



The Abingdonian 2016





The Abingdonian

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Editorial



At the time of year when *The Abingdonian* is published, the majority of us will already be looking to the year ahead and what it promises. With all our new hopes and resolutions, it is easy to let the memories of the past academic year slowly slip away.

Thus, it is hoped that this issue of *The Abingdonian* celebrates the various accomplishments of Abingdon boys as well as capturing a journey you will be glad to revisit over the years to come. From the hugely successful Abingdon Science Partnership in the local community to the terrific production of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* in February, such achievements truly reflect the boys and the staff's dedication to pursuits beyond the classroom.

The opening of the brand new Yang Science Centre and the renovation of Greening Court perfectly reflect Abingdon's adoption of a modern outlook on education, which harmoniously blends with our strong sense of history and tradition as seen in the Chapel corridor. To showcase Abingdon's progression throughout the years, we decided to highlight both these ideas in the inside covers.

With such a story, I encourage you to reflect on fond memories from 2016 from time to time, to remind yourselves of how far you have come, how much you have changed during your empowering years at Abingdon, and how many people you met whose company you enjoyed along the way

Finally, many thanks go to the lead editor, Mr Jenkins, and the entire editorial team, Andreas Lo, Howard Hawkes, Jate Jaturanpinyo, Matthew Viner, Oliver Bishop, Samuel Penrose, as well as all the contributing staff and students who have brought this publication to you.

Felipe Jin Li, 5REH

Head's Foreword



I am delighted to write this introduction to *The Abingdonian*. Although I was not in post when the many events and activities that are described in these pages took place, my own experience to date has shown me what an exciting and fulfilling place Abingdon is to study and work in.

Our lives at school are very busy and each year can seem to flash by before our eyes. It is really important, therefore, to take the time to reflect on our past experiences, to celebrate our successes and perhaps also to think about what we might do even better next time.

These pages certainly capture an action-packed and significant year in the history of the School. The Yang Science Centre, opened in November 2015, has given us facilities for the study of science which are probably unparalleled in UK schools. These include the larger outreach laboratory which has made possible the superb work of the Abingdon Science Partnership, and I am delighted that not only Abingdon pupils but many other young people are able to develop their love of science in our new facilities. The completion of the Science Centre has also made possible the conversion of Greening Court to offer a wonderful environment for the teaching of classics, history and geography, and it is exciting to see Abingdon championing innovation in the classroom in the form of the suite for geographical information systems (GIS); without doubt, the shape of things to come.

Although buildings are important, schools are essentially about the people who study and work in them, and *The Abingdonian* gives us an opportunity to celebrate the many achievements of the entire school community. I am grateful in particular to have this opportunity to express my thanks to Miss Lusk for her tremendous contribution to the School, which is celebrated in these pages. She has left a hugely strong legacy upon which to build and I know we all wish her well for the future.

I am very grateful to Mr Jenkins and his editorial team for all the work that they have put in to produce such an attractive and entertaining publication. I hope that you enjoy reading it.

Michael Windsor

Michaelmas 2015



Science Centre Opening Speech

Good afternoon Ladies, Gentlemen, Governors and Guests.

It is remarkable that just over a year ago many of us were breaking the ground just over there. I have been asked to speak about what the Yang Science Centre means for me, as a pupil; I know I shan't quite be able to convey to you the excitement which greeted me when I first went inside it, but I shall try my best.

I had the privilege of being shown around the Science Centre a few weeks ago, and although the stairs were still in bubble-wrap, and many of the doors were missing, the feel of the place was already there. The pristine, purpose-built laboratories behind me mean that Abingdon students have a more realistic idea than ever before of what it means to be a scientist. Not just a student of science, but a scientist. Stepping inside

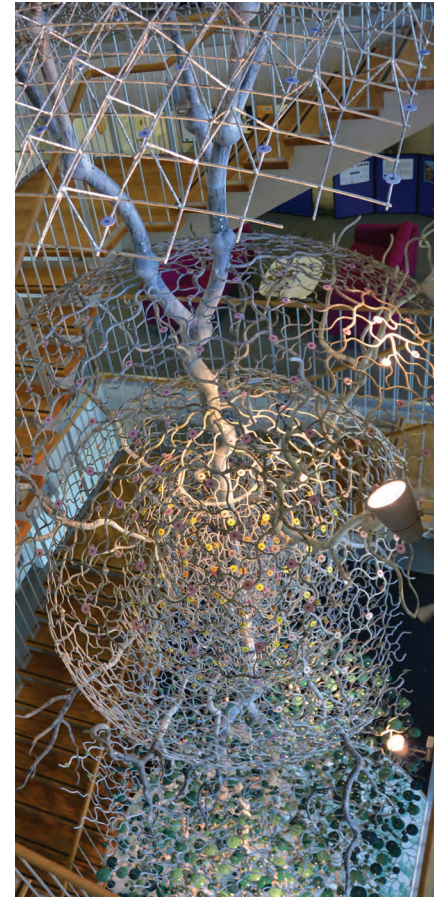
this building for me feels akin to walking into a university research facility, from the spacious labs to the packed prep rooms, and from the grand architecture to the invaluable open-plan learning spaces. And how better to encourage boys to pursue the sciences beyond school, than to give them an unrivalled taster of what it is truly like? Put simply, this building bridges the daunting gap between school and university perfectly. I actually spent two weeks working at a government science facility over the summer, and this feels comparatively space-age compared to that place. I can't tell you where for national security purposes, but for the sake of argument let's call it Harwell.

Form and function go hand in hand. Given the teacher's input, the new labs are profoundly improved from their somewhat - ancient counterparts; so ancient my father was taught there. I for one am sincerely looking forward to the days when I no longer have to play 'chemical jenga' - a term coined by a teacher of mine to describe us all edging gingerly between the cramped rows, terrified of knocking down a row

of elaborate experiments. And gone are the days of craning awkwardly to see the whiteboard, or spending what felt like hours searching through the Greening Wing maze for the mysterious, uncharted S17 lab, which most of us are by now convinced doesn't actually exist.

Instead, this centre is a new chapter in learning for us pupils. Whether it's because of the small changes - such as the virtual corridors which allow equipment to be shuttled without hassle or interruption from lab to lab - or the larger innovations - such as the colossal and staggeringly bright study areas - teaching will be easier, more engaging and more effective, so it is of incalculable value to us. And amalgamating the three science departments in one building will facilitate cross-subject collaboration more easily than before - just as long as the biologists talk slowly to the physicists, that is. Every detail of the building contributes to a more fascinating time for us.

Fascinating - that word alludes, really,



to the best bit. Richard Feynman, one of the pre-eminent sources of scientific inspiration that I think we can draw upon from history, never gave up an opportunity to remind his students and colleagues of the importance of enjoying what they did. "The joy of finding things out," he so perfectly and succinctly put it. Yes, undeniably society needs more scientists and I don't doubt that this facility will inspire many in the years to come, but sometimes we can do things simply for the sake of joy, for the sake of enjoyment. Too often that is forgotten in science. I'm sure that all of us here can agree that better teaching is inexorably connected to enjoying something more, and becoming more passionate about it in turn. Without a shadow of doubt, this place will impassion a generation of students.

Back in the third year I joined one of the many science activity clubs on offer, for instance, but we often found ourselves limited by our surroundings. Now, with the specially-designed project rooms so much more will be possible for students, and they will be able to enjoy the learning experience so much more

easily. And that's just one example. Now, as a member of the Lower Sixth, I have the prospect of two years in here, and there is an unmistakable buzz of excitement in my year in anticipation of the centre's opening. If anything, we sixth formers really envy the lower years, some of whom have a whole seven years of this ahead. As students we simply cannot wait to get in there.

When I took my first tour of the centre, and I saw the stunning and beautiful design first-hand, I was told that I was walking around with a boyish sense of wonder etched across my face, and I strongly suspect I'm not the only one who will be doing that in the coming months. On behalf of all the students here, I would like to thank everybody who contributed in any way towards making this building stand here today - it is a testament to all the hard work, it will transform the life of this school, and we cannot thank you enough.

Thank you.

Jonah Walker, 6DRM





House Singing Competition

This year, School House decided to start the inter-house competition off by taking a risk. At the end of the previous school year, Mr Swanwick and I had a conversation about the House Singing competition. We felt that there was no better opportunity to unite the house and instil a real sense of house pride into the current School House cohort. It was time to awake the sleeping giant.

School House had not tasted victory in the House Singing for over 15 years. Every year, we went through the same

routine: choosing a pop song, going through rehearsals in a borderline-apathetic way and eventually convincing ourselves that we did in fact gain the unannounced fourth place – a claim that all of the other unsuccessful houses are happy to make. If anything was going to change, it would need to start with our strategy.

This led to the first risk: doing a song in a different language. Not simply something in French or German that everyone in the house vaguely knows how to pronounce, but in a mixture of Zulu and Ndebele.

Between Mr Swanwick, myself and a few other boys in the house, a list of three traditional African songs were put forward and we eventually chose

Shosholoza - a popular song originating from Zimbabwe and adapted by Zulu speakers in South Africa as a song of encouragement whilst working in the mines. The song combines both Zulu and Ndebele in a call and response structure in which the miners would sing about the trains that would take them away from the mines that they worked in.

With no one in the house speaking a word of Zulu or Ndebele, our first few sessions involved the house splitting into groups and learning how to pronounce the lyrics. From this arose the next two risks, as we were not only singing a song in an unknown language, but in four part harmony and a capella. The rehearsals were very well managed by the teachers helping out, and thanks to a simple but unequalled arrangement of the parts by Mr Ponniah, after just one week of rehearsing, School House had been identified as the dark horse in the rapidly approaching competition.

With a couple of days to go before the event and with the main body of the piece now running smoothly, we decided to add some finishing touches to the piece to take it from a potentially competition-winning performance to a performance that would do more than that; we wanted to leave the school community talking about School House for weeks to come, to let them know that ours was a house capable of the most





impressive of feats when we united as one.

Incorporating train noises, celebratory screams (an African speciality) and a speech in Ndebele - complete with clicks - all on the day before the performance was yet one more risk. However, with the whole house now knowing that School House was ready to throw off the shackles of "fourth place" and do something truly memorable, every last boy was determined to make these late changes work. The focus and enthusiasm in rehearsals was unprecedented in recent School House history.

Then to the performance. A tense atmosphere was evident in the School House ranks as the competition got underway, but an overriding confidence

kept the nerves under control. Following strong competition from the likes of Southwell-Sander's and Cotton's, School House took the stage as the penultimate performers. As a final boost for the House's confidence, I donned Mr Swanwick's most recent purchase, a cerise tribal shirt made of Dashiki cloth. So, to the infamous chants from the house members, we took to the stage and wowed both crowd and judge with a performance no one had seen the like of before.

The adjudicator commented that it was "amazing to bring a whole house together in this way", that the performance was "very enterprising and amazingly effective" and made special note of the "real sense of involvement and enjoyment" that every member of School House displayed.

Needless to say, the boys of School House, whilst still recovering from the celebrations, are immensely proud, not just of our performance, but of the way in which we all came together to work towards a common goal.

Obviously, there are now big shoes to fill next year. However, as the musical talents of the current Lower Sixth are impressive to say the least, I am confident they will do us proud again in 2016.

A huge well done to School House for their performance, their tenacity and their spirit. Collectively we produced a game-changer that is sure to spice things up in the Abingdon School House Singing Competitions to come.

Solomon English, VIJMD

Classics Trip to Croatia

The latter week of the October half-term break saw the annual Classics Trip, traditionally one of the best trips Abingdon offers - and the 2015 trip to Croatia was certainly no exception. After the typically early start from the coach park, we set off for a flight to the Croatian capital of Zagreb. A general sense of anxiety accompanied the initial journey, either to do with the fact that this was the first time we were going to Croatia, or the fact that the previous year we were delayed by bags going missing and the year before by a volcano, but fortunately neither tectonic shifts nor baggage handling stood in the way of our journey and we arrived in Zagreb without any hitches. We then had a tour of the city which boasted two magnificent churches in what used to be the two separate cities - one magnificent due to its scale, the other due to some questionable roof tiling - the original gate to the old city and a large market. Following this we saw the Zagreb Archaeological Museum which served as a good way to remind us we were on a classics trip!

On the morning of the second day we departed the capital for the smaller city of Pula, in which the Roman influence was very clearly visible as we passed a remarkably intact amphitheatre on our entry, to which we returned shortly. I would say Pula was my favourite place we visited in Croatia, in no small part thanks to our gloriously eccentric guide who insisted on giving us Roman names and summed up the entirety of Croatian history in the sentence: 'My grandfather was Austro-Hungarian, my father was Italian, I am Yugoslavian, my son is Croatian and we have all lived in Pula.' She then proceeded to point out how each house on the street we were on had been built under a different imperial power. Having heard (briefly) about the history of Pula in the twentieth century, we moved into the brilliantly preserved Roman forum in which stood a complete temple to Augustus. As mentioned, we also visited the amphitheatre, which had been remarkably well preserved where



we had another amusing talk from our guide in which she was very determined that she knew the exact reason for the height of the steps. From here we visited the Roman excavations on the peninsula of Medulin before retiring to the hotel at Pula.

On the third day, with place names getting increasingly difficult to pronounce, we visited the ruins of Nezakcij (or Nesactium but that is less fun to type) and there heard an extract of Livy telling of its siege and eventual capture by the rerouting of a river, which, as we were sitting at the top of a hill, some of us struggled to believe. From here we went to the picturesque little town of Nezana from whence we got a boat to the Brijuni islands, a Croatian national park which boasts the brilliant bronze age ruins of a hill fort and a large Roman villa from the first century AD. As I was listening to music on the train

around the island I remember being amused by the Jurassic Park theme, which felt strangely appropriate. The island was genuinely beautiful and the ruins were excellent. After a not-inconsiderable wait for the ferry we returned to Pula.

We arrived in Zadar on the Tuesday where possibly the grumpiest guide we had the entire trip showed us how the city centre had been built on the site of the old Roman forum with spolia forming the foundations of the church of St. Doughnut (sorry, Donat), a large cylindrical church which had incredible acoustics and had been used - we were informed - for everything from chamber music to a rock concert, the latter being frowned upon for perhaps obvious reasons. We also saw the Zadar Archaeological Museum which was interesting and included three large statues of emperors and the rather

more bizarre Zadar Glass museum, which I confess I was sceptical of but was surprisingly interesting despite my reservations. In the evening we went back into Zadar, which is brilliant at night with light displays and a sea-organ (I had no idea either!).

The following day began with a visit to a wonderful little town called Nin from which several of the artefacts in the Zadar museum were taken, but not enough that its own archeological museum didn't have plenty to show. Other than its museum and beauty, I will remember Nin for some of the notable souvenirs some members of our group procured. We went from Nin to a brief break in Benkovac before heading to the ancient site of Asseria, a large ancient city in which little is left but its wall and view - enough to see the colossal size of the city and its strategic potential, being atop a cliff with views for miles around the surrounding country. The final but by no means least thing we saw on this day were the ruins of the ancient city of Salona, the capital of the Roman province of Dalmatia. These ruins were possibly the most extensive we saw on the trip, featuring a large arena, theatre and a great deal more.

On the final day of the tour we visited the city of Split, the second largest in Croatia. In Split we saw the palace of Diocletian, including a statue with a thoroughly polished toe and the basement in which they filmed some of the scenes for Game of Thrones. We also visited the Split Archaeological Museum, potentially my favourite of the museums we visited on the trip due to the brilliant collection of Roman sarcophagi. Following Split we spent some time in the town of Trogir that we were staying in, seeing the Greek sculptures housed in the nunnery and a fabulous church which blended several examples of gothic and renaissance architecture, before returning to our hotel.

After another early start to bookend the trip, we arrived safely back in England. I would like to thank all the teachers who accompanied us on the trip, which was brilliant - I am now very much looking forward to visiting Greece this October.

Patrick Cole, 6CJM





Calamities

The idea behind *Calamities* was to compile a group of sketches - most of them written by Radio 4 award-winning writer and Old Abingdonian Ed Rowett - which involved two or three people. We worked on the project from the beginning of the Michaelmas Term and we performed for two nights in December. From the very first rehearsal, the first and second year members of the cast were working hard with lines, acting and costumes, but quickly found dealing with comedy great fun and the different sketches enjoyable to learn. Mr Phillips was the 'supervisor' over the sketches and made sure he incorporated games into the drama that made it more enjoyable for us to do. To decide who was who, we found a pair (or a group of three) and worked with several different scripts before choosing the one that suited us best.

I was working with Archie Baker on my project and our sketch was about two New York gang members with silly old-fashioned names. The names mentioned were like old gangster names from books and films. Our piece revolved around mixing people up with other names, for example, there was a brilliantly written scene where a

character called "Tony Tie" was being referred to. Archie was trying to figure out if he knew "Tony Tie" and amusingly we got mixed up with other Tonys we knew.

It was a challenging performance mentally and for our mouths as there were a lot of words to learn including lots of tongue twisters! We were very fortunate to have the opportunity to work with the writer, Ed Rowett. This was really useful because Ed told us first hand all the little moments and laughs that he wanted to put across to people when he wrote the sketch. He talked about taking time to pause and wait for laughs, and really helped us with our New York accents and our diction.

Archie and I found it hard at first to nail the voices but we gradually began to get there.

Other groups' sketches included an interview with the creator of *Where's Wally?*, a bellows-mending shop opening, an uncomfortable plane journey and a barbaric salesman. The performance of all the sketches was very good and was really enjoyed by the audience. Overall, it was an extremely good experience and great fun. I am looking forward to working with Ed again this year in the third year play on another play he has written specifically for the school.

Charlie Masters, 2SCVM





Brainstorm

When I first learnt about the Mr Taylor's proposed Third Year production of *Brainstorm* I was a bit confused about the play's subject matter and wondered how the whole production would pan out - a play about the adolescent brain written by teenagers for teenagers - really? It was a contemporary piece, set in a teenager's bedroom, mixing the science of what goes on in the brain with some of the comic aspects of teenage life. Strange!

The rehearsal process was also very unusual as we began without a script. Instead, we had to share our own experiences and use them to create the text. Islington Community Theatre's original production of the play was first performed at the National Theatre only a few months before. It featured a teenage cast whose experiences had formed the core of their script, so we only had a template to work with. At first sharing experiences felt quite awkward, but eventually it became enjoyable and contributed to building a trusting atmosphere within the cast. Of course it is hard to learn lines you don't actually have, but fortunately we all managed to create and then master the material in time for the performances.

I learned a lot from taking part and feel it helped to develop my acting skills.



I'm sure other members of the cast will agree that Kate Shlugman, one of Abingdon's professional actors-in-residence, was extremely helpful in our rehearsals when she gave us tips on how to add depth and detail to our delivery of lines and keep the audience engaged during long monologues.

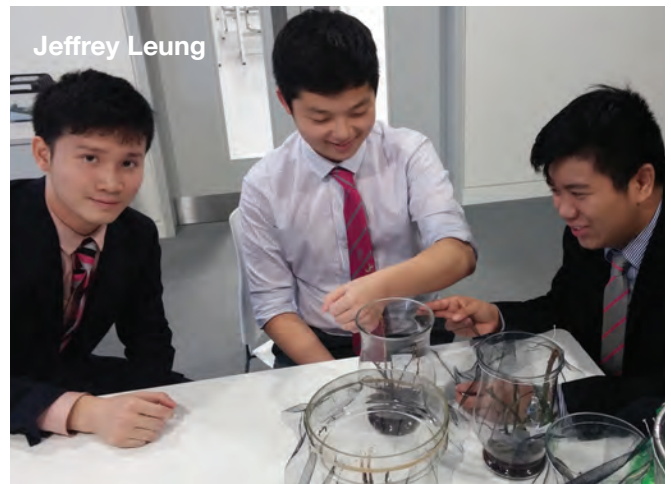
We began working in the drama studio, but eventually moved to the Amey Theatre where the technical elements were added. This created a whole new set of challenges due to the large amount of lighting and sound effects demanded by the production. Although these took a long time to coordinate, their overall effect on the production was unbelievable as they added tremendous energy and pace. We were indebted to

Mr Lloyd, Mr Killick and Ms Bond for the terrific set, costumes, props and technical elements.

One of the most entertaining and popular scenes of the play was the one in which we all took on the role of our parents. Creating the lines for this scene was hilarious and afforded us the opportunity of making fun of parental behaviour. Judging by the laughter from the audience throughout this scene, I am sure our parents enjoyed watching *Brainstorm*, even if it was a little bit close to home at times.

I am very honoured to have been a part of *Brainstorm*. It was a fantastic production and a great experience.

James Tuffill, 3HJW



Entomology

This is a tale of love and friendship. I will never forget my experience in the Entomology Society. Sam and I were both new to the society, and so we quickly became good friends. I thought we were going to be friends forever even after I left for university. We cared for one another, fought like siblings too, with each other and for each other. I loved Sam only in a symbiotic kind of way, mind you. I never thought I would have lost Sam so early – our relationship took a quick turn when, suddenly, Sam stopped eating food and soon after, Sam refused to eat altogether. I was distressed, wondering whether Sam was a vegetarian or not, trying to find a cure for her, but it was too late. It was Mr Dempsey that gave me the sad news that Sam had gone forever.

The following months were full of mourning and grief. I remembered it



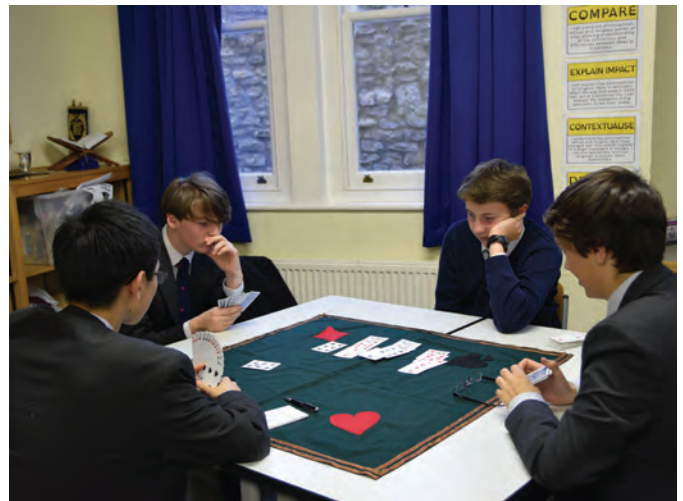
very well, whenever I saw others like her I immediately thought of her. I went through sleepless nights and it was a hard time.

As time goes on, life moves forward. You will never forget and you will never be the same. How could you be? Having lived such a sheltered life, I had only seen death in TV dramas and movies. It's true that, after losing Sam,

I acknowledge that life is precious, and that we should respect and accept the harsh truths of nature, be that the life of fellow humans or the insects that we take care of in Entomology Society.

If you want to look after a praying mantis like Sam, we meet on Thursdays 1:55pm.

Jeffrey Leung, VIBW



Bridge Club

The Bridge Club is booming and we have regularly had seven 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 fourth years mastering the game. It is one of the few sports where people of all ages can compete against each other.

Each term, one room is set aside for players who are completely new to the game. Over six weeks, they usually pick up all the rudimentary rules. We are very fortunate to have Ethan Lo as our teacher. He is extremely patient and measured in his teaching. Younger boys have particularly enjoyed his calm approach. Conor Chippendale has also done some teaching this year, and managed to keep a lively table on track.

Mrs Coull has joined us along with

our regular volunteer, Mr Shepherd. This means we can now spill over into three rooms. Mr Shepherd coaches the senior players, encouraging risk taking in bidding and better communication between partners. Mrs Coull is overseeing the intermediate group, where some of our young second years are becoming formidable opponents.

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

A great break from academic work on a Wednesday.

Will Burnell, 6GRM

It's top banter.

Sam Wright, 4MEE

Bridge is the closest you can get to gambling in Abingdon School!

Jack Lester, 2HFCP

Bridge has helped me to improve my teamwork and communication skills in a productive and fun way.

Piers Mucklejohn, 4VEM

Bridge is an educational club where you learn and practise lots of skills.

Cameron Butcher, 2HFCP

Bridge is a great club to join if you want to learn a new skill and work in a team.

Saul Rea, 4VEM

Rugby 2015





	Player of the Year	Most Improved	Player's Player
1st	Jamie Cox	Jack Holford	Harry Anderson
2nd	George Barton	George English	Edward Williams
3rd	Andrew Convery	Khalil Abouzeid	Theo Wilkins
4th	Rory Esom	Billy Hickman	Bertie Thomas
16A	Louis Ashcroft	Edward Merson	Craig Jenkins
16B	Josh Washington		Conor Martin
16C	Joseph Nash		Ben Ling
16D	Patrick Gwillim-Thomas		Peter Wang
15A	Cameron Woodrow	Christopher Monnery	Edward Hayes
15B	Tobias White		Danny May
15C	Jamie Lawson		Toby Rock
15D	Jerome O'Mahoney		Qasim Naqvi
14A	James Coombs	Oran Forrestal	Jack Harvey
14B	Louis Renouf		Alfred Grey
14C	Jack Mulcahy		Dermot Leggett
14D	Charles Engwell		Thomas Hart
13A	Liam O'Hickey	Steffan Conway	Toby Hindley
13B	Ben Brook	Lorimer Kay	Daniel Woodrow
12A	Charles Lloyd	Luka Shanidze	Josh Broadbent
12B	George Penny	Finlay Ball	Eoin Chippendale



Carl Olavesen

Abingdon Science Partnership

The opening of The Yang Science Centre has enabled the creation and development of the Abingdon Science Partnership whose aim is to widen access to science and to broaden participation in science across all stages of education and for the general public.

A wide range of events now take place at Abingdon to achieve these goals including the running of British Science Association CREST Star Award programme for a number of primary and preparatory schools, GCSE science 'Masterclasses' for year 10 and 11 pupils, training days for primary and secondary school teachers and technicians, and community science workshops and lectures.

I am a Science Ambassador and have taken part in and led several Abingdon Science Partnership activities including helping the cubs to get their science badges and doing Science Oxford activities on Saturdays. One of these was an event called Fantastic Fossils.

When the children arrived they looked for



bones in the sand until everyone was ready when we brought them over to the main section where they learned about different types of rocks using different types of chocolate bars as an analogy. Then they made their own fossils using play dough as rock, candy floss as flesh and dog treats as bones. After they brought this home they would have found a cavity where the bone was. The final task was to make insects trapped in amber by melting soap into moulds with beads trapped inside which they could also take home.

I helped out by assisting setting up all of the stations including crumbling the play dough

so they could use it as sediment, which took a little while. While they were going to activities, it was our job to ensure that they were safe and that the candles for melting soap were burning well.

Although I dedicate my life to science, it is in circumstances like these that I am really making the most of it, in sharing it with others. It also gave me the perspective on how science is relevant to life outside of our beautiful Science Centre.

It is my hope that the children were able to understand the topic much better as a result of this activity but more importantly



that they enjoyed the activity and will use that enjoyment to help them in their lessons in school.

Carl Olavesen, 6MAS

I have been helping Mr Bliss – our Head of Biology – with the Amazing Animal Workshop. In short it is an extension to the work the pupils have been doing in their own science lessons, utilising the fantastic new resources we have available in our Science Centre.

For example, my afternoons with the local primary school St Nicolas, have been spent

studying the classification of animals.

The sessions started with Mr Bliss explaining the science behind the groupings. With this new knowledge and our assistance the pupils were fairly free to go through the animals on display and try to classify as many as possible.

The theory was broken up with the chance to draw the animals in front of them and the range of pets kept by the Biology Department – from our orchid mantis to the hissing cockroaches. We now have a new chameleon, Morpheus, to test their range

of colouring pencils.

The year ones seemed to really enjoy themselves, especially when meeting the royal python and watching the film that finished the afternoon, displayed on the 3D projector.

I haven't chosen to take science A Levels, though I have really enjoyed the subjects. The outreach programme is a great way to continue being in the Science Centre. And, who knows? I may be helping the next Darwin.

Iwan Stone, 5MGD



My Time in CCF

"Community service or CCF?" I was asked for the 10th time as we settled down in our seats for the CCF recruitment talk on the third year induction day. "Community service, obviously," I replied. I sounded certain, and at that point I was. I had spent the last two years seeing boys dressing up as pretend soldiers, marching about with some scary sixth former shouting at them. There was no way, as a third year trying to make new friends in a year group of people I mostly didn't know, I was going to subject myself to that. So as the senior NCOs of 2011 stepped on to the stage to try and sell the cadets to us, I prepared to spend the next 20 minutes either not listening or making witty remarks to my next door neighbour about the 'action men' in front of us.

However, it did not take long for me to sit up in my chair and start listening properly. They talked about shooting, paintballing, survival skills and even flying solo in a proper plane! All thoughts of discipline and dressing up went straight out of my head and it didn't take long for my fickle second year self to be convinced

that this is what I really wanted to do. As such, I went straight home to my parents and after some slightly bemused looks and lots of "are you sure this is what you really want to do?" 's they signed the form and a decision had been made that would define a large part of my life at the school. It's a decision that I am extremely glad that I made and one which I would encourage any undecided Abingdonian-to-be to make as well.

It was in an excited frame of mind that I turned up to the first CCF session of the year and it wasn't long before I was trying on my new uniform at home and saluting to myself in the mirror. The first two terms in the third year are dedicated to 'recruit training' which culminates in a week long camp during the Easter holidays. The training is for the most part led by sixth formers and involves learning some basic skills such as surviving in the field, weapons handling, military theory, patrolling and of course drill. On top of this, the recruits have a few days travelling off campus to either put these skills into practice or just to broaden their experience of real military life and history. This period of recruit training is one that, in general, is really enjoyed, although perhaps more retrospectively by some than others.

For me, these two terms sum up a lot of what the CCF is about. On the one hand, there is a wealth of new opportunities to be explored and experienced that can't be found anywhere other than in the cadets. In just the first two terms, recruits have fired rifles, flown in chinooks, done military grade obstacle courses and even carried out a full 24-hour tactical exercise involving night patrols, ambushes, flares, all culminating in a section attack on an enemy position. On the other hand, the CCF really is about developing you as a person. From the get go you are put into a section of nine that you have to successfully work with and sometimes lead. As well as this, skills such as independent decision making, determination and confidence are frequently challenged. This second area is one that many people often find quite hard and is enough to cause a number of people to leave the CCF. However, it is this area that, if embraced, you are able to get the most out of the CCF from. I, personally, have found that the CCF has given me a huge number of skills that are applicable not only within that environment but also in the rest of my life as well. My confidence in the rest of school life was definitely drawn from my experiences within the CCF every Tuesday.



Highlights of my time in CCF have to include both flying courses, each culminating in a solo flight, the yearly RAF camps (one of which saw us in a tanker refuelling typhoons at 50,000 feet), the Air Cadet Leadership Course (ACLC), and of course the annual Easter camps. These courses aren't always fun and games. Most have challenging aspects, and if you're not prepared to work hard, can be very tough. ACLC is particularly notorious in this respect with packed days lasting from 6:30am to 10pm or later at night. Not everyone finishes the course, and early morning runs, shouting NCOs, and constant assessment take their toll on everyone. Yet it is this that makes the camps so rewarding. There is true team spirit, friendships are formed that won't be easily forgotten, and there is an overarching sense that we will complete this together. Although there are a lot of things that I would struggle with within the armed forces, one thing that has always tempted me and very nearly persuaded me to join has been this idea of the friendships and teams

that are created within it that are not really like anything you will find in civilian life.

You get a small taste of this during recruit camp and the recruits are visibly proud during the annual passing out parade when they officially become cadets. For me, being head of recruits this year has been by far the most rewarding time in my CCF career for exactly this reason. Those who at the start of the year were there because their parents wanted them to be, those who were too cool to get into uniform or those who just looked like they wanted to be anywhere else but the parade square, all (well mostly all) ended the year with a big smile on their face and did the passing out parade with pride and enthusiasm. Having the opportunity to teach and take the recruits through that change was a very special thing and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the CCF for this and everything else it has given me and my year group along the way.

The reason I was asked to write this

article in the first place was down to the fact I have recently won the Sir John Thomson Memorial sword for the top CCF (RAF) cadet in the country, so let me say a little bit about that. What this award has demonstrated to me is that the CCF isn't all about being good at drill, or just shouting at people. It's so much more about enthusiasm, commitment and basically just giving your best to whatever it is you may be doing. Ask anyone who was in the CCF with me – I was awful at drill, could never tell someone off with any sense of authority, and had no chance when it came to aircraft recce. But instead what I have tried to do and will continue to do is be enthusiastic, fun and determined. On my first day in CCF Major Kaye came out with the classic cliché "the more you put in, the more you will get out" and I cannot think of another organisation in which this is more applicable than the CCF.

In conclusion, I would just like to say a massive thank you to all the staff, recruits and of course all my fellow SNCOs for making the CCF so enjoyable. Also, good luck to Bertie Boyd-Gorst, Andrew Convery, Thomas Farish, Hugh Franklin, and Michael Man who are all considering pursuing a career in the armed forces – it has been a genuine pleasure spending Tuesday afternoons with you for the last five years and it's something I will miss greatly.

I cannot recommend the CCF more highly to anyone joining or already within the school. It is a unique opportunity that you just won't get the chance to do in later life.

Joseph Kelly, VINSH





Christmas Concert

For the second year running, the annual Christmas Concert was held at the Sheldonian Theatre in Oxford. It was also the second year that the school's new Yamaha grand piano, purchased with funds from the Second-hand Uniform Shop, featured in the concert after its inaugural performance at the Sheldonian the previous year. At the finale, First Orchestra provided a double bill of music by the French composer Saint-Saëns. I was fortunate to have the opportunity to perform one of his piano concertos on the Yamaha again, this year playing the second and third movements of the 5th piano concerto. Appropriately it is named the *Egyptian Concerto* for its second movement, which includes numerous oriental harmonies and an Egyptian love song. It was these unusual elements and the energy of the finale which drew me to

choose this piece to play. Holding the concert in the Sheldonian also gave us scope to include the theatre's organ in another work of Saint-Saëns': his *Organ Symphony*. Its loud and declamatory fanfares made a fitting end to the concert, which was more nostalgic and rewarding as several of the Upper Sixth had played the piece two years earlier in TVYO, even more so as this time around we were able to get our fingers around more of the notes.

And while we were performing in our last Christmas Concert at Abingdon, it was promising to see the younger pupils thoroughly enjoying their contributions to the concert. The first years gathered together again as a choir and sang *Frosty the Snowman* and *The 12 Days of Christmas*, whilst the Second Orchestra carried on the Christmas theme with *Trepak* from Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker* as well as an arrangement of the *Grand March* from Verdi's *Aida*. There were several younger soloists as well, such as Benjamin Adams who sang with the

Big Band.

Several of the girls from St Helen's also joined us in the Joint Chamber Choir for two a cappella settings of the Christmas Matins chant *O Magnum Mysterium*, one by the Spanish composer Victoria and the other by Poulenc. By contrast, the Gospel Choir, appearing for the first time in a Christmas Concert, gave an energetic performance of *Go tell it on the Mountain*, singing entirely from memory with a selection of actions as well. The school's Chamber Orchestra indulged in Samuel Barber's famous *Adagio for Strings*, which made for a more contemplative end to the first half of the concert.

Holding the concert in the Sheldonian was a great privilege and experience. All the performers enjoyed it, and it was especially memorable for the soloists. We now look forward to the 2016 Christmas Concert, which returns to the Amey Theatre.

Anthony Bracey, VICJM



Lent 2016



Basketball

What our coach Rev Gooding has managed to keep secret from the vast majority of his students during his time at Abingdon is his incredible talent and enthusiasm on the basketball court. Due to the lack of a regular 'teacher's 5', Rev. Gooding has had to, for now, contain his inner NBA player and content himself with running what has been the very successful 2016 school side. I think it is fair to say that he has enjoyed himself along the way.

Having lost some Abingdon basketball legends in 2015 including 6'8" Bola and the powerful Tom Wheeldon, it was always going to be a rocky start to the season as the reformed team found their feet. Despite having changed over half of the team since last year, we started the season by putting in a really strong performance away at Stowe, narrowly missing out on an opening victory by two points. Despite inevitable disappointment, it was a great match and the relatively young Abingdon team showed real promise against a Stowe

side who are well known to be one of the stronger teams on the circuit. This promise began to realise itself in the next two games. Whether it was because of the rivalry or the unhealthy number of games of "killer" played in training, the team really stepped up their performance to win both home and away games at Radley. The second match was won by thirty points and was testament to how much the team had really grown in confidence, not being fazed by some strong physicality from a frustrated Radley side.

Following a break over Christmas, training began in earnest again at the start of the Lent Term. It was really nice to see the number of players, especially from lower down the school, turning up on Mondays, and this should only increase as the squad grows over the next few years. In fact, it was the youth who carried the side through much of the remainder of the season. Both Sebastian Anand and Ben Mencer, fourth and third year respectively, scored a steady stream of baskets and set a great example to those less familiar with the game. Other notable performances

came from Rohan Khosla Stevens and Archie Delafield, who will also both be playing for the school again next year. All this makes me very excited for the development of the side in the next few years and I imagine they will become a team to be feared. This will definitely be the case if the performance against Padworth was anything to go by. New to the circuit, Padworth were of unknown quality and Abingdon did not quite know what to expect. Quality was shown by both sides, and it was not because of a poor performance that Abingdon were down by three points going into the final few minutes. Abingdon were not finished yet, however, and three back-to-back "down town" three pointers by Chun Lung Cheng made for an exhilarating end to a really enjoyable season. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Rev Gooding for all the hard work that he has put in during the year and the rest of the team and squad for introducing me to a sport I hope to continue playing in the future. Good luck to everyone next year; the team is only going to get better!

Joseph Kelly, VINSH

Aidan Thorne Interview

Sam Morrey interviewed Aidan Thorne OA, who is leaving the music teaching staff of Abingdon School after several years teaching the guitar.

When did you leave Abingdon School and what was your subsequent training like?

I think I left in 2008. Then I went to Wales to study jazz music originally, but that ended up being a bit broader. I got training in absolutely everything: jazz music, theatre, composition, name anything and I probably did it. I did a module at university on creativity in music, where we met up with music tech students and we essentially just drove up a mountain listening to music and talking about it.

What got you into music?

I was forced to play bass in my band with my friends when I was 11. I didn't know what I wanted to play really, so my friend just said, "Oh, you'll just do bass guitar". I asked my parents for a bass guitar and they said, "No, you have to play double bass", and then Mr Stinton ushered me into playing double bass, which I hated. For some reason I stuck with it, until it became my first thing and I went to college on it. I still played a lot of bass guitar, classical guitar and electric guitar.

What is your fondest memory of being a musician at Abingdon School?

You could talk about endless things. There were the composition classes we would do on a Wednesday to try and get out of sport, but really we wanted to play music. Or we went on tour to China when I was in the fifth year, which was amazing. We went to Beijing and Hong Kong and played concerts there and learnt about Chinese culture and how they don't listen to performances in a theatre, they talk over it, which is kind of strange. The World Cup was on so we snuck out and watched it.

What was school like for you? And the Music Department?

Music was the right thing for me, so it was good to have this big bustling department.



I played in the school Big Band, the Chamber Orchestra, the First Orchestra and I went through all the younger orchestras as well and the wind bands. So I really just did music constantly here, which was pretty amazing, because you were able to do so much stuff and fit it all in. So, yeah, school was all music for me; the rest I didn't care about until sixth form when I got to choose my subjects.

How are you spending your time these days and what are your future professional plans?

I started lecturing at the beginning of this academic year at the University of South Wales. I've just recorded an album with my band (Duski), and we are hoping to go in a direction of performing a lot more than we do, because it's the kind of band where we do three gigs a year. Occasionally I put a tour together, but it takes a lot of energy. Recently I've been asked to be involved in a project with a Welsh theatre company called *Gagglebabble*, about the life and death of the last woman to be hanged in the UK, but set to rock and roll music.

What advice would you give to anyone contemplating being a musician?

If you want to do it, once you have

the skills of being able to play your instrument and of understanding music, the pathways are vast. You need to have the right mind-set; wanting everything handed to you on a plate won't work. You have to work hard for it, but the rewards are there if you do.

Which musicians have influenced or inspired you?

It's everybody really; you could talk about classic British composers like Benjamin Britten all the way to Jaco Pastorius on the bass guitar who revolutionized the bass. There are endless double bass players like Renaud Garcia-Fons. Then, there's Miles Davis who was seminal in any movement forward of modern music.

What made you decide to pursue a career in music?

I didn't want to when I was really young. My parents are both musicians and I didn't want to be like my parents, so I shunned it. Then I got pushed into being in a band and then I really wanted to do that. It really just goes down to what you're good at. I realised going into my GCSE year that I was going to be a musician and there was nothing else to it.

Interview by Sam Morrey, 5EMH



Caucasian Chalk Circle

The *Caucasian Chalk Circle* is considered to be one of German playwright and theatre practitioner Bertolt Brecht's best plays. Set in revolutionary Georgia the play follows a peasant girl, Grusha, played beautifully in our production by Chloe Taylor, as she attempts to survive the bloody revolution all the while hiding the son of the murdered Governor of Georgia.

Mrs Quick's idea was to go for a wacky, gypsy feel for the production, with bright pink and green being the primary colours to add an element of levity to a resoundingly dark story. With costumes sourced by Miss Bond, the assistant director, our production had the appearance of a ramshackle band of travellers enacting a story to pass away the time around a campfire. Miss Bond also brilliantly created the eerie child-sized puppet, named Michael, manipulated uncannily well by Tommy Macphail.

Thomas Cope took on the role of Azdak, the peasant judge, mixing wiliness and comedy with aplomb and creating an



Joseph Salter

improbable bond with the dim-witted Shauva, played by Alexander Dalglish. The other members of the cast included Hysan Woo as the Drunken Monk; Arthur Musson as the treacherous Fat Prince; Carey Bennington as the hysterical Younger Lady; Isobel Flower as the Peasant woman; Christopher Potter as the Manservant and Dominic Swain who, together with Tommy, joined the cast at a late stage and took on several different roles with enthusiasm. Other members of the cast not only acted and

danced but also played instruments. One of the major memorable moments were the musical interludes and indeed the prelude, which cemented the style of the play and offered beautiful music to the audience while at the same time giving them some cold, hard exposition.

Under the guidance of Dr Preece, who also composed the music, Thomas Farish (Lavrenti), Charlie MacPherson (Simon) and Joseph Salter (Governor) formed the "Tbilisi Trio" consisting of two guitars and a saxophone. Hazel



Thomas Farish

Bannerman (Mother) played the piano and Eve Jones (Wife) played the flute, adding their musical talents to underscore scenes. Our cast of sixteen took on over sixty-five roles – a feat made possible by Mrs Quick's decision at the beginning of rehearsals to get us to play (sometimes bizarre!) theatre games to bond us as a group and explore ways of creating characters quickly and simply.

Mr Lloyd designed a multi-purpose, evocative set which stood in for mountains, courtrooms, peasant

cottages and dark ravines, using lighting to enhance the sometimes brutal, sometimes moving and often comic scenes; Mr Killick provided the sound and the Amey Theatre technical crew ran everything with confidence and professionalism under their guidance. Our final scene was choreographed by Nez Onen, who in a very short space of time got us all working together to create the concluding dance.

Under the direction of Mrs Quick, the result was an incredibly close cast that

produced a memorable production that successfully encompassed the full range of lights and darks, comedy and tragedy demanded by this fantastic play, whose message of love and peace over violence and war is as relevant today as when it was written.

Overall we both thoroughly enjoyed working with our peers in this gruelling yet rewarding production.

Thomas Farish, VIGRM and Joseph Salter, 5EJW

German Exchange

In February a group of pupils from Abingdon School and St Helen's and St Katherine's went on a German exchange trip to the city of Bielefeld in the north-west of Germany. On Wednesday 10 we made our way to Heathrow Terminal 5, and following a smooth hour and a half flight we arrived safely in Düsseldorf Airport (after one of us thought they left their passport on the plane). We were then picked up by a coach and driven to Bielefeld, where we met the families that we would spend the next 10 days with.

I was staying with the Schwenk family, who drove me to their apartment through the streets of the city. When looking out of the window in the bleak of night, it was hard to distinguish it from England. I was confused when I looked up to see a castle and a British phone box. Even the German cars seemed to have a British twang, with many BMW Minis driving around the city.

The apartment they lived in was huge, almost as big as my house, with two bathrooms and a spacious living room. I was then guided to my room, which was mercifully near to the entrance and equipped with a bathroom that looked like an advertisement for Victoria Plumb. My bedroom was easy to confuse with a high-class hotel as it had a perfectly white bed with a TV attached to the wall via a mechanical arm. It was night by the time I arrived so after a brief tour of the house, I unpacked and then got ready to spend my first night in Germany.

When morning arrived, I joined Moritz (my partner) in a day at the Ratsgymnasium in Bielefeld. School life in the Gymnasium was surprisingly different to the high-tech displays and 3D projectors we have here at Abingdon School. Instead their classrooms were aimed towards a single green blackboard with a display of white chalk on the desk in front. The school was so overwhelmingly lacking in computers that their ICT suite had the same number of computers as a physics classroom in our new Science Centre. Each of the outdated devices relied heavily on a dusty cream monitor running Windows XP at a stress loud enough



that you could hear the constant whirring of the computers. On the blackboards mentioned earlier, German vocabulary far beyond my own was sprawled. The already bewildering subject of healthy cells being infected by viruses was made just a little more incomprehensible by being in German.

The following day we travelled to Münster, which comes from the word for monastery, and rightly so as there are 98 churches and a cathedral in the city. We were set free to look around the city and discovered the art exhibitions and the town's wide variety of shops and buskers. With the green copper roofs and town hall, the city held a variety of beautiful sights among which were the clockwork animations of figures hanging over a planetary calendar.

Sunday was spent with the host families. My family travelled to the famed Autostadt of Wolfsburg through a rather fascinating double-decker train.

Once at the City of Cars, I was in awe at the spectacle. Looking back on it I was not quite sure what to expect but when I came through the doors to see primary school children doing back-flips off each other's hands and landing perfectly in sync to a heavy dub-step beat, I was shocked. The city itself was run by Volkswagen and had no people as permanent residents, only cars. It is a city within a city, and is roughly the size of Monaco, built around four large chimneys of smoke coming from VW's main factory. Around such a marvel, pavilions were set up each in the respective art style of the brands from Bugatti to Lamborghini.

When Monday came, the English group were taken to Bremen to learn of some vital German history: we saw the Treaty of Westphalia ending the 30 Years War against the French and were told how Bremen was the principal location of the famous German fairy tale *Die Stadtmusikanten* by the Grimm brothers.

On Tuesday we were privileged to see the inner workings of the local theatre, including a look at their top-secret new play. The evening was spent attempting to ice skate. It was great fun to show off our non-existent talent and generally have fun. Despite most of us failing, a few talented ice skaters reared their heads. Unfortunately, I was not among their number.

The next day, after visiting a library with national treasury listed paint, we travelled to a Dr Oetker factory in Welt, where we discovered top-secret recipes and great tasting chocolate muesli. It was so secretive that in the experimental kitchen on the second floor, we were restricted from photography to stop secret recipes from being leaked. The great day finished with a glorious football match against the Germans, who were truly superior, but we still gave it a shot.

On the last day we said goodbye to our German exchanges, with gifts exchanged and then we were on our way. The trip was exciting and my language skills came on leaps and bounds, and I also made many friends abroad that I still keep in touch with. I would recommend it to anyone. It was completely worth it.

Alec de Jongh, 4BDS



Lower School History Club

In Lower School History Club this year we have been making a World War Two diorama from Airfix. We constructed it over the Michaelmas Term from various airfix sets. It started relatively small and grew into what it is now. It shows a British paratrooper section having seized a German airfield and now defending against the German counter attack. Meanwhile the English and American forces have landed on the Normandy beaches and have broken through. It was super fun to make and see it take shape over the weeks. On top of that we could all joke around with each other while making the scene with different people working on different things. We also got sweets as an added bonus to keep us going as we worked on the models and the



infuriatingly complicated instructions.

In the Lent Term we made our own low budget version of the film *300* in the art garden. It included three northern Spartans and the rest of us as Persians. The script that we wrote was brief and left a lot to be made up on the spot, which led to some hysterical moments

such as when the crippled Spartan traitor started arguing with himself over which handedness he was. Also, the script was full of quotes from *Star Wars* and *Lord of the Rings* again leading to some pretty funny moments. Overall History Club is great fun.

Aidan Coster, 2SJC

Lower School Archaeology Club

Miss Moore came to the Classics Department radiating an enthusiasm for archaeology which has given rise to the new Lower School Archaeology Club. Along with William Sheffield, I have been allowed access to this enterprise as a sixth form 'dig team manager', overseeing proceedings wearing suit and tie in the true spirit of the gentleman archaeologist. I for one was pleased to finally worm my way back into a Lower School club, having been calamitously excluded from Lower School History Club and Lower School Classics Club some four years ago upon entering Middle School. Though the Classics Department excels in so many ways, (the only department to offer an entire table full of food on Open Day and routine package holidays to the Mediterranean) it is sorely underrepresented in the Other Half at sixth form level. In this way, Miss Moore has given me some relief from the bitter absence of an Abingdon School society dedicated to irregular Greek verb forms or finding smutty jokes in Ovid.

Unlike me and William, Lower School

pupils have yet to decide where their academic interests lie, so I should point out that archaeology has something to offer not only for the classicist, but also for the historian, the geographer, the artist, possibly the biologist, and more generally for those who like to dig holes with a spade. Last term the cohort was substantial. Routine attendance ran comfortably into double figures and I am confident that this number will only increase. Although we still cannot quite chart human occupation in the garden behind Mercers' Court, I can say without a hint of sarcasm that the whole team has thoroughly enjoyed the process. Although the long-awaited dead centurion is yet to show his face, no interesting shaped stone has failed to stir the excitement of its lucky finder.

The school site is known to contain good archaeology, some of which came to light during the recent excavations on what is now Austin House lawn. The excavations, conducted by the University of York in 1999, yielded, amongst other things, an empty Roman cist grave, the remains of an infant, and the remains of a diseased Romano-British man. Even more significant (apparently) was a late neolithic to middle bronze age flint arrowhead in a pristine state of preservation. It is this site that we intend to investigate further over the coming

months. Two geo-physics experts from Reading University (procured by Miss Moore's extensive network of contacts) shared with us the results of the survey they conducted on the school site with the club's assistance. The GPR data taken from the Austin House lawn seems to contain several interesting anomalies.

The work taking place in the garden behind Mercers' Court is merely a practice dig, allowing us to develop the skills necessary to handle serious archaeology without breaking anything. To give but a few examples, Miss Moore has talked us through the proper removal of turf, the efficient cataloguing of finds, the correct use of a trowel, and the reasons for not leaning over the trench. Though only a practice dig, the garden has yielded some nice sherds of pottery, our growing collection of willow-pattern in particular, an array of masonry fragments, and a small amount of animal bone. You can understand why we're keen to move onto the Austin House lawn, but as I mentioned before, the Lower School excavators never cease to be amazed despite the relatively small historical significance of these finds.

As I learned for myself on the Roman dig at Dorchester, where I dug alongside Oxford University undergraduates for five days, archaeologists do not expect to sojourn to the British Museum every evening with a sack full of loot. Having spent three days (one of which was the hottest of the year) slavishly clearing the backfill from the previous year, I spent Thursday troweling a one metre-square patch of dirt with a colleague, the result of which was four iron nails, a handful of pottery fragments, and elements of a dead sheep. Humble though they were, my iron nails were at least Roman nails, and were judged worthy of a place on the official site report.

When it comes to archaeology, the thrill is very much in the chase, and thrilling it is. Be that as it may, part of me will still be disappointed if we don't find our dead centurion. I extend my thanks to Miss Moore for sharing her expertise via the club and keeping it amply supplied with equipment.

Lower School Archaeology Club takes place on Thursday period eight.

Henry Waterson, 6RP





Gospel Choir

The second season for Abingdon School's very own Gospel Choir has not only seen the number of 'gigs' for the ensemble treble but has also seen a strong increase in the number of registered members despite various ex-members departing out of concern for their social standing (the reason for the lack of evidence of this in rehearsals is yet to be established). These improvements have been in no small way due to the fantastic leadership of Mrs Wenham. Having exploited Mr Ponniah's regular absences because of other (apparently more important) commitments, Mrs Wenham has taken the choir from strength to strength. Her never-ending efforts to get the choir to sing with more enthusiasm as well as her genuine musical talent - a trait surprisingly rare in this particular ensemble - have brought the group to life and are one of many reasons why the Gospel Choir is the most looked forward to event of any Abingdon School concert. Mr Poon and Mrs McRae cannot go unmentioned either as their unwavering commitment to the activity is unrivalled although I'm still not sure as to whether Mrs Mcrae spends more of her time singing or laughing at various 'choristers' inability to clap and sing at the same time.

However, much as we love them, the choir is not all about the teachers. In fact, if anything, it's all about the boys. One thing I have really



appreciated about the Gospel Choir since its birth two years ago is the fact it brings together boys from right across the school and with all types of musical ability, and allows them to have a bit of fun and produce some really quite good music. It is one of the very few musical activities that has seen sixth formers (yes, in the plural) perform musically for the first ever time in front of 300 people at a Christmas Concert. Indeed, before joining Gospel Choir, I doubted whether the said sixth formers had ever even stepped foot in the Music Department before. I think providing a platform for people to be introduced to music at whatever stage in their secondary career is a really important function of the choir and something for them to be really proud of. Further than this, for more seasoned musicians, they get the opportunity to

sing solos and have more major roles in performances, which they can build on in other, perhaps more serious, societies.

This highlights my favourite thing about Gospel Choir, which is that it is fun. There aren't many activities other than slumping on the sofa and watching TV that you can imagine yourself looking forward to at the end of a long week at 4 o'clock, but I think Gospel Choir has got to be one of them. The choir's never failing ability to put smiles on the faces of everyone in rehearsals as well as on every member of the audience during performances makes it really special and I hope that in the years to come it will continue to make everyone's little light shine.

Joseph Kelly, VINSH



Cross Country

This season has been a real pleasure for me for two reasons. It's been quite satisfying to see the vision I had for the club, which I started coaching 12 years ago, come to fruition, and indeed to watch that vision serve the boys in such a way that made them happy, competitive and healthy, and that developed within them an ability for extra-ordinary mental focus and capacity for physical hardship through training. Of course over the 12 years, boys amassed a phenomenal amount of cups, trophies, medals and other assorted silverware - no records kept. We stuck to five simple rules over the years:

1. The coach does not give out medals in ceremonies - it's not about the medals.
2. We operated in a small, tightly knit, respectful and resourceful group, which sometimes stuck together for five years.
3. We eschewed "stash" except when we were racing - in fact, we made a name for ourselves at fixtures for our choice of casual wear. It wasn't therefore about either medals or "stash".

4. It was usual practice that teams would comprise runners from the third year all the way through the Upper Sixth - legs and lungs did the talking, not seniority.

5. The more inclement the weather the better.

The second reason why this season - my last at Abingdon School - was a real pleasure: the young athletes I worked with. Nat Jones, Alexander Miell-Ingram, Jonty De La Harpe, Ivo Brown, Calum Steer, Joshua Crichton, Daniel Lawson, David Bunn and Alexander Pennington were all young athletes "...with whom I would dig a trench..." to use an old but well-proven infantry expression: reliable, strong, hard and brave young men. And I am very grateful to them that they made my last season the best! I also did not want to have the last word for a change so here are the Upper Sixth's impressions...

Alexis Christodoulou

Over my five years with cross country, there has been a wonderful continuity to it. The same races roll by, the same runs, familiar faces, rather too familiar weather, well-known rivals and well-known hills. But hand in hand with the repetition of

the cross country cycle there is always new life. New runners join and bring a fresh feel to our traditions.

And this season has been no different. It has been a wonderful experience captaining the cross country squad. From the sunny early races of September right through the gruelling winter months, there has been a series of successes. Most remarkably though, these great performances have been consistent through all years in the team, right from the fresh-faced third years through the fifth year talents and to the sixth form. I believe this success is rooted in our team spirit. Cross country is the only sport where there is a truly linear approach to the team, with all years training together, racing side-by-side and communicating as one. I think this (along with the hard training!) is the seed to our success this year. As a third year I always looked up to the older athletes and was pushed to excel as they were doing. Similarly as a sixth former I now have the incentive to avoid losing to runners half my size. I believe this is an approach that schools should try to utilise more often, as I think it has benefits far beyond running for the club's members.

Another highlight has been our wonderful coaching. Mr Christodoulou has been

an inspiration to me - his advice on the mentality of sport in particular will stay with me throughout my running career. But also, the likes of Ms Widdern, Mr Swanwick, Mr Fisher, Mr Taylor and many others (it seems cross country is more popular with staff than it is with pupils!) have been amazing company out on our long dull runs around Abingdon.

Another wonderful season has passed.

Nat Jones, VIEOD

The experiences of the last five years in the crosscountry squad have been unforgettable. There are many memories I will take away with me, such as the ankle-deep mud at Sevenoaks, the shin-deep mud at Radley, and the knee-deep mud at Harrow. And of finishing behind Sedbergh (from Cumbria) in the "South-East Schools Championships". I have also developed a new tolerance for appalling puns, and for enduring below-freezing conditions wearing only a vest and shorts. At other times we may have set a poor example by our complete disregard for the way we dressed (following the examples of Nat Jones and Ivo Brown), but this was compensated for by the fifth years' fierce competitiveness at races, and by Alexander Miell-Ingram's brutal self-discipline during Wednesday gym sessions.

Although only three of us in the Upper Sixth have survived long enough to write this article, Michael Fabes and Harry Thomas deserve a mention for making it almost to the end, and only giving



up when their anatomies dictated. As does Jamie Corish, for a spectacular improvement in the short six months he was with the team; and Anthony Bracey, for his irregular but nonetheless impressive appearances.

Finally I would like to thank Mr Christodoulou for taking on the unenviable task of training us and putting up with us for so long, which he has done without claiming any credit in the team's successes. Although he may change his mind more frequently than he drives a minibus into a hedge, it cannot be denied that we could not have had a better coach – as demonstrated by the consistently outstanding results produced by the legendary generations of teams before us.

Jonty De La Harpe, VIRP

Cross country is not an easy sport! To demonstrate, just look at our pained faces on the school website, during the races.

At the start of the year, we had lost the likes of Von Eitzen, Gatenby, Curtis, Hart and Teece, but everyone stepped up the standard to take their places. Ivo "Seb Coe" Brown performed exceptionally, especially at the Vale and Marlborough. This season, Jonty De La Harpe was a changed athlete. From the start, at Longworth, he became a vital member of the squad (as well as 'the nicest boy in the school'). Calum Steer stepped up his game and improved considerably as the season progressed. Joshua Crichton was the joker of the group, especially in the gym, but he ran particularly well at races, especially Wellington Relays. Captain Nat Jones and Jamie Corish were our weight lifters and the anchors in the team, and kept us entertained with their continuous jokes. David Bunn is definitely one to watch in future, with great potential. Alexander Pennington gave us light relief and laughter - from picking up ice, to nearly knocking everyone out with the flagpoles at St Edward's - though when the gun went, he proved what a strong athlete he is.

I have enjoyed every moment of the cross country season - it has been the best and most unforgettable experience I have had at Abingdon School. The team spirit was amazing and I will miss being a part of it. Mr Christodoulou, the Alpha, is an incredible coach. Just look at the facts - for the last 12 years he has won both the County and the Vale of the White Horse Championships! From his minibus driving to motivating the team, he transformed ordinary runners into great athletes. I will always remember him for calming me down and advising me before races.

Alexander Miell-Ingram, VIMFFC



Chapel Corridor – A Walk Through History

Over the Lent half term Chapel Corridor became a picture gallery, the portraits, prints, documents and paintings hung chronologically so that they take us through the School's history: from the middle of the sixteenth century to the end of the twentieth.

The earliest document dates from 1549 and is the letters patent of King Edward VI granting John Roysse the ownership of a number of properties in the City of London on payment of the sum of £270 13s 4d. The initial letter E contains a delicate drawing of the King who was at that time a twelve-year-old boy; his Great Seal is attached at the bottom.

On the other side of the corridor, framed together, are the indentures and ordinances that John Roysse signed on 31 January 1563 when he re-endowed the School. The indenture outlined the terms of his financial settlement and the ordinances the practical arrangements for the School. Roysse's portrait, painted in 1763 to commemorate the two hundredth anniversary of his benefaction, hangs beside it.

A portrait of another great benefactor, Thomas Tesdale, faces Roysse on the other side of the corridor. Tesdale endowed the salary of a second master with some of his land in Berkshire and Warwickshire, and left money in his will for the education of Abingdon boys at Oxford. This led in 1624 to the foundation of Pembroke College, Oxford where originally the ten fellows and ten scholars were all to have been educated at Abingdon School.

The later seventeenth century was not kind to Abingdon. The Headmaster, Anthony Huish, supported the King in the Civil War; the town of Abingdon supported Parliament and after the King's execution the town petitioned Cromwell to have Huish removed. There's a copy of this petition in the corridor, the original is in the archives.

Come the eighteenth century and the



Cam and Summers, headmasters 1870 to 1893 with drawings of a classroom and the staff common room to the left

School was flourishing, the hope of a Pembroke scholarship attracting boarders not only from Berkshire, Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire but from London too. We can tell this from the framed school roll dating from 1732 where, in the spirit of the age, the names of aristocrats are written in larger letters than those of ordinary mortals. Further down the wall a collection of prints of eighteenth-century writers, academics, explorers, clerics and soldiers bears testament to the future careers of some of these boys.

By the nineteenth century the School was beginning to outgrow its sixteenth-century premises. A photograph of the old schoolroom shows how cramped it was, the photograph providing a contrast to the flattering print beside it, which portrays the room as luxuriously spacious. The first whole school photograph, taken in 1865, shows that there were 64 pupils and three members of staff. Owing to research done by William Richardson, whose photograph hangs above, we know that the boys still came from the same areas as those in the 1730s – Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire, London and the Home Counties.

It was time for change and in 1870 the School moved into new premises in Albert Park, where it still is. Three drawings by the architect Edwin Dolby

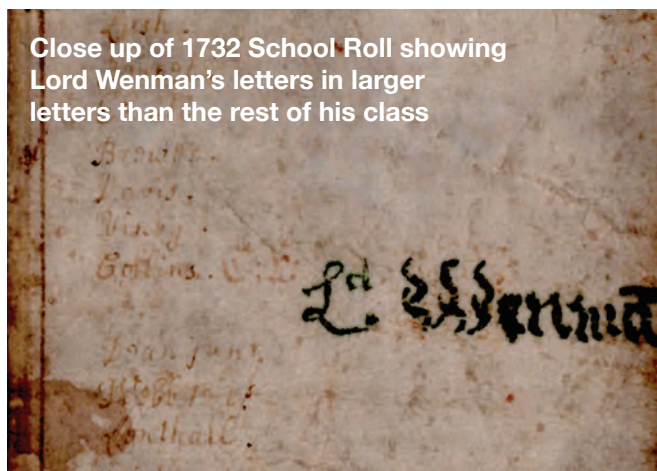
show how the School originally looked. There are other drawings too: by the art master, Charles Octavius Wright, and a boy, Ivan Williams. These give us a glimpse of the both the interior and the exterior at the beginning of the twentieth century, as do photographs, which show us how the premises expanded within the first thirty years of being on this site.

A handsome portrait of a former pupil, John Viney, represents all those Abingdonians who served their country in the two world wars. At the end of the Second World War, Viney, a pilot with Bomber Command, had a DFC and DSO, held the rank of Wing Commander and was still only 24.

A series of pastels and watercolours chart the further expansion of the School to the end of the twentieth century. The final document in the collection echoes the first: dated 1998, it is the letters patent from the College of Heralds, granting the School the right to a coat of arms, which in the symbolism of its component parts summarises the School's history.

Each image has an explanatory label and further information on many of the items can be found on the website a History of Abingdon School in 63 Objects www.abingdon.org.uk/63objects.

Sarah Wearne



Football

On the back of another tough pre-season, the 2016 football season proved to be a highly successful and enjoyable one for the Football Club. Whilst the weather did its best to dampen boys' spirits, the energy, enthusiasm and commitment shown by all involved in the club was exceptional, enabling it to build on what had been a very promising previous year. There were a number of stand out performances, with the U16 As beating Bedford Modern, the 1st XI beating Radley both home and away, and the 2nd XI retaining the Thames Valley Football League title for the second consecutive year. However more importantly, participation levels were again at their highest, with opportunities for the boys to progress and achieve success continuing to grow.

After a highly competitive Futsal Champions League during the Michaelmas Term, and having been put through their paces by the staff of Oxford United during pre-season, the Lower School started their campaign with the U12 Bs scoring 15 goals

against Shiplake, before going on to enjoy convincing block wins against Dragon and St Hugh's. Convincing 5-1, and 2-0 wins for the U13 As demonstrated the ability of this year group.

After a mixed start to the season, the U14s maintained their approach of getting the ball down, and playing to feet, playing some highly attractive football as the season developed, with both the U14 As and U14 Bs clinching notable wins against Reading Grammar School, Oratory and Cokethorpe to name a few. The U14 Cs performed admirably on what is an ever more challenging fixture card, and could not be criticised for their efforts throughout.

The U15s were hoping to continue their progress from the previous year, with the U15 B team starting the season with a resounding 3-1 win against Bedford Modern before going on to further victories including against Radley. The U15 C team, in a similar fashion to the U14 Cs could not be criticised for their efforts, and more than deserved their 1-1 draw with Radley to end the season. After a slow start, the U15 As demonstrated their progress with improving results as the

season progressed, victories over both Oratory and Shiplake College being the highlights.

The U16s went into the 2016 season with great promise, and did not disappoint. Playing attractive football on a regular basis whilst demonstrating a dogged and physical streak when required, the A team won 6 of their 7 fixtures including wins over Berkhamsted, Bedford Modern and Reading Grammar. The B team, not wanting to be outdone by the A side, also had a number of notable wins, beating the likes of Oratory and Radley. Putting 16 goals between them against MCS on their way to victory was a highlight for many. The U16 Cs maintained the U16's strong reputation with a number of convincing wins against schools including Oratory and Radley.

Moving into the seniors, the 5th XI put in an outstanding performance to beat Berkhamsted 4-3, before going on to finish the season on a high with a convincing 6-0 win over Radley, whilst the 4th XI's video analysis sessions paid dividends, with wins over Reading Grammar, Shiplake and St Edward's. The 3rd XI started the season with





a 2-0 win over Bedford Modern, before putting 10 past MCS, 6 past St Edward's and an excellent 3-2 win over Reading Grammar secured them second place in the Thames Valley League.

The 2nd XI had yet another very successful season, losing only 2 of their 14 fixtures played. Under the guidance of Mr Middleton they were direct in their approach and clinical in front of the goal. Victories over Reading Grammar, Shiplake and Forest to name only a few, helped the side retain the Thames Valley Football League 2nd XI title for the second year running! A terrific achievement.

After a slow start to the season, the 1st XI got their campaign underway coming from 0-2 down at halftime to beat Cokethorpe 5-2 on Waste Court, whilst also showing great character, and came from 1-0 down to beat a very good Berkhamsted side 2-1. The second half of the season saw the ever-improving side go seven games unbeaten, with 1-0 and 2-1 wins away at Forest and MCS respectively being the highlights. Whilst unfortunately early season displays resulted in the side finishing very narrowly in second place in the Thames Valley Football League, the season finished on a high; a Joe Blanch free kick was enough to see the



team finish the year with a hard fought 1-0 win away at Radley, a fitting finish to a thoroughly enjoyable season.

In addition to success within school, 1st XI captain Joe Blanch was rewarded for his consistent performances, making his debut for Oxford United Scholars, whilst first year pupils Arun Sahota and Theo Mara both represented the Independent Schools Football Association South Central Division at U12; both also went on to represent the South of England

Lions alongside Archie Barker, Charlie Masters and Aaron Mara.

Finally the football season was brought to a close with the inaugural Football Club dinner, as the club welcomed back Old Abingdonian and current Premier League football referee Graham Scott as the guest of honour. This was a fitting way to draw to a close another highly enjoyable season of participation, progress, and success for all involved.

Tom Donnelly

Chess Club

Having won promotion last season by coming a strong second in Division 4 of the Oxford and District Chess League, Abingdon's "City 4" team played this season back in Division 3. The higher standard of competition proved just right for the development of our team players. Abingdon played 14, won 5, drew 2 and lost 7. We ended sixth in Division 3, ahead of the two other predominantly junior teams: MCS Blackbirds 2 and Witney 4. The best performances were a draw against the eventual winners Witney 3 and a win against City 3, a team that included OA Tim King. Fifteen players were fielded in total. Five turned out for more than half the matches: Ray Ren (10/12), on Boards 1 and 2, Rafi'i Al-Akiti (7/12), also on Boards 1 and 2, James Beckinsale (3.5/10), mostly on Board 3, Mr English (4.5/14), mostly on Board 4, and Jerry Yang (2.5/7), mostly on Board 5. The other contributors were: Daniel Savage (1.5/5), Thitipat Ditrungroj (2.5/4), Jeff Abraham (2/4), Ivan Kotegov (0/3), Angus Shen (0/3), Joe Lamond (0/3), Dr Jeffreys (1/2), Richard Oh (0.5/2), Mr Poon (1/1) and James Anderson-Besant (0/1). Ray's excellent score won him two trophies. He was awarded the David Del Nevo Trophy, for the player with the best game points percentage in Division 3; and he was awarded the Lester Millin Memorial Trophy, for the junior with the best game points percentage in any one division of the League. Ray's is the

best individual Abingdon performance in the ODCL since 2010, when Jeffrey Yu scored 9/10 in Division 4, winning the Sam Phipps Trophy.

Abingdon again competed in the prestigious National Schools' Championship. Significant rule changes came into effect this year. No longer is there an age-handicap, so it is now far more advantageous to field sixth form players, and there is now a rapidplay qualifying round for teams with an average grade below 125. Two teams were entered for the local qualifying round at Radley, which took place on Wednesday 7 October. Because Abingdon A and B and Radley A and B were the only four teams preferring this route to qualify, the coaches agreed on an all-play-all tournament of three rounds, with two wins being sufficient for qualification. Our A team qualified by winning all three rounds 6-0. Our B team qualified by beating Radley A 4.5-1.5 and Radley B 6-0. The two teams were as follows. Team A: 1. Joseph Truran, 2. Rafi'i Al-Akiti, 3. Ray Ren, 4. James Beckinsale, 5. Jeff Abraham, 6. Richard Oh/Joe Lamond. Team B: 1. Daniel Savage, 2. Jerry Yang, 3. Ivan Kotegov, 4. Will Taylor, 5. Dashiell Hathaway, 6. Thitipat Ditrungroj/Luke Ffrench. We are grateful to Mr Mosedale at Radley for hosting the contest.

Abingdon A's first encounter following qualification was in a Region 6 quarter-final against Cherwell School, played away on Wednesday 20 January. The

eventual 6-0 victory belied the quality of Cherwell's players, who had knocked out Reading B in the first round.

Abingdon's team on this occasion was: 1. Joseph Truran, 2. Ray Ren, 3. Rafi'i Al-Akiti, 4. James Beckinsale, 5. Richard Oh, 6. Joe Lamond. At the conclusion, Joseph Truran had to retain his composure under real pressure when five of the Cherwell team gathered to watch their last remaining player attempt to salvage half a point.

In the semi-final Abingdon A was up against Reading, who were National Champions two years ago and National Runners-up last year. Improving on last season's 5.5-0.5 away loss against them was an obvious first target, but it was never going to be easy playing a side whose bottom board is still stronger than our top board, though the rating gap has diminished. After the usual tortuous negotiations over dates, we finally arranged to play them at home on Tuesday 23 February. It was an enjoyable occasion, with Abingdon's new Head of Mathematics Mrs Coull, who once taught at Reading, watching from the sidelines. Rafi'i Al-Akiti, who could not play in last year's encounter, won on Board 3, and Jeff Abraham drew on Board 5, making the final score 4.5-1.5.

1. Joseph Truran (141) v Matthew Wadsworth (215)
2. Ray Ren (138) v Anthony Zhang (201)
3. Rafi'i Al-Akiti (136) v Peter Isaksen (164)
4. James Beckinsale (125) v Alex Vanlint (156)
5. Jeff Abraham (116) v Ryan Wong (154)
6. Daniel Savage (108r) v Nikhil Kadambadi (153)

It is a tribute to Abingdon's players that the same Reading team went on to beat MCS by an even greater margin, 5-1, in the Region 6 Final.

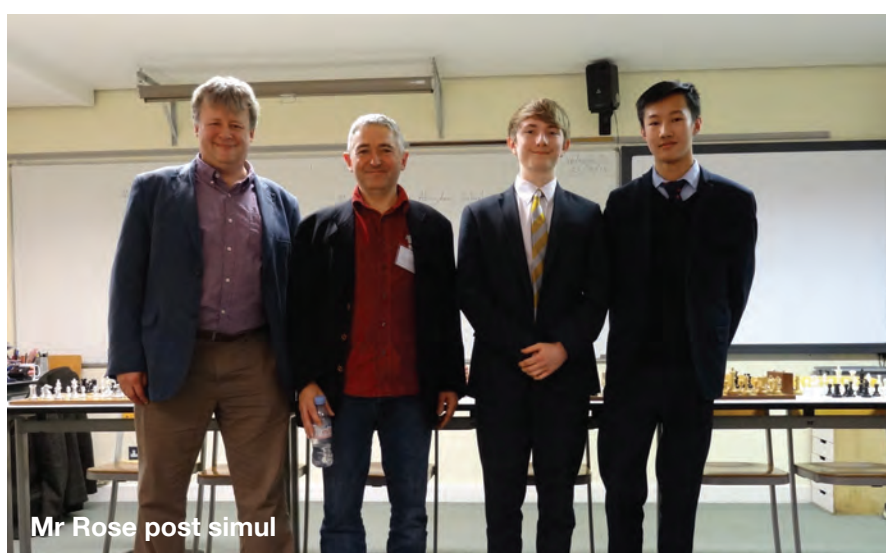
Previously, on Monday 25 January, Abingdon's B team had played away against MCS, transport and supervision being kindly provided by Mr Pemberton, due to a clash of dates. There was a moment when John Place at MCS feared for his team's progress in the



tournament after Jerry Yang came up with a simple but stunning checkmate on Board 2, after just 14 moves! But MCS did get the match under control and finally triumphed 4.5-1.5. It was Dashiell Hathaway, on Board 6, who came up with Abingdon's half point.

1. Daniel Savage (108r) v James Cole (168)
2. Jerry Yang (-) v Alex Keane (128)
3. Ivan Kotegov (-) v Anthony Fox (120)
4. Thitipat Ditrungroj (-) v Tom Shepherd (102)
5. Will Taylor (-) v Vijay Keshav (98r)
6. Dashiell Hathaway (-) v Max Wedmore (101r)

Eton's "Last Chance Saloon," a last chance to get through to the National Finals, was this year renamed the Eton "Repêchage" and took place in Eton's Upper School on Sunday 24 April. Seven Abingdon players took part in the five-round Swiss tournament, attempting to secure one of the last three places in the Championship Finals, there no longer being a Plate. Abingdon started well with a 6-0 win against Cherwell School, and in the second round came close to drawing with the eventual winners Wellington College. But a third round draw with Simon Langton Grammar School and a narrow fourth round loss to Haberdashers' Aske's B left the team with no chance of qualification. The 6-0 win against Haberdashers' Aske's C in the final round put Abingdon on equal points with Westminster and two places ahead of Eton but in only tenth place overall. The team was 1. Ray Ren (3.5/5), 2. Joseph Truran (2.5/5), 3. Rafi'i Al-Akiti (2.5/5), 4. James Beckinsale (4/5), 5. Jeff Abraham (4/5), 6. Jerry Yang (3/3)/ Joe Lamond (0.5/2). The best teams at the Eton Repêchage were formidably strong. Wellington's top three players, for example, were FIDE Master Vladimir Minko (ECF 224, FIDE 2379), surely the strongest player Abingdon has ever encountered in school competition, William Foo (206) and Richard Zhu (191). In previous years Abingdon has enjoyed remarkably good runs at the "Last Chance Saloon," so we should not be too unhappy with the outcome this time round. Next year!



Always popular in the Michaelmas Term is the annual simultaneous display, which took place on 25 November. Oxford City Chess Club's best player Matthew Rose (ECF 216) took on 18 boys and 2 members of staff. The time control was 75 minutes. Mr Wells went through the games of the early finishers. After two and a half hours of exacting play, the final result was a win for Mr Rose by 17.5 to 2.5. Abingdon's top performers were Ray Ren, who won his game in only 22 moves, and Joseph Truran, who fought hard for a draw. The other point scorer was Jerry Yang, who narrowly avoided checkmate by winning on time. Abingdon's full team was 1. Rafi'i Al-Akiti, 2. Angus Shen, 3. James Anderson-Besant, 4. Joseph Truran, 5. Ray Ren, 6. Tony Du, substituting for Jeff Abraham, 7. Daniel Savage, 8. Jerry Yang, 9. Aravind Prabhakaran, 10. Richard Oh, 11. Thitipat Ditrungroj,

12. Lawrence Putt, substituting for James Beckinsale, 13. Joe Lamond, 14. Will Taylor, 15. Luke Ffrench, 16. Dashiell Hathaway, 17. Charlie Franklin, 18. Matthew Fowler, 19. Mr Poon, 20. Mr English. Matthew Rose, who is the Oxford Times chess correspondent, was true to his word and published his game against Ray in the newspaper's regular chess column, on Thursday 10 December. Here is the game: 1 e4 c5 2 c3 g6 3 d4 cxd4 4 cxd4 d5 5 e5 Nh6 6 Nc3 Bg7 7 h3 0-0 8 g4 f6 9 exf6 exf6 10 Bg2 Be6 11 Nge2 Nc6 12 0-0 f5 13 Nf4 Bd7 14 Bxd5+ Kh8 15 Bxc6 bxc6 16 f3 fxg4 17 fxg4 Qb6 18 Be3 Rae8 19 Na4 Qb4 20 a3 Qd6 21 Ng2 Rxf1+ 22 Qxf1 Rxe3 23 Nxe3 Qg3+ 24 Ng2 Bxd4+ White resigned.

On Monday 7 December, Chess Club fielded two teams in the regional stage of the National U13 Team Chess Championship, organised by the English

Chess Federation. Team A was 1. James Beckinsale, 2. Joe Lamond, 3. Will Taylor, 4. Matthew Fowler. Team B was 1. Luke Ffrench, 2. Dashiell Hathaway, 3. Charlie Franklin, 4. Luca Frauenfeld. Because Abingdon's main focus is the standard play U19 National Schools' Championship, this inaugural event was mainly an opportunity for our youngest players to test themselves against some of the best players of the same age in the region, and for that purpose it served very well. After four rounds of rapidplay at MCS, neither Abingdon team had got near the two qualifying places for the National stage, but there was one outstanding individual performance, and that was by James Beckinsale, who ended on 3 wins out of 4 on the top board for team A. The remainder enjoyed some high quality entertainment and training, which I am sure will be a spur to future development.

House Chess took place on Wednesday 9 December alongside the Inter-House Sports Competitions. Expert observers felt that it was the best competition yet, featuring some exceptionally high quality games. After four rounds of rapidplay, the winners were James's, led by Rafi'i Al-Akiti, who defeated Franklin's in the last round to retain the trophy. These are the full results: 1. James's (3/4), 2. Franklin's (3/4), 3. Austin (2.5/4), 4. Crescent (2.5/4), 5. Christodoulou's (2/4), 6. Cotton's (1.5/4), 7. Morgan's (1.5/4), 8. School (1.5/4), 9. Southwell-



Sander's (0.5/4). (Teams tied on match points were separated first by game point difference, then by the head-to-head result, and finally by points won on Board 1.) Thanks to arbiters Dr Burnand and Dr Jeffreys and to scorer Mr Poon for helping the competition run smoothly.

In the Michaelmas Term, boys also competed in knockout tournaments in the sixth form, Middle School and Lower School, though the sixth form final was not played until Tuesday 22 March. On that occasion, in one of the highest quality encounters in recent years, Ray Ren, playing Black, defeated Joseph Truran to win the Harding Cup. Earlier, Richard Oh had defeated Alister Jamieson to win the Pearce Cup

and James Beckinsale had defeated Matthew Fowler to win the Nightall-Jakubovics Cup. Just getting to the final was a considerable achievement. There were 19, 72 and 25 entrants respectively in the sixth form, Middle School and Lower School tournaments. Matthew Fowler did particularly well to get past several Lower School team players.

The main event of the Lent Term was the school stage of the UK Chess Challenge, which consists of seven weekly rounds of rapidplay. From 30 Abingdon entrants, there were 19 who earned sufficient points to qualify for the Berkshire "Megafinal." Ray Ren and Rafi'i Al-Akiti were joint School Champions, both winning 20 of the 21 available points, only drawing when they played against each other. Joint third were Joseph Truran, James Beckinsale and Richard Oh on 17 points. Qualifying on 15 points were Joe Lamond, Angus Shen, Daniel Savage, Ivan Kotegov, Jerry Yang, James Anderson-Besant, Thitipat Ditrungroj, Will Taylor, Dashiell Hathaway and Charlie Franklin. Finally, qualifying as the best in their age category were third years Alister Jamieson, Tong Tong Sukamongkol and Alexander Pennington, all on 13 points, and first year Matthew Fowler, also on 13 points.

On Saturday 20 February, nine Abingdon players travelled to St Joseph's Catholic College, Swindon, for the Wiltshire Junior Open Chess Championships. Seven players were entered in the Intermediates' and two





in the Beginners' section. All played six rounds of rapidplay, with a time control of 30 minutes. The winner of the Intermediates' section, finishing ahead of 24 other players, was Rafi'i Al-Akiti, who won all his games. The other intermediates were Richard Oh (4/6), Joe Lamond (3.5/6), Daniel Savage (3.5/6), Dashiell Hathaway (3/6), Alister Jamieson (3/6) and Luke French (2/6). In the 25 strong Beginners' section, Saxon Supple (5/6) was joint second and Lawrence Putt (4/6) joint fourth. Overall, Abingdon players won about two thirds of their games.

On Bank Holiday Monday 2 May, 12 Abingdon players travelled to The Downs School, Compton to compete at 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 five had qualified for the Southern "Gigafinal" in July. The qualifiers were all from the combined U14 to U18 sections. They were U18 winner James Anderson-Besant (2/6), U17 winner Ray Ren (5.5/6), Joseph Truran (4/6), Jerry Yang (4/6) and U15 winner Richard Oh (3/6). Joe Lamond (3.5/6) also performed well in the U13 section, only narrowly missing out on qualification. The other participants were Daniel Savage (3/6), Tong Tong Sukamongkol (3/6), Alister Jamieson (1/6), Charlie Franklin (1.5/6), Dashiell Hathaway (1/6) and Matthew Fowler (0.5/6).

Chess Club continued at a more relaxed pace in the Summer Term, meeting just twice a week on Tuesdays and



Wednesdays. Practice was sharpened with the introduction of continuous all-play-all tournaments, one for recreational and one for squad players. One warm Wednesday afternoon, we played tag chess in the Sculpture Garden on the Club's giant set. The team of Ren and Ditrungroj caused an early upset when they defeated Wells and Zhou. Afterwards, conferring was allowed.

The King Trophy, named after Old Abingdonian and former Master in Charge of Chess Tim King, was awarded this year to Rafi'i Al-Akiti, who will be going on to read Contemporary Chinese Studies at Nottingham University. It will be clear to readers of this and of previous Chess Club reports in *the Abingdonian* that Rafi'i has made a major contribution to the success of Chess Club during his time at Abingdon.

He is one of the most talented players to be awarded the King Trophy, being blessed with a particularly impressive big match temperament. His 2014 win in the match against King Edward's School, Birmingham in the last sixteen of the National Schools' Championship is especially memorable.

Thanks as ever go to the Club's terrific coaching team: Grandmaster Wells, Dr Burnand, Dr Jeffreys and Mr Poon. And congratulations to Mr Truran OBE on becoming Chief Executive of the English Chess Federation. Asked in an interview for *Chess Magazine* whether chess can make one happy, he replied, quoting Tarrasch, "Schach hat wie die Liebe, wie die Musik die Fähigkeit, den Menschen glücklich zu machen." Could not agree more.

Andrew English

Hockey

Abingdon School Hockey Club once again has had a fantastic season, with over 160 pupils participating and 16 teams being fielded on a weekly basis in the Independent Schools' Hockey League. The fixture card continues to be very competitive with fixtures against schools such as Eton, Marlborough, and Wellington College and again Abingdon continues to punch above its weight and compete regularly with these larger establishments.

The season started during the Michaelmas Term with the England Hockey Indoor Competition. Abingdon entered both an U18 and an U16 team; with limited indoor exposure the boys competed incredibly well, a huge credit to them being able to transfer their skills from outdoor to the faster indoor game. Both teams made it through the county and regional rounds, to then come up against some very strong opposition in the first round of the National Competition. Again Abingdon showed some incredible spirit but unfortunately came off second best to the likes of Whitgift and Dr Challoner's. A huge learning curve for the boys, but an excellent way to kick off the season.

During this time, the Lower School were exposed to their first taste of hockey, with a brilliant, fun and exciting indoor quicksticks league. All were assigned to a country and battled it out in a round robin each week, with music, chanting and excellent support from the 6th form. Each week provided some epic matches. Well done to all those involved!

During January, the 1st team squad left on their annual tour of Barcelona. It was a brilliant tour, with master-classes led by internationals everyday and matches against local teams in the evening. The boys had a fantastic time. They were exposed to the top tier of Spanish hockey, meaning quick learning was essential. Led by captain Dom MacLachlan, the boys played exceptionally well, even competing on the last day when legs were tired against the Catalan U18 national team. As well as the hockey, the boys got to enjoy what Barcelona had to offer. Overall an eye-opening experience and one which we will endeavour to repeat next year.

The hockey season started in fantastic fashion in January with an overall all-block win against St Edward's. All teams played some free flowing hockey and it was great to see so many pupils involved and enjoying

playing. There were countless more memorable moments. Unfortunately this report will not be able to mention all of them, but hopefully the snippets below will give you a flavour of what it means to be part of a team and the Hockey Club.

The U16Bs, against Cheltenham, were down to 9 men on a sweltering day. Led by Mr Ghosh, the boys rallied together and held out for what has been described as one of the best defensive efforts ever seen by a side in recent years - a huge credit to those involved and the leadership of the team.

The U16As, played in one of the best-spirited tour matches against Bangor School from Ireland. They were a great credit to the school showing off the best qualities of an Abingdon pupil.

The 1st XI, after a fantastic season, recorded an overall win rate of 71%. In their last match they took on Bradfield, and played the most overall accomplished performance that I have seen from a 1st XI at this school, displaying pace, defensive grit and attacking flair. It was mesmerising stuff to watch.

The U13As, led by Mr Broadbent and Mr Hunter, bettered the 1st XI with a





win percentage of 72%. This was on top of qualifying for the Nationals with a very impressive win against MCS at Oxford Hawks.

The U14 Cs, after a tough start to the season, found their feet in what can only be called a goal fest against Cheltenham winning 4-0, after not scoring for three games.

As well as the above, there have been many personal achievements this year too. Over 26 boys have been involved in their county set ups, representing their county most weeks throughout the season. 6 boys have made the step up to regional level, playing in the Future's Cup and participating in JRPC sessions. A highlight has to be Max Carter Keall; Max has been selected for the England U16 team and played in two test matches so far against Holland and Scotland. During the summer he played against Belgium, and Germany as well as having the 6-Nations Tournament in August.

I would like to finish this report by saying thank you; firstly to Andrew Hall and Raj Ghosh, who have been exceptional coaches during their time at Abingdon, inspiring many hockey players to go on to bigger and better things. I would also like to thank those pupils who are leaving; you have been incredible role models for the rest of the school, leading from the front and improving year on year. A special



mention to Dominic MacLachlan, who has not only led the 1st team with exceptional passion and dedication but is also someone who has been at the forefront of everything that has happened in the Hockey Club over the past few years.

Lastly to the parental body, 'The Abingdon Griffins', who have raised

funds for hockey sticks, benefiting all those who are starting out on their hockey career, scoreboards up at Tilsley park and specialist coaching from international hockey stars for all the boys to enjoy.

Overall a fantastic season! Bring on next year!

Olly Deasy

French Exchange

Un échange scolaire est quand deux écoles se rencontrent et chaque élève reste avec une des familles françaises ou anglaises. Pendant le séjour en France, quand le correspondant va à l'école, on passe du temps avec ses amis qui font aussi l'échange et on visite plein de sites historiques et culturels.

Moi, j'ai fait l'échange avec le Lycée de la Nativité à Aix-en-Provence et j'ai passé de très bons moments. Je me suis vraiment bien entendu avec ma correspondante et sa famille. Elle avait deux frères qui étaient vachement sympas car ils m'ont aidé à faire mes devoirs de français! En plus, sa mère et son père ont cuisiné de très bons plats, donc on a mangé beaucoup. Quand ma "corres" était à l'école, j'ai fait beaucoup de choses avec mes amis. Par exemple nous sommes allés au Pont du Gard. C'est un pont romain ancien et très célèbre. C'était amusant car nous avons marché le long de la partie supérieure du pont. Nous avons aussi fait d'autres choses telles que la visite d'Aix, de Marseille et son stade vélodrome, et nous avons suivi les pas de Van Gogh à Arles. Je me suis vraiment bien amusé.

Je suis allé en France pendant les vacances de Pâques et la famille de ma correspondante m'a invité à nouveau. Je vais y aller cet été avec un de mes amis. Je pense que ce sera formidable parce que pendant l'été il fait vraiment chaud dans le sud de la France. Si j'avais le choix, je ferais à nouveau l'échange parce que cette expérience a été vraiment

bénéfique pour mon français. J'ai passé d'excellents moments avec mes amis et je me suis fait de nouveaux amis français.

A school exchange is when two schools meet and each pupil stays with a French or an English family. During the stay in France, when the exchange partners go to lessons, you get to spend time with your friends who are also on the exchange and visit many great sites and cities.

I did the exchange with the lycée La Nativité in Aix-en-Provence and I had a very good time there. I got on really well with my French exchange partner and her family. She had two brothers who were very nice because they helped me with my French prep. In addition, her parents cooked delicious meals and we ate a lot! When my exchange partner was at school, I did a lot of visits with my friends. For example, we visited the Pont du Gard; a very famous Roman aqueduct. It was fun because we walked at the very top of the bridge, where the water used to flow in Roman days. We also visited Aix, Marseille and its football stadium and we followed in Van Gogh's footsteps in Arles.

The exchange took place during the Easter holiday and my exchange partner's family has invited me to visit them again. I will go there in the summer with a friend. I think that it will be great because in the summer the weather is very hot in the south of France. If I had the choice, I would do the exchange again because it was a very positive experience and it helped me improve my French. I had a great time and made new French friends.

Benjamin Adams, 4REH

On Friday 25th March, very early in the morning, 33 4th Year boys and 3 members of staff set off for Aix-en-

Provence. After a very relaxing trip across France on the Eurostar, the group arrived at the lycée la Nativité where they were introduced to their "corres" (exchange partner). The first test was to know whether to shake hands or whether to greet the French way with a kiss on each cheek. After a tour of the school, it was time for our pupils to be brave and go home with their exchange partners to spend a three-day-Easter weekend with their French host families. This gave the boys the opportunity to experience how Easter is celebrated in France – no Easter bunny, but Easter bells – and to do a wide range of activities such as going to the Alps, swimming in a 14 degree Mediterranean sea, or even attending a show by Cirque du Soleil.

After a busy weekend, on Tuesday the group set off to Marseille, the second largest city in France. The visit started with a guided tour by coach, where the stunning coastline could be appreciated by all, and after climbing a few sets of steps, the beautiful Notre Dame de la Garde church could be admired. The afternoon was spent at the Stade Vélodrome where boys could show off their knowledge of the local OM football team. The following morning was spent in the beautiful city of Aix-en-Provence. Boys enjoyed a guided tour and learnt to recognise 17th and 18th century architecture before spending the afternoon with their exchange partners. Thursday gave the group the opportunity to explore the area further afield with an interesting visit to the Pont du Gard aqueduct, one of the most beautiful Roman constructions in the region. In the afternoon, the group visited Arles. On Friday, after having attended a few lessons at the lycée, it was time to hop on the Eurostar again to go home. The boys made the most of their stay to practise their spoken French and to fully immerse themselves in French culture.

The French party visited Abingdon School in May. For the majority of the week, they enjoyed sunny weather conditions. They visited Bath, Warwick Castle, Cadbury World, Oxford and London, learnt how to play croquet and they sampled Indian food on the last evening of their stay. This was a very positive and successful experience. Vivement l'année prochaine!

Maud Cottrell





Battlefields Trip

On the 13 April, 45 third year pupils embarked on the annual trip to the battlefields of the Great War in northern France and Belgium. We left from Abingdon early on a Wednesday morning and after a long journey arrived at the Belgian Town of Ypres. Firstly we visited the British cemetery at Lijssenthoek, where we learnt about the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Afterwards we visited the German cemetery at Langemarck and then went on to visit the largest Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery in the world at Tyne Cot. We paid our respects at the grave of an Old Abingdonian from the Lancashire Fusiliers, Pt P N Miles. We also visited a reconstructed German trench system at Bayernwald, overlooking the town of Ypres and after dinner attended the

'Last Post' ceremony at the Menin Gate, which was very moving. After a quick visit to the chocolatiers, we then travelled to our hotel in Lille.

On the second day, the group travelled south to the battlefields of the Somme. We first visited the old British front line trenches at Serre and then went to 'Ocean Villas' for lunch and a hands-on demonstration of the kit and uniform of a normal British Tommy. After this we visited Newfoundland Park and Ulster Tower. Nearby was Thiepval Memorial, on which the names of tens of thousands of soldiers whose remains were never found are inscribed. The final visit of the day was to the Lochnagar Crater, the place where one of the British mines exploded on the first day of the Somme, leaving behind a huge hole where German fortifications once were. After a great dinner in the town of Albert, the group was whisked

away back to the hotel.

The final day began with a journey to the town of Arras, just north of the Somme where extensive tunnelling operations took place before the 1917 offensive. We descended in an elevator and toured the caves to see original carvings on the wall by soldiers who had fought in the battle. After this we visited a memorial to the Royal Flying Corps, on which a number of OAs were remembered, including T H Buswell. Following a packed lunch in the town square, we embarked on our final visit of the trip which was to the memorial at Vimy Ridge. After this we journeyed back to school.

Overall I found the trip extremely fun and memorable and would like to thank Mr McGill, Mr Hallinan, Mr Jackson and Mrs Wenham for accompanying us.

Tristan Tonks, 3RJG



Summer 2016



Tennis

2016 was a super season, during which the Tennis Club won county titles and reached the regional knockout stages of the U13 and U15 Aegon competitions.

These results would not have been achieved were it not for the players' commitment to training throughout the year, the continuous support of parents, the devoted staff, and our fantastic tennis professional Martin Butler. Martin is a great coach whose eye for detail enables him to add significant value to players of all abilities.

Pre-season Tennis Camp

During the Easter holiday, a group of boys drawn from all years attended an intensive pre-season camp on our very own hard courts. This involved three hours of tennis in the mornings for our junior players and three hours of tennis in the afternoons for our senior team players.

The players showed determination

and grit to push beyond their respective comfort zones. The video analyses demonstrated significant improvement in technique over the course of the week.

Independent Schools' League

The seniors and U16 teams finished second in their groups. The U15 team finished fourth and the U14 team third in their group.

'Radlingdon' Open Tennis Tournament

The top 32 pairs from Abingdon and Radley (128 players in total) battled it out on Saturday 11 June at the inaugural 'Radlingdon' Open Tennis Tournament, hosted by Radley (yes, they have 32 courts). In the main draw, Sam Christie and Max Hall got to the final and lost to a very strong Radley pairing. In the plate, two Abingdon pairs made it to the final. George Strange and Edward Adamson managed to defeat Rory Parsons and Angus Williams in the all-Abingdon affair. It was a good day for Abingdon tennis, with 75% of the pairs in the final stage of the

tournament being from Abingdon School. Other notable performances came from the following players: William Pearson, Lafite Lo, George Jeffreys, Andrey Gurkov, Aron Lavis, Francesco Cipriani, Cameron Yu and Jimmy Strange.

Aegon Oxfordshire Tournament

The U15 team and U13 team won all of their matches in the competition and successfully retained the Aegon Oxfordshire title.

Eton Pairs Tournament

The U15 IV of Sam Christie, Max Hall, Ethan McLellan and Jimmy Strange finished 4th out of 16.

Inter Schools Matches

The seniors enjoyed many convincing wins, including over MCS in the Nationals, and against Stowe, St Edward's, Bradfield, Oratory and Marlborough. Many thanks to the departing Upper Sixth tennis players, in particular Andrey Gurkov and Joseph Kelly, for their contribution to the Tennis Club over many years.

The U16s had a very short season due to examinations. However, many boys continued playing and representing higher, more senior, teams. This commitment shows excellent time management and dedication to Abingdon tennis. Particular thanks go to Lafite Lo and William Pearson.

A slow start to the season for the U15s against Wellington was rapidly turned round. There were wins against Stowe, St Edward's, Bradfield, Shiplake, Marlborough and Warwick. Well done to all for their tenacity on court. An impressive win / loss ratio!

In the younger years, the U14s had a solid season that included victories over Marlborough and Warwick. Lower School boys show a lot of interest in tennis, which bodes well for the future. There was success for both the U13s and U12s against Moulsholf, and for our strong U13A team against MCS, Warwick and Dragon.

Ben Ponniah



Young Enterprise

Wabi-Sabi, a Young Enterprise company run by 16 fourth years, made it past several stages of competition last year to be ranked in the top five YE companies in the UK. The company sold a range of cooking products designed to get teenagers away from junk food and ready meals and into cooking for themselves with fresh ingredients. Our flagship product, *the Hungry All the Time Teenage Cookbook*, was a collection of simple but tasty recipes written in such a way that even a total novice like myself could follow them.

Although we ended up doing much better than any of us had dared to imagine, we began with utter shambles. If the reader had been with us for each step of the journey I am about to describe, I am confident that they would be every bit as surprised by this result as we were.

Young Enterprise, for those unfamiliar with it, is a scheme where teenagers are left pretty much to their own devices to set up a proper company with bank accounts and directors and all the challenges you would expect to face

in the world of business. To succeed in this exercise, we first needed a product to sell.

Following several weeks in which pretty much every other company in our year had figured out where they were going and had set off with some purpose, Wabi-Sabi (or Abingdon Purple, as it was still known after our failure to agree on a new name) had moved barely beyond square one. Many ideas were banded around the boardroom, but for weeks none of them really seemed to add up to anything viable. We thought about up-cycling old bits of cans and scrap metal, but then realised none of us were any good at DT; we considered selling whiteboard phone-cases, but they were a write-off from the start. It got to the point where we were two weeks away from our first selling opportunity – the St Helen's Christmas Fair – and we still hadn't got it together.

At each event we attended, we told the judges the story of how we came up with *the Hungry All the Time Teenage Cookbook*, designed it, wrote it, collated, revised and checked the recipes, formatted them and then printed it, all in a matter of two weeks, as an example of the efficiency of our company under pressure. In fact, it was just a testament to how hard we were prepared to work after we'd realised we

had procrastinated for too long and left it to the last possible moment.

In the end, the book actually turned out to be successful thanks to the long hours spent reorganising the company structure, fixing text and obsessively checking; special credit must go to Felipe Jin Li, deputy managing director and design director, who created the eye-catching graphics and layout from scratch, and to Jamie Chick, marketing director, who managed not to lose his mind after late-night scrolling through the reams and reams of print.

The name fell into place following a suggestion from Nathaniel Reading, director of the elusive 'manufacturing department' and famed for his unrestrained enthusiasm in meetings – 'Wabi-Sabi' is the Japanese idea that beauty can be found in imperfection. The name still inspires laughter in the group, but our choice was validated when we discovered that the judges at all of the stages of the YE competition really seemed to like it – something about combining imperfect ingredients into beautiful cooking, as daft as it might sound, appealed to them. Here's a pro-tip then, for anyone looking to do YE in the future: choose a name with a story behind it; it gives you a good opportunity to talk about the ideas behind your business.





We did have some fairly major disasters along the way, such as when the finance department revealed that it had lost track of half the money, and we had to bring Theo Sandstrom, the new finance director, in to trawl through the spreadsheets for hours to locate the missing cash. Here's another pro-tip: every time someone makes a sale, make sure it's properly logged with the finance guys – we learned this the hard way!

But in the end we managed to turn a profit of about £2000, and our book reached hundreds of teenagers who, hopefully, have benefitted from our efforts. We even secured endorsement

from Mary Berry, herself a famed cook, and the cooking company Smeg, who liked what we were doing.

However, when the selling season drew to an end after Cowley Trade Fair and the competition stage loomed on the horizon, we knew we had to buck up our ideas if we were to make it through even the first stage of judging. Young Enterprise judging is based on several criteria: quality of the company report (the long document that detailed our performance throughout the year); our trade stand's appearance and the interview we gave to the judges in front of it; and our presentation, given to an audience up on stage. In typical Wabi-Sabi fashion, all of these things were completed as close to the deadline as possible – I still remember the frantic last-minute rehearsals in music practice rooms, and the finalising of the display stand on the very morning of the national finals.

We managed to get through each stage of the competition (three in total) to reach the nationals, honing our technique each time until by the end, the presentation was polished, the stand looked fantastic and our report was actually pretty professional. I think the skills we picked up here, as we refined each step, will be skills we continue to use well into the future. The finals themselves were brilliant – two nights spent in a student flat in London,

competing at the Emirates Stadium by day, and out in the West-End by night. The stories we have to tell from that experience – meeting amazing people, talking to such a big audience and even appearing on breakfast TV – will stay with us for the rest of our lives. The presentation went better than we'd ever rehearsed it (which was a relief) thanks to the efforts of Marco Cerundolo (sales), and Yazan Odeh (operations), who were unfortunate enough to have to present with me. Practically the whole team turned up to cheer, which was hugely encouraging, and in the end we came in the top five YE companies in the UK, making us the highest placed fourth year team. We were all really proud of what we had managed to accomplish throughout the year, and (more than anything) surprised by this sudden reversal of fortune.

We're all very grateful to our business advisors Paul and Sally and centre leads Mr Fieldhouse and Mrs Griffiths for guiding us through the process. I was proud to be a part of this team: friendships were forged, great things were accomplished, and we hope, as we move forward outside of YE (opening as a limited company), that Wabi-Sabi will continue to build on its success.

Alasdair Czaplewski, 4DMH



Swimming

The 2015 -16 swimming season has seen the Abingdon School Swimming Club go from strength to strength, with a number of new school records broken, debuts made, and for the first time, all three age group squads qualifying for national finals; a terrific achievement. Under the guidance of Head Coach Amanda Ford, all three age groups have certainly exceeded their expectations, and it has been pleasing to see the School continue to make great strides on the Schools' swimming circuit.

Further down the school it has been satisfying to see a number of the performance squad swimmers taking on leadership and coaching responsibilities, as the Lower School additional swimming lessons continue to grow year on year. It is a real pleasure to see the progress made by these younger pupils, guided, motivated and encouraged by older members of the Swimming Club.

ESSA Secondary Schools' Relay Championships.

Having qualified through the regional round in late September, for the first time in the Swimming Club's history, all three age group squads qualified for the ESSA Relay finals held at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Pool. In what was

a highly competitive environment, all three of the squads swam exceptionally well against strong opposition including Millfield School, Plymouth College and Mount Kelly School, swimming quicker than in qualifying in every race, whilst setting five new school records. Having qualified for the finals in 30th place, the senior squad epitomised the spirit of all involved by finishing 15th overall.

The Bromsgrove Relays

Abingdon were looking to continue their momentum at this event, and didn't disappoint. The youthful U15 team, including two U13 swimmers, swam exceptionally, finishing third and second in the 4 x 50m medley and 4 x 50m freestyle relay finals respectively, whilst, the U18 squad won the 4 x 50m medley relay final in a time of 1:57.81, and then went on to double up, winning the 4 x 50m freestyle relay in a time of 1:45.24. This was a terrific achievement against a field which included Warwick, Marlborough and Repton.

Warwick 100's

In early February, all three age groups attended a highly competitive afternoon of swimming, against tough opposition from schools including Harrow, Warwick, Whitgift, Bedford and Cheltenham; and as anticipated stepped up to the challenge, consistently placing in the top three. Both Daniel McNamara and

Chawindhorn Cheevadhanarak led from the front, achieving first place in respectively the 100m breaststroke and 100m butterfly, whilst the U15 Medley relay squad also finished in first place. Overall the Abingdon squad finished in second place, an improvement on last year's performance, with only Harrow School collecting more points during the afternoon.

Abingdon Sprints

In mid-February the Swimming Club hosted its third annual Abingdon Sprints Gala, welcoming nine schools from across the region. On home territory, the Abingdon boys swam exceptionally, consistently placing in the top two to finish overall age group winners in all three age groups for the second consecutive year.

The Harrow Gala

When given the chance to go head to head with Harrow Swimming Club, the Abingdon squad knew they were up against tough opposition, having crossed paths at previous events. With a number of boys stepping up to represent the School for the first time, this gala had a great air of excitement. Out to prove a point, the U16 squad beat their Harrow counterparts 108 points to 68, whilst the U18s overcame their opposition by a much narrower margin, 90 points to 86. Unfortunately on this occasion the U14 squad



couldn't make it a clean sweep, losing narrowly, 84 points to 92. However the overall result, an Abingdon win, was an excellent achievement against very talented opposition.

The Bath and Otter Cup

Competing at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Pool for the second time this year, the U18 squad attended this prestigious event, challenging themselves against over 90 of the top schools in the country. After a promising swim in the heats, the Abingdon squad qualified for the final of the 4 x 100m, eventually finishing in 10th place in the country in what was an exceptionally fast race, the winning school clocking 3:40.62.

The Griffen Gala

The season finale was the annual Griffen Gala, in which the Abingdon squad teamed up with St Helen and St Katharine to swim against the local club, Abingdon Vale Swimming Club. It was an evening in which four U14 school records were broken. All three of the Abingdon age groups beat their opposition from Abingdon Vale, the U18s 96 points to 80, the U16s 94 points to 82, and the U14s 90 points to 84, giving the Abingdon boys overall victory by 34 points. It was a fitting way to end for those representing the school for the last time, bringing the curtain down on a highly successful

season for the Swimming Club upon which it can build upon next year.

It has been a great year for Abingdon's swimmers. The club continues to grow, even though 2016 was the final year for many of the clubs long standing members. Murray Eccleston, Joseph Bradshaw, Alex Monaco, Solomon English, Boris Mang and Michael Fabes leave after a number of successful years. They have been omnipresent at galas and most training sessions, encouraging the young up and coming talent within the squad. With such a strong set of role models there is a great bond between the boys that swim for the school, especially as many of them have such strong ties to the local team of Abingdon Vale. Daniel McNamara

has had some fine results this year, both when representing the school and also as an individual at county level for his club. Simon Chester, Chawindhorn Cheevadhanarak and Kai Miles have also made great progress this year. Under the guidance of Miss Jenkins, other swimmers who do not train out of school have made pleasing progress, with Silas Gill, Jack Johnson, Edward Purkhardt having represented the school and showing that there is now real depth to the squad. We now look forward to next year, for which Mrs Ford is confident that her young protégées can step up and fill the void.

Dan Mason and Amanda Ford



Rowing

In the summer of 2015, many of the boys in my year group saw the boathouse for the first time when we attended the summer camp, a trial week of rowing for those of us interested in taking up the sport in the near future. It was not until January of the next year that we would get to row on the water again.

At the very beginning, rowing was slightly odd; unlike most other sports, we had to find our own way to the Boathouse which was 1.6 km away. We had no real idea how challenging rowing would prove to be, and the motivation one had to have in order to excel. Training, early on, consisted of “mobilisation” exercises (stretches and warm-ups) and work on ergos to get to grips with the correct technique. Of course, it was not long before all of us transferred these skills onto the water. Throughout the third year, we were sculling rather than sweeping - the difference being that sculling is with two blades and sweeping is with only one.

Training sessions were soon followed by competitions and crew selections as we were assigned teams and coaches, culminating in the first major competition at the Sculling Head on Dorney Lake, venue for the rowing in the 2012 London Olympics. The next major competition was the National Schools' Regatta, our first regatta of the year. It consisted of a time trial, dividing each crew into categories for the races to follow. Despite vastly better pace from the A crew, the B Octo progressed to



decisive victory in their lower division.

Next for the A crew was Marlow Regatta, where despite facing a challenging 2km race at Dorney, they finished a brilliant second place in their division. BASHER was next up for the B crew, and having learnt the importance of the time trial we came away with tenth place in the whole event (a high position considering we were against multiple J15 crews and some seniors).

The last event of the year was Reading Regatta. The B Octo won in their division and conversely the A Octo was beaten by Norwich in their second race. However, later in the afternoon came the quads, for which the A and B crew were split up. Following an early disqualification for the As, the B and C quad came to face each other in the final race of their division. The C quad beat the B quad by a considerable

length, this meant that three members of the B crew took their second tankard of the day (Hugo Clark, Peter Mason and Luc Jersing).

To prepare for all these events we had lots of training sessions – these were sometimes a pain to get to on time, especially on a Saturday morning, and were always hard work. As the year continued, all training sessions became more enjoyable but more painful as we were pushing ourselves harder. Overall the first year of our rowing careers was great fun and gave us a flavour of the sport, but in hindsight we also developed countless skills that will be useful in years to come, and not just in rowing. The most important lesson we learnt wasn't simply how to ‘bust a gut’ in a race, but how to co-operate as a team.

Hayden Ramm, 3RJG



Lower School Gala Concert

The musical year ended with a bang with the Lower School Gala Concert! A large audience was treated to one of the widest arrays of musical styles that has been displayed by Lower School pupils in recent years – there was everything from Oskar Muller with his incredibly enticing self-composed music technology piece *Rise and Fall* which

the audience went wild about, to – at the other end of the spectrum – the first ever Lower School bassoon quintet, with Noah Chakravarti, Dan Cooper, Alex Oldham, Joshua Roche, and Luc Tucker producing a deep and absorbing sound that showed great skill, and, through Joshua Roche's accompanying dance moves, a touch of humour!

To kick off the night, the whole of Lower School took to the stage as a massed choir to perform the famous number, one

hit *Happy* by Pharrell Williams, under the baton of Lachlan Jones. They, in my opinion, did this well-known piece justice, with brilliant harmonies at the bridge and strong pinpoint singing, on the note throughout. We also had Dashiell Hathaway with the *Sarabande in G minor* on the violin. He played this incredibly, with strong and powerful dynamics showing his virtuoso playing. Ben Shaw on piano gave us a beautiful version of *Over the Rainbow*, while Hugo Wade played *En Irlande* on French Horn. He performed this with a rich texture that was sublime, producing a velvety smooth sound. Several first years also stepped up to perform solos for the first time on the Amey Theatre stage, including Noah Chakravarti, Andy Liu and Luka Shanidze on piano, Jack Tilley on trumpet, and Oliver Liddell with his beautiful vocal performance.

When it came to instrumental ensembles, we had Junior Strings, directed by Aliye Francis, playing *Kanon*, *Adagio from Trio Sonata in D*, and *La Cumparsita*, the Junior Blues, directed by Paul Owen, with a medley of rock, including *Iron Man*, *Smoke on the Water*, *Eye of the Tiger* and the *Mission Impossible Theme*, and finally the Lower School Band, with *Colours of the Wind* and *A Day in Majorca*, directed by Nigel Sommerville. These were all very good, with the performers all playing together well, and not one mistake was audible.

I think it is fair to say the future of music at Abingdon School is unequivocally in safe hands.

Owen Ravden, 2SCVM





Sailing Independent Schools' League

A group of 14 boys chose to undertake their Silver Duke of Edinburgh award by sail, and after a very successful practice expedition back in October, we were all eager to get back on the water once again.

After term had ended at lunch time on Thursday 24 March, we first took a trip to Tesco, where one crew managed to initially overspend by over £100, and then began our trip down to Lymington Marina. We were split up into two crews of seven, with each boat having an assessor on it. The boats used were 40 foot Bavaria Yachts, which were 8 feet longer than the boats used on the practice expedition, necessitated

by the increase in crew size by two people. The first day of sailing followed the trend set by the practice expedition, with temperatures reaching 25 degrees celsius at times and there being relatively little wind. However, we were warned not to become too accustomed to the weather as the forecast predicted a sudden change in conditions, with gale force 8 winds possible. After a peaceful sail from Lymington Yacht Haven over to Cowes on the Isle Of Wight, we all feared what tomorrow might bring.

Once we had woken up the next day, we realised that the weather forecast had been correct and, in fact, might even have underestimated the strength of the wind at times. Unfortunately, the wind was coming from exactly where we wanted to go to on the second day and this resulted in us having to 'beat' up wind, which made the trip a lot longer than it should have been. The winds on both day two and day three reached up to 40 knots at stages and this resulted in at least three boats giving out a

'mayday' call, such was the danger of the conditions.

As with any other Duke of Edinburgh expedition, whilst the activity undertaken during the day is the key feature of the trip, the task of preparing meals in the mornings and evenings is also something on which you are assessed. With us being on a boat, the quality of meals we could produce was definitely higher than that of the ones you would be able to make on a normal walking DofE expedition. One evening, on our boat, James Hall and Joe Roads spent over three hours making what they claimed to be their 'speciality meal', which is a great deal longer than what is usually spent on DofE cooking.

After fighting the elements for four days, in probably some of the worst conditions any of us will face whilst we are sailing, all of us received our DofE Silver awards.

Day Skipper

After successfully completing our Duke



of Edinburgh award, 12 out of the 14 chose to also undertake the Day Skipper qualification. This qualification allows you to 'charter boats in surrounding, known waters, in daylight hours'.

For our Day Skipper, we returned to Plymouth Sailing School, not to Lymington but where we had also completed our practice expedition for our DofE.

On the course, we were split up into three smaller crews of four, with one teacher and one assessor on each boat.

The course consisted of us being assessed over both practical and theoretical skills; at the end of the week, the assessor would have to make a decision as to whether he was confident about us being able to safely handle a group of people out at sea. The course was five days long, which allowed the assessor to make a good judgement over our sailing skills and ultimately come to a decision.

The first day had perfect sailing conditions, sunny with some wind, and on this day we sailed all the way along the coastline from Plymouth Yacht Haven to the Cornish town of Fowey. After spending the night in Fowey, we awoke to find extremely strong winds and concluded that it would not be the best idea to head out to sea. This resulted in us being tested on our boat handling skills in the harbour (consisting of picking up mooring buoys under motor and sail, landing a boat beside a pontoon and being comfortable manoeuvring the boat in both forwards and reverse gear). We then set off at about 7:30pm to sail back to Plymouth on a 4.5 hour trip, which also allowed us to get some night hours under our belt.

After the five days, with trips back and forth to the River Yealm and Fowey, 11 out of the 12 of us passed to become qualified Day Skippers.

Evan Littler, 5DGA





Leavers' Day

'Ladies and gentlemen, welcome all to our morning of celebration of the end of our years as students, of not only Abingdon, but of school in general. I imagine it's difficult for most of you to remember what life is like without the early start to catch the bus, the footy at lunch time and the emails from Miss Spurling-Holt about general studies arrangements. It's a daunting prospect to be entering the unknown, as it was years ago when you first started school; I'm sure you can all remember that time too well.

I remember my first day at Abingdon when I joined in the fourth year. I wore my new pullover under my blazer on a 26 degree September day because I didn't realise you could wear a blazer without one. On top of that I skipped my fourth lesson because I didn't realise it existed. It didn't all go as smoothly as I would have liked. But it didn't matter; making mistakes is part of what life at school is. I'm sure that you all have similar stories to tell and, whether you like it or not, they'll stick with you.

Thankfully, the teachers here are forgiving, and more than that, they genuinely care about us. I need to apologise now to my tutor, Mr Davies, for taking up many hours of his life going over a personal statement that had barely changed since the last time we met. Tirelessly and patiently, he'd

scan every sentence looking for a way to save those precious characters. The university offers I'm lucky to have I owe to him equally as much as my subject teachers. More generally on the academic side of life, the teachers who carefully put together university references, set up revision classes in their free periods, and bake cakes for when morale is low before the start of exams all deserve a thank you for their unrelenting work and patience with us.

As a boarder, I have a whole other side of the Abingdon community to be grateful for. Housemasters who make sure we're all safe and well catered for; kitchen staff who get in before any of us are awake and leave not too long before we've gone to bed; a cleaning team whose efficiency is unparalleled; and the most compassionate and loving matrons out there. For those of you who haven't met the School House matron, Di, a part of me feels sorry for you. You love Di from the first moment you meet her to the day you leave Abingdon and even after that. She embodies everything that I have come to appreciate at Abingdon: a willingness to help, a skill at her job you just can't teach and an empathy that every boarder could do with on the first daunting night at school.

Then there are all the people behind the curtains who keep things ticking away like clockwork. It's hard being these people because a lot of the time, all the work they're doing is only noticed when things have stopped running so

smoothly - but that's only because it's so easy to get used to comfort when it's been around for so long. So I'd like to say a thank you to all the people who always deserve one but maybe don't always get it: the cleaners, porters, technicians, groundskeepers, support teams, Health Centre workers and many more.

All these things happening behind the scenes are meticulously planned and executed to make it easier for us, the students, to receive one of the best educations available in the world; and I believe that each one of us, in our own way, has thrived. Some have devoted hours of the day, weekends included, to sports fixtures and training sessions to become the fastest, strongest and fittest sportsmen out there. Having to tackle Jamie Cox at full speed on the rugby field is, I'm sure, just as terrifying as batting against the bowling of Jasper Gooder. Luckily I've never actually faced either. Then there are those who excel in music, to the extent where a lot of the time I end up stopping playing in orchestra just to take it all in. Finally, there are the so called "Academic Weapons", a group of studious elites who make the grade boundaries of our exams so high. We love them and we hate them. All of these people, often quietly, show true talent in the field that they are passionate about, welcoming the criticisms and comments as just more ways to improve. I have no doubt that some of the skills you have all

fostered at Abingdon will be recognised and appreciated by the people of the world in the years to come.

But today isn't just about thinking about where we've come from; also about it's where we're going. For most of us, that's university (fingers crossed), some to gap years and some... haven't made up their minds yet. It isn't possible to predict everything that's coming your way in the future, but a rough outline of what you want to do, where you want to do it and who you want by your side to help you through can be useful before you set off on your many journeys.

And there's one more thing I would urge you all to think about when choosing your career paths: who you will help. We are an incredibly privileged group of people and, whether we want to think about it or not, we have been put ten steps ahead of the majority of the population when it comes to further education, employment and so much more. What school has helped us with is how to deal with pressure - juggling exams with your first team fixtures, trying to get the grade you were so kindly predicted by the Maths Department and doing it all whilst sustaining a conversation with the St Helen's girl you sit next to on the bus. Now, there is a more real pressure on us. A pressure to go further than just keeping ourselves in the dry, to try and help those who didn't get their push start.



We happen to all find ourselves in the top 1% of the richest people in the world. In a position such as that, there is no excuse for failing to put yourself forward as a contributor to society. We can't afford to be bystanders, under the false impression that other people in this world are doing more than is required so we don't have to. As highly educated individuals, many of you in this room will go on to lead large businesses and some even lead this country. In positions such as these, it is all-the-more important that you put others' needs above your own. I hope that all of us here today try to serve our community more than we seek to serve ourselves.

So, what will I be feeling when I step out of that exam hall for the last time on Monday? Anger, but that will be the exam's fault, nervousness when thinking about all of the things we have to come in the next few years, but mainly a true sense of peace of mind that my classmates and I have done our best, that we have tried to make the most out of what we have and that we will continue to do so in the future - just after we've had a long summer holiday.

I wish you all the best with your many successes. Thank you.'

*Solomon English, Joint Head of School
VIJMD*



Cricket

The 2016 cricket season started early for some with an U15 cricket tour to Sri Lanka at the start of the Easter Holidays. The tourists experienced some very warm weather and played five highly competitive matches against schools and club sides local to the cities of Kandy, Colombo and Bentota over the course of the 11 days. The enormous passion for cricket in Sri Lanka was apparent throughout the tour, with local children playing the game at every turn, both past and present players adorning almost every advertisement, and the hotel staff jumping at the chance to take on our boys at beach cricket in Bentota! But it was not just the cricket in Sri Lanka that the boys will remember; the chance to help bath an elephant in the river, our visit to the sacred Temple of the Tooth in Kandy and the humbling experience of witnessing the still very apparent effects of the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami will remain with them for many years, I am sure.

The summer of 2016 was sadly much affected by the weather, with a total of 21 fixtures succumbing to the rain. Of the 95 games that were completed, the school won 55 and lost 39 with 1 draw, resulting in a win percentage of 58% across the club.

The 1st XI had a challenging year of rebuilding but the exposure of younger players to 1st XI cricket will stand them in good stead for the years to come. Left arm opening bowler Max Mortimer ably carried the bowling attack for much of the season and Alex Ling showed glimpses of how destructive he can be with the bat. The emergence of Harvey Jupp, Jamie Lawson and Ethan Webb from the U15s is exciting for the years to come.

The U15s had a most impressive season as a year group. The A team reached the last 16 of the National Competition, further than any U15 side has gone in the school's history in this competition, and completed the season with an excellent 71% win rate. The U15B and C sides had an outstanding summer, completing the season with the loss of only a single match apiece and recording wins by over 150 runs on a

number of occasions. In fact, such was the prowess of the bowling in the U15C side that, on a number of occasions, Mr Cotton was known to negotiate an inflated target for his batsmen to chase, such was his confidence in his players – this became affectionately known as the 'Cotton-Lewis' target, and not once did his team let him down.

The U14As and Bs had strong seasons winning 70% of their fixtures. Whilst sometimes their downfall, they are a year group intent on playing an exciting and attacking brand of cricket. Easter 2017 will see them tour Sri Lanka and there will certainly be some exhilarating cricket (with moments of exasperation!) to look forward to. The U14C team had a difficult season, with many boys learning the game and playing for the first time. They made huge improvements over the course of the summer, displaying great enthusiasm, particularly following their exciting 7 run win over Berkhamsted. I look forward to seeing their continued progress in 2017.

The four Lower School teams had competitive seasons, with a combined win percentage of 57%. The U13A side

showed glimpses of their undoubted ability, but played with little consistency during the season. However, they will certainly be a side to watch in 2017. The U13B team were one of the most successful sides in the school, winning all but one of their matches. They showed a great passion for the game throughout the summer and with such a healthy depth of ability in this year group, many will be pushing for a place in the A team in the coming season. Our U12 sides were involved in some of the most nail biting finishes of the 2016 season. The U12As won 4 of their 7 completed fixtures, with 1 match washed out, whilst the U12Bs recorded one of the great finishes of the season. With Cokethorpe requiring 1 run to tie and 2 runs to win from the final two overs, the bowlers held their nerve to bowl the final 12 balls without conceding a single run and therefore win by the narrowest of margins!

Well done to all of the boys who represented the school on the cricket field in 2016.

James Golding





Gothia Cup

Over the Summer break, first year pupils Arun Sahota and Theo Mara, second years Archie Baker and Charlie Masters, and third year Aaron Mara represented the South Central Lions Schools' representational side at the internationally recognised Gothia Cup in Sweden.

My Gothia Cup experience was exciting, exhilarating and enjoyable. For Archie and me it started with the flight to Gothenburg on Friday 15 July. That weekend included some training at the Gothenburg Academy's grounds.

On Monday, my team (South Central Lions U13) came up against a German side (Walddörfer SV) at the Majvallen pitch. The clash ended in a goalless stalemate; however, our team dominated. That night was the Opening Ceremony, which was brilliant and colourful.

The day after, we played a Portuguese team (Academica de Santarem) as our second group stage game. We were lucky enough to be playing on a main pitch at the Heden Centre.

Unfortunately, we lost 3-0, due to some extraordinary goals.

On Wednesday, I captained the side against a Swedish team (Stenungsunds IF) as we played at Majvallen again. We won this game 4-0, which put us through to the plate competition on goal difference.

In the plate, we first faced a Swedish team (Danderyds SK) at Äby and soundly defeated them 3-0. Later that Thursday night, in Härlander, we met a Mexican side; penalties decided the match and we were the victors with five penalties to three.

Next came Friday morning and the plate round of sixteen game between our team and Bath & Wiltshire Boys FA. The match was a tiring and well fought competition, watched by the rest of the Prep School Lions community as well as our families back home, through the live stream. The contest was heading to a second penalty shootout at Härlander, but in the dying moments, one of their forwards had a long range effort from the right hand side and it flew above the keeper and into our net. Less than a few minutes later we had been defeated 1-0 by another British team. It was devastating! We had a wonderful time

and would love to participate again next year!

Charlie Masters, 2SCVM

The Gothia Cup was a fantastic experience. Flying out to Sweden with the team was great, as it was my first time flying into a different country with a football team, and the tournament had teams from all around the world and was fabulously organised. When we arrived we had two training sessions before the tournament started, and I really enjoyed waking up early and travelling on a tram to get to our matches.

We had three matches in the group before knock out stages. We won two and lost one, placing us second in our group. The matches we played were a fantastic experience as the opposition all had different ways of playing football. This was really fascinating to play against because you had to adapt your game, therefore improving massively as a footballer. We got knocked out in the round of 64 by a really good Spanish academy. I would love to be selected again next year.

Theo Mara, 1SW



The Moldova Project

This year's Moldova Project trip saw a group of 16 students and 4 teachers from Moldova, along with the Director of our partner charity Agape, visit Abingdon for a week at the start of the summer holiday. Staying in Austin's House, the group attended lessons with members of Abingdon staff and enjoyed day trips to London and Oxford.

Every summer has a story. For me, this summer has been the greatest in my whole life. I understood I was blessed to have such an experience in Abingdon from the very first moment. Seeing a lot of foreign people pleased to see you and always ready to help you unconditionally was a surprise. I was also impressed by the fact that people were open to give a piece of advice about your future, education and good choices in life.

The thing I liked the most about the Abingdon School itself was the relation between students and teachers. It was surprising to see how much feedback they receive from each other and how respectful they are. I enjoyed spending time with the Abingdon teachers as they really made me feel their devotion to what they teach and enjoy doing.

Ada Sainsus

The food! THE FOOD! It was really, really tasty and you know, having an English breakfast every morning is not that bad (it's great!). The trip to Oxford was absolutely amazing, and having the opportunity to be in that university, in one of the best in the entire world (if not the best), in the exact room where Harry Potter was filmed! Also, we went to London. As an Arsenal fan, it can't get much better than that. We saw so many new things that I can't even count them on my fingers.

Abingdon School is so cool - I mean, having your own sport room, having 3 big stadiums, a separate science/physics/biology centre, a theatre, an amazing boarding house – wow!

Thank you for this amazing opportunity.

Sam Sadoevi

I was in the United Kingdom just for a week, but I learned more about their culture and people than in a year at English lessons. The week that I spent at Abingdon School this summer offered me not just the possibility to discover this country, but also to learn more about their educational system at different steps. I was so impressed with this school, which offers to the students not just knowledge, but also forms abilities that they can use later in life. We did some lessons with teachers from this school, and I found a lot of



differences between our schools and this one. I think we did a great job in a drama lesson, playing "Romeo and Juliet" by William Shakespeare, and in biology and chemistry, where we analysed the digestive system, making a lot of conclusions after this about what, how and when we eat. I appreciate your efforts for making an amazing experience for us – a huge thank you for your hospitality and for your time.

Iana Caraman

In the summer of 2016, representing the Lyceum from Zimbreni, I was privileged to be part of the Moldovan group that have visited the UK for a week, staying at Abingdon School.

It was a once in a lifetime experience that has shown us new perspectives on lifestyle, education, history, culture and interpersonal communication.

As a teacher, it has helped me a lot to break down my barriers, get out of my comfort zone and, to a certain extent, compare the two educational environments: the English and the Moldovan one. There are certainly many things that could inspire us. Some of the most important ones are the English attitude and determination.

What I appreciate the most is that I got to know amazing people and made many friends.

As a conclusion, two main ideas come to my mind referring to my school and to Moldovan education:

Encouraging teachers to long for continuous personal and professional growth, in spite of the challenges they deal with every day.

Inspiring students to become more self-confident, ambitious and community-focused.

We bring special and great thanks to the generous people from Abingdon.

Olesea Jechiu

11 July was a big day for me, I flew to England. I was very impressed by English people: how they talk, how they behave with guests. For me that trip meant a lot because I developed and improved my English. I started to speak with new people without being afraid that I could say a wrong word.

I appreciate your efforts for making an amazing experience for us - a huge thank you for your hospitality and for your time.

Cristian Vutcariov



Mission Discovery

Last July, I completed the annual Mission Discovery Summer School run by the International Space School Education Trust, at King's College London. The course lasted for one week, during which participants worked in teams with other students from across the UK and the world, each team competing to come up with a biomedical experiment that could be built and launched onto the International Space Station.

The week began with a few team – building exercises – coming up with a team name and 'mission patch' a logo representing our team and objective in the style of those used for real space missions. The former NASA astronaut Michael Foale CBE talked to us about how leadership is taught to astronauts at NASA, focusing on how it is the attitude of the followers as well as the leader which is important for a successful team. The first day ended with a 'Mars Lander' challenge – trying to prevent an egg dropped from five storeys up from breaking, using paper, balloons, etc. We took inspiration from real Mars Landers. Several teams, including ours, managed to protect our 'eggstronaut' whilst minimising 'cost': key practice for the tight constraints that our own experiments would have to conform to.

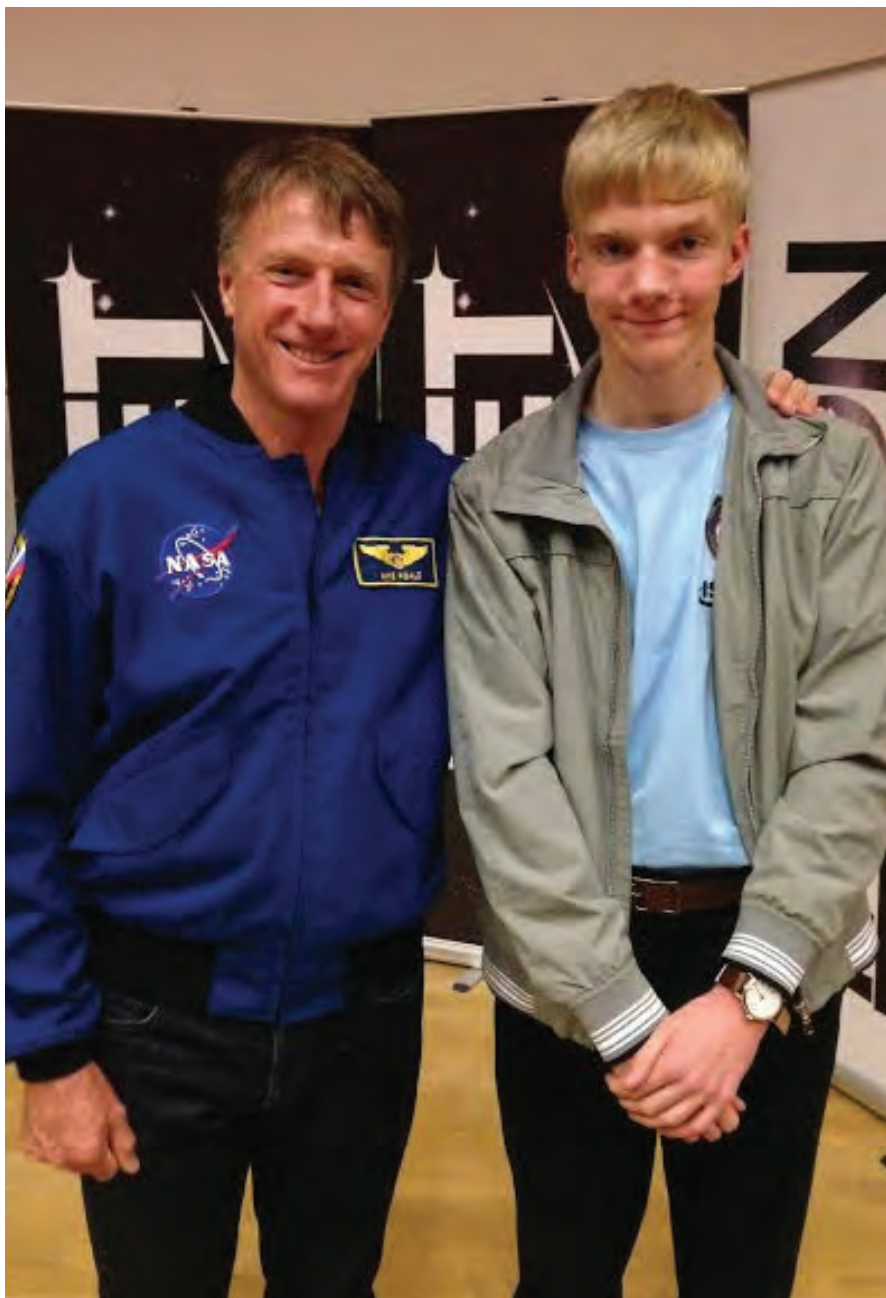
Over the course of the week we listened to several presentations by scientists at King's, such as Professor Steve Harridge (Professor of Human and Applied Physiology), Dr Julie Keeble (a lecturer in Pharmacology) and several other visiting speakers on space and biomedicine. We learnt, for example, about muscle structure and contraction, a process triggered by an influx of calcium ions, and how muscle atrophy in microgravity is heavily bound up with the body's use of and demand for calcium. We also learnt how in space there is fluid movement to the upper body, affecting the cardiovascular system, and numbing an astronaut's sense of taste (many astronauts prefer hot food containing

capsaicin because this triggers the heat/acid pain receptors in the mouth, instead of their taste buds). We also learnt how the body's vestibular (balance and motion) system adapts to space and subsequently returning to Earth, and on the sight defects being in space can cause.

We listened to presentations by Michael Foale on his time in space, such as the servicing of the Hubble Space Telescope, the pictures of the universe it now captures, and his passion for photographing Earth from space. I found it particularly interesting to hear about the experiments he completed during his six space

missions, such as some of the first attempts to grow plants on a space station. Sarah Murray, current Assistant Chief of EVA (spacewalking), Robotics and Crew Systems at NASA, talked to us about the NASA neutral buoyancy laboratory and the training regime for new astronauts. We also learnt several life lessons and how to give an engaging and interesting presentation.

By the end of the week our teams had designed and presented to a panel of judges our biomedical experiments capable of being launched into space. My team's experiment tested the hypothesis that the coral *Sarcophyton*



would survive more easily in microgravity than on Earth, where coral bleaching is threatening coral reefs. Coral reefs are increasingly important havens for marine biodiversity and may become a key source of new medicines in the future, so we believed that demonstrating that a 'reservoir' of coral reef could be kept in space was of real importance. The team that won the competition will have their experiment (assessing the ability of the bacterium *Chondromyces crocatus* to form 'fruiting bodies' in microgravity, which has applications in the study of superorganisms and in nanotechnology) launched aboard a Falcon 9 rocket during the flight SpaceX CRS-11 to the International Space Station.

The course took place at New Hunt's House and Library on King's College Guy's Campus. We also managed to fit in several excursions, such as sightseeing trips around London.

It was a fantastic experience that I would recommend to anybody aged 14-18 considering a scientific or medical career.

Patrick McCubbin, 5DGA

In the first week of the summer holidays I, along with another Abingdon boy, Patrick McCubbin, attended Mission Discovery at King's College London. It was a week-long programme that culminated in the design of an experiment that could take place on board the International Space Station. We began by coming up with a team name and mission patch, the latter of which won my team an honorary mention, to get to know our teammates. The first day ended with a challenge to design a Mars Lander from various bits of rubbish to which we had access. Each item contributed to the overall budget, so the difficulty came in building a lander that would not only keep our egg 'pilot' intact, but also remain cheap. After 45 minutes of construction, our landers were dropped from the fifth storey of a nearby building. Unfortunately, our egg did not survive.



The remainder of the week was dedicated to designing our experiment, which had to comply with a variety of conditions. The experiment had to fit inside a ten centimetre cube, and survive in storage until launch day. It had to generate results in only two astronaut interactions, each of about ten minutes, and without being returned to Earth. A weight limit was imposed, and we had to consider the price of the experiment, as well as research any potential dangers that could arise from our experiment taking place. After a lot of discussion, my group decided to study the effects of micro-gravity on quorum sensing in the bacteria *Aliivibrio fischeri*, which begins to glow when it reaches a certain population density.

We were also treated to a variety of lectures by subject specialists, many of whom taught at King's but also included astronaut Dr. Michael Foale, and Sarah Murray, Assistant Chief of EVA, Robotics and Crew Systems at NASA. On the final day we presented our plan to a panel of judges, many of whom had given us lectures earlier in the week. My team made it through the heats into the final round with four other teams. We then had to present in front of everyone there. Unfortunately, my team only came third, and so our bacteria will not be going into space any time soon. Regardless, it was a fantastic opportunity and an invaluable learning experience.

Matthew Gill, 6OTL



Vietnam Trip

During this year's summer holiday three groups of around 13 students and two teachers travelled to Vietnam for a three week trip. I happened to be in group two led by Ms Widdern and Mr Hall. Our trip consisted of three sections, a trek, volunteer work, and rest & recreation, in that order.

After the longest plane journey of my life, watching five films, and a couple of surprisingly nice aeroplane meals, we landed in Hanoi. My group and I, having two days to 'acclimatise' ourselves, explored our new surroundings. The busy streets were incredible, buzzing with excitement, and we began to try street food at either little shops or from wondering women who carried it in big baskets. We also quickly became aware of the road transport situation, which consisted of fitting too many people on old mopeds and never stopping for anyone to cross.

Soon enough however, we set off on our trek. For the next five days we went from one home-stay to the next travelling between morning and midday to try and arrive before the hottest part of the day so that in each home-stay we would have time to look around the area. These home-stays were incredible - they were wooden stilt houses made predominantly from bamboo and timber, each with a slightly different arrangement and a different feel to it. In most cases the whole group stayed

in one large room connected to the kitchen. A number of the houses kept animals such as chickens, piglets or some water buffalo under the buildings, whilst others used it as a dining area or even as we might use an attic at home to store various random objects.

My favourite of these home-stays was the last because it was situated close to a local football pitch where the goals were simply three sticks of bamboo. Here we played the locals themselves and attracted most of the village including the village leader and a water buffalo to come and watch us get beaten 6-1. The experience of interacting so closely with the locals, who spoke nearly no English, through sport was one that I will never forget, and I really hope that I get the chance to do this again in the future.

Although the last trek day was exhausting due to the heat of the day and the angle of climb, we powered through to the most amazing remote village named Ban-Hieu, passing plants and animals I've never seen before including poisonous spiders and huge red stick insects. It was here we would be staying for a week to help out by concreting the base of the town hall and the path to it, alongside teaching English to some of the children (during which I became well known within my group for my lively 'head, shoulders, knees, and toes'). We used various tools such as hoes, shovels and machetes in order to clear space and create the concrete. It is during the

time we spent on this project that we became aware of both the amount of manual labour that comes with this type of lifestyle and the importance of sunscreen. It was extremely hard work and a true challenge seeing as we had been contracted to work for 6 hours a day, stopping early if they believed that we had done particularly well. Just as on the trek, the food was some of the best I've ever tasted. We ate with chopsticks, which we quickly became able to use properly. On the third day 70 Vietnamese university students came to volunteer also, completing most of the path. They only came for a couple of days with each night (especially the last) having a party in the evening involving dancing and singing, which we were only too happy to join in with. The last night involved the whole village and many of the students received their certificates to certify their communist duty had been completed. We finally finished our work and sadly had to leave the village, but not without one last dance and song to show our respect.

The next day we traveled to Ha Long Bay where we spent the whole day travelling by boat around the incredible islands and walking through the huge cave situated on one of them. The boat supplied a full sea food lunch, which of course was amazing. After the boat trip we had to say farewell to our guide Tim, who is just about the coolest guy I've ever met. He taught me and two other team members Wing-Chun (or women's Kung Fu as he called it) early in the morning on a small bridge in the village

and he provided a sufficient team morale boost even when we were sweating and feeling sick. He left us saying that he was sorry to leave us but he must go and find another group to guide in order to earn more money to buy more water buffalo for his future bride.

Our remaining time was spent in Hoi An, Hanoi and Hue, all of which were part of the 'rest and recreation' section of the trip. Here we spent a lot of our

time shopping for cheap clothes or even tailored suits and discovering even more amazing foods as well as seeing some landmarks such as the Hidden City.

The whole trip was absolutely incredible, and I will never forget it nor will I ever struggle to use chopsticks again. The time spent with the people in 'Group 2' has increased the strength of our friendship and our sense of adventure, not to mention the confidence it has

now given me to go travelling without my parents in the future.

I must say thank you to everyone involved especially 'TrueAdventure' and 'Footprint' for organising the trip and making it so enjoyable, and ASPA and the OA Club for the travel award that meant I could go on the trip in the first place.

Byron Langley, 6RKJ



Kayaking Trip to Rio

I was amazed to receive an invitation to join the British Olympic Association's Ambition Programme and experience the Olympic Games first hand as an aspiring athlete. The programme has been running since Beijing 2008 and aims to inspire young athletes and improve their chances of medalling if they make it to the Olympics themselves one day.

Sprint Kayaking nominated me and two other athletes and one coach for the trip. Part of the preparation included getting immunisations for Rio and attending a formal Olympic kitting out weekend at the NEC where we received some training and a suitcase full of kit – stash!

The date of the trip fell between two of my most important events of the year, the Sprint World Championships and the Marathon World Championships, so my coach adjusted our training plan to accommodate it and before long we were at the dedicated check-in desk at Heathrow.

Our trip included time at the training camp, in the Olympic Village, the British House and at various events during the games. We even got to take selfies with some Olympic legends and shared a lift with gymnast Louis Smith. The athletes'



dining hall was astonishing and I set out to find the most unusual foods I could. The cheerful and helpful nature of the locals and the terrifying craziness of the taxi drivers added to the atmosphere of a city hosting the Olympic games and made our trip very exciting to say the least.

For me the absolute highlight was getting to watch Jonny Schofield and Liam Heath take a silver medal in the men's 200m K2 Sprint Kayak event before Liam went on to become Olympic Champion in the K1 event. My mum spotted me on the BBC coverage at their award ceremony and my phone started ringing - "Yes mum, I've got sun screen on."

Liam and Jonny came to our club when they got home to show off their medals

and to give their support to Jeanette Chippington who went on to make history by winning the first ever sprint kayak gold medal in the Paralympics. Despite their success they were extremely humble and encouraging to the next generation and spent ages signing autographs and posing for photos with even the very youngest members of our sport.

Luke Harding, my K2 partner, and I had a fabulous final season as junior athletes. We competed in Germany, Bulgaria and Belarus and won the Junior Sprint Canoe Under 18 European Champion title and silver medals at both the Sprint and Marathon World Championships.

Magnus Gregory, 6APS



Art Gallery

1	Arman Garmroudi	(A2)
2	Arman Garmroudi	(A2)
3	Brodie Marshall	(GCSE)
4	Daniel Rohll	(GCSE)
5	Edward Green	(GCSE)



1



2



3



5



4

6	Gianluca Cau Tait	(GCSE)
7	Gianluca Cau Tait	(GCSE)
8	Harry Venables	(GCSE)
9	Jack Bevan	(GCSE)
10	Joseph Lilley	(GCSE)



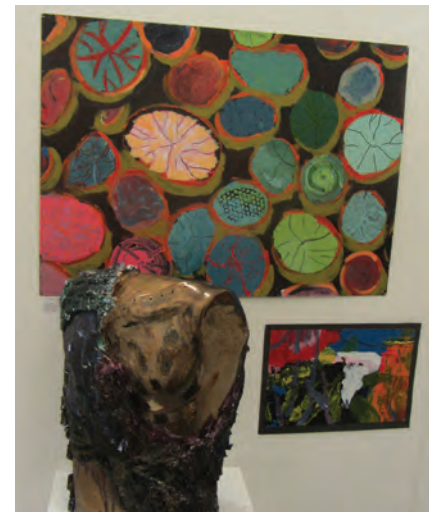
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7



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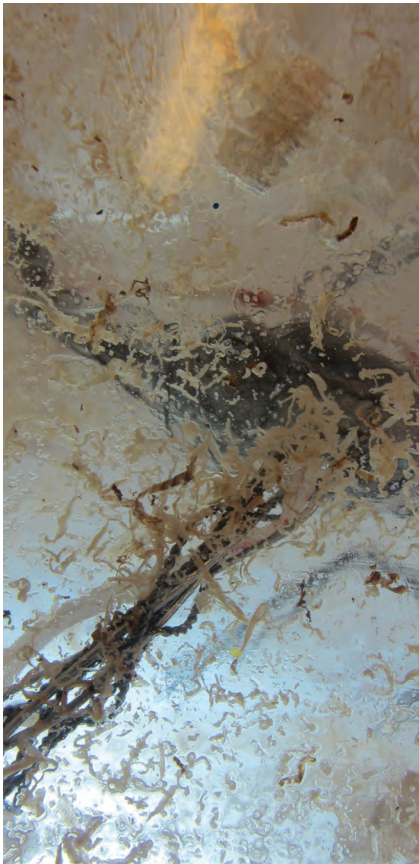


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10

11	Joseph Lilley	(GCSE)
12	Joseph Lilley	(GCSE)
13	Micah Hayns	(GCSE)
14	Peter Wang	(GCSE)
15	Joshua Booth	(GCSE)



11



12



13



14



15

House Reports

Austin House



The academic year 2015/16 was a year of change, most notably with the decision to permanently rename the house to fall in line with the other two day/boarding houses at Abingdon, which have long established names. There was much deliberation given to this important decision. However, it was the Remembrance Board that adorns the far wall of the house Games Room that provided the eventual inspiration for

the house's new and permanent name.

The physical building, known as Waste Court, was originally bought by the school in 1928, in memory of the Old Abingdonians who died in the First World War. Paymaster Alan Murray Austin, a student at Abingdon School between 1895 and 1901 was the first Old Abingdonian to perish as a result of the outbreak of war, when on 15 October 1914, his ship HMS Hawke was torpedoed by a German U-boat in the North Sea. Whilst at Abingdon School, Alan Murray Austin represented the school at football, athletics and cricket and also gained a distinction in Greek. In 1902, he took first place in the Royal Navy entrance exam, for which the School awarded the boys a half-day of holiday! Given the reason for the School's purchase of Waste Court, it was a truly fitting tribute to Paymaster Austin and all of the Old Abingdonians lost in the World Wars, that September 2015 saw the creation of Austin House.

The year started in very high spirits for Austin House, with the first inter-house competition, House Singing, quickly upon us in the first half of term. The choice of the song *Hall of Fame*

by The Script was a popular one and the boys did themselves proud with their final performance on the stage of the Amey Theatre. Whilst not claiming the top prize, the Austin House boys themselves claimed (an unofficial) second place! Special mention must go to our musicians Nicholas Wong (piano), Angus Shen (guitar) and Harry Lei (drums) whilst little would have been achievable without our Director, Cameron Thomson, who did a fantastic job in galvanising the group, and Liam Yuen (Assistant Director and Chief Motivator).

The house proved successful in many different disciplines in the inter-house sports competitions: Angus Shen, Oliver Gray and Harry Fishpool romped home in the U18 table tennis competition for the second year running, Oliver Breach and Aaron Mara won the U15 squash, Oliver Williams and Gian Verdding took the U14 pool title and Lafite Lo, Ben French and Kofoworola Braithwaite combined to reign supreme in the U16 table tennis tournament. The third and fourth year combined team claimed victory in the U15 ergo challenge, Andy Zhang, William Richardson and Toby



Seb Hickman



Rowles took the U15 badminton title, and the Austin House boarders claimed the boarders' basketball competition, following up on last year's success. Most impressively, Austin House thrives on a real spirit of participation and the boys continue to show a wonderful attitude towards representing the house, for which I am very thankful.

Special mention must go to Henry Waterson and Vil Kiraikou for their commitment and outstanding contributions to the House Debating Competition, whilst the Austin House fourth year will be looking to defend their House Challenge title in 2017. These are two competitions that the house will be looking to do even better in this year, particularly with the addition of Mr Edgar to the Austin House tutor team.

The summer exams proved incredibly successful for Austin House. The Upper Sixth started the trend with an array of excellent results, which saw the vast majority attaining their first choice university offers. Head of House, Seb Hickman, Jack Bowen and Reece Wang go on to study at Cambridge and Oxford. The following week, our fifth years set the standard even higher



with their GCSE results, with Austin House being the top performing house in the school, in a record breaking year, with Ivan Leung and Patrick McCubbin achieving a clean sweep of A* grades.

The end of the year saw a number of members of staff moving on from the House. Mr Ghosh takes up the post of Head of Geography at Rugby School, Miss Atkinson moves to Morgan's House to lead a sixth form tutor group and Mr Litchfield ends his long association with the house to become Housemaster of School House. I am extremely grateful for all that they have given to the house over the years. We

welcome a number of new members of staff for 2016; Mr Edgar becomes Assistant Boarding Housemaster and third year tutor, Mr Cook is a resident tutor in the house and fourth year tutor, Mr McDonnell joins as boarding house tutor and assistant third year tutor and Mr Thomas returns to Austin House as sixth form and boarding tutor, after a brief stint with James's House.

We wish our leavers of 2016 all the very best for their very bright futures whilst looking forward to celebrating the success of the current Austin House boys over the course of the next year.

James Golding

Crescent House



Freddie Ward

Anyone who has ever spent any length of time in Crescent House knows that one of the most important rooms is the Cobban Kitchen. The social hub of the house, the kitchen is where boys can be found making toast by the loaf at break time, as well as cooking up an impressive range of dishes most weekend evenings. For me, then, one of the highlights of the last year is to see a brand new kitchen in place, complete with mod cons, that I know the boys are going to make the most of in the coming years. The kitchen

often shows Crescent House boys at their best - working together, making friends, and trying out new-found and established skills. This year, as ever, the range of activities the Crescent boys are involved in is too extensive to cover comprehensively, but I want to highlight just a few of their achievements.

Crescent House's involvement in the inter-house tournaments led to a number of successes over the year. In the Michaelmas Term, the Crescent U15 swimming team won their competition,

with impressive contributions from Daniel Petrov, Jonathan Lee and Kai Miles. In the Lent Term, the U15 table tennis pair of Felipe Jin Li and Jate Jaturanpinyo won the doubles for the second year running. There were some great results in the athletics competition in the summer, with Tobias White winning the U15 100m in 11.43 seconds, while Nathan Hudson and Peter Zhou won the U14 400m A and B finals respectively. Also at U15 level, Martin Man won the shotput with a distance of 9.67m, while Kai Miles threw 34.80m to win the discus. Crescent retained their tennis title, with Jason Lai winning the singles, and Cameron Yu and Brian Ho the A doubles competitions. Also on the tennis court, Sam Christie reached the regional finals in the Aegon U15 tennis tournament.

Off the playing fields, Dominic Swain and Kai Li were involved in the third year production of Brainstorm, with Dominic receiving a Head's Praise for his performance. Jerry Yang was part of the winning Abingdon team in the senior Maths Team Challenge regional round. Crescent's house song for 2015 was





Michael Man

a stirring rendition of *Summer of 69* by Bryan Adams, ably directed again by Jamie Farrow.

Crescent House boys achieved some excellent GCSE results over the summer, with Jai Sidpra and William Drake both achieving 9 A*s and 1 A, and Anthony Yang and Josh Washington achieving 8 A*s apiece. Jeffrey Leung, Richard Ainslie and Bryan Kwan were the pick of the bunch at A-Level, but all the Crescent Upper Sixth can be proud of their achievements. I wish them luck

as they move on to pastures new and fresh beginnings.

Over the course of the year, the House was ably led by Heads of House Michael Man and Freddie Ward, with Asten Yeo representing Crescent as a School Prefect. I thank them and the other senior boys for all of their support and hard work.

We said goodbye to resident tutor Mr Fieldhouse, who has left to become Head of Sixth Form at St. Dunstan's

School in South London, and Mr Hall, who has moved to Dean Close as Deputy Head (Co-Curricular).

The Head of House for 2016/17 will be Yuan Han Li, while Josh Ascroft, Oscar Bond, Christian Kirk and Christopher Yip will be School Prefects. I am confident that they and the rest of the Upper Sixth will lead the House ably, in what I am sure will be another very successful year for Crescent House.

Matthew Kendry

School House



It has been a fantastic year for School House on all fronts, and by 'all fronts', I mean the House Singing Competition. School House completely changed the game with *Shosholozza*, a South African anthem led by the very convincing tribesman, Solomon English. We saw less success in events such as the Road Relay, but this was due to a very strange peak in self-diagnosed leg injuries mere days before the race.

This year, the house was under the leadership of Mr Swanwick as

Housemaster, Harry Anderson and myself as Heads of House, and Charlie MacPherson and Joe Blanch as deputies. Mrs Elmore stepped up to the new role of Assistant Housemistress, where she organized wider learning activities for all year groups, and provided guidance to boys when Mr Swanwick could not. The Chairman of the Boarders' Council was Churk Chung – meaning that all of the Chairmen have come from School House since the council began. Once again, School House contributed one of the two Heads of School, Solomon English, and several prefects, including one of the school's best rowers, Adam Teece, and Joe Blanch, who was selected to play for Oxford United, proving that School House produces some of the school's finest boys.

We were not without losses, however. One of them was our beloved table tennis table, as boarders later discovered that the table did not in fact have a seating capacity of four to eight people (depending on how strict the duty tutor was). The only logical next step was to invest in greater seating

capacity, and so two more of the classic Chesterfield sofas were bought – a sofa that will make you feel rich when sitting down, but poor when you realize that it cost you half of your student loan.

On the boarding side, the house saw more changes in staff than the Labour Shadow Cabinet. School House welcomed Mr Jackson, Mrs Wylie and Miss Moore as new boarding staff, and they quickly gained respect through making pancakes, cooking sausages, and embarrassing attempts at Jenga. Mr Davies meanwhile conducted a group of boarders in an efficient production line of some of the most authentic pizzas anyone had tried - not only did the ingredients for thirty small pizzas cost less than one large Domino's Pizza, they also didn't provide half of your annual intake of salt and fat!

The house is unspeakably grateful that Di was not needed as Wonder Woman much this year, except for one week, where she was in fact saving the world. In said week the house was not the same. Boarders stared blankly at alien objects called 'dishwasher' and 'washing machine', wondering





Solomon English

why the clothes seemed not to be cleaning themselves this week. It was an apocalyptic world, like something out of Crescent House. School House is not School House without Di. She is invaluable to boarders, parents and boarding staff alike.

Mr Simmons put his physics knowledge to the test as he guided boarders from all ages and houses in building a go-kart. It is said that Austin's was the 'fastest house': however I can dismiss these claims due to School House not having our best drivers around – there were several leg injuries leading up to the event. Charlie MacPherson and Mr Simmons organised a strange version of Monopoly where you actually go to London. Supposedly, the task was to visit the streets on the Monopoly board and take selfies of your team there. Some teams joined the hour long queue at King's Cross Station to get a photo at Platform nine and three quarters, but most teams 'got lost' around the McDonald's area. Overall, the young leader and Charlie agreed that it was a very fun day.

The first official inter boarding house



Joe Blanch

football tournament took place this year, organized by Mr Kendry. Austin's House did not perform as well as hoped, with School House athletes actually joining the game in an effort to save Austin's honour when playing Crescent House. In their defence, Austin's is the smallest boarding house, and had its own fair share of ill-timed 'injuries'. The final was a gripping match between School House and Crescent. Unfortunately, any record of the score of this match has mysteriously disappeared.

And so as the year draws to a close, Mr Swanwick, Mrs Elmore, Harry and I hand over the house to Mr Litchfield as the new Housemaster, Miss Moore as the new Assistant Housemistress and Blake Jones and Daniel Alcock as the new Heads of House on the boarding and day sides respectively. The house is in great hands and promises to have another year of success. I wish you all the best.

James Taylor, VIJMD

Christodoulou's



When I look at my list of this year's Upper Sixth leavers I am glad that I have decided to keep my comments general rather than specific... the reason for this is that they have definitely kept me on my toes with their "misadventures", shall we say, and while I would love to single them out so as to get my own back, I won't. Strangely, though, I feel it has been a fantastic five-year journey where my house-mastering skills have been stretched to the limit but ultimately, the one word I would use to describe them collectively is: fun. They are fun-loving and fun to be with - a bunch of young men who I have loved talking to about all manner of things and with whom I have had a great working relationship. Just to give you an example, when I walked into the school gym last term, Jamie Cox proclaimed loudly in front of his friends: "Sir, what are you doing here? Are you lost?" Ultimately, they make me laugh and I know that they have hearts of gold. But I won't miss (or maybe I will) asking Arman to get a

shave, or the football terrace-like arm-waving of Charlie Herold, who I hope has forgiven me for giving him a copy in his first week here five years ago.

But the most important thing that I like about them as a group is their diversity. Yes, there are the alpha male wannabes with all their sport, bodybuilding and manly type pursuits, such as football and Burberry, but they are the most sensitive and caring young men I have come across in a while. Aside from the alpha male wannabes, there are the strong, contemplative ones, the sensitive ones with diverse backgrounds and tolerant and progressive outlooks on life. As a group they have been amazing, fun and stimulating in every conversation I have had with them. I suspect that this group will go on and do a wide range of different things after university, imaginative and creative things. I wish them the very best of luck. They have been brilliant.

As for the Lower Sixth highlights: Hal

Watts has competed in the Diving National Elites and Armada Cup, coming fourth in the National Elites. Ollie Singleton is currently training for the Oxford Half Marathon later this year. Hal Watts and Charles Nabnian have attained Bronze II and Silver IV in Western European League. Alex Watkinson and Harry Cover have both represented the school in rowing, Alex Watkinson rowing in a Quad and Harry Cover rowing for both the 2nd Eight and a Quad. Rory Pattison gained first place in an Intellectual Art Essay competition.

Further down the year groups: Henry Barlow continued to be one of the leading lights in the swimming community, coming third in the National Arena League butterfly 50m competition as well as taking part in a championship Thai boxing training camp at Evolve martial arts in Singapore. James Bowen was a leading participant in the country's youngest Netexplo project team, a UNESCO - backed initiative with

the aim of identifying the next emergent technology. Conor Chippendale was successful as a Young Leader in the Scouts and proved to be a rising star in hockey, captaining the U15 Cs through a successful season. Will Franklin played well in both the school's U15 A team and U16 Berkshire hockey team. Jack Johnson captained the Newbury District B swimming team through another good year, seeing a number of convincing victories. Sebastian Anand performed to a very high standard on the basketball court and also impressed in the high jump. Ben Lovejoy was part of the winning inter-house football team and represented the school in the swimming squad. Jamie Masters captained the U15 A football team through yet another good season, as well as representing his house successfully in the inter-house competitions. Henry Steinsberg was part of both the U15 A team and inter-house football teams, seeing much good fortune in both. In addition, he performed at the Oxford Playhouse with the prestigious Musical Youth Company of Oxford. He was also selected for the school golf team, demonstrating a wide range of both sporting and non-sporting talents. James Stammers achieved his aim of getting into the A team for rowing while having a fantastic time in Bordeaux on his first rowing camp with the school. Andrew Kang did very well in his exams and represented the school in a tennis match. Attending a French exchange was also a highlight for him. Daniel Cooney played in the U15 A team for hockey where we had



James Stammers

an excellent season, only losing one fixture in all of his games. Nathaniel Braovac managed to play in all fixtures for athletics and attained a new P.B. in high jump. He was also pleased with how well his end of year exams went. Connor Fanning did better than he expected (his own words!) in the exams and has made the men's tennis team for his local club. Charles Hall also did better in his summer exams than he expected and also attained a merit in his grade 6 trumpet exam, managing a place in the A team for rowing and an invitation to go to Spain in October. Pierre-Louis Peuch won 75% of his chess games this year against a wide range of opponents. He has also been part of a Young Enterprise company

which sold many phone cases and participated in sales fairs. Ruaidhri Taylor won an archery competition at 15m and James Moreton-Smith competed in the badminton U15 Nationals, winning various medals on the badminton junior circuit. He also competed as a member of the first pair for Abingdon's squad, winning all matches in the Wellington Quadrangular tournament.

Central to the success of the house is the unparalleled quality of tutoring: the third year were very fortunate to have Nez Onen and the fourth year enjoyed the smaller groups ably led by Kate Byrne and Andy Broadbent. The fifth year were wonderfully shepherded through their mocks and into their public exams with the magnificent help of Emma Williamson and Peter Coke, while the sixth form were incredibly lucky to have Oliver Lomax, Richard Taylor and Stuart Evans. All the boys in the house are grateful for the unrelenting and expert service of their tutors.

It has been a great pleasure to be the Housemaster of exceptionally talented young men like those mentioned above and I wish all the members of the house well for the future. All the boys and tutors will join me in wishing the very best of luck to Emily O'Doherty who will do a great job running the house as of September 2016.

Alexis Christodoulou



Sebastian Anand

Cotton's



Alexander Miell-Ingram

How quickly three years have passed! It feels like only a blink of an eye since I began as Housemaster of Cotton's House, and yet now my happy time in charge of the pastoral care of the wonderful 90 or so boys that make up our house has drawn to a close and my final job is to look back at their accomplishments in the year that has passed.

This year showed a blossoming of talent and it seemed that everything moved up a gear, aided by a comfortable confidence from boys and staff in the expectations and working patterns that had been established over the last few years.

The House Singing Competition was one of the most hotly contested for some time and the standard of the top houses was noticeably the best in recent memory. Any of the leading houses could have been worthy winners and would have been of winning standard in previous years. We aimed to be in the top three for the third consecutive year running and, hopefully, to better our second place of last year. Our rendition of *Stand by Me* showed skilful use of harmonies, countermelodies, clapping, clicking and whistling, and, ambitiously, was almost entirely "a cappella", but we were narrowly beaten by the spirited School House. Sadly, the adjudicator had not

realised that he should give a ranking other than first place, but his comments indicated that we were either second or third, and I suspect it was the former!

We have been blessed with a fine crop of sportsmen in the house over the last three years and Cotton's regularly contributes more than our fair share of players to the 1st teams in the major sports and many of the minor ones too. Many other house members keenly enjoy their sport across the other school teams as well, and this puts us in a strong position in inter-house competitions, even if we are regularly deprived of our best players due to school fixtures occurring on the same day as the inter-house competitions! In the Road Relay, we built on the success of last year and dominated the event this year. For the second year running, Alexander Miell-Ingram in the Upper Sixth and Calum Steer in the fifth year were the fastest runners in their respective age-groups, with Alexander being the fastest runner in the whole competition and also captaining the hard-working Upper Sixth quartet to team success in their age-group. The fifth year team actually went one better than last year, not only winning their age group trophy comfortably, but also winning the whole competition, beating our own sixth form team into second position overall in the process! Not to be outdone, the fourth year

quartet also romped to victory in their age group category. In rugby, the U15s won the competition for an incredible third consecutive year (different boys each year of course!), and we were also winners of the overall rugby 7s competition. Similarly we were overall winners of the hockey competition, and were thrilled to win the U14 athletics. The debating competitions saw the house represented in two finals, and the overall victory in the third year competition was a great source of delight. The list of successes in the inter-house competitions over my time as Housemaster has been a continual delight to me and it has been satisfying to the house (and daunting to our guests) to see the houseroom notice boards and trophy cabinets filling and overflowing as a result of their varied and excellent endeavours – a great testament to the boys' effort, sense of teamwork, and the unflinching house spirit.

Academically, it was another very successful year and many boys have gained places at excellent universities of their choice. There was also a particularly strong set of GCSE grades from this year's fifth years, which should set them up wonderfully for their sixth form careers and university applications beyond.

This year we had a fine Head of House, Thomas Farish and impressive House



Adam Lilley

Prefects in George Barton, Nathan Byrne, Tom Castle and Adam Lilley. These boys led with distinction, never needing to over-impose themselves, and, by possessing a quiet self-confidence and engaging personalities, were natural leaders when required. The Upper Sixth as a whole though, were a memorable group and such a tight knit unit that they mostly operated as an irrepressible force, rather than requiring to be led as such! The year culminated in a memorable Leavers' Dinner, with all in excellent spirits and with many a fine speech and anecdote from the leavers, best left to fond recollection rather than the printed word!

My time in Cotton's House has also run its course, however, as I begin a year's leave from Abingdon in September, in order to meet the needs of my family. There were a number of suggestions as to what I might be doing with my time given the vacancies which had just arisen, ranging from taking the job of England football manager, Prime Minister, and even Top Gear and Bake-Off host, but it is the role of parent that I shall be enjoying! It has been a real privilege looking after the pastoral care of the boys in Cotton's House and I am proud of the success that the house has had in my time in so many varied fields. Furthermore, by following this course of action I feel that the boys at Abingdon will benefit from seeing that equality



Thomas Farish

and family are at the heart of the school ethos and I am grateful to the Head and leadership team in granting me this leave, despite my sadness at having to step down as housemaster.

I am very grateful to the wonderful team of tutors that it has been my pleasure to work alongside. We were thrilled to welcome Alex Stuart to the team at the start of the year. The dedication and care of the tutors for their tutees has been a source of inspiration to many of the boys. It is amazing what a difference a well-judged comment or wise intervention at an opportune time can make to a boy's life, and the sense of caring community that pervades Cotton's House could not be achieved without the tutors' hard work.

So next year will bring a new Housemaster and indeed the long awaited new houseroom! I know that the house will continue to flourish and that the core values which created such a happy, vibrant and successful place in my time as Housemaster will continue in the years ahead as they were never wholly reliant on the luxuriant fabric of the houseroom (thank goodness!) or the individual persona of a Housemaster, but rather were the cumulative effect of the corpus of individual house members, the tutor team and, perhaps, a little bit of guidance from the team leader!

Cotton's House - I will miss you all and wish you the greatest happiness and success in the years to come!

John Cotton

Franklin's



James Anderson-Besant

Heads of House for the year were James Anderson-Besant and Carl Cox. Energetic, committed and friendly, they led by example from the start. They were well supported by William Adams, Giannis Giortzis, Michael Jiang, and Benjamin Schneider, all of whom showed abundant talent and amiability.

James Anderson-Besant and Leon Wu led us expertly for the house song *Something I Need*. We performed with enthusiasm and skill, and were commended for our fine singing.

The inter-house sports competitions began with some notable successes. Jamie Chick came second in the squash. Ray Ren, James Anderson-Besant and Leon Wu came second in the house chess. In table tennis Darius Oraee, Benjamin Schneider, James Moore and Aleksandar Radmanovic all took second place, and Huba Varady won his competition; this meant that we won the table tennis trophy.

In the spring competitions we did even better. In the Road Relay our fourth years came third, and our third years

came second. Oscar Frost ran the fastest time in the house in 9.27. James Chung, Rahul Ghandinesen and Oliver Williams came third in badminton. In shooting George Simonson and James Magé came third. Oliver Elly and Matty Ball came third in pool. George Newton and Harry Donoghue came third in table tennis. In the U15 football competition, Oscar Frost, Daniel Bacon, James Moore, Jamie Chick and Tom Southgate played superbly as a team, and won second place. Finally, Benjamin Schneider and Darius Oraee won the fencing competition.

Summer competitions also went very well indeed. Louis Brosnan, James Moore, Huba Varady, Jimmy Straine and Kiran Gathani played some brilliant tennis and came equal first in their competition. In athletics, Oscar Mascuñan Margetts won the shot; Oscar Frost won the 200m and long jump; Matthew Johnson won the 100m with a brilliant time; Alexander Dalgliesh and Max Nurse-Bosley won their 400m races, and Max also won the high jump once again; Giles Oldershaw

won the 800m. George Straine won the shot, again; Giles, Max, Alexander and Matthew then teamed up to win the 4x100m. Our Lower Sixth won their competition by a mile, and overall Franklin's earned an impressive third place.

Alasdair Czaplewski and Louis Brosnan have shown great talent in debating, and they won the inter-house competition in great style. Giannis Giortzis and Sam Farrar were quite outstanding in their debating too, and won numerous accolades for the school in various competitions and the MUN. Ray Ren became the school's outstanding chess player, and achieved an extraordinary win against a visiting grandmaster. Tom Buckle played some brilliant tennis and made it to the top of the school's rankings. Jack Holford was a giant in every way for school rugby and for Wasps. George Straine also excelled in rugby for the school and for Wasps, and earned selection for the England North U16 side against France and Wales. George also won both academic and sports scholarships



Leon Wu



Oscar Frost

for the sixth form, reflecting his ability and commitment. Rory Esom won the Deloitte Economics Essay Prize. Our fantastic crop of musicians, Leon Wu, James Anderson-Besant, Jamie Corish, David Chung and Michael Jiang, all of whom achieved distinctions at Grade 8, made an extraordinary contribution to music at Abingdon. They won too many accolades to mention individually, and they will never be equalled as a cohort. Last but not least, Benjamin Schneider went to South Africa for the junior Commonwealth games to represent his country in fencing, and won the gold medal for épée; Franklin's first Commonwealth champion!

We said goodbye to two tutors. Mr Fletcher-Campbell has been a great tutor in the house for many years. Although we know him primarily for his musical talents, he actually read Classics at Oxford, which may partly explain why his UCAS and school reports have always been so beautifully written. He has helped and encouraged a huge number of Franklin's boys, and they know what a kind as well as



intelligent man he is. Next year he will be taking an even larger role in the Music Department, and will also become the full-time organist. We will still see him around the school, and he will always be welcome as an honorary member of Franklin's.

Mr Border came into the house rather more recently, and after taking one group of boys through to GCSE, he volunteered to take on the role of third

year tutor. His tutees agreed that he has done a tremendous job, always ready to listen and advise, and even giving them extra coaching in the sciences, and in debating. He is going on to fulfil his long-term ambition of confusing everyone by running a day house called Border's! He too will always be welcome.

David Franklin

James's



I would like to start this, the inaugural Abingdonian article for James's House, by setting the score straight on a burning issue: the apostrophe. Or rather, the s after the apostrophe. Yes, that second s is meant to be there. After much consultation with the English Department, and indeed that paragon of Abingdon style Mr Dawswell, it was decided that we would be James's House, to rhyme with James is, not James' House. Details and explanations are already fuzzy and half-forgotten, but if St. James's palace is good enough for the Queen, then the second s is good enough for us too.

Looking back over the past year it is safe to say that the last three terms have been as successful and eventful as one could have hoped from the outset. The start of the new school year saw Mr James take the helm as Housemaster, following on from Mr Webb after 9 excellent years. James's House enjoyed contributions from across the year groups, led by a strong involvement from the Upper Sixth, with School

Prefects Harry Parker and Kester Webb, as well as a superb team of House Prefects led by Heads of House Murray Eccleston and Samuel Foster.

The Michaelmas Term saw many notable contributions take place in the House, with Ethan Moody qualifying for the National Junior Windsurfing squad and performing brilliantly in the National Championships, whilst Josh Rundle also exhibited his rowing and sculling talent. The first term marked an exciting milestone for the house: the first house singing competition in its new era, led calmly and impressively by Carl Olavesen, illustrating leadership that provides hope for future years to come. Whilst our rendition of *The Eye of the Tiger* may not have claimed first prize, it's safe to assume that we picked up second place - or perhaps not.

The Lent Term heralded another equally exciting competition; inter-house debating, in which Archie Williams and George Jeffreys blew the competition away with a strong grasp of logic and persuasive rhetoric in front of a huge

audience of 300 people, convincingly arguing that Britain would be better off remaining in the EU rather than leaving it...if only they had been at the helm of the Remain campaign. Alas.

The term also saw Max Carter-Keall called up to the U16 England hockey squad, an opportunity which he has seized, playing every game since, and his performances have led Max to be put up a year by his coaches to trial for the U18 side, which is great news.

Moving onto the Summer Term, mention should be made of Rafi'i Al-akiti, Zachary Muncaster and Tom Wiblin reaching the IFP Student Investor Challenge national finals. Whilst they did not win, it's worth pointing out that Tom claims the victors cheated so in all likelihood it was a complete robbery. Summer also saw a house social take place, with the whole house - boys, parents and teachers - coming together to enjoy casino-style games in the form of blackjack and roulette, as well as football and an evening buffet. It's good to see that here in James's we advocate



gambling from an early age!

From a sporting point of view, it's fair to say the house enjoyed a remarkably successful year. A number of impressive performances meant that we finished second in U18 badminton, third overall in rugby and, led by Rafi'i, first in chess (yet again) during the Michaelmas Term. Lent saw an even better performance, when we won the overall rowing ergos, shooting and U18 hockey with Max Carter-Keall, William Taylor and Samuel Foster playing prominent roles despite the use of some questionable headwear by the latter. In the road relay, two James's House teams were victorious; the Lower Sixth team led by Ivo Brown, who also won the individual Lower Sixth category with a time of 8 minutes and 19 seconds, and the third year team who collectively finished with a time of 40 minutes and 37 seconds. Only Ivo beat Mr James, but Alexander Pennington looks sure to take his revenge in future years.

Which leads us to the Summer Term, and what was described as a whitewash



by the Head of School in final assembly. By my reckoning James's won six of a potential 13 events during the final week of term, and finished in the top half in another five sports. Victories came in golf, sailing, athletics, U15 cricket, rowing and squash. This was a truly remarkable way to end the term, and of course provides us with plenty of cups, trophies and certificates with which to adorn the smart new houseroom.

Overall, the year saw a great deal of success for the boys in James's, both as a unit and individually, across all areas of school life, and, with a palpable sense of house community growing all the time, this looks set to continue. Huge thanks to Mr James, the tutors and the boys for a fantastic year, and I wish everyone the best of luck for the future.

Charles Edwards, 7RMF

A large group of young men, likely a school choir or band, are standing in rows, singing or chanting with their mouths open. They are wearing white shirts and red and white striped ties. A conductor in a white shirt is visible in the foreground, facing the group. The background is dark, suggesting an indoor setting with stage lighting.

This year saw the first staging of the intra-house pool competition. Organised by Sam Telling and Edward Williams, it was a great success with many boys



Magnus Gregory



and indeed tutors getting involved. It was the first of what I hope will be many such events led by the boys themselves. Far be it from me, however, to say that it may have been a little odd to see Sam winning his own competition!

Morgan's saw another year of sporting commitment and enthusiasm – which is to say we didn't win much again. The turnout was exceptional, however, and it is great to see boys so keen to get involved in competitions and proud to represent the house. Special mention must go to Nikhil Vyas for winning the U18 squash competition – as a third year! Hopefully this is one trophy at least we can hope to win again.

There are those in the house who excel at sport, of course, with Tom Digby and Magnus Gregory leading the way for international recognition. Tom started the year returning from the Rowing Junior World Championships, winning his second silver medal. He then went on to beat the world U19 5km ergo record. This would be impressive



Nat Jones

Thomas Keogh

enough, but a young man from Italy broke his record, so Tom did it again, but ensuring that he waited until the Italian had had his 19th birthday before making it public! Magnus carried on as the canoeing superstar of tomorrow, excelling at the senior Great Britain trials and winning gold and silver at the Junior World Championships.

I'd like to round off by offering our

thanks to two departing tutors in the sixth form. Andrew Swarbrick has been a wonderful tutor to many sixth form boys and brought his extensive expertise in the UCAS process to bear in advising many boys (and me!). Emily O'Doherty leaves to take over Christodoulou's House and I know that she will do an excellent job.

Henry Morgan

Southwell Sander's

**As I try to whittle down my inbox,
wade through the paper mountain on
my desk, and generally prepare for
the glorious summer holidays, all that
is left for me to do is to relive some of
the many memories of another year
in the Green Army...**

**I begin with my annual farewell poem
to the Upper Sixth**

Moving on now to the Lower Sixth, we give congratulations to Jonah Walker on his selection as Head of School and a well done to Byron Langley, Alexander Jorgenson, Robert Harris and Patrick Johnson on their selection as School Prefects. Max Mortimer and Thomas Dingwall have enjoyed good seasons in the 1st XI, while Max is up for selection for the Berkshire U18s. Charles Quarterman continues his stunning progress with his Zappi Road Racing team, winning amongst other things the 50th edition of the Junior Circuito del Guadiana in February.

The fifth year, as I write, are enjoying a long lazy summer holiday after working really hard for their exams. Notable performances include Charlie Stoker who has played regional and county hockey and Henry Isherwood who continues to train with the Wasps Academy. Thomas Clokey has a hugely exciting summer ahead climbing Mt Kilimanjaro and raising money for charity in the process. Sadly we say goodbye to Edward Green who is moving schools to Millfield to develop his tennis. We wish him all the very best of luck with that. Finally a big well done to Arthur Musson, Henry Isherwood and Ben Saunders who won the fifth year inter house debating for the second time in three years.

In the fourth year Tom Harvey-Jamieson spent a month in South Africa as part of an exchange, playing rugby for their school and immersing himself in South African life. Noah Walker won the Faringdon Town Council volunteer community award for the work he does around the town and the Folly to encourage wildlife - there were four categories and he was the youngest to be nominated and the only male winner! Henry Muller was in the school

play *Anything Goes* in the Lent Term. Henry, William Diver, and Noah Walker all have been rowing at many regattas representing the J15 Bs and As. Both teams achieved silver in their finals at Bedford. Drew Farwell represented the England Schools rifle shooting team county. Qasim Naqvi went on the cricket tour to Sri Lanka and was a member of the victorious U15 XI who have just won the regional round of the

ESCA cup. Toby Pratt has also reached regional hockey level. Francesco Cipriani has also been practising in the Arsenal Soccer School, which is a great achievement. A big thanks to Saul Rea who has taken the lead, with the help of Drew Farwell, Jack Lester, Piers Mucklejohn and Alexander Thulin, in organising the production and return of *The Green Flag* house newsletter.

The third year tutor group had a pastoral

As winter leaves and along comes spring
I hear my email inbox ping!
Even though it brings a tear to our eyes
It is time to say farewell to some real "Good Guys".
As we reflect on the times there have been
The Green Army Hall of Fame is where these guys will be seen:
There's Felix with racquet and shuttlecock in hand,
The Badminton team are feared across the land.
Jonathan brings an end to a Dynasty of Bibs
Assuming art coursework get done and his folks have no more kids!
Sgt Major Convery keeps his troops out of trouble,
He loves his midnight booze runs... mine's a double!
How will the rugby team cope without Lewis the flanker?
Work hard at your geography degree and you could be a banker!
As Dan looks ahead to a life in medicine
If he stays in one piece he keep the ladies pulse's a racing!
Zaijian, JK as you look to the East....
A career as a nun sounds a real treat!
Joe Mac the golden child, he's no renegade,
Rear of the year is quite an accolade.
How will the mighty 5ths survive without Mitch?
There will be one less headless chicken running around the pitch!
While Sandall does some swinging of the golfing kind,
Doing geogers at Cambridge with a glint in his eye!
We'll all miss Will S and his permanent smile
A career studying rocks is just his style!
A 5th team and house legend, Stretchy heads on his way.
I wager with his politics degree he'll run the country one day!
Harry T, Head of House, and yet another 5th team beaut,
He won't miss his daily commute!
The hockey club is sure to miss Wolly B,
Perhaps he'll get into the Sandpit club at Uni?
As they look ahead to exams and summer fun
There are a few teachers to whom they say thanks a ton.
Be it girlfriends, deadlines, late nights or UCAS,
They've stuck by you all when you're pains in the... neck!
Yet the legacy you leave on the house and the school
Shows that as a bunch of guys you personify "cool".
Remember when you sip a beer at the uni bar
You're Green Army forever, whether near or far!



Charlie Stoker



focus on how we treat each other, with the boys reflecting together on the impact of positive and negative comments on people's self esteem. The tutor group also had a good deed week in which Alexander D'Arcy, Arthur Boulton and James Thickett organised a cookie sale on behalf of Mencap and Matthew Buhler baked cakes for Cancer Research. Joe McConnell, Harry Horsnell and Alex Zhang have been involved with a joint drama workshop with students from Fitzharrys exploring issues surrounding PSHE. Alex Zhang was also one of only two boys in the year group to make it through to the Maths Olympiad in April. Several members of the tutor group got involved in the third year play, Brainstorm. There were also some good out of school achievements with Patrick Heath playing for Wasps rugby, Henry Pickess raising money for a heart attack charity with three 10km races and finally



Charles Quarterman

Arthur Boulton on his bike winning the Hillingdon Inter-Club Time Trial and has competing at national level races.

As I re-read this account of the year it brings it home to me what a multi-talented bunch of young men we have in the house. They are guided expertly by some superb tutors whose their hard work, counsel and good humour I

greatly appreciate. This year we have to say goodbye to Andy Chim who leaves us after a year. He made an immediate impression on the house and we wish him good luck. All that is left for me to do as the year draws to a close is to thank everyone in The Green Army for another belter of a year.

Robin Southwell Sander

Lower School



The move to secondary school is a bit of a leap in to the unknown and so the new first years probably weren't entirely sure what to expect when they first arrived in September – it is unlikely that watching their tutors lying down on the main school drive to be jumped over by a former BMX Half-pipe World Champion was on anyone's list, but that is exactly what they were treated to when Mike Mullen visited to launch this year's *Be the Best You Can Be* programme. He certainly gave the boys plenty of good advice about just what you can achieve when you are prepared to put in the effort and see making mistakes as an important part of the learning process. His success in managing to teach me how to do a BMX trick live on stage in front of all the boys showed the power of positive coaching – I remain eternally grateful to Mrs McRae for whipping out her mobile phone to record this moment so that it can live forever on the school website!

Inspired by Mike and helped enormously by the excellent mentoring of the second years, the new first years were quick to find their feet and start to get used to school routines. A lively rendition of *Don't stop me now* by Queen at the

House Singing Competition was well received by the judge and showed the boys working really well as a team, but also gave some individuals the chance to step up with Ben Shaw and Mike MacLennan providing excellent accompaniment on piano and drums, Lachlan Jones being a very confident and commanding conductor, and Owen Ravden showing great composure in his note-perfect solo at the very end of the performance – no mean feat when you know that every single one of the older boys in the school is listening. In the first inter-tutor group competitions of the year 2T were the winners in the inaugural Reading Challenge, while 2M and 1E proved victorious on the rugby pitch. 2P (Hamish Carle, Charlie Franklin and Max Williams) narrowly defeated 1W (Isaac Mortiboy, George Penny and Johnnie Willis-Bund) in the grand final of the annual Lower School Challenge.

Lower School boys are rarely short of things to say but sometimes they would benefit from saying these things in a slightly more sophisticated and organised way, so there is always a focus on public speaking in the Lent Term. This year we were very pleased to welcome trainers from the English

Speaking Union who ran a public speaking workshop for all the members of the first year, and then held several weeks of highly competitive inter-tutor group oratory as part of the annual public speaking competition. The grand final was a very close affair with first year champions 1W (Owen Henney, Charles Maddison and Jack Tilley) narrowly defeating 2P (James Gibson, Zach Rhodes and Max Williams).

In sport 2M and 1E swept the board in the end of term competitions with victory in both hockey and the road relay. The annual Charity Football Tournament was won by Wanyamas in Pyjamas (Archie Baker, Adam Coombs, Jack Heath, Charlie Masters, Rowan Prince, and Louis Summons) and raised £250 for Meningitis Research (with an extra £108 raised for Blue Skye Thinking on the refreshment stall).

Several members of Lower School were successful in the scholarship process, having undergone a rigorous process of assessments and interviews during the term: congratulations to Daniel McNamara and Joshua Roche (Sport), Hugo Wade (Music), Dashiell Hathaway and Owen Ravden (Music Exhibition), Sam Penrose (Art), Archie Baker and

Charlie Masters (Drama), and Toby Hindley, Dashiell Hathaway, Daniel McNamara, Nicholas Pearson and Will Taylor (Academic).

Over the Easter holidays the majority of Lower School boys were involved in the annual Adventure Trips, with the first years visiting PGL Liddington and second years going to Plas Pencelli Outdoor Education Centre near Brecon. Whether leaping for a trapeze, squeezing through tiny holes in the ground, abseiling in a disused quarry, or zooming down a zip wire, challenges were offered, comfort zones tested, and new things achieved. The fate of the boy who managed to lose the Lower School Gopro camera in the depths of the River Wye was uncertain for a while, not least because he was in striking distance of his Housemaster at the time, but even he lived to tell the tale!

There was plenty of time for fun and recreation in the summer with highlights including a very successful joint dinner debate with St Helen's girls, the balloon debate of which saw James Gibson utter the now immortal phrase "the robot beekeepers are coming" which made some kind of sense at the time! There were also trips to the Rhineland, Fishbourne Roman Palace, and Hampton Court. Inter-tutor group competitions came thick and fast with plenty of sporting events, as well as the culmination of the year round reading challenge. In terms of the overall year group winners, 2M were victorious in many of the sporting events but 2P's dominance in the more cerebral



activities meant that the final victor was not decided until the penultimate day of term when 2M's victories in the tug of war and the swimming gala secured them the title. Things were even closer in the first year with everything hanging on who won the tug of war tournament on the very last day of term – 1W, inspired, or possibly terrified, by the sight and sound of Mrs Wigmore screaming them on at the top of her lungs, proved to be unbeatable on the end of a rope and ended the year as first year champions.

We were very pleased to welcome Mike Mullen back twice in the last few days of term. Firstly to run a BMX workshop for the entire second year where they all got to try out some tricks and stunts on bikes under Mike's expert guidance

and then as guest speaker at the *Be the Best* Celebration – when he once again felt the need to jump his bike over some members of staff, this time the Lower School Housemaster and Deputy Head Pastoral, on the stage of the Arney Theatre. The expectant audience clearly felt that Mike was just showing some stage craft when he pulled up at the last minute from his first attempt but in fact, as he revealed to me afterwards, he had realised that he had not had a long enough run up and would have landed right on top of us if he had gone for the jump! Having thankfully made the jump at his second attempt, Mike then awarded special prizes to Charlie Franklin, James Gibson, Tristan Mann Powter, Ben Shaw and Max Williams (Baker Awards), Jack Tilley (The Cooper Cup for Excellence in Reading), Lachlan Jones (The Dillon Cup for Lower School Service), Theo Mara (The Broadbent Cup for Sporting Excellence) and Matthew Viner (The Woodgett Cup for Excellent All-round Contribution).

The departing second years have been a great group of boys to work with for the last two years – they represent a very wide range of interests and personalities and have certainly come on a very long way both as individuals and as a group during their two years in Lower School, developing a greater understanding of what they need to do to "be the best they can be". I wish them all well for the future.

Adam Jenkins



Inter-House Sport Results

	U18	U16	U15	U14
Athletics	Franklin's		Cotton's	James's
Badminton	Morgan's	Austin's	Austin's	
Basketball			Christodoulou's	
Chess	James's			
Climbing				James's
Cricket			James's	
Fencing	Franklin's			
Football	Christodoulou's	Morgan's	Christodoulou's	School
Hockey	James's		Morgan's	
Pool				Austin's
Rowing Ergos	James's		Austin's	James's
Rowing Quads			James's	
Rugby 7s		Morgan's	Cotton's	
Shooting	James's			
Squash	Morgan's	School	Austin's	
Swimming	Christodoulou's	School	Crescent	
Table Tennis	Austin's	Austin's	Franklin's	
Tennis			Crescent	
Water Polo		School		

Lower School Inter-Tutor Group Competitions

	2nd Year	1st Year
Summer Reading Challenge	2T	
Rugby	2M	1E
Lower School Challenge	2P	1W
Cross country	2M	1E
Hockey	2M	1E
Road Relay	2M	1E
Public Speaking	2P	1W
Water Polo	2M	1C
Table Tennis	2P	1W
Athletics	2M	1W
Reading	2P	1E
Cricket	2P	1C
Swimming	2M	1C
Tug of War	2M	1W
Overall Winners	2M	1W

Staff Farewells

Modern Language Assistants

Temana Lai Mink and Laure Navas joined the Modern Languages Department as French assistants from the University of Reims where they had both just completed degrees in English. They both soon became integrated into the department and their work was much appreciated by boys and staff alike. Temana remains in the UK and has taken up a post as a French sales rep for Lego. Laure has now returned to France to study for a Masters degree. We wish them all the very best for the future.

Jane Mansfield

Ana Blanco López has a BA in Languages from Complutense University of Madrid together with a Masters in teaching Spanish from the University of Seville. Last academic year, she worked as a Spanish language assistant at The Ellen Wilkinson School for Girls in London. We were lucky that the Spanish Embassy, once again, provided us with a good professional. During this academic year, apart from her work in Abingdon which she enjoyed very much, Ana has been studying at the Open University as well as producing Spanish material for primary and secondary students in the UK. She now leaves this country to move back to her hometown where she will be teaching Spanish and English at several language schools. We have been very pleased with her work at Abingdon and wish her all the best for the future.

Victoria Pradas

HongMei Wang graduated from Shanxi Normal University in 2001. She then worked as an English teacher at Shan

Xi Sheng Tai Yuan Shi No 12 Middle School in China between 2001 and 2015. She took a one-year secondment and joined us as a Chinese language assistant at Abingdon through the Chinese Hanban and British Council programme. HongMei demonstrated a hardworking attitude and helped to create many Chinese teaching resources, as well as providing assistant lessons to our Chinese class pupils. HongMei really enjoyed working at Abingdon. She has now returned to her post at No 12 Middle School. We still keep in touch with HongMei to share teaching practices and wish her all the best for the future.

Gao Zhang

Nez Önen joined us from our partner university in Bielefeld in 2014 and we were lucky that she had decided to stay another year and also become a tutor. As with everything, Nez threw herself fully into her roles as well as into school life, taking trips to sixth form socials with the boys, attending Oxford German network meetings and offering dance classes for the boarders on Sundays in her first year – many will remember her solo performance on Teachers Come Dancing. Her whirlwind of a creative and enthusiastic personality and commitment to the boys' achievements and well-being were unrivalled. She is planning on staying in England and working as a teacher. We wish her all the best for a successful future.

Alexandra von Widdern

Jo Willis-Bund

Jo Willis-Bund joined the English Department for a year to teach Lower and Middle School English. She enthused her classes with her passion for the subject introducing a wide range of exciting texts including Philip Reeve's *Mortal Engines* and Reginald Rose's

Twelve Angry Men. She helped to promote the boys' interest in English outside the classroom by running a trip to *The Tempest* for the third year and helping out with Middle School debating. Jo also contributed to Other Half activities in the Summer Term by supervising Lower School croquet. She has been a warm and generous colleague and always willing to help others in the English Department and in the school at large.

Emma Williamson

Ed Swanwick

Ed Swanwick arrived from Scots College in Sydney in April 2014, where he had been a Housemaster of Royle House for several years. He took on the role of Housemaster of School House and Head of Boarding, which he threw himself into with aplomb. As a firm believer in a forward-looking boarding programme, Ed put a great deal of effort into tightening up and modernising boarding at Abingdon. In particular, his



work behind the scenes in preparing boarding for the anticipated inspection was vital, and very much helped ensure a successful outcome.

Ed is also an avid rugby fan and could frequently be seen sporting his canary yellow rugby shirt ("Canary yellow? That's Australian gold my friend...") around the campus. I had the misfortune to watch England crash out of the World Cup to Australia with him, although to be fair he was graciousness personified afterwards! His passion for rugby translated to two successful seasons coaching the 2nd XV where his competitive nature shone through.

Ed leaves to take on the role of Deputy Head Pastoral at Clifton College, and he and wife Sue, daughter Sadie and son Rex will be missed. We wish them all the best for the future.

Matthew Kendry

Raj Ghosh

Raj joined the Geography Department in 2012 as a newly qualified teacher and quickly showed himself to be incredibly dedicated and enthusiastic, working long hours in the departmental office marking or creating highly inventive and engaging lessons. He cared deeply about the progress of every single boy in his classes, making sure that he was catering for all their individual needs. He

was at the cutting edge with his use of ICT as well, often passing on useful tips to the more established members of the department on new technologies that he had used and that had worked well.

Raj was equally dedicated to the pastoral side of life at Abingdon, being a resident tutor and then Assistant Boarding Housemaster in Austin House. He threw himself wholeheartedly into organising trips and activities for the boys and was a key figure in setting up the new boarding enrichment programme. He took his role as a tutor incredibly seriously, putting as much time into preparing his tutor group sessions as he did to his subject lessons, helping to revamp PSHCE lessons, and making sure that all the boys in his care made as much progress as possible in all areas of school life. He always went above and beyond the call of duty for one of his boys.

Raj is a passionate sportsman and his enthusiasm rubbed off on all those boys he coached, particularly the Middle School rugby teams he worked with who have been inspired by his example. He has really helped to create a culture that has changed the way Abingdon approaches sport and changed the way that we are now viewed (and feared) by our rivals.

Raj is one of the most sincere, honest and hard-working colleagues I have ever worked with. He wears his heart on his sleeve, has strong morals and

uses his own passion for teaching and learning to inspire the staff and pupils around him. He can also always be relied upon to display a high level of sartorial elegance and an ever-changing facial hair style! We are very sorry to see him go but know he is going to make a great success of his new role as Head of Geography at Rugby.

Robin Southwell-Sander

Nick Fieldhouse

Nick Fieldhouse started his teaching career in 2007 at Torquay Boys' Grammar School and within two years of his appointment there he had been propelled to the post of Head of Department. He therefore arrived at Abingdon in September 2011 with an impressive track record behind him and quickly established himself as a dynamic and enthusiastic teacher of Economics and Business Studies. His subject knowledge, clarity of exposition and friendly manner swiftly earned him the respect of his students. Indeed, his preparation for lessons always went way beyond the 'necessary' because he was driven by a continual desire to make learning both fun and engaging. Creating exciting and innovative tasks for the classroom was therefore central to Nick's teaching practice. He cared greatly about his students' success, and the sea of green ink on students' essays resulting from hours of marking was but one sign of his dedication and commitment.

In September 2013 he was internally promoted to the position of Head of Economics and Business Studies. To that post he brought the same qualities that were evident in the classroom: energy, enthusiasm and a desire to achieve the highest of standards. The department's office soon swelled with certificates and trophies from competitions such as the IFS Student Investor, ICAEW Base, the Deloitte Essay competition and the Young Enterprise Scheme. The success of Young Enterprise was of particular note: under Nick's stewardship the number of pupils involved in the activity quadrupled





and prizes were gleaned at area, county, regional and national level. Nick also established Business and Enterprise days for local primary schools and led the department's foreign trips to Paris, New York, Frankfurt, Prague and Brussels.

The same Midas touch was evident when Nick took over the running of the school's Fencing Club. The club experienced significant growth during his tenure, a more extensive fixture list was established (to include schools such as Harrow, Winchester and Wellington) and many prizes were won at national level in the Public Schools' Fencing Championship. As a tutor in Crescent House, Nick commanded the respect of students for his zeal, good humour and pastoral sensitivity. He approached this role with immense, but characteristic, fervour.

The outward trappings of success were evident in all that Nick did, but never were his achievements garnered at the expense of others. The wellbeing of students and colleagues was always of primary concern to him and he led others through encouragement, example and infectious enthusiasm. Given his achievements in his time at Abingdon, it came as little surprise that he was appointed as Assistant Head (Sixth Form) at St. Dunstan's College, London. His unique blend of genial verve and professionalism will be much

missed at Abingdon, but we shall follow his career trajectory with interest. He leaves with our thanks and very best wishes for the future.

Simon Grills

Tamara Christodoulou

Tamara Katic, as she was then, joined the Physics Department five years ago. She quickly made a big impression with her sharp mind, power dressing and of course, all those shoes. Almost every physics textbook, on the topic of pressure, makes a rather non-pc statement that a lady in stilettos causes more damage to a wooden dance-floor than an elephant. This normally takes lots of explanation as to the difference between the elephant and the shoe... well, not since Tamara joined us, as she always had plenty of heels to demonstrate with.

Tamara always cared greatly about how well her pupils were doing, working just as well with a top A level set as with a bottom Middle School group and always making sure her boys were very well prepared for their exams.

She is very proud of her Serbian heritage and indeed we soon learned that a good way to annoy her was

merely to suggest that the great engineer Nikola Tesla was American, Croatian, or anything other than Serbian! She is supremely intelligent, but, as so often with smart people, her common sense can be a bit dodgy – and I am not just referring to her deciding that a certain middle-aged maths teacher was “a bit of a catch” and becoming Tamara Christodoulou.

I know the boys will miss her caring, compassionate ways, her clear concise explanations and her sense of humour. We wish Tamara, Alexis and Alexander all the best for the future.

John Brooks

Peter Coke



Peter came to Abingdon from QE Barnet as master in charge of rugby six years ago and during his time here has done a tremendous job developing and moving the Rugby Club forward as well as taking over the reins of the Athletics Club this year and teaching geography too.

He loves his stash as well as a good tour and led three hugely successful senior overseas trips to South Africa, Namibia and most recently to Australia and New Zealand, as well as introducing the annual October tours around the UK for the U14s.

He's tremendously passionate about his sport, always wanting to challenge and push the boys whatever their level, and it's a testimony to his hard work and dedication that the number of sides that Abingdon puts out has increased and a number of boys have gained international honours during his time here. Abingdon is now recognised as a force at schoolboy level on the national stage with lots of renowned rugby playing schools around the country wanting a fixture against us.

Peter has taken the Rugby Club a long way in the past six years, but has found the lure of Sedbergh, a school with a massive rugby tradition, something that he couldn't pass up and we wish him and his family well as they move up North where every fixture will be a mini-tour! He'll be a hard act to follow and Abingdon's loss will undoubtedly be Sedbergh's gain.

Andy Broadbent

Felicity Lusk

Heads vary hugely in how they tackle the challenge of being a Head, doing a job which, at times, I have said is an "impossible task". Felicity saw her role as to think about strategy and change, to be the external face of the School going out to others marketing the School, and to delegate the detail to others.

She arrived in 2010 as a long-serving Head of over a dozen years at the high-achieving Oxford High School. Much has changed during her six year tenure: these developments have all been part of the desire to improve what we offer on the academic side, in pastoral care and the Other Half: most staff now tutor, so reducing the size of most tutor groups; PSHE is now taught by specialists; the removal of Saturday academic lessons was accompanied by the lengthening of lessons and much more year group games, which enabled more specialist coaching; a School Council was created; football became a sport played competitively for all year groups.

Significantly, soon after she arrived, Felicity asked for a master plan of



buildings to be developed, and a recent analysis showed that much has been accomplished. The Health Centre has been relocated, and counselling rooms have been provided there; a new Reception has been created in the old Bursary, and one too by the new Science Centre; appropriate offices have been provided for support staff; a School café has been created by the Jekyll Garden; the Amey Theatre, the Charles Maude Room and much boarding accommodation has been refurbished, and the Boat House has been upgraded. One unforeseen opportunity which was seized was our purchase of the lease of Tilsley Park. The main project of Felicity's tenure has been the new Science Centre. This has been followed by the refurbishment of the old science labs to create Greening Court and by the new all-weather pitch close to Crescent.

Felicity worked assiduously with the OAs – and their involvement in their provision of advice for current pupils has blossomed. Seeing the importance

of integrating the whole School adult workforce Felicity encouraged this too. Readers of Felicity's blog, which was continually updated with descriptions of some of the activities she had been up to, not least the adventures of Dudley, will know some of the things Felicity did. However, much of the role involves, as she occasionally hinted, discussion and difficult decisions, which don't make it to a website, but at the final assembly to the boys Felicity was able to announce that plans were being developed to build a new Library, sixth form centre and Art Department close to Lacies Court for completion in 2018.

Most significantly for any school, Abingdon weathered the significant recession which had begun just before Felicity arrived at Abingdon. Demand for places continued unabated, and there have been two very successful full school ISI inspections, one just after she arrived, and the other in her final year. She has left the School in a strong place from which to build for the future.

David Dawswell

Rachel Yarrow

Rachel joined us in September 2010 as the first second in the English Department, at the time that Kevin Carson had just begun to make some major changes. She was educated at Oxford High School (under Felicity Lusk), held a BA from Cambridge, a Masters from Oxford and a PGCE from London. We felt she was well qualified! She came to us from John Hampden Grammar School, where she'd begun her teaching career, was heading up year 7, and was involved in the EPQ and debating. My post interview notes from Kevin have him describing her as "very impressive throughout yesterday" and "a great addition to the team" – and so she turned out to be. She was key in helping Kevin change the culture of English and showing us the road to improvement.

Up against strong external competition, Rachel was then easily the first choice to become Head of Department in 2012 when Kevin moved on, building on what had been achieved with her somewhat softer skills being brought to bear after Kevin's somewhat more 'direct' style. That's not to say that she ducked the difficulties of leadership

and the English Department is not at all an easy one to manage containing as it has done a previous Head of Department, two of the three Deputy Heads, the Head of Boarding, the UCAS co-ordinator, the Master in charge of the Other Half and then latterly the Director of Teaching and Learning: a classic case of too many chiefs and lots of people for whom their English teaching has to compete with considerable responsibilities outside of the department. The phrase "herding cats" was coined for just such a situation. Rachel handled all this with aplomb as well as some other very challenging staffing issues that might have derailed a less skilful Head of Department and I've certainly admired her uncompromising and steadfast demand that the boys receive the very best possible standard of English teaching from whichever teacher they were given. Results and recruitment into A Level have improved even further under her leadership and she brought debating and *The Martlet* into the department, started up the Model United Nations as an activity at Abingdon, and began an AS Creative Writing course for sixth formers.

All that said, Rachel was always a little uncertain with me as to what she

wanted to do next in teaching and treated the greasy pole of promotion with a healthy disdain. She could easily have moved onwards and upwards had she chosen that route, but it was not a great surprise to me when she announced that she and her new partner had decided to start up their own business. She had my immediate and full support in that – not that I was at all anxious to lose her but more that I recognised from our private discussions that this was something she really wanted to do. We were very pleased indeed to keep her on in a part-time teaching capacity for a further year – and I know she very much enjoyed a retreat from the headaches of leadership and the opportunity to focus just on her teaching when she was on site. We wish her all the best in her new venture and indeed phase of life... marriage, parenthood... and trust that she won't lose touch with the many friends she made here.

Graeme May

John Winters

John Winters joined the school in 2008 and was a stalwart member of the Maths Department throughout his Abingdon career. He was second in the department for the majority of his time at the school and took on the role of acting Head of Department when Vanessa Penrose was on sabbatical. He ran the Maths (UKMT) Challenge for a number of years. He has an ingrained love of order and process, and a deep affection and loyalty to the school which perhaps inevitably resulted in his perpetual pursuit of finding ways to improve the efficiency of the routines of everyday school life and bring them into manageable order, through his formidable and creative ICT and programming prowess! In the Maths Department, he automated the process of book loans (normally numbering around 2500 per annum) and the collation of public exam results by boy, set and teacher. This passion spread outside of the Maths Department too, and many an Abingdonian will well remember John's efficient handling of all aspects of the processes on GCSE and





A Level results days.

His ICT excellence, in addition to his teaching skills, was too good to be untapped and initially his wisdom was called upon as staff rep on the ICT Committee before his influence spread through the ingenious “Scheduler” programme he wrote in his “spare time” allowing the collation of disparate data entries into one helpful and personalised single diary format, to save on the frustration of duplicating data entry and having to consult multiple documents to plan one’s day. Similarly he created a markbook programme which was greatly appreciated, particularly in the Maths Department.

Most recently, the vital task of handling the heavy lifting of data from Schoolbase onto iSAMS was undertaken by John, and his eye for detail and refusal to buckle under the weight of even the most extreme data exchange requirements proved to be a challenge even for the experts at iSAMS who realised that they had met their match in JHW! If John undertakes to do a task, however large, you can rely on it being completed without compromise or corner-cutting and with dogged determination! Data is one of his great

passions and he is always passionately keen to see decision-making informed by reason and (ideally) statistical justification.

His sense of duty and commitment is most impressive and many is the trip leader who has been grateful to John’s willingness to help out, particularly with the logistical side of ensuring a trip’s success. He drove countless boys in minibuses, most frequently for tennis and CCF, and was an intrepid companion on a large number of bronze and silver DofE expeditions. He even tried “several times to be a rogue naval officer in the CCF” (his words), but never quite got there! He also founded the computer programming Other Half activity which has since branched into several streams.

As a staff member and parent to an Abingdonian, he really understands what the school’s values are and what staff and pupil welfare means, and this understanding informed his work as a tutor, first in the sixth form and then in Middle School in Nick O’Doherty’s house and then latterly in Cotton’s. There are qualities that John possesses which are not always noticed, but I was most grateful to have such an unfailingly punctual, reliable, loyal and a deeply

caring man as part of my house team. We wish him well in his “retirement”, although we know that he will always be busy using his fearsome mental and ICT abilities to provide solutions to one problem or another!

John Cotton

Alexis Christodoulou

I can still recall my first impression of Alexis vividly as we both joined the school at the same time in September 2004. I assumed he was an ex-British Army officer but I was slightly incorrect as Alexis was actually an ex-subaltern from an elite Cypriot parachute regiment. Alexis was always vague about what he actually did in the Cypriot army but with typical modesty gave the impression it had been very important. Alexis had also been an ex-professional windsurfer and rowed for Oxford. I’m sure all of the above are true.

The steely determination engendered by such experiences was soon apparent to me. In my first few years I assisted Alexis in the school Cross Country Club, which he led with implacable competitiveness, and I was always impressed (and slightly alarmed) by how seriously he took it. Alexis certainly subscribed to the adage that sport was not a matter of life and death, it was more important than either. Under his leadership the cross country team went from strength to strength and whilst it was never quite as successful as badminton it could be said to have been for a time the second most successful school team in terms of matches won. Alexis quickly rose to the ranks of middle management and soon had his own house: Christodoulou’s. Once again he demonstrated his innate ability to lead boys. He made it clear very quickly that whilst he respected academic ability, it was a running and triathlon skill set that it was most essential to develop if you wanted to get on in life! He informed me on one of our first cross country matches that he would complete an Ironman by the



end of the first year at Abingdon and sure enough he completed one that summer. Soon he had transmogrified into a lycra wearing ninja and was competing regularly. Although he could have picked the easier option of representing Greece in age group competitions he always wanted to race for Great Britain. I was never sure if he achieved this ambition but he was soon moonlighting as a triathlon coach and leading others to greatness. Occasionally Alexis taught a maths lesson. His online reviews wildly differ as to how effective he was at this. One describes him as a 'very good teacher'. I am sure this is accurate.

On a personal level I hugely enjoyed hanging out with Alexis. There really was never a dull moment. In the time I shared with him he managed to juggle an extraordinarily complicated personal life with high level athletic endeavour and was still always ready for some amusing banter in the MCR. With the birth of his son and marriage to Tamara, he also settled into domesticated happiness. The beast, it seemed, had been tamed. He was a thoughtful teacher, an amusing colleague and a great friend. He will be missed and Wellington College can surely only benefit from a man of so many parts.

David McGill

Alison Quick

Alison Quick was educated at Oxford High School, Manchester University and the Webber-Douglas Academy in London. She spent time as a professional actress before starting her teaching career as a lecturer at De Montfort University. She taught at Rye St Antony before becoming Head of Drama at Oxford High School in

1997 and joining the Abingdon Drama Department in 2004.

Alison quickly established herself as a livewire. Her classes were a whirlwind of activity, pupils up on their feet, fizzing with ideas, acting them out with a passion Alison triggered like a Van der Graaf generator. Class discussions were just as lively, debates resembling the floor of the House of Commons. At every turn, Alison promoted the idea that drama was not just entertainment, but a vital way of exploring life, asking hard questions, striving to make sense of the world.

Her productions had a wonderful intensity. There was Henry Papworth's brilliant performance in *Equus*, or the fire and brimstone of her *Taming of the Shrew*, or her terrific version of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*. My own favourite was her production of *Fen* – an eerie, flinty piece, haunted by ghosts of starving field workers in East Anglia.

Passion leaves its mark. As Maya Angelou wrote, "people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." When word got out Alison was retiring, many former pupils got in touch. One, currently studying at the Julliard School in New York, wrote:



I have so many fond memories of being taught by Alison; she always brought such fervour and excitement to the material we studied. Alison also directed me in my final school production of Cymbeline, which was a pure joy. I had never performed Shakespeare before, and she undoubtedly lit a fire in me then that is still with me today.

Alison is also blessed with a lively sense of fun, as many of her pupils attest. A former St Helen's student wrote:

She goes down in history as one of my favourite teachers. I was always able to have so much fun with her and she made everything seem possible.

That sense of fun expressed itself in spectacular bursts of energy. On one occasion, walking back from the coach park at midnight after a theatre trip to find the tall gates to Long Alley locked, in a flash, Alison hauled herself up, before vaulting clean over the top and down the other side. She seemed at that moment to hang in the air like one of Chagall's flying lovers. Her boldness was breathtaking.

For me, that moment, sums up Alison's approach to life. Like the Nike advert – and like the Film Unit's maverick mentor Mike Grigsby, who always admired her spirit – Alison's motto was "Just Do It".

Alison often resembled a kind of Mary Poppins figure, working like a benign electrical charge on all around her. For years she bounded up the stairs to the drama office, two at a time, toting a pair of seemingly bottomless carpetbags stuffed with paraphernalia to counter every eventuality. She not only inspired her pupils; she kept her colleagues afloat on many occasions, offering unstinting support and wisdom far beyond the obligations of her part time role. Through times of illness or family crisis, she was always there for us, offering practical help of the very best kind. For that as well as for her teaching, her productions, her creativity and her friendship, all of us are hugely grateful. We will miss Alison enormously.

Jeremy Taylor



Andrew Hall

When asked to write a few words about Andrew, I knew it was going to be tough to condense his achievements into a small paragraph. Andrew played a huge part in Abingdon School life during the 13 years that he was here. He had an enthusiastic, determined and passionate nature which rubbed off on all those who had the pleasure of working with him.

He played a large part in both the building of our incredible Sports Centre and the acquisition and development of Tilsley Park, as well as managing to run a very successful PE department as Director of Sport. He lived and breathed the School, wanting each pupil to achieve the best that they could in whichever sport they decided to choose. On top of his exemplary teaching, Andrew was renowned for his inspirational team talks, often lifting the boys from the depth of despair at half time to produce a phenomenal come back during the second half.

Away from teaching Andrew was a keen sportsman himself, completing many an epic adventure. As a keen

triathlete, many boys noticed how smooth his legs were, something they often asked about during the first few lessons that he taught them. The response the boys generally got from Andrew was 'hair does not grow on steel'... at which they seemed tongue tied (for a few minutes at least!). During my time knowing him, Andrew managed to cycle from Oxford to the Isle of Skye, run the Oxford Half Marathon, walk on hot coals, climb Ben Nevis, kayak Lake Windermere and mountain bike the West Highland Way, showing his adventurous nature and determination to succeed in whatever he put his mind to.

Andrew has been an absolute pleasure to work with – his dedication to inspire those around him to reach the highest level has been witnessed by hundreds of pupils and staff members over the years. We wish him and his family all the best on their new adventure at Dean Close. He has moved on to bigger and better things and I know that his new school are in for a very exciting time with him at the helm as Deputy Head. All the best, Andrew, and a huge thank you from us at Abingdon.

Olly Deasy



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