bird counts, conducting detailed habitat surveys to help Operation Wallacea measure the amount of carbon locked in the forest, heading out on night walks to see snakes, salamanders, frogs, tarantulas and bats. Working with the scientists allowed us to get much closer to the animals (measuring parrot snakes, weighing vampire bats, pulling hummingbirds out of mist nets and swabbing salamanders for chytrid fungus). We also did an exciting canopy access course which allowed us to climb our way to the top of a 30m high tree and view the forest in all its glory.

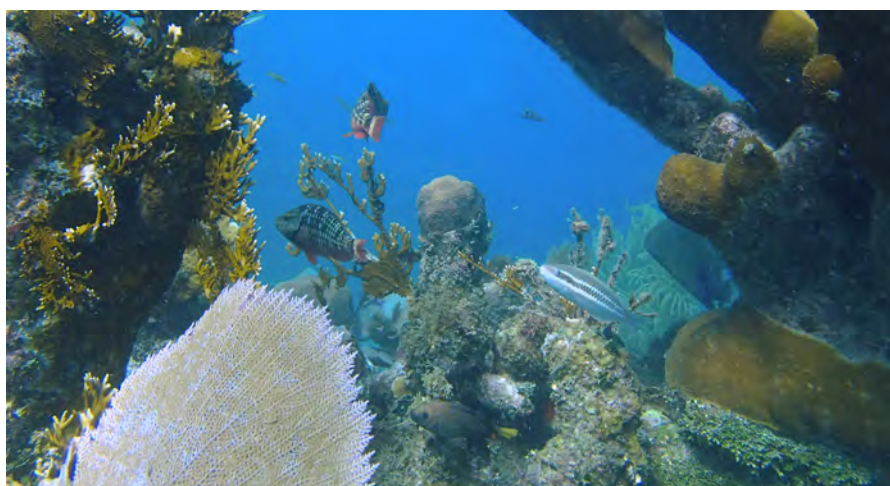
We spent the second half of that week much deeper in the forest, trekking for several hours to reach Capuca, a small, never-used-before satellite camp in the middle of the core zone (where development is prohibited) at an altitude of 2,100m. Thanks to the unique type

of cloud forest found on the mountains of the Cusuco National Park there are many interesting plants and animals to see that can't be found anywhere else in the world. The mud in camp was horrendous, and soon everything was filthy, but the opportunity to find unusual, endemic species in this patch of cloud forest was worth it: giant dung beetles, enormous atlas moths, pit vipers and jewel scarab beetles. This was certainly the hardest part of our trip, but the experience was amazing.

The second week of our trip was spent on the small island of Utila off the coast of Honduras, where we stayed in a dive research centre. This week was spent scuba diving and studying Caribbean reef ecology, learning how to identify fish and coral and finding out about their importance in the reef's ecosystem. Being 18m underwater is a really unique experience, allowing you to get up close to all sorts of weird animals, from giant fan corals to vicious looking 8ft moray eels. There were many successful sightings on the reef—a few of us were lucky enough to get close to a whale shark or swim with a pod of spinner dolphins—and there was a seemingly endless variety of brilliantly coloured angel fish. This week was thoroughly enjoyed by all and made for a great ending to a great trip.

On behalf of the boys, I would like to thank Mr Dempsey and Mr Taylor for making this such an enjoyable and unforgettable trip!

Nicholas Orr Burns, 5RMC





Moldova Trip

Here are some things you may not know about Moldova. It is the home of the world's largest underground wine cellar; it is somewhat surprisingly ranked third in the world rankings of internet access speed and is one of only three countries in the world to have a national flag that is different on the front compared to the back. However, it is also the poorest country in Europe, meaning many towns and villages have to work desperately hard to survive during the 40 degree heat of the summers, and the -30 degree of the winters. This is why for the past 12 Years, a group of boys from Abingdon have headed out to the town of Ialoveni (6 miles from the capital Chisinau) to spend two weeks running a summer camp for the children in an attempt not only to educate them, but to also give them an opportunity just to relax and have fun. This year, it was our turn.

"It's all right, we've got this evening" said Freddie Stenton-Putt as we realised our plans for the summer camp starting the next day amounted to "duck, duck, goose", "splat" and potentially the loom bands brought by Mrs McRae in case we ran out of ideas. At this point, Mr Jenkins gave up any remaining hope he had left that we might be the first



group of Abingdon boys who, given four months' notice, could come up with a short list of educational activities for the camp well in advance, and informed us of the emergency planning meeting he had prearranged for that evening. Luckily, we were prevented from feeling guilty for too long as it was time to board our final flight.

We arrived at about 4pm Moldovan time into Chisinau airport to be greeted enthusiastically by Nicu, Director of Agape, the charity we support, and some of the Moldovan helpers who would not only be translating, but teaching and leading activities with us during the next two weeks. We didn't have long to be nervous about

meeting our new hosts as straight away we were whizzed off to what were to be our homes for the next few days. We all stayed in Ialoveni, which was beautiful, but very different to any town I have seen in England. What struck me most was the fact that every single garden, without exception, was essentially an allotment - often with a space for keeping chickens or ducks from which each family were able to feed themselves. This was reflected by the fact that the only shop I came across in Ialoveni sold no more than a small local village shop back here in England, along with a few added extras such as fish heads and chicken legs. As a result, it was no surprise when on the first evening we were served a fully

vegetarian potato and cabbage dish with a cheesy sauce - all produced and cooked at home. It really was a contrast to food in England.

Once we'd had dinner, we had our emergency planning meeting which gave us our first opportunity to really get to know the Moldovan helpers we would be working with. After some very original Ice-Breakers provided by Charlie, we got down to planning the next 4 days of activities that were to be staged in Ialoveni. With the help of some nuts and Coke, we came up with a basic structure of doing a round robin each day of a craft, a sport and an English lesson. I was assigned English along with Charlie and Anna and got down to planning a lesson that was going to have to compete with volleyball, and some inspired origami going on in the classroom next door. Eventually settling on body parts as a basis for our lesson, we each left for our host families.

The next few days were both enjoyable and interesting. The mornings were spent doing a round robin of activities with up to 70 Moldovan children in the school of Grigore Vieru, before heading off to do touristy activities such as visiting Chisinau, a school Agape had helped and playing football against the Moldovans. I found running the summer school very rewarding and could see, especially toward the end of the week, just how much difference it made to the children. It was also fascinating to see



Chisinau, which was strikingly different to Ialoveni. Although not quite London, it felt fairly up to date and much like any other European capital. The other days were just as enlightening. Whether it was spent visiting a school to see a new purpose-built English classroom that had been paid for by our school's sponsored walk, or when we were well and truly thrashed in football by the Moldovans (I blame it on the heat!), it never stopped being enjoyable. It was great to see the work Agape had done and very fulfilling to have a chance to make a difference (albeit a small one) ourselves.

On the Friday of the first week, we set off on a 9 hour drive, to the mountains

of Romania. Along with around 30 of the children we had been working with previously, we were heading to a mountain cabin just above the village of Lacu Rosu. During the next week, we would be doing a variety of activities with the children in and around the cabin. The scenery was extraordinary, and it was a real privilege to spend the time there with such an amazing group of people. The activities included a mountain walk (which everyone achieved successfully), a shopping challenge modelled on The Apprentice, and even a 'who could make the best film award' with some interesting, yet oscar-worthy, results. The week culminated with a talent show in which almost everyone got up to perform. I was amazed by how confident the Moldovans tended to be to get up and perform and there were some very impressive acts. Highlights included the 6 of us doing traditional Moldovan dancing, Raafi's opera singing and a really very impressive break dancing routine. Overall, we all got a lot out of the week and made some really strong friendships, evident from the tears that were shed when it was time to say goodbye.

All in all, it was a great two weeks that obviously had a big impact on the lives of some of the children there, and I really look forward to seeing some of them again when they do a return trip next year.

Joseph Kelly, 6NSH





World Rowing Junior Championships

After a long and tough season 5 Abingdon rowers, and 1 cox, attended final trials in Nottingham hoping to gain selection to row for Great Britain. After a week of trials Tom Digby and I were selected to represent Great Britain at the Junior World Championships in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. As my first time being selected and Tom's second it involved a 2 week training camp at Pangbourne and the GB training centre in Caversham where we would decide which crews we were to race in at the championships and start training together as fixed crews. I was in the coxed four while Tom was in the coxless four and we both began to retune ourselves to rowing alongside other athletes whom in most cases we had never rowed with before until this camp.

Once this training camp was over we left on a 22-hour flight via Portugal to

Rio de Janeiro on 1 August. Once we had arrived and settled in we began to prepare for racing by training on the race course which was situated on the Lagoa de Freitas, a lake in the middle of Rio, which had a stunning view of Christ the Redeemer and also is the Olympic course for next year. Training on the lake was a very surreal experience because instead of watching other school crews go past, it was world class international junior crews from many different nations.

There were many things that were very different while I was rowing at the championships, such as, the effects of a single mistake on any day, even when I was not racing, that could result in warnings to the crew for things which were never considered at domestic school regattas due to the new level of almost professional competition. Once it came to racing in the coxed four we had practised every area of the 2000m race in order to prepare to race against other nations so that during my heat we could execute as perfect a race as possible. The GB junior team is often slightly on the back foot in terms of preparation

due to the culture of domestic rowing which means that boats are selected much later than other countries such as Germany or Italy. In my first race on 6 August we came second in our heat beating USA and Ukraine but losing to Italy, meaning missing out on automatic qualification to the final, which meant we had to race again later in the day in the repechage. Unfortunately in the repechage we were beaten by other strong crews and narrowly missed out on a place in the A-final coming 5th. This resulted in a side-by-side race with Ukraine to decide who won the B-final. During a tight first 500m that favoured the Ukrainian fast starters, we were able to keep on terms with them which gave us confidence to push away from them and extended our lead to 7 seconds at the finish line.

It was an amazing experience to compete for my country and I have learnt a lot about competing at a high level in the sport. It was the perfect way to end my junior career as I move on to university rowing.

Guy Screaton, VICJM



After the selection trials in July, I was selected for the GB coxless four, along with Charlie Elwes and Luke Towers who, like myself, were returners from the Worlds the year before. Our boat started off not going as well as we'd hoped, given the experience and ergo average that it had. After our two week training camp in Pangbourne we came on a lot, although did not get it right in our 2k training piece two weeks before the final. From then on, we began to perform how we'd hoped and we began to get very excited at the prospects of what we could do.

When we got out to Rio it took a couple of days to adjust to the heat and time difference but then racing started on the following Wednesday. It was a great atmosphere; there were a group of 50 plus supporters. We raced for the first time on Wednesday coming second in our heat to Greece. We were a little bit frustrated with the result but we progressed to the semi-finals. In our semi final we didn't have Greece or the Germans who seemed to be pretty strong crews, however we did draw the Romanians and the US. After 500m it was dead level between us, Serbia, the US, and Romania were about 1.5 seconds in front. We had a really tough last 500m to beat the US by 0.2 of a



Tom Haynes and Jamie Sudlow

second and qualify for the final.

The final was one of the most nerve-racking experiences of my life. I was glad when we got going. We had a great first 500m and were 2.5s ahead of the rest of the world at that point. The Romanians crept up on us through the middle kilometre and we were rowed though just after halfway. Our boat, the Greeks and the Germans were very close behind at that point, but we very narrowly got ahead. Not that we knew it—we won our silver by 0.11 seconds over the Germans, and the Greeks were

0.1 seconds behind them narrowly missing out on medals. The Romanians beat us by 1.5 seconds in the end but we were very happy with the result.

Guy and I weren't the only ones in action over the summer however and it's good to report that there was also rowing success for Jamie Sudlow and Tom Haynes who became national champions in the under 16 pair at the British Junior Rowing Championships held in Strathclyde in July.

Tom Digby, 6EOD



Gothia Cup

Wow, what an amazing experience we had in Sweden!

75 nations were represented in this year's Gothia Cup making for an amazing atmosphere, not only around the city of Gotheburg but also at the venues.

This was a huge tournament and the unforgettable Opening Ceremony in the Ullevi Stadium with over 50,000 competitors, coaches and supporters attending will always be something we will remember.

The venues, 31 in total, obviously had a lot of thought put into them and the pitches ranging from 4G to grass were incredibly well kept. Some games were live streamed and one pitch even had a drone in the sky recording the matches!

South Central 3, the team Theo Zamani, William Lebeau (captain for two games) and myself (captain for one game), had only managed to meet on one occasion before flying out. This would always

make our progression in the tournament a difficult job as there were 144 teams competing in the under 13 boys category, many of which were academy teams that had spent years playing together. However, we weren't going to let this faze us and we decided to embrace the whole experience not only for our own development under coach Jason Henry (Fulham FC) and Charlotte Long (Physio) but also to ensure we enjoy ourselves.

South Central 3 were in under 13 Group 24 with group matches being played on the first 3 days. We started strongly on the Monday winning against FK Lillehammer 3-0. We knew our next match on Tuesday was going to be difficult against IFK Goteborg (2nd in last year's tournament) and so it proved to be, with us losing 3-0. The final group game on Wednesday against International SA (from Singapore) started well with us dominating and going into half time 1-0. However, after this break they came back strongly taking the lead with a couple of long range shots. Although we did manage to get

another goal, we ran out of time to take advantage of our late momentum and we lost 3-2.

This put us in the B play offs, where we faced a stronger Lebanese side, Athletico SC. The game started well with both sides playing attractive, patient possession football. However, as the game went on fatigue after three days of hard football started to creep in and we lost 4-1.

Two big, elite Swedish clubs contested the U13 final, with Malmo FF winning 3-1 against IF Brommapojkarna.

What an unforgettable week! We experienced top level football coaching, learnt many new drills, and how best to optimize our performance through correct nutrition and body conditioning, plus we had the opportunity to mix with boys from all over the world, visit the wonderful city of Gothenburg, and take part in something special. This was a truly fantastic experience and something I would definitely do again.

Aaron Mara, 2SW



International Linguistics Olympiad

The thirteenth International Linguistics Olympiad (IOL), this year at the American University in Blagoevgrad Bulgaria, had the apt motto 'Linguistics creates friends'. For in a week with only ten hours total of competition (one six hour individual paper and a four hour team problem) there was a lot of time for socialising with people from the 28 other countries there. The event was as much a cultural exchange as a competition. And so in all this, I think our two British teams really found a sense of national identity: eagerly joining queues in the university canteen despite neither knowing nor wanting what was at the other end; demonstrating various British accents to try and counteract the fact that everyone there spoke perfect English (in fact only the Americans got confused); and of course complaining about the weather, namely that it was too hot and never rained.

But the culture most on show was the Bulgarians' with a presentation of tradition dances in the open ceremony.

The Wednesday featured an excursion spent up in the Rila Mountains at an old monastery, followed by a traditional Bulgarian lunch and folk-dance workshop, allowing us to try and replicate what we had seen earlier in the week. The Bulgarians seem to have an obsession with a certain salty, white cheese as well as with cucumber, which constituted the starter salad of the lunch and was available at every meal at the university including breakfast.

The individual paper itself was sat on the Tuesday with five questions on Nahuatl and Arammba number systems, Kartevian verb morphology, Soundex surname coding, Wambaya sentences, and Somali poetry metre. The IOL problems require not just correct answers but precise and pithy explanations, for example of the language's grammar. I answered on the last four questions, earning a silver medal and overall joint 18th out of about 170 contestants. The team paper is considerably more challenging and it often requires more abstract thinking. This year we were presented with passport document information and about 35 word definitions from a monolingual dictionary, both only in the Northern Sotho language, and were then asked to create a grammar of the

language and a Bilingual dictionary. We went from having very few ideas after about 45 minutes to the passport asking if you were a vegetarian after 3 hours, at which point we realised something had gone wrong; not too wrong though as we ended up winning against the other 43 teams, gaining the first British team podium position, but much more crucially breaking the Americans' four year streak of team gold.

Not only were there two contests but there were two parties as well, both with a karaoke, allowing us to demonstrate our Scottish accents in a rendition of 500 miles with the Irish team. Being a Linguistics Olympiad, we were also treated to several lectures on computational linguistics on topics such as how computers learn languages. One of them discussed ambiguity in English, giving several examples, the most notable and rapturously applauded being "Tony Blair releases new budget; more lies ahead".

What was particularly memorable though was that, even amidst the political jokes and more serious enmities between certain nationalities at the Olympiad, there was a friendly and warm atmosphere for the whole week.

Anthony Bracey, 6CJM

Senior Rugby Tour

The Senior Rugby Tour to Australia and New Zealand was truly a trip of a lifetime for the 45 Abingdon schoolboys and six accompanying members of staff. It was the biggest rugby tour that Abingdon School has ever undertaken, and the many months of planning were all justified in the experiences both on and off the rugby field.

After a long 24 hours spent travelling the squad was extremely happy to check into the luxurious Novotel Manly. The few days of sunshine, beach and extravagance flew by with many boys asking if they could stay in Manly for the remaining three weeks of the tour. However it was a rugby tour and the focus soon moved from the golden sand of the beaches to the green grass of the pitches. After watching the Wallabies' iconic victory over the All Blacks to win the Rugby Championship it was time for the Abingdon boys to play their first match down under. Both Abingdon teams kicked the tour off with convincing wins against Sydney Grammar School, the 1st XV winning by

34 points to 5 and the 2nd XV winning 35 points to 5. After the game the boys enjoyed a delicious post match meal and the nurturing company of their billets, a theme that was present whenever families hosted us.

After a brilliant week of enjoying the sun, sea and sights of Sydney it was time to move to the colder climate of New Zealand. The boys soon found themselves in Palmerston North, the home town of our very own Head, Miss Lusk, where again the hospitable hosting of their billets soon made the boys feel very at home on the other side of the world. After a short turn around it was time to take to the field once more. However this time they were faced with a much greater task playing two very physical and competent Palmerston North rugby teams. The 2nd XV were disappointed to lose a winnable game; it seemed that the effects of touring (living out of suitcases, constantly moving about and playing and training more frequently) were beginning to take their toll on the boys as they failed to fire on all cylinders. The 1st XV enjoyed more success, narrowly winning 20-19 thanks in part to a drop goal by Conor Graney and some brave, dogged defence.

Following the physicality of the previous

rugby matches some rest and recovery came in the form of a spa day and a memorable afternoon spent racing down a luge track at the top of Mount Nongataha. It was here that the battle of the hill took place, a fiery showdown on the luge track, where mate was pitted against mate and all loyalties were put on hold as the boys (and staff) battled to be the fastest down the mountain. The physicality and determination shown on the luge track was then transferred to Maharangi College, which was the venue for our next game. The 2nd XV were set the challenge of matching the energy of the previous game with an increased level of defensive efficiency. They didn't disappoint. Despite being the smaller side, our boys proved too strong for Maharangi 2nd XV, running out 38-15 winners. Next it was the 1st XV's turn to run Maharangi through their paces. What ensued was a fast-paced game in which Abingdon dominated both up front and in the backs, coming out convincing winners with a 41-0 scoreline. Following the game, the Maharangi 2nd XV entertained Abingdon with an impromptu stage show, complete with singing, dancing and lighting special effects. Then it was down to the serious business -



post match interviews televised on "Donaldson on Sport", the school's student-led sports broadcast. Making the most of their opportunity in the spotlight many boys spoke with great professionalism and wouldn't have looked out of place on Match of the Day.

In the midst of convincing wins and very successful GCSE results the tourists took in the stunning scenery of the Bay of Islands and enjoyed a traditional Maori event that immersed them in the culture. Feeling like they now had a greater grasp on the New Zealand heritage, the tourists faced one final Haka in their last match of the tour against Avondale College. In keeping with the trend in New Zealand, both teams that were fielded against our boys were physically larger than us, so the lads knew they were going to have to dig deep if they were going to finish the tour on a high. The 2nd XV showed the same grit and tenacity that is quickly becoming a trademark of their style of play. Starving the opposition of possession, the 2nds played with flair, spinning the ball wide to keep their larger opponents running and eventually tiring them out. Despite an inability to turn many try-scoring opportunities into points, the 2nd XV still came out the victors with a well-deserved 10-5 win. The 1st XV were met with a similar mis-match of size and duly applied the same tactics to keep their opponents



run off their feet. In the end, the more disciplined, structured approach of Abingdon led to a convincing 19-3 win.

Unfortunately our time in New Zealand had come to an end but the last night is one that will always be remembered with entertaining presents, laughter and many great tour memories being exchanged. On the way home the tourists transferred to their Dubai hotel for some well deserved rest, and the

boys wasted little time in trading their muddy rugby kit for singlets and flip flops as they lounged by the pool - apart from a few of the more fair skinned members of the tour who had to remain inside out of the scorching 42 degrees.

In conclusion on the pitch, the 1st XV returned having won four out of their five fixtures against very creditable opposition. The fixture to remember was the Palmerston North game against an opposition who are well known internationally as a school for producing All Blacks. The 2nd XV were not to be outdone and their three wins out of five was also very pleasing, with many boys proving their worth and getting some game time with the 1st XV. Off the field the tour will be fondly remembered for the integration into the Maori culture offered by all our host schools and Maori culture evenings. It was also a great moment to be able to present a cheque for £2000, which had been raised pre-tour, to Brad Clark of the Starship Foundation, a New Zealand charity working with children and young people with a range of illnesses. On reflection the tour had many special memories on and off the pitch, which will remain with the tourists for a lifetime.

Jamie Cox, 6RMT



Art Gallery

- 1 Micah Haynes
- 2 Micah Haynes
- 3 Jeremy Chan
- 4 Micah Haynes
- 5 Micah Haynes
- 6 Jack Bradley
- 7 Micah Haynes
- 8 Arthur Bruce

- (AS)
- (AS)
- (A2)
- (AS)
- (AS)
- (A2)
- (AS)
- (GCSE)



1



2



8



4



3



5



6



7

9	Jonathan Hall	(GCSE)	13	Harry Wallis-Smith	(GCSE)
10	Ethan Lo	(GCSE)	14	Harry Wallis-Smith	(GCSE)
11	Ethan Lo	(GCSE)	15	Bertie Thomas	(A2)
12	George Skingley	(GCSE)	16	Arthur Bruce	(GCSE)



9



10



11



12



13



14



15



16

17	Bertie Thomas	(A2)	21	Joshua Forman	(GCSE)
18	Rohan Khosla-Stevens	(GCSE)	22	Jonathan Hall	(GCSE)
19	Harry Fishpool	(GCSE)	23	Jonathan Hall	(GCSE)
20	Rory Pattisson	(GCSE)	24	Arthur Bruce	(GCSE)



17



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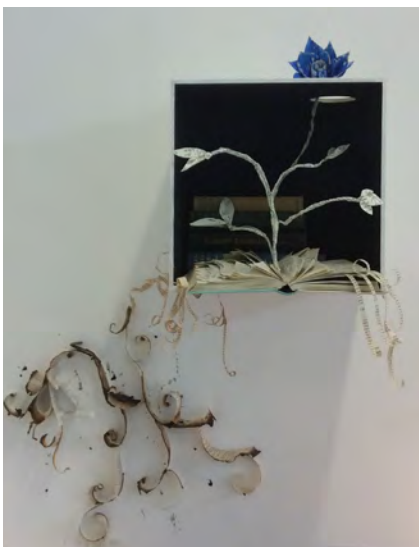
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House Reports

School House



School House has had a successful year. We had a strong group of Upper Sixth, led from the front by Henry Tipple and myself as the two Heads of House on the day and boarding sides respectively. Tommy Nicholson was one of the Heads of School this year, and Jack Walsh, Henry Tipple and I were all School Prefects. Stanley Wang acted as Chairman of the Boarders Council and each evening the boarding tutors have been assisted by our team of Boarding House Prefects, who do everything they can to ensure that prep times are run smoothly and all Middle School boarders are in bed on time - not an easy task!

This year has also seen School House step out of the background, becoming more of a frontrunner in many inter-house events. Throwing ourselves

into the competitions, we managed to walk away with first place awards in U18s fencing, U16s water polo, U15s badminton and U15s and U14s ergos to name a few.

Despite singing our hearts out in the House Singing Competition, our rendition of *Best Day of My Life* by the American Authors failed to secure us a place in the top three. We did, however, win praise from the judge about our creative use of instruments and our tight harmonies - it's something! However, even in times where the House has not done so well, there is no lack of enthusiasm. Cheering 'School House' repeatedly in sync does surprisingly well to keep morale high! In an attempt to improve in the competition this coming year, it was decided that we should choose an unconventional song and

start preparations for the next House Singing before summer even starts! Coordinated by Solomon English, we wish them the best of luck next year!

We did manage to finish the year on a high, walking away victorious from the School vs. Crescent cricket match which was won 93-78 in a game of 10 overs; Crescent only being saved from complete annihilation by Mr Deasy and Mr Birkbeck stepping in to bat for them at the last moment.

As this year comes to an end, we must say thank you to Mr Hallinan, who has been a boarding tutor in School House for the last five years, for everything that he has done for us. Always up for a chat while he cooks us all sausages each Wednesday evening, we will miss him greatly! Luckily, he will still be around as he stays on as a tutor in School House.



We must also say thank you to Mr Golding, who, after only one year at Abingdon School, is leaving School House boarding to become the new Housemaster of Austin (previously Davies') House. We wish him the best of luck in this new position.

Thank you also to Mr Colborn who stepped in to do evening duties in our times of need, and to Mrs Penrose who was a sixth form tutor, as they both leave Abingdon. Mr Colborn departs for Wellington College, and Mrs Penrose leaves to take a new position at Cokethorpe School.

In these times of change, it was always good to know that we have Di, our matron, looking out for us. Whatever problem we had, Di has always been happy to help, whether we needed a throat lozenge or our friend ripped his suit trousers and they needed mending! Thank you as well to Mr Swanwick and Mr Simmons for being there and supporting us through the last year.

As all good things must come to an end, this year did. The House became more and more sparsely populated as



most people went on study leave and it soon became time for the Upper Sixth to leave.

We now hand the torch over to the current Lower Sixth, captained by James Taylor and Harry Anderson as the new Heads of House on the boarding and day sides respectively. I congratulate them on their appointment

to these roles, and also congratulate Solomon English on his appointment as one of this coming year's Heads of School.

Thank you to everyone in School House for a fantastic year, and we wish you all the best for the future.

Justin Wilson, VIVDP

Crescent



One of my favourite parts of being a housemaster is showing prospective parents and boarders around Crescent House. A frequent comment made is that Crescent has a homely feel to it, but I was even more pleased when a potential parent turned to me recently and said, "This is a happy house!". The boys at Abingdon and in Crescent House always work exceptionally hard at everything they do, but to do so with enjoyment and with a smile on their face is even more rewarding. I am always impressed with the range and diversity of activities the boys are involved in, but if I were to include everything of note that they do, then this article would be far too long.

Crescent House's involvement in the inter-house tournaments led to a number of successes over the year. In the Michaelmas Term, a team consisting of Christopher Yip, Kenneth Au Yeung, Jake Pennington, Ryan Ling, William Tong and Jeffrey Leung won the badminton competition, while at U15 level, Felipe Jin Li and Jate Jaturanpinyo showed impressive skills in the table tennis. In the Lent Term, the U16 team of Jake Pennington, Marius Putnam, Kenneth Au Yeung, Patrick Leggett and Harry Wallis-Smith won the five-a-side football in fine style. Ethan



Webb and Alisdair Cornforth dominated the U14 100 metre competition in the summer, the former in an impressive 11.89 seconds, while the tennis team also won, featuring an excellent singles performance from Sam Christie. I want to thank all Crescent boys who took part in the inter-house teams - the competition only works because so many boys are willing to enthusiastically give things a go, even when it may not be playing to their particular strength.

Crescent boys excelled in the swimming

pool, with Alex Monaco representing Abingdon at the Bath and Otter Cup at the Olympic pool in London, and Jonathan Lee helping his team to the county record for the 200m medley relay. Joseph Truran has excelled on the chess board, and in addition to the school team, also plays for Witney in the Oxford and District Chess League. A recent "find the winning move" puzzle in the Sunday Telegraph was from one of Joseph's games at the Witney Chess Congress, which was a

great achievement for him. Henry Hart continued with his running success, and both he and Michael Man achieved good times in the Reading Half Marathon. Thomas Bishop was selected to represent the South-West U16 Division in rugby - another impressive achievement.

More unusually, Tim McGovern was the winner of the Oxfordshire Young Sport Reporter competition, run through BBC Oxford radio. He won a day of training with a professional and got to report on the Oxfordshire School Games.

Outside the sporting arena, a crack team of Adrian Lei, James Beazley and Richard Ainslie won the sixth form debating competition, impressing the judges with their quick wit and sharp retorts on the way. Aim Wonghirundacha and John Cheung were widely praised for their Abingdon Film Unit film *Blindside*, and Aim also went on to be commended for his film *The Red Brick*, which featured a number of Crescent House boys. Benjamin Adams and Callum Ravden received praise for their involvement in the third year production of *As You Like It*, and Jamie Farrow was involved in the exceptional production of *Les Misérables* in the Amey Theatre, which was my highlight of the school year. Jamie also provided the musical direction for this year's house song, *Price Tag*, by the popular artist Jessie J, and he was ably and enthusiastically assisted in conducting by James Beazley. "Fourth" again, boys—we hope



to improve upon that next year!

Henry Hart and Henry Fulford provided outstanding leadership of the CCF, and there was hardly a school publication produced throughout the year that didn't in some way involve Asten Yeo's consummate design skills.

Crescent House academic achievements are almost too numerous to mention, but stand-outs for me include Henry Hart's 4 A*s at A-Level; James Baker, John Cheung and Adrian Lei all winning places at Oxford; and, amongst many excellent GCSE results, John-Christian Davey, Jamie Farrow, Patrick Leggett and Christopher Yip all

achieving 10 (or in Christopher's case 11) A*s.

The House was led by Heads of House Evgeniy Neviditsin and Tim McGovern, with School Prefects Jeffrey Hang, William Tong, Adrian Lei and James Beazley providing a strong Crescent presence at School level.

We said goodbye to tutors Mrs Waite, who has left to become head of the chemistry department at Ashford School, and Mr Poynter, who has moved to Dulwich. After four years as a Crescent tutor, Mr James has been promoted to housemaster, and Mrs Kaye will be moving to be third year tutor of James's. Rev. Gooding is also stepping down from covering one of the fifth year tutor groups. I want to thank them all for all they have done for Crescent over the years.

We welcome Mr Barnes, who will be moving to Crescent as my Assistant Housemaster, and Mr Pemberton, Miss Poole and Mrs King all join as tutors.

The Heads of House for 2015/16 will be Michael Man and Freddie Ward, with deputies Bertie Boyd-Gorst, Jeffrey Leung and Harry Thomas, while Asten Yeo will be a School Prefect. I am confident that they and the rest of the Upper Sixth will lead the House ably in what, I am sure, will be another very successful year for Crescent House.

Matthew Kendry



Davies'



Well, another year has come and gone and as the Davies House Buffalo I have seen a new set of third years settle in nicely, whether it be John Allen stealing the show in the third year drama production or Oliver Breach playing his heart out in First Orchestra. It's safe to say the Force is strong with this lot; their passion for the house is unrivalled. They have been added to a very strong fourth and fifth year who dominated all sporting competitions: a favourite of mine was watching Oliver Gray reign supreme over table tennis - not sure whether this was through skill or force of personality - but as expected we came out on top. House Singing once again saw us come a respectable fourth place (trust me I checked with the judges), and well done to George Dyke who led this. He also brought Friday Four O'Clock Talks to new heights of greatness and there was not a Friday afternoon that went by that didn't see Davies House library crammed with eager young minds wanting to find out about anything from body language to bad movie mistakes.

A new initiative started this year with whole-house tutor times, kicking off with team building - the favourite activities being the egg drop or dodge ball as there seems to be something thrilling to the boys about throwing stuff especially when a teacher has given them



permission to do so! Work presentations and volleyball followed and these could not have been done without our Heads of House and the team of House Prefects. Boladale Babalakin was always seen with a smile on his face, able to use his imagination to engage even the most sullen fifth year boy, while Tom Harkness had the determination and diligence to make sure the jobs were done. Next year's crop have a tough act to follow.

As the photographs on these pages show I have much enjoyed my travels around the globe with members of the House. I certainly covered a lot of miles this year right up until the end

of the summer when I joined Edward Adamson, Toby Collins, Tom Haynes, John Hobby and Stuart Pearson on the rugby tour to Australia and New Zealand —the life of the Davies' House Buffalo is certainly never dull!

Of course next year we have a new Housemaster and a new name, Austin House. The name comes from that of the first OA to fall in the First World War, and will act as a fitting reminder of the fact that the building of Austin's House was originally given to the School to commemorate those that gave their lives in the service of their country.

The Davies House Buffalo



Christodoulou's



The accomplishments of the departing Upper Sixth are recorded elsewhere in the *Abingdonian* so in this report I am going to focus on what the others members of the House have contributed to life at Abingdon.

3rd year: James Bowen was part of the shooting squad and the winning general knowledge team. Conor Chippendale played in the Second Orchestra and was named hockey player of the season in the U14C team – he was also captain of this team; additionally he visited the elderly, and achieved a Grade 2 with distinction for clarinet. Praymore Shaba played wonderfully for the U14A football side and Reading Town elite team. Andrew Kang dedicated himself to music at Abingdon and beyond by being a member of the First Orchestra and the TVYO. Ruaidhri Taylor was a member of the Chapel Choir, the Film Unit and part of the winning general knowledge team. Additionally, outside school, he was awarded the Chief Scout Gold standard. Henry Barlow competed in the National Arena League swimming and the Abingdon swimming team while he kept up his fitness with Kendo. Ben Lovejoy was also part of the winning general knowledge team and tutor group rep. Jamie Masters was a key member of the U14A football team, the Arsenal elite

squad, and contributed hugely to the U14A rugby side. Charles Hall rowed for the U14B squad and played U14A rugby while he worked towards his Grade 7 piano and Grade 6 trumpet. Sebastian Anand was awarded full colours for basketball – a huge accolade for his age. Daniel Cooney was an A team player for the U14 hockey side while he achieved a Grade 3 with merit on drums – an excellent achievement given that he has been playing for only 18 months. James Moreton-Smith spectacularly won the U18s singles at badminton during inter-house sport while James Stammers was top scorer for the U14As in football. Jack Johnson shone through the swimming gala, and won two silver medals at 100m individual medley and 50m butterfly, and one bronze at 100m freestyle. William Franklin and Connor Fanning were key members of the CCF. Sadly we said goodbye to Gleb Kuznetsov who has moved to Australia.

4th year: Joe Roads continued to be one of the leading lights in sport at his age while representing School and the county at hockey and tennis. Charles Goulder scored 74 runs off 81 balls leading his team to a clear victory against St Edward's. Robert MacLennan made excellent contributions to fencing

and music, while Reuben Havelock continued to excel in music and drama. Michael Sutton also played an important role in drama and an even more important one as a jib-man in his U16 sailing crew. Noah Williams was the main thinker behind a Young Enterprise start-up company, alongside Joseph Salter and Robert MacLennan. Tom Spring grew in confidence in design technology, always appearing with new gadgets, while Jake Drew's passion for electronics and the Film Unit continued to flourish. Joseph Salter exceeded expectations by coxing the J16A crew. Harry Venables won coaches' player of the season in the U16 hockey A team, scored 78 runs off 73 balls in cricket against Haberdashers' School, and recently won the Town & Gown 3km race against another 350 runners in a time of 10:47. James Hall's great sporting moments include county hockey as well as playing for the A team; he also passed Grade 7 in the guitar and piano. Tom Preston sat his Greek GCSE one year early and in his second ever game for the C team in cricket managed a staggering 4 wickets in 2 overs! Joshua Crichton has been a reliable and highly achieving member of the School cross-country team, while also achieving the highest mark of the year for Classical Civilization.

Charlie Harden-Sweetnam managed an amazing 6 A*s in his end of year exams coupled with a strong disciplinary record and great commitment in his Young Enterprise group. Marcus Green has been working through his Arabic GCSE while being part of the award winning Flame Young Enterprise group. Oliver Moody has been involved in a variety of clubs this year including CCF, D of E, Sailing and Young Enterprise as well as being a highly accomplished scout outside school. Hugh Armstrong also managed an excellent 6 A*s in his end of year exams as well as maintaining high standards in his A crew for rowing. James Day reached an amazing rugby high when he played for the A team while showing strong commitment to rowing as well. Danny Lloyd also sat his Greek GCSE a year early while showing clear linguistic ability in French, Latin, German and Russian. Joe D'Souza has been participating in musical groups such as Second Orchestra and Symphonic Wind Band, playing French Horn, while also managing to achieve 96% in his German Oral Exam.

5th year: Hal Watts continued to produce an excellent string of performances from the diving board and recently took part in the UK National Elites' competition. Charles Nabnian was awarded half colours for community service. Charlie Landells showed a promising future in filming and editing while producing a first class piece of work in the Upper Sixth leavers' video, while Joshua Forman chose to excel in the unique and individual sport of climbing. Sadly we see Charlie Stott go on to Sir William Borlaise for the sixth form: Charlie has been a first class pupil and an excellent rugby player whilst leading the CCF's third year section. We wish him all the very best at his new school. Jamie Sudlow, Harry Cover, Robert Kinnier Wilson and Alex Watkinson represented the school at rowing in their respective crews with equally strong commitment. Arthur Bruce follows in his brother's sailing footsteps by becoming a day skipper at the youngest age possible - a five day course completed at Easter in Plymouth allows him to charter yachts around the world as a skipper. Edward Turner-Fussell and William Sheffield helped to win the House Challenge

while Edward received the prize for the most interjections/interruptions made during House assemblies. Josh Perkins represented Abingdon in cricket. Horatio Hirst represented Abingdon at football. Joshua Perkins won a £250 prize in a Henley estate agent's photo competition with his shot entitled Early Morning Activity. William Sheffield rang bells here at School and regularly at a local church for Sunday Service; he also helped in the school archives on Monday afternoons, together with Edward Turner-Fussell.

Lower sixth: James Fotherby took part in the school fencing team, helping to win the sabre and epee trophy as well as placing in the individual sabre competition at Crystal Palace. Matthew Rogers has also been active in the school, after his re-election onto the School Council. Samuel Palmer has also excelled, with his acceptance into the 2nd VIII and the achievement of reaching the final of the National Schools' Regatta. Hugh Franklin has been successful with his music after playing solo trumpet with the Waterloo Band of the Rifles in a concert earlier this year. Charlie Herold started the year well being made a Lower School Assistant. He then excelled in the second team football side, which went on to win the County League. Arman Garmroudi has excelled on and off the sports field having represented the 1st

XV rugby and having won the art prize for the Lower Sixth. Conor Graney had a very successful start to the year having been a consistent member of a successful 1st XV rugby side. He has finished the year strongly being an asset to the 1st XI cricket side and wicket keeping on several occasions. Jamie Cox had a busy Michaelmas Term being part of a strong 1st XV rugby side and captaining Wasps U18 Academy for a couple of games. He then captained the rugby sevens side at Rosslyn Park. Christopher-James Nicholls enjoyed playing in the band for *Les Misérables* and also played in the rugby sevens national tournament. Harry Leafe was fifth best in the country for the air squadron trophy, was awarded colours for CCF, and obtained a place for an internship at the John Radcliffe hospital. Gregory Munday managed to secure work experience at Diamond Light Source and Reading University while only just completing a hugely successful first year at Abingdon. Finally, Freddie Stenton-Putt was part of the 2nd XI hockey team who had an unbeaten season, and won a placement for a summer internship at Carmelite Chambers law firm.

As the above makes clear it has been another very busy and productive year for the boys of Christodoulou's House.

Alexis Christodoulou



Arthur Bruce

Cotton's



This year in Cotton's House was one in which there was a palpable sense of building on the foundations laid in the previous year. Boys, housemaster and tutors had all settled into good working relationships with each other and the aim was to retain a positive outlook to school and work and to endeavour to flourish in all that we do.

The House Singing Competition provided an excellent opportunity to build further on the success of the previous year and to aim for the top three once again. With our rendition of Queen's *Crazy Little Thing Called Love* we embraced the relaxation in the competition's rules and showed off some harmonies and other effects. The adjudicator decided that we deserved to be runners up for our efforts, leaving us in second place, one higher than last year, and moving in the right direction again for next year!

As usual the House was generously represented in the sporting arenas both at Abingdon and further afield and both in School teams and at

House level there was a considerable catalogue of success. We saw 1st team representation by a number of House members in all the major sports and great success outside school as well. In the Road Relay, Cotton's had the fastest fourth year team and two of the fastest individual runners, Alexander Miell-Ingram in the Lower Sixth and Calum Steer in the fourth year. In inter-house competitions we won U15 rugby and the U14 and U15 football, retaining our titles in both. There was also an impressive win by the U16 swimmers and we were thrilled to retain our title again in the U16 table tennis. The Summer Term normally brings success for us and again we were very pleased with the expected retention of our titles in both the golf and the U15 cricket.

This was a year which saw the flowering of many House members' talents in the Arts and the outstanding production of *Les Misérables* dominated the lives of many – both boys in the House and housemaster alike! It was good to see so many Cotton's boys involved and all played a significant part, but

Hugh Cutting, in the lead role of Jean Valjean, was simply magnificent and rightly received plaudits from far and wide, amateurs and professionals, for the level of his performance, with many correctly identifying that his level was that of a professional West End production. There were other memorable performances by House members in drama pieces across the year, at third year, GCSE and A-Level productions and it was wonderful to see a different side to some of our boys as they expressed themselves on stage.

Our artists featured prominently in the exhibitions, both as scholars and GCSE and A-Level candidates and the range, breadth and invention of their creation was truly stunning. I would certainly be happy to own some of their pieces!

In music, Hugh Cutting led from the front once again in his performances at concerts across the year but a pleasing number of other House members are involved in the musical life of the School in ensembles and by taking music lessons, and it was a delight



Alexander Miell-Ingram



Hugh Cutting

to hear their work at concerts and performances throughout the year.

Intellectual prowess, thoughtfulness and matters cerebral also featured heavily in the lives of the boys in Cotton's. Academically a good number of boys have achieved fantastic offers from universities and gained strong AS and GCSE grades, which of course is at the heart of what boys hope to achieve from their time at Abingdon. The successful chess team regularly benefitted from the skills of Edward Reynolds, Jeff Abraham and Daniel Lawson. As a House, there was success again in debating, with the sixth form this time losing out and being runners up in a re-run of last years' final. This year though the sixth form added victory in the general knowledge competition to their roster of success – a well deserved victory in this hard-fought contest. *The Martlet* expanded under the editorship of Tobias Jupp and many House members could be found contributing to its pages, including Daniel Brown and Aidan Steer.

Prize giving saw the house generously represented amongst the recipients of the School's awards and showed the versatility of the boys in the House and the range of areas across which they achieved to a high level. Alexander Taylor won both the Mercers' School

Memorial Prize and the Mathematics Prize, Aadam Samiullah and Khalil Abouzeid won the Mervyn Gray Memorial Prize for Applied Science, George Wilder won the Head's Prize, William Ginks won the third year academic prize, Benjamin Hall and Nick Webster the fourth year academic prize. Hugh Cutting won a number of prizes: the Sawbridge Choral Prize, the Ward Trophy for Musical Achievement, the Drama Cup, and the Music Prize. Teddy Curtis was also a multiple winner gaining the French Prize, the Watkins-Muir Cup for Cross-Country Endeavour and the Barnshaw Nott Athletics Cup. Edward Reynolds won the King Trophy for chess, and Alex Davies won the Richard Anderson Trophy.

The new tutoring system was introduced this year and worked very well with all third years being able to spend time gelling as a group before being split into smaller groups for GCSE courses. The split sixth form tutor groups have allowed for dedicated UCAS preparation as well as good integration across the two years. The new third year mentoring scheme has been introduced to help both third years and sixth formers alike!

It was wonderful to see how much the boys of Cotton's achieved over the year and they were ably assisted in their

endeavours by the dedicated team of tutors, to whom immense thanks should be given. We were grateful to Mr Hindley for joining us on the sixth form tutor team for a term before we were able to welcome Mr Mason to the fold in January, and we are very grateful to Mr Winters for the dedication that he showed to the House in his time as a tutor. He stepped down from this role at the end of the year, but still remains unofficially affiliated to the House as he continues in his role managing the Schools' systems and schedules as well as teaching maths!

There were many memorable moments across the year and the social secretaries, Charles Normanton and Matthew Butcher, particularly excelled at creating fantastic House social events, ranging from the sixth form "Pub Quiz" in the Michaelmas Term to the newly introduced Leavers' Dinner at St Edmund Hall, Oxford. This provided a fitting way to say farewell to our leavers and to thank the Upper Sixth, who performed so well across the year and particularly to pay tribute to the exemplary Head of House, Hugh Cutting, and the other House Prefects who helped make this such a great year.

John Cotton

Franklin's



Heads of House were Louis Hudson and Luke Shepherd, supported by House Prefects Oliver Carpenter, Alexander Foster, Henry Papworth and Adam Spears. They constituted an outstandingly calm and friendly team. They all had considerable talents in many areas, but I was struck by the way they had all faced problems and surmounted them, coming out stronger and wiser for it. They set a great example of friendliness and resilience to the whole House.

This was an unusual year because I was away on sabbatical in the Lent Term. I was very lucky that Mr James stepped in to run the House so brilliantly. I continued to monitor House achievements by email while exploring the Southern Ocean, which was odd. I then returned for the summer to put the House back into disorder...

The year's competitions began with the House Singing, as usual, and as has become usual too, we did very well. Alexander Foster was a superb director, Leon Wu accompanied on the piano with unflappable calm as well as talent, and Ethan Sarphe showed his ability on drums. We sang *Royals* with musicality as well as enthusiasm, and were deservedly placed a creditable third.



We went on to successes in many House competitions, with both individual and team performances. We came second in the U16 rugby with George Strainge, Max Nurse-Bosley, Angus Williams, Luke Wilson, George Newton, Matthew Johnson, Ben Scrivener and Piers Butler forming an impressive team. Tom Southgate came second in the House squash, and Ray Ren, Leon Wu and James Anderson-Besant came second in the House chess. We won the senior table tennis competition, with the excellent Kit Greenacre in the individual event and Henry Papworth

and Oliver Carpenter playing doubles. Edward Cope, Cailan Reddy and Max Thompson were also highly successful, with the result that we were the overall champions in table tennis. One of the biggest competitions of the year was the House football, and our team played outstandingly well together to reach the final, which they won to emerge as champions of the competition. In the House athletics we also saw a number of outstanding performances. Many individuals did well, but the highlight was that our fourth years won their competition, a superb victory showing



James Anderson-Besant

their strength in depth.

Adam Spears became an important rugby player for the school, and later in the year was a key member of the cricket first eleven. Alexander Foster was again a star for the first eleven in hockey, and Oliver Carpenter was also a valuable player. Jack Holford was a great force in the 1st XV, and was selected for Wasps Under 18s; George Strainge is now following in his footsteps. Ray Ren played some brilliant chess for the school. Will Clamp-Gray was an outstandingly successful cox. Max Thompson emerged as a major rowing talent, winning silver at the British Indoor Rowing Championships, at the National Schools Regatta, and at the British Rowing Championships. Benjamin Schneider was selected for the GB junior fencing team; after a number of superb results he capped his year by going to the Junior Commonwealth Games in South Africa and winning gold in the epee.

Luke Shepherd, Louis Hudson, Giannis Giortzis and Alasdair Czaplewski revealed themselves as outstanding



Benjamin Schneider

debaters within school and in external competitions; Sam Farrar also impressed again with his calm and witty delivery. We have been particularly lucky to have such fine musicians in recent years. Alexander Foster, James Anderson-Besant, Leon Wu, David Chung, Jamie Corish and Didier Delgorge have all contributed their considerable talents to School and



Leon Wu

House in many orchestras, groups and other events.

I am grateful as ever to my team of tutors. They continue to work hard to support and encourage their tutees, and I would like to thank them again for their part in a very successful year.

David Franklin

Morgan's



Mitchell Keely

The end of my first year as housemaster provides a good opportunity to look back on the year and the many achievements of the boys over that time. Morgan's, or Boyd's as was, has always been a House with a great range of characters and talents, and the Upper Sixth of my first year were no exception.

We started the year with the legendary activity that is the House Singing Competition. The House was lucky to be led by future impresario Mitchell Keeley, who led the entry with his typical verve and enthusiasm. I have always been keen that this competition should be a source of enjoyment and not enforced misery. It offers, furthermore, a wonderful opportunity for older boys to lead the House and gives them a chance of leadership: this Mitchell exemplified and everyone was impressed by his efforts. Sadly the judgement didn't go our way, but a good time was had by all.

The range of talents in that group is something to behold: besides Mitchell's music, composing and performance in the spellbinding *Les Misérables*, Theo Brophy-Clews captained England at rugby, James Wooding was named Captain of Boats, Jamie Bowles captain of the 1st XI football, Guy Screaton went to Rio for the Junior World Championships in rowing, Joseph Barber won an organ scholarship to Keble College, Oxford and there were many other achievements besides.

That all these are typical of an Abingdon student is one of the great joys of the School, and those in years below will surely follow in their footsteps. Two more boys, Thomas Keogh and Patrick Cole, had leading roles in *Les Misérables*, for instance, Magnus Gregory continues to dominate junior kayaking, and Tom Digby won silver at the Junior World Rowing Championships (again).

Notable achievements such as these

are to be celebrated, of course, but it is in the more everyday successes that House life revels. Morganites have a proud history in the House Challenge Competition, for instance, and whilst sporting success didn't come quite so easily this year we had a jolly good time trying. Indeed, I count myself especially lucky as housemaster that very little coercion is required. It's not just competition that brings the best out in boys either: the wonderful efforts made by members of the Lower Sixth as third year mentors was a real highlight. A new scheme this year, it brings new boys together with sixth formers to help guide them through the many intricacies of Abingdon life. The care and consideration shown by these boys was a wonder to behold, and I hope will prove a great example to these young boys as they progress through the School and beyond.

Henry Morgan

Thomas Keogh



Theo Brophy-Clews

Magnus Gregory



Patrick Cole



Jamie Bowles



Southwell-Sander's

As another year draws to a close it is time to reflect on all the goings on in The Green Army. In terms of the leavers we say good bye to a stellar set of lads and I have taken it upon myself to sum up the group through the medium of poetry!

Moving on to the Lower Sixth, Joseph McNamara is now training with the Wasps Academy and both he and Lewis Dandridge were stalwarts of the 1st XV. The newly appointed House mentors proved to be a fantastic addition to the House – helping the third years settle in and thrive. Highlights for the fifth year include Charles Quarterman's meteoric progress with his cycling that have seen him competing a lot in Europe including victory in the Copa del Espan. Max Mortimer has had an outstanding season for the 1st XI with a major contribution to the victory over St Edward's with a switch hit 6 to win. The fourth year continue to establish themselves throughout the School. Henry Isherwood has continued to play rugby for Wasps Academy. The debating team of Ben Saunders, Arthur Musson and Charlie Stoker won the fourth year trophy. Adriano Matousek received an A* in his Italian GCSE this summer which he took a year early and has been a driving force together with Ben Saunders in their Young Enterprise team, winning an award for manufacturing. Tom Woods has represented the First Orchestra and also the National Youth Orchestra and Ivor Langley has contributed to Big Band with great success. Josh Braithwaite and Arthur Musson have been rowing in the A boat all season, while Ben Goriely-McDonald has been included in the first team squash squad and Charlie Stoker has been invited to the hockey Junior Regional Performance Centre. Mrs Wenham's third years have proven themselves to be a really thoughtful and considerate bunch of lads. In May, 12 members of the tutor group took part in the Live Below the Line campaign. This is a project organised by UNICEF to give normal people the experience of what it is like to live on the extreme poverty line at £1 a day. They raised around £250 which went to UNICEF

They've had many a tutor over the past few years,
And what's clear to me as the end draws near
Is from the cheeky chaps who joined the Army Green
They leave the house as some of the best we've seen.
There's Blackwell or Javert as he is better known.
A life of the stage showing off his dulcet tones?
Next comes Head of House, top lad Josh Burdass,
With his love of pumping iron, he looks a real badass.
Be it tackling Bedfordians or studying supply and demand
Ross Cook will be head of The Bank of England!
We also bid farewell to Monsier Tom Davy
Who will no doubt follow a life of philosophy.
JD is Oxford bound to explore some history –
Let's hope his neighbours like a bit of ACDC.
Losing George England is a massive loss
He'll charm the girls at Uni and show the lads who's boss.
Farwell's another legend who's rowing off to pastures new.
Henley will have to wait as he has Greek vocab to do.
Next comes Dec, the sharp footed assassin –
Let's hope uni lectures don't start much before PM!
Sgt Finch commands respect—it will be hard replacing him,
At least we now might win the debating!
He joined us late but made up for lost time,
As UN Secretary General Liam will be just fine.
Don't be deceived by Will J's innocent face—
With a hockey stick in hand no-one is safe.
Medicine at Uni is where Rupert is keen
But who'll now sort out my inter-house teams?
Missing out on Luteijn will be Oxford's loss,
He'll do well whatever and won't give a toss.
Richard is heading to Oxford to study PPE
Who's going to boss our general knowledge quiz team?
A long summer of cricket is what Morgs is eyeing from afar
As long as he can finish his Spanish grammar.
Jack P and his guitar helped us win House Singing.
We put on such a show the crowd's ears are still ringing.
In the sixth form we've seen Kristian set his sights high,
A summer of festivals is where he's got his eye.
Be it hockey, basketball or a bit of DT,
Wheeldon's got talent and a joie de vivre.
What will we do without Whitters around?
From 14Ds to 2nd XV he's made up some ground!
Your legendary tutors have been through the mill
Of hearing about girlfriends, deadlines, and UCAS they've had their fill,
But your attitude and approach to Abingdon life
Makes our job a pleasure and provides very little strife.
As we bid adieu to a bunch of stars,
Remember the Army Green, whether near or far.

and The HungertProject UK. Well done to all involved and to Mrs Wenham who joined them and organised the event.

From a whole House point of view there have been many highlights and when it came to inter-house competitions,

while there were individual and group successes, the most pleasing aspect was seeing boys being prepared to step outside their comfort zone to ensure events were covered. This team work and sense of unity has been a real highlight of the year. This takes us



to the high point of the House Singing Competition—this was to be our finest hour! A stirring rendition of Sara Bareilles' *Love Song* wowed the judge and audience in equal measure and the cup came home.

As the year drew to a close we had to say goodbye to Mr Barnes who moves to Crescent as the Assistant Housemaster – a position he richly deserves. We thank him for his massive contribution to the House over the last two years. We also had to bid farewell to Miss Yarrow who is changing careers and starting up a small business. Again in only two years she established herself as a superb tutor and we wish her all the very best for her new challenge.

To finish off, I would like to briefly summarise our House ethos, which is based on the idea of having a growth mindset, where people believe their basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work. In the Green Army we want students to develop a love of learning, try hard in adversity and develop academic resilience, which is invariably a prerequisite for real



achievement.

I would also like to thank the parent body who continue to support the House week in week out, turning up to events such as the candle lit carol service or the strawberries and cream social in the summer. It remains a

privilege to work closely with such a talented bunch of colleagues, hard working cohort of boys, and supportive group of parents. You can now follow us on Twitter—AbingdonGreenArmy@southwellsander.

Robin Southwell-Sander



The year started briskly and the third years seemed to settle in particularly quickly. This may have been helped by the Lower Sixth mentoring scheme that was introduced at the start of term. We also formed a House Council with a representative from each tutor group. The aim of the council is to put forward ideas to improve the House and suggest and organise things like tutor group trips. The first meeting saw each councillor bring song titles from the tutor groups for the group to decide which to sing at the House Singing Competition. *America* by Razorlight was chosen.

During the second half of the term lots of boys were busy as ever around school but also outside school: Alex McShane was competing at regional trampolining events and winning several in his age category, in November at the annual Oxfordshire Sports Awards James Fitzjohn was part of the cricket team that was awarded the Junior Sports Team of the Year, William Carter

Keall continued to play hockey at the top levels, going through the national age group trials again, and also playing for the Reading 1st team in the top division of the national league, and Michael Dewar played some games for the Wasps reserve team. For Michael this was the start of a season that would see him gain Scotland U18 representation against England first, and then other European sides. December also saw Matt Dawson come into school for a day with a selected group of up-and-coming rugby players to pass on his expertise. Louis Ashcroft was one of the lucky few selected for his efforts on the rugby pitches through the term.

At the end of the term we had the usual inter-house sports events. Our highest scoring event proved to be chess with Rafi'i Al-Akiti, Daniel Savage and Richard Oh winning the competition in a close final against Franklin's. Our sixth form couldn't always field full teams in all the events for one reason or

another but the boys who did turn out did exceptionally well. The swimmers, Murray Eccleston, James Law and Kester Webb, won most of their individual events but obviously three can't make a relay of 4 x 50m so we had to forego the points there. Absence and illness meant we were down to five players in the U18 rugby (Tom Wiblin, Freddie Pinkerton, Christian Spallini, Tom Dill-Russell, and Duncan Grant) but they played brilliantly and came second. With a few points from the U18 badminton (Matthew Young and Zachary Muncaster) and table-tennis (Louis Hampden, Charles Edwards and Nathan Allaby), the team secured an overall U18 win for Webb's.

Colours Ties awarded at end of term assembly showed the range of sports and activities that the boys participate in to a high level. George Jeffreys was awarded a tie for managing lighting and sound at school drama productions as part of the Tech Crew,



Rowing Camp to Temple-sur-Lot

year. Ivo has been the star of the team setting the individual quickest time for the year group each year.

The Easter holidays saw lots of the boys going on trips, one of which was the rowing camp to Temple-sur-Lot. We had nine boys on the camp with somebody in every boat there. They all trained really hard, the weather was perfect every day, and it was great to see them have a brilliant week.

Within a few weeks of Easter the fifth years were to go on study leave so this was the time for a house photo - the last photo to go up on the wall with the title Webb's House (I only realised afterwards that they look like a herd of animals in a pen!).

The Summer Term started, as always, with fourth year exams and following them, one year group after another went through the exam hall, until they finished with the A2 exams and it was nearly the end of the year. Mr James and I had more and more talks about boys in the House - he has lots of ideas and plans for the future and I'm sure he'll do a great job.

It just remains for me to say thank you to all the boys and parents from over the years of Webb's for their contributions to the House and for making it a pleasure to have been their housemaster.

Mike Webb

as was Mungo Graham for Duke of Edinburgh excursions, Archie Williams for continuing to give a lot of time to Community Service visiting local elderly people, and Alastair Smith, Freddie Pinkerton and Michael Dewar for their efforts on the rugby pitch.

In January and February it seemed like hard graft through the cold and darker days but lots of activities and sports were going on. Lots of boys in the House played football, and it seemed particularly popular with the fifth years with Joseph Law, Calum Egan and Ivo Brown in the Cs, Matthew Spira and Charlie Sheppard in the Bs and Joseph Delafield in the As. In golf Matthew Young played particularly well against Hampton School against players with very low handicaps. Some of the tutor groups used their time to discuss different topics in preparation for the Inter-House Debating Competition, and Mr Middleton's group also had a team-building challenge constructing paper-straw structures.

The debating competition saw the third years get off to a really good start progressing through to the final, where the verdict on points was a draw but the other House was chosen to have just the upper hand. Tom Mills, Louis Edward, Jacob Henney, Thomas Batchelor, Timmy McConnachie-Kaye, Charles Clarke and Howard Hawkes all contributed really well to the team at

stages through the rounds.

The General Knowledge Challenge also runs in the Lent Term and we had a strong contribution from many teams but the fifth years were really the team to watch - Charlie Lindsay, Archie Williams and George Jeffreys have been unbeaten since the third year and have the skills mastered down to a fine art. The fifth years also deserve a mention when it comes to the Road Relay at the end of term. The team of Ivo Brown, David Mackney, Joseph Law and Jack Lewis have teamed up each year and won their year group category each



Louis Ashcroft with Matt Dawson

Lower School



The year in Lower School began in truly inspirational fashion with the visit of Talan Skeels-Piggins who told the story of how he overcame a motorcycle accident in 2003 that left him paralysed from the chest down to compete in the Giant Slalom at the 2010 Winter Olympics, become European Champion in Alpine Skiing, and be the first paraplegic in the history of motor-racing to compete against able-bodied motor cycle racers. He certainly provided the boys with much to think about and gave the new first years useful advice on how they should approach the challenges that lay ahead as they started out on their secondary school careers.

It has been a year of considerable sporting success with notable victories against difficult opposition in all of the main team sports. The undoubted highlight was the amazing run by the U13 team in the Rosslyn Park National Schools Sevens tournament. Competing against over 120 teams from all over the country, they progressed all the way to the semi-finals – the best result

ever by an Abingdon team at any age level. Individual sporting performances of note included Alexander Pennington winning the U13 boys' category in the Oxfordshire County Cross Country Championships, closely followed by Freddie Cunningham in third place, Ethan Moody becoming national champion in the U15 5.8m class in windsurfing, and William Lebeau, Aaron Mara, and Theo Zamani gaining places in the U13 ISFA South Central Development Squad in football and competing at The Gothia World Youth Cup in Sweden in July.

Musically, it's been a busy year. The whole House came together for a confident performance of Riptide by Vance Joy in the House Singing Competition, led by conductor Theo Brown and accompanist James Magé with Fergal Marsh on drums. We took advantage of the change in rules that now allows some harmony to add in a descant that soared over the final chorus reaching the notes that other Houses just can't reach. The first

years were in fine voice again at the Christmas Concert when they sang *The Virgin Mary had a Baby Boy* and *Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree* in the stunning setting of the Sheldonian, while the Lower School Band played a medley of carols a few days later at our carol service. In the spring a trio of talented second years, Alexander Glover, Fergal Marsh and Cameron Yu, did extremely well to gain a place in the finals concert of the Pro Corda National Chamber Music Festival in Oxford. In the summer the Gala Concert was a superb showcase with many excellent solo and ensemble performances including a hypnotic improvised piece by the Drum Circle, a solo performance of *Hey Soul Sister* by Owen Ravden, who has been a leading light in the treble section of Chapel Choir all year, a bassoon duet featuring Alex Oldham and Dan Cooper, and an enthusiastic rendition of Walking on Sunshine by all the boys.

Drama and Art have also been enjoyed by a great number of boys this year. Mr Taylor's production of *A Midsummer*

Night's Dream... sort of played to appreciative audiences and, whilst remaining faithful to Shakespeare's original, contained just the right amount of risqué humour and over the top performances to be a classic Lower School performance. Mrs Tufnell meanwhile, having joined the Lower School tutor team at the start of the year, set about the task of brightening up the Houseroom with a series of art displays created by the boys in their lessons and at Art Club. A joint Art/Classics workshop saw the boys working in groups to produce their own life-size versions of the Olympian gods from cardboard, create theatrical masks to put on a performance of the Perseus myth, or convert Boarders' Hall in to a Greek temple depicting the myths of Heracles.

Inside the classroom the boys have made considerable progress with the first years being quick to adapt to the expectations of life at secondary school and the second years building on the firm foundations they had put down last year. Lower School is very much the time at Abingdon when the boys start "learning how to learn" in preparation for the academic demands of GCSEs and A levels and, if the comments that subjects teachers have made about this group of boys over the course of the last year are anything to go by, they are



looking well placed for great success in the future. Particular congratulations go to those second years who were awarded scholarships - Dermot Leggett, James Munday, Hayden Ramm, Toby Smallcombe (Academic), Charlie Atkinson, Hector Chambers, James Coombs (Sport), Fergal Marsh, Alex Glover (Music), Jake de Jongh (Music Exhibition) and Harry Baston-Hall and Tristan Tonks (Art/DT) – and to those awarded the academic prizes for topping their tutor groups in the summer exams – Dashiell Hathaway, Dermot Leggett, Daniel McNamara, Hayden

Ramm, Toby Smallcombe, and Max Williams.

The year ended with the Be the Best Celebration when we welcomed Talan back as our guest speaker. He proved that he had very much lived up to his promise to "be the best" by producing the trophy he was awarded when he became the motorcycling 600cc paralysed rider world champion in June. The following boys were then awarded special prizes: Liam Deegan, James Magé, Ethan Moody, Hayden Ramm and Alex Westlake (The Baker Award), James Magé (The Dillon Cup for Lower School Service), Daniel McNamara (The Broadbent Cup for Sporting Excellence) and Edward Jones (The Woodgett Cup).

As ever, my thanks go to the superb team of tutors who have contributed in so many ways to another very successful year in Lower School and, in particular, to Mrs Tufnell who, after too short a time with us, is leaving to teach down the road at Radley. We also say goodbye to the 58 second years as they move on to Middle School – they have been a remarkably cohesive and good natured group, always ready to take on new challenges, and are undoubtedly going to go on to great things as they continue on their Abingdon journeys.

Adam Jenkins



Inter-House Sport Results

	Michaelmas 2014	Lent 2015	Summer 2015
Athletics (3rd year)			Davies'
Athletics (4th year)			Franklin's
Athletics (L6th)			Davies'
Badminton	Crescent	School	
Basketball			Christodoulou's
Chess	Webb's		
Climbing		Webb's	
Cricket			Cotton's
Fencing		School	
Football		Cotton's	
Golf			Cotton's
Hockey		Webb's	
Pool		Franklin's	
Road Relay		Christodoulou's	
Rowing		School	School
Rugby 7s	Southwell-Sander's		
Shooting		Davies'	
Squash	Davies'	Davies'	Morgan's
Swimming	School		
Table Tennis	Franklin's	Cotton's	
Tennis			Crescent
Water Polo		School	
Overall U18			Davies'
Overall U16			Davies'
Overall U15			Cotton's

Lower School Inter-Tutor Group Competitions

	1st Year	2nd Year
Rugby	1M	2E
Lower School Challenge	1P	2H
Cross Country	1M	2W
Hockey	1M	2H
Road Relay	1P	2E
Public Speaking	1M	2W
Water Polo	1M	2P
Athletics	1M	2E
Reading	1P	2H
Cricket	1M	2W
Swimming	1M	2E
Tug of War	1M	N/A
Overall Winners	1M	2W

Staff Farewells

Laura López Camisón

Laura is a qualified teacher with some teaching experience. She started her career in Gamo Diana School in Madrid, where she taught early years students for five years. Wanting to improve her English, she applied for and was granted a scholarship to come to England. For two years, she worked as a Spanish Language Assistant at Walthamstow Hall, an independent girls' day school in Sevenoaks, Kent and then she joined us. We have been delighted with her contributions to the Spanish Department. Laura has proved to be a hard-working and extremely energetic teacher – no wonder she was highly recommended to us by the Spanish Embassy. She has enjoyed her year at Abingdon and although it is sad to say goodbye to her, we are really pleased that she is going to fulfill her dream of becoming a Spanish teacher in England, working at Little Heath School in Reading. We wish her all the best for the future.

Victoria Pradas

Marion Libert and Alix Weyd

Marion and Alix joined the Modern Languages Department as French assistants from the University of Reims where they had both just completed degrees in English. Although a bit reserved at first, they both proved to have bubbly personalities and their cheerful nature and good humour were much appreciated by boys and staff alike. Marion will be continuing her career in the teaching profession. She has returned to France to do a masters degree and hopes to come back to the UK to do a PGCE in the future. Alix has decided to use her language skills in the tourist industry and has returned to France to embark on a new training course. We wish them all the very best for the future.

Jane Mansfield



Wenyan Guo

Although Wenyan's home town is Henan Province in the north of China, she studied in Xiamen, a small but very beautiful city in the southeast of China. When Wenyan came to Abingdon as our Chinese Language Assistant, she had been studying Chinese for six years. As she likes travelling, her post at Abingdon allowed her to explore many different places in the UK. She really enjoyed this year working in the UK and with the students at Abingdon in particular.

Alexandra von Widdern

Andy Hall

A music graduate from Bristol University, from which he had also gained his masters degree in composition, Andy Hall first came to Abingdon for a one year position in 2008 as Music Assistant, a role which encompassed musical administration, some theory teaching and the running of our informal concerts. He was also able to use his skills as a trumpeter and composer to work with the boys in the areas of jazz and group improvisation.

When the part time post of Composer-in-Residence became vacant at the start of this academic year, Andy was contacted in deepest Colombia, where he was on holiday and—fortunately for us—was checking his emails. Andy had just finished a part-time Doctorate in Composition at Brunel University, whilst working as a freelance musician in London.

Andy was able to juggle his other commitments and make time for a temporary part time role this year. As expected, Andy threw himself into the role in a highly professional and successful way and was able to embrace the needs of our examination pupils at GCSE and A Level, as well as contributing in other activities, such as the Big Band and the Lower School Drum Circle. Andy has proved to be an outstanding teacher and colleague.

This has been an eventful, as well as a highly successful, year for Andy, which has seen his marriage to Helen (a London hospital doctor) and the award of his doctorate in composition. Andy's great ability as a composer and his natural gift as a teacher have made him hugely successful in his role at Abingdon and we are enormously grateful to him

for his work over the past year – and we wish him and Helen the very best for the future.

Michael Stinton

Matt Poynter

Matt joined us at the start of this year having successfully graduated as a chartered surveyor. With three brothers all being teachers, it was perhaps inevitable that the family profession would draw him in. Matt was exceptional as a role model for the boys, a true schoolmaster throwing himself into all aspects of school life, whether that be helping out on the rugby pitch, where he was known for his “clipboard and long coat” look as pioneered by Premier League football managers, or taking duty in the boarding house where he regaled boys with tales of cold weather surfing off the coast of Greenland.

Matt was known for his engaging and lively lessons and his deeply researched lessons were a stable favourite amongst the boys, opening them up to a wide variety of real case issues in geography from a pending ‘super-quake’ in Turkey to the Kakapo cannibals of the Amazon rainforest.

Matt will be sorely missed both in and outside the classroom, but we wish him all the best as he takes up his new post at Dulwich College as a fully qualified teacher of geography. He will also be

taking a rugby team before coaching his true love of rowing for the following two terms - all at Abingdon hope that his expertise will not give the competition too much of an advantage!

Raj Ghosh

Amber Waite

Amber joined the Chemistry Department at Abingdon in 2012 having previously taught in the USA and, more recently, Headington School. Before coming into teaching, Amber had worked in research as an oceanographer. Her stories of her exploits in this field, including deep sea dives in submarines called Alvin and Jason, are fascinating.

Amber used her experiences prior to teaching to give her classes real insight into applications of the chemistry that she was teaching them. Her excellent subject knowledge, coupled with a great sense of humour, made her a popular member of the science team.

Latterly, Amber moved into the boarding community, living in Glyndwr, and proved to be an valued tutor in Crescent House. It was obvious from early on in Amber’s Abingdon career that just teaching Chemistry would not be enough and she took on the role of American universities adviser, using her experience of studying in America to guide our sixth formers who were USA bound.

By far the most outstanding role that

Amber played at Abingdon was as Science Partnership Coordinator. Having worked in outreach at Kew Gardens, she was an ideal candidate to kick start our science outreach programme. In its first year, Amber established networks with a number of local primary and secondary schools as well as science learning partnerships and charities. She introduced the British Science Association’s Crest Star Award to eight local schools, delivering science activities to several hundred 5 and 6 year olds in the local community. Thanks to Amber, the Abingdon Science Partnership moves from strength to strength as a new chapter unfolds with the outreach laboratory opening in the Yang Science Centre. Amber leaves Abingdon to take up the role of Head of Chemistry at Ashford School in Kent.

Richard Fisher

Rob Colborn

Rob Colborn joined us as a fresh-faced graduate in 2012 direct from New College, Oxford where he had done his undergraduate degree and had been pursuing his doctoral research on the obscure Roman poet Manilius. He soon got stuck into every aspect of Abingdon life, whether in his classics teaching, tutoring, cross-country running or on trips. Indeed on a trip to Greece in his first half term with us, he proved his recent student status with his ability to demolish food at the hotel buffets.



In an aging Classics department, he proved our key link to the next generation not least with his compendious music knowledge: I will never forget the unsuspecting Middle School scholar who received an absolute grilling from Rob on his presentation on Dubstep!

More seriously, thanks to his tremendous knowledge of Classical literature he inspired his students with a great love and understanding of the Classics, persuasively extolling the importance of understanding the history of Classics as a subject as well as the virtues of Homer, his all-time favourite author. He was also an exceptionally caring tutor to whom his tutees could always turn for helpful and sympathetic advice. And he was always prepared to muck-in, even serving as a very successful football manager - a game with which he confessed to having only the most passing acquaintance.

We wish Rob every success as he moves on to his new post at Wellington College, now a fully qualified teacher but still with the completion of his tome on Manilius hanging over him. I am sure that he and his trousers will bring as bright a spark of colour to his new surroundings as they did here at Abingdon. We will certainly miss him, not least for his eternally good-natured and sunny disposition.

Chris Burnand

Ruth Tufnell

Ruth joined Abingdon in 2011 as a part time member of the Art Department. During her time here she guided boys through GCSE, taught many Lower and Middle School groups and ran a very popular and over subscribed Lower School Art Club. Ruth organised and led life-drawing sessions for the sixth form and was instrumental in organising our younger boys in producing work for Young Art Oxford.

For the last year Ruth has acted as a Lower School tutor, showing great dedication in helping the latest generation of first years get off to a good start at secondary school. She really helped the boys understand what was expected of them at their new



school, while never forgetting just how big a step they were taking. She also helped improve the look of the Lower School Houseroom by installing several colourful and creative art displays.

Ruth's positivity and cheerfulness will be missed and I know that her tutor group were especially sad to see her go. Ruth left to take up a full time teaching post at Radley College and we wish her the very best.

Emily O'Doherty

Jan Wiejak

Jan joined Abingdon to teach Mathematics in September 2008. He came from a very different life working in the business world but decided teaching would offer him the new experience he was looking for and a contrasting style of life.

Jan's time at Abingdon has been marked by two very strong characteristics. His completely professional approach to all aspects of the role of the teacher: his standards are high and he meets them consistently. But similarly strong has been his willingness to get totally involved in the wider life of the school. He has been a fixture on the Duke of Edinburgh expedition team throughout his time at Abingdon, accompanying many of the gold expeditions across the country. He has also been heavily involved in the Tennis Club.

Perhaps the activity that best shows Jan's true character and commitment was the organisation and completion of the 63 mile walk; a re-creation of an original walk undertaken by Abingdonians 50 years earlier. Jan's desire to commemorate the walk illustrates many aspects of his personality; he is motivated by physical and mental challenge, he has great respect for the history and tradition of the School, and its place in the community. The walk was gruelling, but all those involved were left with some unique memories.

In the Maths Department we have valued Jan for his supreme organisation—if you want exam papers written, set lists organised, or papers marked, with no fuss or bother and a week ahead of schedule, then always ask Jan. We will miss the power of his look of withering pity for those more challenged by organisation or punctuality and his clear and no nonsense approach to departmental debate - we always knew just where he stood.

Jan and his wife Jill are planning to leave Abingdon and move to the beauty of the northern hills, where Jan can indulge his love of the outdoors to the full.

Vanessa Penrose

Edward Davies

Edward Davies joined the History



Department fresh out of his PGCE year in 2007 and quickly established



himself as a conscientious and inspirational teacher. Dr May mentored him through his first year and, once he had been trained up to a high level, I then took over the department and enjoyed reaping the benefits of his high performance teaching without having had to do the hard work necessary to get him there!

Ed and I were also both tutors in Phelps' House where, within a year of joining the school, Ed had managed to inveigle his way into the luxury accommodation on the top floor of Waste Court. His future wife and he particularly enjoyed having their very own wasp nest in their sitting room for the entire first year of their residency! Even more coincidentally we were both sixth form tutors and, having witnessed his tutoring on more than one occasion, I was forced to admit that his tutor periods might have been more thought through than my own.

When Will Phelps announced his departure, Ed quickly stepped up and became the new Housemaster at Waste Court. We were now in the strange position of being each other's bosses. Whilst I could boss him about in the History Department and stitch him up with a particularly challenging class, he could transfer the more eccentric members of the boarding community into my tutor group. It is testament to his essential professionalism that he did not yield to temptation and instead

managed the house as he did all things - by combining charm and humour with a high level of organisation.

Ed is one of those rare individuals who genuinely do not like to blow their own trumpet. He is always modest about his achievements and does not like to be the centre of attention. This is a very attractive quality but one which should not disguise his real talent for teaching in the widest sense of the word. He will always be a great classroom teacher but the fact he is also able to coach rugby to a high level, lead a large day and boarding house with all its attendant pressures, and remain a good humoured guy is remarkable. He will go far and it is more than appropriate that he has left Abingdon to take up an SMT role at Rugby.

We will miss Ed and hope that his wife Natasha and children Tom and Matilda will also be happy in their new lives. Priority 6 (Abingdon's leading CrossFit gym) will also mourn his passing just as he was perfecting his handstand press-ups!

David McGill

Vanessa Penrose

Vanessa first joined Abingdon as a part-time Maths teacher but it wasn't long before she stepped up into the newly



created Second in Maths Department role and then, very shortly afterwards, into the Head of Maths position itself. What marked her out from the beginning

was her genuine and highly thoughtful consideration of how the practice of teaching is something that all teachers need to keep developing, however long they've been in the job. She was one of the first department heads to embrace the push on Assessment for Learning when Abingdon began that initiative in 2008 and she was solidly behind the move to the longer lesson model. It was always the case that, if Vanessa voiced her support for a whole school strategy then you knew that there was a much greater chance of carrying it through. Equally, when she voiced concerns it usually meant that some further thinking was indeed warranted.

She ran the largest department in the school with great skill and sensitivity, inspiring a fierce loyalty in her staff, particularly those new or relatively new to the profession, whom she nurtured and supported throughout their first tentative steps. Her standards were high and staff were expected to step up to them, but she went about achieving this in a tactful and diplomatic way. When things weren't up to scratch, though, she had no problems calling attention to it and addressing what needed to be done. Under her guidance, mathematics has thrived at Abingdon and innovations such as the move to Additional Maths at GCSE has led to more boys being stretched and challenged whilst those struggling somewhat have also always been able to find extra help and direction along the way. She leaves a department in fine fettle.

Vanessa leaves us to take up a whole school Teaching and Learning post at Cokethorpe, which is exactly the right move for her. She has long had an interest in senior leadership and in contributing to whole school improvements in teaching and learning. I know that Cokethorpe will provide fertile ground for her to continue to provoke, gently, and to support, strongly, the colleagues she finds there.

Graeme May

Chris Cross

Chris Cross retired from Abingdon in July 2015, after eleven years of dedicated work in the Learning Support Department. Chris worked for the

first eight years as Head of Learning Support, then beyond retirement for three further years, teaching on a part-time basis within the department.

Chris brought to the department more than twenty years of experience as a SENCO in the maintained sector – in itself a singular achievement. Under Chris's leadership, Learning Support at Abingdon ran seamlessly, with flawless systems and procedures. Indeed, as her successor, I count myself extremely fortunate to have inherited a department in such good order.

As a teacher, Chris was unfailingly conscientious and scrupulous, utterly dedicated to the boys and committed to providing the best possible outcomes for them. She was very much the advocate for every boy she taught. The letters of thanks sent by parents and boys alike are testament to the excellent support Chris provided, and the boys' results, often exceeding all expectations, speak volumes.

Quiet and modest by nature, Chris will be very much missed by boys, parents and colleagues alike, and above all by us in the Learning Support Department. We all wish her a very happy and fulfilling retirement, with her husband, Graham, her two daughters, her granddaughter Eleanor and grandson Henry.

Celia Collins

Estelle Slatford

Estelle first came to Abingdon in 1996. At the time she was Estelle Duchesne, the first in a long line of students from Caen in Normandy coming to be a French Assistant for a year in a British school. Little did she know that it was a move that really would change her whole life both professionally and personally, as it is at Abingdon that she met her future husband Russell Slatford who was at the time a geography teacher here. Happily, Estelle married Russell in 2003 and they had two children, Abbie and Tom.

Having completed her year as a French assistant Estelle went on to do a PGCE in languages and then taught for three



years at Matthew Arnold School in Oxford before heading off to Australia for a year with Russell. It is while in Australia that Douglas Aitken, Head of Modern Languages at Abingdon at the time, told Estelle of a language-teaching job that had become available in the department. Unable to get a flight back to the UK, and before the days of Skype and Facetime, Estelle was offered the job of Teacher of French and German after a telephone interview with the then Head, Michael St John Parker. She began the second chapter in her Abingdon teaching career in September 2002.

Estelle quickly proved to be a valuable member of the department. She became Head of French and served for one year as acting Head of Modern Languages when our dear colleague Veronica Walker became ill. This was a sad time for the department and Estelle manned the fort admirably.

Throughout her time at Abingdon, Estelle has been an extremely supportive colleague and a true friend to many of us in the department. She has led many successful trips including the French exchange, sixth form trips to Paris and Lower School trips to Normandy and the Rhineland. Estelle has also contributed to school life by being a Lower and Middle School tutor and cross-country runner. Her no-nonsense, unfussy approach, warm sense of humour, and infectious laugh have been appreciated by all and will be missed.

Estelle leaves Abingdon to devote time to her family as they settle into their new life on the south coast.

Jane Mansfield

Nick Pritchard

In 1969 Nick was one of the last appointments of Headmaster Sir James Cobban (1947 to 1970). Forty-six years later Nick has retired from the Mathematics Department. Educated at the Dragon, a Scholar at Winchester College and then a Scholar of Balliol College Oxford, Nick did his teacher training at Oxford University, with teaching practice at St Edward's. A planned-for, and then aborted, teacher exchange with Repton School has been the nearest Nick has come to leaving Abingdon School.

When asked about his teaching style Nick described not sticking to the textbook, using anecdote and humour, with many sports references in a bid to capture pupils' attention, and sneaking in some mathematics while the pupils were not looking. He has always been committed to making sure that material is fully-comprehended, so much so that his one-time Head of Department, now Second Master, used often to ask him to speed up - Nick has commented that this is still an issue with an overfull further mathematics syllabus, deliberately planned to be taught at speed.

Highlights from Nick's career include appearing as the dragon in Spencer's House panto; coaching football for nearly twenty years – variously called recreational sport and non-team games; running a very successful cross-country club for a decade; organising a festival of 70 teams running up Boars Hill; and Nick himself completing the Road Relay in 7 minutes 47 seconds, still only beaten by two people to date.

Having travelled with Nick to Cox's Field for the last fifteen years, often twice a week, I have always found that he could be relied upon for an interesting angle on the latest planned changes or mishaps in School, often ending, when quizzed about his own opinion, with the phrase "well, I couldn't possibly comment", which often said it all. The most



The Masters' Common Room of 1970 – Nick Pritchard: back row, fourth from left

extraordinary incident we both could recall at Cox's Field was discovering a woman peering out of the roof hatch into the corridor of the pavilion one games day. Given child safeguarding requirements we were somewhat aghast. No-one believed her and her colleague's story that they were police officers, but it turned out to be so. It transpired they were on a stake-out watching an illegal operation. Unexpected events do happen in rural Oxfordshire!

Nick has many hidden talents, not least as a bridge player, but the oft-repeated assertion that he was once a pop-music impresario is still met with the standard "no comment". As well as solving cross-words – and his advice to Dr Burnand will be much missed – Nick also creates them and it is very appropriate that an Abingdon-themed crossword that he has composed features in this edition of *The Abingdonian*.

Nick ended his leaving speech to the Common Room, after forty six years, with a new problem to solve, called "Pritchard's Conjecture" which is explained below.

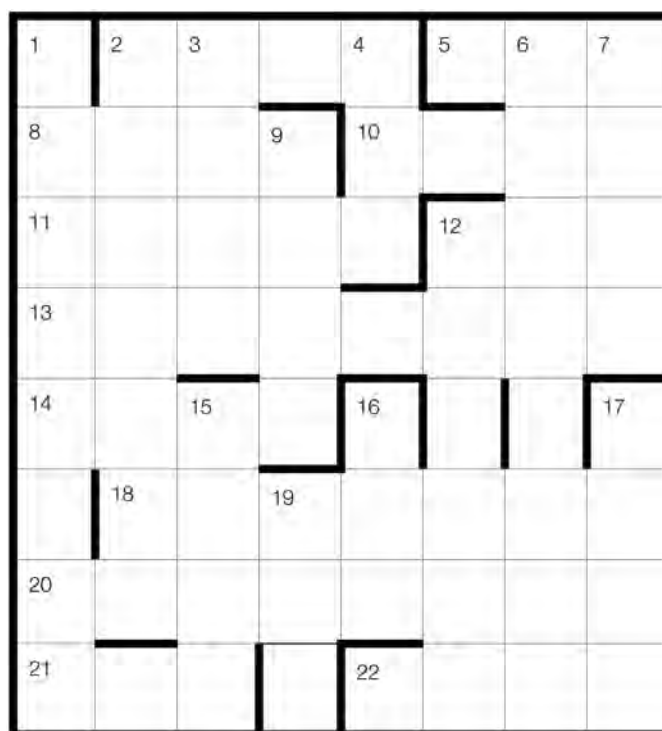
David Dawswell



Pritchard's Conjecture

"The theorem of Pythagoras has been around for two and a half millennia, so it is unlikely that anything new can be found, but recently Mr Pritchard spotted something curious that he had never seen before. It seems that every Pythagorean triple includes a multiple of 3, a multiple of 4 and a multiple of 5. Thus for 8, 15 and 17, the 8 is the multiple of 4, and the 15 does double duty as the multiple of 3 and of 5. He could not find a counterexample, so his conjecture is whether this is true and, if so, whether it can be proved."

Abingdon Crossword



Mr Pritchard has many memories of Abingdon School, which he would like to share with you in a crossword. Some clues have a 'cryptic' element, and some answers involve abbreviations or more than one word (as indicated).

Across

- 2 Pre-2009 parent association, wholly (or partly!) (1,1,1,1)
- 5 You can see its branch in Stert Street (just scan these letters) (1,1,1)
- 8 Olympian featured in the Abingdon Herald
- 10 Tricky end to examination, for entrance (this) Abingdon
- 11 Where the old gym was (surprisingly) in the Sixties (2,1,1,1)
- 12 'Legend' following Mr Drummond
- 13 Which school has (briefly) the contact for pupil ? (2,6)
- 14 This boy, after his departure, developed into OA actor Jones
- 18 Like a bell ending a lesson, as a rule
- 20 They try really hard, those contributing in English lessons?
- 21 Prep is usually this, whichever one a student is in
- 22 Park to keep out of sight, we hear, not Albert

Down

- 1 A game supported by the French, they may be heard on Waste Court Field
- 2 Dartmoor event, attended by Abingdonians, otherwise in temporary accommodation (3,4)
- 3 Abingdon runners can have primarily support for their feet
- 4 Address for most teachers at Abingdon
- 6 It is high at Abingdon, spectator accommodation above a short road
- 7 Many locals refer to us as Abingdon (this) School
- 9 Benefactor of Theatre (previously Hall)
- 12 Scene of Abingdon triumphs in 2011, 2012 and 2013
- 15,16 Objective for people purchasing, for instance, a top-class education for their sons (4,3)
- 17 Teachers enjoy using this language, though not taught at Abingdon
- 19 Year between school and university

(Solutions on next page)

Solution:

W	T	A	S	S	T	S	B
H	E	R	A	I	N	T	O
I	N	C	M	R	H	A	Y
S	T	H	E	L	E	N	S
T	O	B	Y	B	C	D	E
L	R	E	G	U	L	A	R
E	S	S	A	Y	E	R	S
S	E	T	P	H	Y	D	E





ABINGDON