



The Abingdonian 2017





The Abingdonian

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Editorial



With such busy schedules, it's very easy to let the memories of the past academic year fade away, so we have produced this issue of *The Abingdonian* to commemorate all that happened here in 2016/17. We hope that this issue captures some of the numerous accomplishments of Abingdon students and the fantastic activities and trips laid on by the School, making them available for boys to revisit for years to come, even after moving on to pastures new.

As an academic year, 2016/17 was full of events worthy of mention. Outside the classroom we saw exchanges to France, Spain and Germany, the latter marking the 50th anniversary of our link with the Ratsgymnasium School in Bielefeld, and exciting trips to places as far afield as Finland, the French Alps and Moldova. Our sports clubs had busy and successful seasons, while productions such as *And Then There Weren't Any Left* and *London Road* played to appreciative audiences in the Amey Theatre. In the classroom, our GCSE and A Level students achieved excellently once again.

With such a huge array of activity going on it was very easy to produce this year's issue of *The Abingdonian*. We encourage you to use our publication to look back on the year fondly, and remember how far you came, how much you changed, and all that you did on the way.

Finally, many thanks go to the lead editor, Mr Jenkins, and to the entire pupil editorial team of Rory Bishop, Daniel Cooney, Jate Jaturanpinyo, Andreas Lo, Sam Hayes-Newington, Sam Penrose, Xavier Putnam and Matthew Viner, as well as to all the contributing staff and students who helped in bringing this publication to you.

Howard Hawkes, 5NGJ

Head's Foreword



I am delighted to be able to provide a foreword for this latest edition of *The Abingdonian*. It has given me a chance to reflect on my first year as Headmaster of Abingdon, a year which seemed to fly by, packed with adventure and incident.

It is also an opportunity for me to express my thanks to everyone in the Abingdon community for the warm welcome that they gave me and my family when we arrived in September 2016. There is a palpable and precious sense of community here and in my first year I particularly relished those occasions when the entire school was engaged in an activity together. The charity walk - or 'Charathon' - came early in my first term and I enjoyed the chance to get to know the local countryside better while also chatting to pupils and colleagues as we covered the 13 miles together. Little did I know at that point that my first term would culminate in a role in the staff panto; a hair-raising, surreal and ultimately enjoyable experience!

I quickly picked up on the sense of ambition and the standards of excellence which underpin life at Abingdon. The pages of this magazine capture this but the sheer quality that was on display in so many areas on so many occasions was hugely exciting for me to see. Be it in academic life or in the Other Half, there was so much to enjoy and each day offered something new and interesting.

In the first year as Head of a school like Abingdon, there is an enormous amount to take in and I leant heavily on the support of the Senior Leadership Team and of course particularly on the encyclopaedic knowledge of Abingdon that Mr Dawswell brings. I was fortunate to work with two outstanding Heads of School in the form of George Jeffreys and Jonah Walker who were superb representatives of what the School is all about.

Of course my principal goal in my first year as Headmaster was to reflect on what I saw and to agree a future direction for the School. Surveys and informal feedback played a key role in this process and I hope that we now have a Development Plan in place that will set the course for the next five years and enable us to make a great school even better.

I would certainly like to take this opportunity to thank Mr Jenkins and the editorial team for all the work that they have put in to produce this latest edition of *The Abingdonian*. I hope you will relish it as a record of the past twelve months as much as I will.

Michael Windsor

Michaelmas 2016



A New Start

In the blink of an eye, I have already completed my first year at Abingdon: It wasn't easy getting used to the boarding side of things, especially being abroad, but with the help of my fellow room mates and teachers, it wasn't hard to adapt to my new life abroad.

I was anxious, yet also excited, on my first day, heading towards School House - my new home. It was hard bidding farewell to my parents and brother after living with them for 13 years. However, it wasn't long after that I got a new hand on my shoulder, my dedicated housemaster introduced me to my new life as a School House boarder and Abingdon pupil, together with the help of my tutors and our matron. Within two weeks, I had already got my hands full with Other Half activities, whether it is orchestra, choirs or even publishing magazines.

One of the aspects that I am enjoying the most is the boarding experience at Abingdon. Despite the fact that

our boarding community is smaller than at other schools this means we get a much deeper understanding of each other, and become even greater friends. Every weekend, we gather and go into town or even into Oxford to have dinner and converse before heading back to school. Occasionally, we even get trips to Bristol, Oxford and lots of other thrilling places in the UK, which is a great pleasure as we get to have some free time to buy loads of things to bring back to Abingdon. Getting into bed on time is a difficult thing for me to adapt to because I'm used to sleeping late, but you possibly can't do that here. I remember when I was one minute late, the duty tutor was already questioning me as to why I am 'this late' for bed... But I guess it is a good thing: at least I don't have to sleep in class and be scolded and given a detention!

Abingdon offers a lot of different trips to different parts of the world. I have already visited two different countries in Europe, both of which were extremely memorable. I remember I had to be woken up early by my housemaster in the eerie night and wait under the

pouring rain for our coach to arrive before being stuck in the cramped place for nearly 20 hours! Although it was a long and slightly uncomfortable ride, luckily, we still survived thanks to the TVs on our coach and the deck of cards to play with. It's great to have fun and explore the other side of learning the history and culture of the city. I recall I once drank a cup of apple cider (don't worry, it's non-alcoholic!) in the Christmas Market in Strasbourg and I almost screamed to death after drinking the first sip! Going on trips with Abingdon is truly, truly exciting and if you are asked to go on any trips, I would strongly recommend you go!

Even though it was just my first year, there were lots of great things happening in my new school life abroad, and I know, for sure, that much more is to be encountered throughout my school life at Abingdon!

Andreas Lo, 3AJM

For most of us, third year is the beginning of a new life here at Abingdon School. It is our first step into a new world that will be our home



for years to come. We will do our most important exams of our lives yet, and we will, hopefully, grow into cultured, well behaved and thoughtful young men. I won't lie, it is hard at first. Not only is there a whole new school to get used to, there are also hundreds of new faces to get to know. Many are fortunate enough to have some from their previous school with them, but many others, like me, will not. But quickly it gets easier. Soon enough, be it from your new tutor group, new house or class, one can find new friends and old that will form a big part of the support structure you'll need for your future years at Abingdon. And that is actually a very important aspect of this School. From your friends, teachers, housemasters, the list goes on, there is always someone to help, literally. Importantly, I never forgot that if I had a problem I could simply ask. The community around does truly become a vital piece in your life. Although the first few days are hard, the routine at Abingdon soon becomes the norm. Within a very short period of time we all got into the rhythm of things. I also started to take part in the endless

Other Half activities Abingdon has. Academics are very important but, as the name suggests, they're only one half of the whole picture. From writing in a multilingual magazine, a professional newspaper, to more sporting, physical activities and making music, the choice is hard to make. For some this is an opportunity to improve the skills they already have, but for many, like me, it was a rare opportunity to try something new, and, to be perfectly honest, I absolutely loved it. Much like I said before, The Other Half is a perfect opportunity to meet new people who have the same interests as you. To this day, a big chunk of my best friends I only met simply because we have the same likes and ended up in the same Other Half activity. In the end, as much as third year may seem scary or frightening, it will probably turn out to be one of the most enjoyable and formative years yet.

Johan Nerlov, 3SJB



Johan Nerlov





Classics Trip to Greece

In October, the Classics Department ventured forth on its annual week-long excursion, and it was Greece's turn to host according to the established four-year cycle. After departing the coach park in the small hours of the morning and meeting a mysterious man in a trenchcoat who turned out to be Patrick Cole, the company was fully assembled in time for BA to see us from Heathrow to Athens International without incident. Soon after landing we started on what proved to be a busy schedule. Greece

has many sites to offer and I was glad to make the most of the time available.

As custom dictates, much of the guiding at the sites were undertaken by the pupils themselves. For the first time, middle school guides took the stage. Assisted by a local dog, the GCSE ancient historians effectively shared their knowledge at Marathon. Joe Salter narrowly avoided a hefty bill for performing unlicensed Greek tragedy at the spectacular theatre at Epidauros, Silas Gill stunned audiences with his rendition of the Herakles, while Alasdair Czaplewski spoke particularly astutely at Mycenae, and Ben Ffrench appropriately pedalled his powerful rhetoric on the Pnyx. My tour guiding at Delphi

- critically acclaimed as 'somewhat militaristic' - carried well across a vast, totally deserted mountainside, while William Sheffield was left to battle the infuriating sound of southern Europe's noisiest pulley system on the slopes of the Athenian Acropolis. The mysterious man in a trenchcoat led the proceedings at Olympia, while credit is due to Charlie Burnand for consistently outshining his father's presentation skills, most notably at Argos.

Invaluable local knowledge came from Dr Burnand's and Mrs Fishpool's combined careers of Greek exploration, granting us such pearls of wisdom as what it means when a Greek throws an apple at you. Our bus driver from Hellene Travel showed considerable ability in our language, ferrying us tirelessly and safely across many miles of panoramic Greek countryside, a feat for which every cent of our whip round was well deserved.

Our travels took us through many a museum exhibition, where Miss Moore came into her element among the geometric bowls and archaic smiles of the Greek archaeological record. The tendency of Greek curators to send their star artefacts on tour around the globe is at times frustrating, but this reminds us how fortunate we are to have the Ashmolean and the British Museum. This brings me to the Elgin/Parthenon





Marbles: Greece wants them back, and a visit to the New Acropolis Museum is enough to dispel any concern for their future upon their return.

Our four hotels were well chosen, offering marvellous views (Hotel Ilissos in Athens to a lesser extent), continental buffet breakfasts, often dinner as well, and comfortable spaces for A-Level candidates to attend late-night tutorials. We relied on the abundance of restaurants and cafes for other meals, during which only one wallet was lost. The delicacy that made the biggest impression on me was chicken souvlaki, skewered grilled chicken accompanied by bread and Greek salad. It certainly made a big impression on Patrick Johnson, who was sick all over the streets of Athens. Fortunately Mr Hallinan was close at hand, as indeed he was when Hayden Ramm indulged his sesame seed allergy with a bite of

halva at breakfast. Besides picking up the casualties, Mr Hallinan also brought his in-depth knowledge of medieval Europe to the table whenever we were bemused by a Frankish castle. Behind each stunning photograph on the school website is Mr Jenkins, adjusting the zoom with one hand and collaring itinerant third years with the other.

Dr Burnand, who ran the trip, has already received the gratitude of the Upper Sixth in the form of a bust of Pericles (the famous 'first prime-minister of Greece' we were assured by the vendor) and a naughty book from the New Acropolis Museum. This year's staff-created quiz on the hotel terrace, including picture and cryptic elements, was won by my team, 'The Seventh Cohort of Waterson', making a late run from third in the penultimate round. The premier athletes of the trip in stadium races revealed themselves

as Ben Ffrench and Vil Kiraikou. The photograph competition was won by William Sheffield's shot of the Temple of Poseidon, capturing the beautiful sunshine at Cape Sunium on our final morning. As the last thing the ancient mariner would see on the horizon as he voyaged away from Attica, the temple (upon which, after great efforts, we finally found Lord Byron's signature thanks to the efforts of Gabriel Dobson) made for a touching farewell for us too.

As my departure from Abingdon draws nearer I grow ever more envious of the classicists who will be off to Provence in 2017. Good luck to them and long may this trip continue. Many thanks once again to all those who prepared and executed it.

Henry Waterson, VIRP

Santiago Spanish Exchange

Every year in October, there's a fifth form exchange to Santiago de Compostela, to make our Spanish better and to show us first-hand what Spanish culture is like, with a Spanish family. It does not come without any mishaps however, like me managing to get the words *partido*, (meaning football match) and *pegamento*, (meaning glue stick) confused, resulting in my asking my exchange's father whether he watched all of his son's glue sticks! We sorted it out eventually.

We arrived late in the evening after a very uneventful journey. What followed was an evening of getting accustomed to the rapid dialogue in the Spanish families (they slowed down for us luckily) and finding that actually it wasn't as difficult as we had thought it would be to converse with the families. Any confusion from there on was easily sorted by our exchange partners, who had been studying English since they were three years old and were therefore almost fluent, making the whole experience far easier for us.

On the first day we received a talk on El Camino, the famous pilgrimage to Santiago, all in Spanish. After a brief discussion about what we had just heard, we embarked on a short walk along the very last part of the route itself. After a self-guided tour of the old city, we went into the cathedral itself. Obviously it's amazing; I could show off all my iGCSE English descriptive writing skills telling you about it, but Google Images would probably do a better job. We were then handed over to our exchange partners for the weekend, which was spent enjoying Spanish culture and getting to know our exchange family. The weekend was probably the period in which I felt the most improvement in my speaking, as we were constantly speaking Spanish.

On Monday, we had one of our two days in the actual school of Manuel Peleteiro. We had a Latin Dance workshop



(sounds awful, but was quite fun,) and a somewhat confusing maths lesson: whilst our Spanish listening skills were definitely improving, learning functions was probably a bit much. On Tuesday we went to La Coruña to visit the Torre de Hercules (a Roman lighthouse – still in use), a museum called the Domus, an aquarium full of interesting sea life, and then an afternoon on the beach. The weather by now had started to pick up; after rain and fog ("hay niebla" being the best phrase I had come up with so far) for the first few days, we now managed to get some good sunshine.

Wednesday brought the interesting experience of having an English lesson with 11 year olds probably, if we're being honest, better at English than we were at Spanish. We had another, "almost understandable now" maths lesson, and then a biology lesson that I think I mainly understood; clearly the week of

non-stop Spanish had done some good. On the final day we had a trip to Baiona, and then on to a town in Portugal where we had our last chance to have a full day with the exchange partners, and after a finale dinner, followed by churros con chocolate, in the morning we said goodbye!

The Spanish Exchange must be one of the most useful things you can do if you want to do Spanish at iGCSE, or further. It was great fun and a complete tour of a fascinating area of Spain. I personally had an amazing experience and my Spanish listening and definitely speaking improved greatly.

John Allen, 5EPB

On Saturday 4th March, we arrived home again; the characteristic light rain of Galicia received us. All of us were exhausted and with many new experiences in our minds. I couldn't



believe the trip was over, a whole week had passed and all the moments we had all lived would never come back, although I am sure that the majority of us will treasure those memories in a special place in our hearts.

When I first met my English family, just like nearly everyone in the Spanish exchange, I felt quite nervous because I was going to meet the people who I would be living with for a week but that feeling quickly disappeared when that night at dinner we started chatting as if I was another member of the family.

The following days were full of learning. One of the most interesting things was becoming familiar with the different culture and habits our English partners had as well as attending lessons in our corresponding schools.

We were also very welcomed by the schools we attended, Abingdon School for the boys and St. Helen & St. Katharine School for the girls. The contrast with our school, Manuel Peleteiro, was noticeably big. The first thing that is clearly visible is the architectural variances that the buildings have. Our school is a brand new building with a modern design

whereas the host schools were composed in their biggest part of historical buildings, founded at the start of the twelfth and twentieth century respectively that follow the canons of the unmistakable and beautiful English architecture.

From their educational system it drew my attention they were divided into boys and girls as well as the fact that different children in some of the families were attending different schools. These are not very common things in Spain.

The way of teaching is similar. They even prepared some specific lessons for us: I would never have imagined receiving a Chinese lesson in English!

The rest of the trip was completed with the excursions we went on. We were transported to different historical times walking around the Oxford colleges with their impressive buildings where you could breathe history, tradition, culture and knowledge. It was also interesting to visit the city of Bath and its majestic Roman baths which remain in a very good state of conservation.

All of these activities not only provided us with knowledge about the region and their way of life but helped us to

lay down strong ties with our exchange partners and our schoolmates. Our daily cohabitation with our partners made us establish a strong bond of friendship that I hope to conserve for a long time.

Something I think I will always remember about the exchange is the feeling that I had when we were leaving. On the one hand, I was very glad of having had this experience as well as to have met such fantastic people and making new friends with whom we lived lots of experiences and shared many things. On the other hand, leaving them, it hurts, because after living a week in someone's house and sharing everything with them, you make more than just a friend, in some cases, you make a brother or a sister and to have to leave without even knowing when you are going to see them again, it is a hard thing to do. But we always have to say goodbye, or see you soon.

Despite the fact that time will pass, I will always have these memories that will help me in my personal journeys, because, as José Saramago said:

"The journey never ends. The objective of travelling is just to begin another journey."

Alejandro Garcia



Treasure Island

When we started rehearsing the play we did an exercise to help us with our pirate accents. Then, the next lesson saw us getting our parts and reading through the scripts assigning lines to the chorus. Then after that, we began rehearsing it physically on the floor of the drama studio which led up to rehearsing on the Amey Theatre stage two weeks before the show. During the rehearsals we evaluated the scenes we had already blocked and occasionally we went back over the show up to the scenes we had just blocked.

My part was Long John Silver, one of the main roles and I had to practise walking with a limp on a crutch. Performing in the Amey Theatre with the whole cast was fun. At first we split off into separate groups but eventually (two weeks before the show) we put the different parts together and we had the basic outline of the play. After we had got the basic idea of how the play would go, we added in props such as tankards, swords (not used until the dress rehearsal) and for me, a crutch. We then ran through the play multiple times until we had the lines and movement perfected. Some scenes however needed a lot more work than others. For example the fight scene

where the pirates, led by Long John Silver, were fighting the sailors, led by Captain Smollet (Ethan Tully).

When we performed in the Amey Theatre, we had to project our voice much more than in the Studio as this was a bigger space. As well as this we had music to speak over which made it harder for the audience to hear us if we didn't project our voices. Sometimes Mr McDonnell would sit on the back row so that we had to make him hear us. It worked! Two rehearsals before the performances saw us meet together at lunch break in the Drama Studio and we sat down in our own space and, without scripts, recited our lines.

Before the performances, we had to get into a personal space and relax and calm down so that our energy would be stored up for the play when we would give it 150%. Sir wanted us to feel exhausted after the shows!

The award for best performance was probably Eoin Chippendale acting as Old Blind Pew. It must have been really hard not to look at Alfred Morley (Jim) and the audience for that matter!

But I think the biggest credit has to go to Mr McDonnell, Miss Bond, Mr Lloyd and the tech crew for making it possible. Thank you!

Avery Trotter, 2CALM



Avery Trotter



And Then There Weren't Any Left

This year the third year play was the spin off of the well-known Agatha Christie Novel *And Then There Were None*. We were extremely honoured and grateful for Edward Rowett, an Old Abingdonian, to write the script for us. As well as having the tension and guessing game that a murder mystery has, the play in essence is perfectly crafted comedy. The play demanded timing articulation and bold characterisations from the 13 cast members. We were all able to work together to give a performance of enjoyable surprises that produced a well rounded show that we all loved.

As with all performances, the auditioning process is always an interesting one. I remember entering the room recognising some faces and then the director, Mr Ben Phillips, came out and told us about the audition. It then continued by person after person going into the small drama office outside the drama studio and giving their own individual performances. After that concluded we engaged in the usual group activities: reading through the script, working on small sections of the



text, and so on. The auditioning really helped me get a feel for the play and start to understand the depth and layers within the characters and the plot.

I would say that one of the most tense parts of the process was the final rehearsal. I remember that we had more than one fatal tech issue and there were aspects of the performance that should have been ironed out much earlier than the final rehearsal. As an actor you are vulnerable to making more mistakes this close to the performance than before because you no longer have the security of the next few rehearsals. It was a very hard period but you battle through with the rest of the cast.

If you were to go up to a stage actor and ask them why they do drama and what they do, they would say because they love performing, and it is no different for us. We love performing and we do it for that big night. You wait backstage paying no attention to the audience, and just focusing on your performance and the show. You listen to the hushed silence as the lights go down. You wait for the reaction to the first few jokes in the play. Then you step out into the spotlight and soak up the enjoyment.

Samuel King, 3BJLP



National Schools' Sailing Match

Cold, clear skies provided good conditions for the National Schools' Sailing Match Racing on the 5-6 November 2016 in Portland Harbour. Two teams from Abingdon, helmed by Tom Savidge and Arthur Bruce, clashed with teams from around the UK in technical, exciting racing. Arthur's team took eight victories from eight races on day one to put them at the top of the leaderboard. Winds increased to provide tricky conditions on day two as both teams won their respective races to progress to semi-finals. In the semi-final, Abingdon A had a close fought match against Abingdon B with a total of four penalties given, two to each team. This ended in a photo finish as Abingdon A did their final



penalty around the pin mark and quick boat handling allowed them to win by less than a foot and become finalists. Abingdon B faced MCS in the play off for third place and narrowly missed out on podium position. In the finals, which were the best of three races, Abingdon A suffered their first loss of the competition in their second race. With both teams head to head in the last leg

and the fate of winners' trophy at stake, Abingdon's excellent spinnaker work by Giles Oldershaw and trimming by Daniel Neild resulted in a filled kite as a gust hit within a few boat lengths of the finish. This allowed them to overtake and win by half a boat length, sealing the victory for the team and the school.

Daniel Neild, VIIM



French Trip to Strasbourg

Our Christmas Holiday kicked off with a rewarding yet freezing trip to an ancient, small yet special town in France: Strasbourg. The trip only lasted for four days, but during this short time we not only improved our French speaking skills but also enjoyed the magnificent Christmas market and the eye-catching views around the town.

We headed off to Strasbourg by coach on a dark, cold morning and drove the whole distance, which took 14 hours. On the second day we had a tour around a small, antique town. We walked around the market and even managed to get some free pastries! After lunch, we strolled to the Musée

Alsacien, where we learned about the daily lives in pre-industrial and early industrial Alsace. It was truly fascinating to see the delicate models around the museum, as well as the wonderful decorations inside. Despite the unwelcoming museum staff, we were still excited to be visiting such an absorbing and fascinating place. We had a lovely dinner, followed by a quiz, which was great fun. Everyone was put into groups of four, and I think it's fair to say that we had a good time. On the third day, we went to the Zoological Museum near the hostel, where we got a chance to look at some real scaled animals. Afterwards we got some free time to walk around the Christmas market and we tried traditional French drinks and food, followed by a quick walk inside the Cathédrale Notre Dame de Strasbourg. The moment I walked into the church, I could already feel

its majesty and holiness. During the boat trip on the River Ill we got to see a wonderful sunset while enjoying the view around the island in the middle of Strasbourg. In the evening we got to stage our own talent show which was really good fun. Everyone was extremely shy to perform in front of their peers, but in the end some people were brave enough to come out and act. First off, Dominic Clark gave a singing solo, then followed by me and Joe Nicholas where we did a duet together. The night was very enjoyable and everyone did a marvellous job!

We had a great time and I would like to say thank you to the teachers who went with us as well as the bus driver who coped with taking us all the way there and back!

Andreas Lo, 3AJM



Rugby

After a cracking pre-season the Rugby Club went into the 2016 season with a strong base behind them, fantastic fixtures ahead and some really exciting trips and tours.

Our Lower School were impressive with 38 fixtures played across the term by four teams, and well above 70 boys playing for the school. Our U12s had good results over Cokethorpe and Shiplake as well as competing strongly

in the school festivals at the Dragon and Caldicott Prep. The U13s had a good year developing their skills and producing some excellent performances again.

The U14 year group had a very strong season, with lots of strength and depth across the age group. Our D XV were undefeated from 11 matches scoring 590 points, and for the first time we had an E XV due to the large uptake of rugby with three wins from five. The highlight was beating Radley in both teams. The C, B and A XVs were also very

successful and played a fun and exciting style of rugby, winning the majority of their matches, and always striving to be better. Big results were wins over Eton, Radley and Marlborough. At half term the U14s went on tour to Sussex to play Eastbourne and Seaford. They were successful on the pitch, but also bonded well off it. This definitely helped them post half-term with some of those tougher fixtures where team spirit is key. The age group as a whole are one to watch and surely will make a good senior team when up in Sixth Form.





Our U15 age group pushed on in a big way over the season. The season started well with good wins over Cokethorpe, but big improvements and great results against Eton, Radley, and Rugby were especially pleasing to see. The numbers playing were very healthy with a consistent D XV out each week. All four teams won more matches than they lost, scoring well over 800 points between them. They are a talented bunch of boys who really enjoy their rugby. At half-term the A XV ventured to Langley School National Festival to play schools from around the UK. Like the U14 tour this proved invaluable post half-term, bonding the team and allowing technical and tactical developments to be made with the squad.

Our U16s had a season to remember. The B & C XVs were superb in terms of results, winning most of their matches, and showing depth in the age group as well as passion for rugby and their school. Highlights were wins over

Radley and the B XV winning last minute against Rugby away. The A XV might not have had the results they would have wished for, but this was a major season for the boys. The positivity and teamwork from a strong pre-season clearly had a big impact, but most impressively they never stopped learning and improving. This would stand them in good stead for the Japan summer tour and then into sixth form the following year.

Our Senior XVs had a cracking year. For the first time ever we were able to put out a 5th XV which shows the passion and love for rugby here at Abingdon. In terms of results in the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th XV the results were pretty even in terms of wins and losses. However, against some of the schools such as Eton, Rugby and Radley there were strong wins in many of these sides. Boys were seriously committed and pushed the club forward again. Our 1st XV had a wonderful season winning eight and losing just three. There were

major wins away to Eton and home to Warwick. It was such a great year for the boys who have moved the bar up again and left the jersey in a better place. The 1st team also competed in many sevens competitions in the Lent Term. They were runners up at the prestigious Colston's Sevens, just missed out on the last 32 of the national sevens, and produced some scintillating rugby at the Sedbergh Super Tens, finishing their rugby strongly.

Our Touchliners group as ever supported the boys both on and off the field with new training equipment for all our boys to access in the 2017 season. The club is in an exciting place. The seniors who come back from a rugby tour of Japan have much talent, depth and potential. There has also been considerable investment in the pitches and fitness suite that will strengthen the boys' athletic development in the years to come. We look forward to 2017 with great anticipation.

Matthew Gold



Finland Trip

'All in, Mister Bond', said Rev. Gooding in a Russian accent, as he pushed a handful of Jenga-chips into the middle of the table. The strangeness of this poker game was compounded by the fact that we were sitting in an old loggers' cabin, in the middle of the Finnish Oulanka wilderness, where the closest settlement was a 45-minutes' drive away, only a short distance from the Russian border - and all whilst the winds were billowing outside so loudly that we could hear them amidst the din of the dinner mess. This is just one of the many unexpected, but life-changing experiences we had on the Finland trip.

In the intervals between our numerous poker games, we went on a two-day overnight expedition along the basin of the River Oulanka to the Russian border, fortunately not suffering any casualties to the border patrols (perhaps with the exception of Joshua's Go-Pro...). The moment that I knew without a doubt that I really was in Finland was when I discovered that the hut we were staying in for the night didn't have Wifi, electricity, running water or even a proper toilet, but had instead a separate cabin dedicated for sauna. I think this would have seemed very strange to all

of us as well, had we not discovered earlier the power-combo that was the Sauna Snow Angel. Indeed, I was led to believe that a video of Billy Hickman's momentous dive can still be found somewhere on Snapchat.

One of the highlights of the whole trip must be the husky sledding. We were driven by a team of ten huskies and the view on top of the arctic plateau was simply out-of-a-Christmas-postcard; picture perfect in every way. It was around 11 in the morning, so we could just about see the sun rising out of the frosted pine-tops of the boreal forest, its rays splattered across the powdered snow in a thousand shades. Before we could stop to take in the view, the huskies were already racketing through the undisturbed woods, cutting through the powder with sled marks and dog paws. At that moment, I could really see why people said the Finnish language had a thousand words for snow - the powder, frost and ice flakes were simply stunning; mind blowing in fact. Special mention to Max Crum for driving his husky sledge through a tree and nearly hospitalising Rev. Gooding in the process!

After the husky ride, we moved on to visit a reindeer farm where we were all given our reindeer drivers licences (although

they are only valid in the Kuusamo area!). It was a family business and the owners had lived there for generations - they were some of the nicest people I have ever met. Sheltering us from the cold, the owner invited us to his house and treated us with the classic Finnish reindeer sausages and blueberry juice ('juice'). He was an elderly man and the conversation we had must be one of the most memorable experiences I had. Without boring you with the details, he spoke at great length about Trump, Brexit and global warming. Having never left the country, he has learned about most of these from people who have visited his farm and kept in touch. The farm owner told us about his own experience of global warming, how the winter grazing ground for the reindeer becomes larger and larger every year, how the snow on the ground becomes thinner and thinner. How it regularly used to be -40C in winter. Perhaps this is where the trip has left its deepest impression on me - the fact that we all live in the same world, despite how strange their Finnish ways initially seemed to us, or ours to them.

Calvin Liu, VJMD

The boys had a truly fantastic Arctic adventure. Elsewhere in the week the highlights included taking part in a cross-



country ski-ing rugby match - played with a huge medicine ball; everyone was getting stuck in and giving 100%! It was quite a sight, and would make a great new other half activity! Boys also snow shod in the boreal forest looking out for animal tracks and hoping that the bears were safely hibernating someone out of sight! Our patience was also rewarded by seeing a golden eagle, two in fact, feasting on a frozen arctic fox carcass. The boys also did some ice climbing, which looked easy but was much more difficult in practice. Lactic acid burned in your forearms as you made your way up, with ice splintering everywhere (perhaps due to imprecise technique!) but all boys got to the top – even if it took them 40 minutes! I was very proud of their determination; “never give up” we shouted from below, a good motto for life. During the week the boys also learnt to: make wilderness fires, chop wood (the Finnish way!), “make sauna”, perfect the “snow angel art”, make and sleep in quinzees, saw the infamous northern lights and drank in the beauty of this wonderful, untouched part of our world right on the Finnish Line with the Russian border. I



hope they go back in the future and take away how important it is to protect our fragile world from climate change and from climate change deniers.

I would like to thank Henri, Miriam and Mimi who were truly wonderful wilderness guides and made the trip so hugely special for us all. Also thanks to Ian Fishpool for helping to look after the students on the trip.

Paul Gooding





Boarders' Christmas Dinner

The end of the year has come. 2016 has not been without its surprises and upsets, but also its successes. For example, I may not have been too happy about the whole Brexit thing, but it meant I got to spend a lesson the next day not working but just listening to a ranting Mr Kendry, so you can find the silver lining in all things.

There are many people who need to be thanked before I go further into the speech. The catering staff have provided a lovely meal for us tonight and put a lot of effort into feeding the house very well throughout the year. Sodexo food is an integral part of a boarder's life, or at least it is for most of them. Anyway, thank you very much for all you have provided.

Thank you to Rev Steer and Chapel Choir for the service we enjoyed earlier. We are also grateful for the thoughtful chapels you give and organise for us over the year. As a community I think we have proved that audience participation never ends well. All the same, thank you again.

Mr Windsor, it has been a great first term

with you. We have felt your commitment and care, but if you continue with your tumbleweed jokes, then I fear your days are numbered.

On to the house, Mr Litchfield is our new housemaster and it's been a great first term. Thank you for your work this term, and I hope it continues to go well.

The duty tutors also do a lot for us: Mr Jackson, Mr Latham, Mr Chamen, Mr Davies, Miss Moore and Mr Simmons. Mr Simmons actually gave me a message he wanted me to read out to you all tonight. It says: 'please can everyone remember to like and subscribe to my Vimeo channel. I post a load of great movies that I make at home.' I apologise, but though Mr Simmons is the most made fun of, he is also the most caring and we should remember that. Boarding duties can be very high energy sometimes, so thank you all for your work.

I would like to thank the dayboy head of School House, Daniel Alcock. The great thing about Daniel, is that he does the same, plus the tiniest bit more, as the dayboy Head of House in Crescent does.

The Matrons are the most critical part of the house. These last few weeks Storm has been covering the house and has done an incredible job. The house has continued to run well and the amazing

table pieces we see are also thanks to her.

Finally, Di is probably the longest serving member of any house in the school, arriving in 2003, and we owe her a great amount for her service. Di is the matron, but also the friend, the advisor and the mother of the house, being constantly open at all times, making us very lucky to have her. Sadly she is not with us tonight, but we hope when the New Year comes she will be better.

I would like to finish with my own reflections on School House and boarding. I came into boarding for a number of reasons, but I knew looking from outside that School House was a place where I could be happy and develop. On my first day as a boarder, I was very optimistic and naïve about not changing things too much. I woke up at 7am, kept my files in my dayboy locker and said that I would not go back to my room until the school day ended at 5pm. Anyone who has ever met a boarder knows that this lasted for less than two days and my dayboy identity was soon lost.

But I like to think there was more to this than wanting to fit ten minute power naps on my bean bag into the middle of the day. The people are what really made me a boarder so quickly. Along with a great

cohort, there were individuals who really did make me love boarding. To name two people who are thought highly of by many people, the Heads of House before me, Justin Wilson and James Taylor, were brilliant supports. The house spirit is created and constantly strengthened by the pupils, helping each other as equals and bringing each other up.

We are a distinct community. We mix well with the rest of the school and have plenty of day friends, but there is something a bit extra about being in the boarding house. These are the people we live with, eat with, spend the evenings we would spend with our parents with.

We could compare the boarding house with a range of groups in literature, from the lost boys in Peter Pan to the school children of Lord of the Flies. And it really does feel like Lord of Flies sometimes. But to look at another School House, that of Rugby School in Tom Brown's Schooldays, we there see a boarding house that is hopefully very different to the one we live in. Here I truly hope we have a progressive boarding house, where hierarchy is limited, except in the necessary cases, and honesty is not feared.

Tom Hughes wrote, regarding how the upper forms should guide the younger years, 'Now is the time in all your lives, probably, when you may have more wide influence for good or evil on the society you live in than you ever can have again.' Next year, new people will be in and my year will be gone, but I hope that we continue to nurture and care for every new generation coming in.

We are a community and a good community, showing peace to each other. Though I am hoping not to mimic the end of the first Harry Potter film too much, when I came back the first weekend after boarding and went into my room at my parents' house which I had spent many years in, it felt different seeing it, looking at everything a second time as though it had changed ever so slightly, and I felt that this was because I now had another home. I hope we can all feel that this school is a home and I wish you all a very merry Christmas.

Blake Jones, VIJFH



Lent 2017



Chinese Theatre Trip

On Friday 20 January, around 40 third and fourth year students studying Chinese, teachers and parents travelled to Reading to see the Chinese New Year Spring Festival Gala, which is performed by 22 professional artists from the Jiangsu Province Department of Culture. For many people this was an unforgettable experience and I am sure that everyone had a great time. It was the first of a series of events to celebrate the Chinese New Year, which this year is the Year of the Rooster. The Gala included acrobatics, dances, folk songs, a Peking Opera and some

traditional Chinese music played with traditional Chinese instruments, all of which can be traced way back to the ancient Tang and Song Dynasties.

The evening started with a song and dance tune which is supposed to reflect changes in the Chinese culture and to match the people of China's spirits in a passionate way. The next act involved some traditional Chinese instruments being played and is performed by four Chinese musicians. There was a yangqin (keyboard), a dizi (flute), a pipa (guitar) and an erhu (violin). They played two tunes – the first one was a Chinese tune called *Xi Yang Yang* (*Beaming with Joy*) with is a famous piece of folk music with a joyful and light melody to it. The second tune was English and was the tune *Green Sleeves*, which is an

English love song with a classical tune but includes an elegant melody with sadness. The third act was performed by some lively acrobats, which was spectacular. The act was done by two men performing stunts and backflips over each other while throwing straw hats up in the air and trying to catch them. The act was extremely impressive and one of the best performances of the whole show. The fourth and fifth acts were a dance and a female solo song. The dance was about the area located to the south of the Yangtze River called the Jiangnan region. The Chinese poems that were sung in the background of the dance reflected the quiet and refined lives and the scenic views including the lotus flowers, gentle and delicate music and various dances.



The song that was sung in the fifth act was a popular Jiangsu folk song called *What a Beautiful Jasmine Flower*. It originated in Jinniu Hu Lake, near the town of Nanjing in Jiangsu. The song represents love and happiness.

The sixth act was another acrobatics act but slightly different to the first one. This act involved a Chinese man dressed as a frog and he was dancing and spinning himself around inside a hoop. The background tune was called *Moonlight on Lotus Pond* and the act involved a frog dancing merrily near the pond doing somersaults, rolling over, jumping, leaping and doing flips inside a giant iron hoop. The next few acts involved a funny horse race and another dance called *Pole the Lotus*. In the *Horse Race* performance, a piece of music was played on a two-stringed musical instrument. The music depicts a picture of cheerful crowds and galloping horses. The dance was

rather funny because there were two lotus flower costumes dancing around the main lady actor, but the lotus flowers were actors as well, just curled up when inside the costume. The highlights from the Peking Opera were amazing. It was based around a young man returning from military camp to see his mother, but he wasn't allowed. Eventually, with the help of his wife, he was finally able to return to his mother. The eleventh act was a man singing a solo of the song *Enjoy a Happy Together*, which depicts a long-lasting friendship. His voice was incredible and the vocals he produced projected all around the hall.

The second last act was my favourite one of the whole evening. It was three men performing a Chinese traditional acrobatics and athletics act called Diabolo, more commonly known as Chinese yo-yoing. The 'sport' of Diaboloing has been around for more than two thousand years. The final act

provided a dramatic end to the night. The female soloist and male soloists came together and sung a beautiful antiphonal duet of *A Festive Carol*. The song sings the praises of the rivers and mountains of the country, joyful festival and life. It also creates a happy atmosphere of people watching and observing the festival celebrations. The event was concluded by the Deputy Mayor of Reading, Councillor Rose Williams, delivering a speech and the Director of the Jiangsu Delegation sending warm greetings to everyone in attendance.

That night was memorable. Thank you to Mrs Zhang and all the teachers who came along for providing this amazing trip for us. It will also be a valuable addition to our knowledge of Chinese Media and Culture, an element of our Chinese GCSE studies.

Ben Shaw, 3AJM



London Road

London Road is arguably one of the lesser known musicals chosen for a joint senior production with St Helen's in recent years, but for many of us, it was by far the most memorable. Unlike many music theatre pieces, this play portrayed a true story, and the real people at the heart of it. The roots of the play are in Ipswich, where Alecky Blythe, the playwright, spent time interviewing the residents of London Road, an unremarkable street of Victorian terraced houses, which became the focus of national and international media attention in the wake of a number of serial killings carried out in late 2006. The residents found their lives turned upside down by the intrusions of the media, and the gruesome discovery that the murderer had lived on their road for ten weeks around the time he committed the atrocities.

However, the play does not focus on the murders and their investigation, but rather on the impact of the events on the real life characters as they tried to live their lives as residents of London Road. The spoken and sung material of the play is rendered on stage precisely as it was



said by the real residents over a decade before when Alecky Blythe recorded interviews with them, and the audience is party to their thoughts, hopes and fears, emerging with an overwhelming sense of their resilience in the face of the terrible events. As the play progresses, the residents band together, helping each other, and decide to run a flower contest to bring their street back to life.

London Road is an emotional and uplifting story despite its grim context, and the production produced both tears

and laughs in our audiences, as they empathised with the characters and their thoughts. For the actors, the play also stirred our emotions, including a degree of stress and turmoil as we struggled to do Blythe's work justice. The demands of reproducing "verbatim" the words and sounds of the real people at the heart of the play were stern enough, but the fact that the musical numbers were also meticulously constructed around the "melody" of each person's speech patterns made learning the material



incredibly challenging. Recreating accents, nuances and all the “ums” and “urhs” of verbatim speech threw us in at the deep end, along with an unorthodox but masterful score by Adam Cork. Many of us could be found listening to the real recordings of these residents,

and striving to translate these into our performances, constantly aware of the need to do justice to their story.

After many rehearsals and hard work, the cast, just as the residents did in 2006, banded together and formed a solid unit. Huge thanks must go to the band, Mr

Taylor and Dr Preece who led us through the eye-opening and incredibly rewarding process, and many of us were sad to say goodbye to our characters and the story behind them when the curtains closed on the final night.

Charlie Landells, VIEJW



German Exchange

A language exchange between two schools is a common occurrence today; this was not so in 1967, least of all between schools in England and Germany where animosities and suspicions caused by the war still lingered. This means that from the start the Abingdon-Bielefeld exchange was something special.

The story began in August 1966 when James Cobban, headmaster 1947-1970, picked up two German hitchhikers on Boars Hill and invited them to have lunch at Lacies Court. Cobban knew Germany: he had been a colonel in the Intelligence Corps at the end of the war, involved in the Allied Control Commission. His work had taken him to Bielefeld so he knew how badly damaged the town had been by allied bombers.

Over lunch one of the hitchhikers, Alexander Potthoff, talked about his school, the Ratsgymnasium Bielefeld. As he did so an idea formed in Cobban's mind. Writing in 1987 to mark the twentieth anniversary of the exchange, he recalled:

"I had long had at the back of my mind the idea that if we could build up a connection

with a comparable school in Germany ... it might make some contribution, however small, to the strengthening of ties between the two countries."

The next year the exchange began and immediately the pupils found they had much in common. Neil Coulbec, who went to Bielefeld in 1969, reported in *The Abingdonian*: "Our interests and views took the same direction whether it was a question of pop music, the Common Market, student representation (of great concern to them), war, or what to do in the evenings". However, the fact that pupils were allowed to smoke at school, even if only outside the main school doors, came as a bit of a surprise.

It wasn't just pupils that had much in common. Michael St John Parker, headmaster 1975-2001, also writing in 1987, observed that both schools shared not only a concern with rigorous academic standards but also for the quality of their pupils' lives, and both "are proud upholders of the great European tradition of liberal education which goes back through the period of Enlightenment to the Renaissance and even to the Middle Ages".

The format of the exchange has varied over the years. Initially only the senior Bielefeld class came and the ages of the original

contingent from Abingdon ranged from 13 to 17. Now the exchange is conducted in the fourth year. In the early years it was a biennial exchange, now it takes place every year. Originally the Ratsgymnasium was a boys' school, like Abingdon. However, once it went co-ed in the 1970s the exchange was expanded to include the girls of St Helen and St Katharine's.

In 1979 Gideon Franklyn spent a whole term at the Ratsgymnasium remarking on the early starts, the absence of uniform, the presence of girls and that there was less of a sense of community. This was something picked up by Vark Heinrich Helfritz when he spent a year at Abingdon 1984-5. He felt very much that German schools were somewhere where you did your lessons whereas in England there was a strong feeling of belonging.

Staff took part in exchanges too. In 1986 Otto Steinsiek and Nick Revill exchanged places for a term: Otto Steinsiek found it frustrating that learning and teaching were so geared to exams. Nick Revill appreciated the fact that the status of English as an international language gave his pupils a very positive attitude towards the subject.

Fifty years is a long time and much has changed. In 1971 a visit was made to Goslar where "the frontier with East

Germany was in every sense a chilling confrontation with the difficulties of Herr Brandts's Ostpolitik". The group also went to Cologne where the cathedral was "now fully restored". What the article doesn't mention is that it was "now fully restored" from the effects of the allied bombers.

However, if you think there was a policy of 'don't mention the war' you would be wrong. Dr Ohly, Head of History at the Ratsgymnasium, gave talks and wrote articles for *The Abingdonian* on German history and the effect of two world wars, acknowledging the shame the country faced in 1945 for, in Germany's name, "had been committed the atrocity of genocide, above all against the Jews, but also against many inhabitants of the occupied countries".

It was perhaps for this reason that the Ratsgymnasium embraced so wholeheartedly Abingdon's proposal to mark the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War in 2014 with a joint project that would use our two schools to illustrate the common humanity and cultural similarities of our two countries, and make an attempt to understand our separate perceptions of events.

The exchange, fostered over the years by Abingdon's German teachers, especially Keith Hasnip who supported it so wholeheartedly in the early years, remains in good heart. And in this post-Brexit era its original aim of promoting greater understanding between our two countries remains as necessary as ever.

Sarah Weame

In February, a group of 17 fourth years, alongside our fifth year equivalent at

St Helens, touched down in Bielefeld, Germany ready and raring to see our German exchanges. Having hosted them the previous October, we already knew our partners. It therefore didn't take long to settle in, bonding over notable moments such as ironic history lessons and nightly laser tag wars. To our (pleasant) surprise, all of the German group were more interlinked than we expected, allowing us to meet up and socialise as a big group. One night we would all be out at a restaurant and the next we would be dancing. More explanation is probably needed about the topic of "dancing": most of us were, somewhat unwillingly (bar the odd couple), dragged down to a dance class. From the side-lines we watched our exchanges 'gracefully frolic' around whilst trying to build up the courage to join in. Soon after it was Valentinstag, which proved to be just as awkward in Germany as in Abingdon!

Of course not all of what we did was organised by our exchanges, but instead our teachers. If we weren't with our partners in lessons, we were taken off visiting different iconic sites from Dr Oetker Welt (unlimited free pizza) to chocolate shops in Bremen. Most of the time we were split in to two groups (girls and boys) but some boys made the most of having girls to talk to. In addition to socialising, the exchange allowed us to try lots of activities we wouldn't have done back home, outdoor ice-skating for one. Not only that, but the packed lunches provided by our host families were excellent. I would highly recommend exchanges to anyone, whether or not a committed linguist: Anyone who goes on an exchange gains a huge amount of life experience, in addition to improving their language skills.

This is the part of this article that the teachers really like: what we learned from going on the exchange. Even if you don't speak much German for the entire week (which is hard to do as you will slip into German for things like ordering food), you'll still pick up a better accent or different ways of saying little things or slang for that matter just from listening. Admittedly your exchange family is most likely going to get you to speak some German so there's no getting out of it, but it's not all bad. For me, someone who hasn't always found German easy, the exchange has certainly improved my speaking and listening skills (and made German lessons much easier as a consequence!). We were also able to learn the important life skills of communication and smiling and nodding if we didn't understand!

What none of us had really realised at the beginning of the week was that the 2017 Bielefeld exchange was a bit different to usual. Our trip marked the 50th anniversary of the exchange. On the Saturday we were able to avoid normal lessons with our partners and took part in the celebrations instead. We didn't honestly know what to expect beforehand and were rather surprised when we entered the assembly hall only to see First Orchestra on the stage... in Germany! For a reason unknown to us, a German Shakespeare strolled up on stage and introduced the whole occasion in a humorous way. Each head teacher of the three schools (Abingdon, St Helen's and Ratsgymnasium) rose up to give a speech on the exchange. To our surprise, the first half of Mr Windsor's speech was entirely spoken in fluent German! He did translate for those of us less skilled in understanding German but still, we were impressed. A few impressive performances from both the German and English bands and more German Shakespearean soliloquies later and we found ourselves enjoying some German delicacies prepared by our exchange partners' families.

The eight days we spent in Germany went incredibly quickly. Not only did we have the opportunity to practise our German, discover new places and meet some lovely people, we were also honoured to help celebrate 50 years of the Abingdon-Bielefeld connection.

Liam Deegan, 4JAM





First Orchestra Tour to Bielefeld

A warm invitation to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the exchange programme and association between Abingdon School and the Ratsgymnasium in Bielefeld had been keenly accepted by Abingdon's orchestral musicians. On a bleak, dark, February morning, 45 bleary-eyed pupils and four staff set off at an unearthly hour to make the journey across three countries to Bielefeld. Despite being delayed by an unexpected closure of the Autobahn highway, we were pleased to arrive eventually at our modern and comfortable youth hostel.

The following morning, we enjoyed a guided tour of Bielefeld, recently decorated with a light powdering of snow. So we savoured two of the town's contrasting attractions. Firstly, Sparrenburg Castle, originally built in the 13th century, which has a spectacular view of the town centre beneath the hill where it stood. Next we visited the Dr Oetker's Museum, an interactive museum

that demonstrated the development of the company's products and machines over the preceding 125 years. We watched some of its production in action and sampled a traditional German vanilla pudding; an intense vanilla custard which was very thick and delicious. Up on the first floor, we were awestruck by an amazing display of outlandish real estate, constructed entirely from gingerbread. Unfortunately, these were for display purposes only! After lunch, we knuckled down to some intensive rehearsal, ready for the Jubilee Celebration concert the following day.

Pupils, parents and staff gathered eagerly in the majestic hall of the Ratsgymnasium in anticipation of the morning's celebrations. Abingdon's First Orchestra played some highlights of its tour repertoire to rapturous applause and a standing ovation. There were speeches in German and in English with gifts exchanged between current exchange students, symbolic of the continued ongoing friendship between the two schools. Our visit to the school was rounded off by a chance to let off steam in the gym. Mixed teams from across the years enjoyed a light-hearted yet competitive football tournament; the

outcome was amicably resolved without having to resort to a penalty shoot-out!

Our final two performances took place in St. Nicholas Kirche in Lemgo and Martin-Luther-Kirche in Detmold. Our concert programme included iconic English works such as the spellbinding *Nimrod* from Edward Elgar's *Enigma Variations* and Vaughan Williams' *English Folksong Suite*. The show was stolen, however, by Didier Delgorgue's accomplished performance of the first movement of Mendelssohn's *Piano Concerto No 1*. Our avid German audiences were effusive with their compliments. We even featured in an article in the Lippisches Kultur-Journal!

This music tour to Germany offered us many opportunities; to sample some of the local cuisine, to admire the architecture of some of the buildings in the historic cities we visited, to stretch the musicality of our individual performances and of the combined ensemble and to forge new friendships. I would like to thank Mr Stinton and his team for an enjoyable and successful tour.

Oliver Glover, 1SJC



Basketball

The basketball team faced a very tough season this year. With the departure of our older players last year, a relatively young Abingdon basketball team were left with the challenge of living up to the success of the previous years. The majority of our team is made up of Middle School boys and we normally play sixth form teams. This really adds to the challenge of each match!

The team is not just made up of good players, but good people. Training and matches are hard work, but we still joke around and it's always enjoyable playing with the team. Our abilities are all at different levels, and as the season progresses, everyone steps up their game. It is impressive to see a team comprised from all different years play together as one unit.

As always, when we come to the end of a school year, we must say goodbye to a number of players who are leaving the team and the school. First mention is to Sachin Kumar who, like myself, has been part of the basketball team since it started. I remember when we started playing on the team, and neither of us were anywhere nearly as good as the Upper Sixth at that time, but as the years went on, Sachin just continued to get better. We both went from playing less

than five minutes a game, to playing the entire game. Playing along with him is always fun, and his vision when it comes to passing is astounding.

Yuan Han Li is another leaver, and he is our "wonder sub". Every time Yuan Han is on the court he is one of the most hard working individuals, and he never gives less than his full potential. Even before he was on the team, Yuan Han would always help with fixtures and operating the scoreboard. Yuan Han is an example to many of the younger players as to how much effort and commitment they should give.

The team is also losing Chun Lung Cheng at the end of this year. Chun Lung only joined the team at the beginning of last year, but has had such an impact. Chun Lung "Mr 3-point" Cheng, has saved us in matches when we have been lacking in points! He has also made some key game winning shots in the dying seconds!

Harry Best, another relatively new team member, will be leaving as well. Harry has been a welcome addition to the team. Always a problem for the other team, and a great help to us – through his sheer athleticism and hard work. We recently started playing together at a local club, and I look forward to continue playing with Harry for many years to come.

Sebastian Anand is Abingdon School's

answer to Stephen Curry. Whilst only being in the fifth form, Sebastian is our strongest, most skilled player – well deserving of his recent full colours. He is our go-to guy. Sebastian started playing on the team a year after Sachin and I started, and was a spectacle to watch. Seeing his skill progress has been inspiring to say the least. Sebastian is going to another school for sixth form and it will be a great loss to the team. I'm sure anyone who follows basketball will see him in the professional leagues in years to come.

The remaining members of the team are now left with the task of living up to our success. I'm sure they will flourish. It has been a great honour captaining this team. Even though we may not have been as successful as last year, considering the two-year age gap with our opposition, all of those extremely close matches really are a testament to the skill and teamwork within the Abingdon School basketball team. The team has always been a joy to play alongside, right from the beginning, five years ago. I wish the team all the best, and I am sure their success will only grow. I would also like to thank Mr Gooding and Mr Frampton for their time and dedication in coaching the team and helping us to keep our heads in all those closely fought matches.

Rohan Khosla-Stevens, VICJM



Squash

Abingdon squash has had its most successful year ever. Our outstanding squad consisted of Nikhil Vyas, William Pearson, Hector Chambers, Ed Pettitt, Will Taylor, Ben Goriely-McDonald and Max Mortimer. They trained hard all year and played with spirit and skill, beating Bradfield (twice), John Hampden B, Stowe and St Edward's. We also had excellent

competitive matches with John Hampden A, RGS High Wycombe and Aylesbury. After losing to Radley in the Michaelmas Term, we avenged the loss with a very satisfying win against them in the Lent Term.

We had a great run in the U19 National Trophy, and reached the last eight before losing a hard match to Wellington. I would like to give special thanks to our brilliant coach Ben Rosec, whose expertise, enthusiasm

and warmth have made this squad so competitive. Guy Tupper has also continued to play a vital supporting role, offering extra training sessions on Saturdays. The squad is still very young, and we have exciting times ahead of us.

David Franklin



Ski Tour

On Friday 10 February a group of 37 students and five staff departed Abingdon on a coach for the school ski trip to Saint Gervais in the French Alps. Despite a longer than anticipated journey due to half term traffic jams and poor weather we still arrived at the resort early afternoon on the Saturday in time to check in and collect our equipment from the ski hire shop.

Students shared self-catering apartments that were located approximately 1.2km outside the centre of town giving a good variety of options for eating out as a large group, reserving their own tables in restaurants as small groups, and even the challenge of the boys cooking for themselves with provided ingredients on two of the nights. A particular trial for Charlie Cardno was working out how to cook rice and Tom Southgate enjoyed learning how to put a cover on his duvet.

A large snowfall during the preceding week led to good snow conditions

and also gloriously sunny weather throughout our time there. The main skiing area extended from the top of the Bettex cable car at 1400m up to the top of Mont Joly at 2525m, giving a good variety of skiing options. On the first day all students spent six hours in ski or snowboard school provided by ESF, refining techniques previously learned or venturing out onto the slopes for the very first time.

The morning of the second day gave the students their first opportunity to explore the slopes with their friends with the majority of the groups skiing the routes shown to them by the instructors previously. Lessons then resumed from 2.00pm to 5.30pm each day with the instructors enjoying guiding the more able groups off piste and down black runs that they were not allowed to ski outside of lessons.

On the Wednesday and Thursday mornings, the coach took us 15 minutes down the road to the resort of Les Contamines to give some further variety in the skiing. Fewer people and short lift queues meant many miles of skiing were had. Mr Simmons and Mr

Dempsey, who both previously thought that they were reasonable skiers, enjoyed spending an afternoon with the advanced group and realising that they weren't quite as young and agile as previously thought, and devoted much time getting back up from the floor after falling over. On the last afternoon the boys enjoyed being taken to the VIP area of the Folly Douce at the top of Mont Joux by their instructors and joining in the fun of dancing on the tables.

Particular mentions should go to Aaron Mara and Connor Fanning for being the best skiers and Graham Suttie for being the best snowboarder, but more notably to Daniel Hollis who was a complete beginner at the start of the week but managed to master a black run in his ski lesson on the last day. His instructor commented that Daniel was the quickest learner he has encountered in his 30 years of ski instructing. We would also like to thank the staff that accompanied the trip: Mr Dempsey, Mrs Griffiths, Mrs Hack, Mr Simmons and Mr White.

Ben Simmons



Swimming

The 2016-17 swimming season has seen the Swimming Club continue to grow in both its stature, and its achievements. Under the watchful guidance of Head Coach Amanda Ford all four age groups have exceeded expectations with the school's swimming reputation on the Independent School circuit continuing to grow. In addition to its provision for pupils to compete both locally and nationally, this year has seen the inaugural partnership swimming sessions, during which Abingdon pupils worked collaboratively with pupils from Fitzharry's School under the watchful guidance of Performance Squad Swimmers. Furthermore, new ventures into long-course training trips, and continued work with Abingdon Vale Swimming Club have enabled pupil performances to go from strength to strength.

ESSA Secondary School's Relay Championships

Having qualified through the regional qualifier hosted by Abingdon, the U15 swimming squad ventured to the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Pool to

compete against the best schools in the country, for the English Schools' Swimming Association National Relay Finals. The boys swam exceptionally, finishing overall in an agonising eleventh place, with a time of 2:02:52, only 0.46 seconds off a place in the final. The afternoon session saw the boys build on the momentum of the morning, finishing fifteenth overall in the 4 x 50m freestyle relay, 15 places higher than their qualifying position.

Harrow Meet 2016

This annual event provides a fantastic opportunity for non-regular swimmers to represent the school. This year 23 swimmers represented the school across three different age groups, posing a tough challenge for the strong Harrow squad. The afternoon proved to be highly successful as the U14 won all of their races, setting six school records in their seven events, whilst the U16s and U18s won an equal number of races as they lost.

Warwick 100's

Early in February, all three age groups took on separate challenges, including Harrow, Warwick, Whitgift, Bedford and Cheltenham. As anticipated they stepped up to the challenge,

consistently placing high up. Both Daniel McNamara and Win Cheevadhanarak led from the front, achieving first place in the 100 metres breaststroke and 100 metres butterfly respectively, whilst the U15 Medley relay squad also finished in first place. Overall Abingdon had to settle for second place, an improvement on last year's performance with only Harrow School collating more points during the afternoon.

Abingdon Sprints

In mid-February the Swimming Club hosted their annual Abingdon Sprints Swimming Gala, welcoming 9 independent schools from across the local area including Harrow, Bromsgrove, Cheltenham, Marlborough and Oratory. On what was a competitive and fast paced afternoon the U18 squad finished an incredible third, whilst the U16 team finished a creditable second. Building on previous outings, the U14s again led the field from start to finish on a number of occasions, finishing as convincing winners of their age group.

Bromsgrove Relays

In mid-March the Swimming Club made their annual trip to the Bromsgrove Relays, competing against schools



including Warwick, Nottingham High and Bromsgrove themselves. Entering both A and B teams at U15 and U18, the U15 A and B squads swam well in the 4 x 50m Medley heats resulting in both squads making the 'A' final, for which the A squad finished first in a time of 2:02:12. The U18s A squad also qualified for the A final in the U18 4x50m Medley Relay, finishing second in a time of 1:59:75, an agonising 0.5 of a second behind first place. Later, in the 4 x 50m Freestyle relays, the U15 A squad again led the field home in the final in a time of 1:50:44, whilst the U18s finished a creditable fourth in the event, only one second behind first place.

Bath & Otter Cup 2018

This event saw a very youthful U18 squad, including two U14s who are still eligible to compete in this competition for another four years return to the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Pool in London to compete in the prestigious Bath and Otter Cup. The squad punched well above their weight against over 80 of the top schools in the country including Millfield, Whitgift and Plymouth College. The morning session saw the team finish third in their 4 x 100m Freestyle Heat with all four boys setting new personal bests. The



afternoon session consisted of the 4 x 50m Medley Relays, in which the team finished fourteenth in the country in a time of 1.58.93.

Griffen Gala

This year's Griffen Gala saw Abingdon School team up with swimmers from Abingdon Preparatory School, The Manor Prep, and St Helen and Katharine School to include swimmers from U10 through to U18 to swim against the local Abingdon Vale Swimming Club (AVSC). Despite their best efforts the U18s came off second best whilst the U16s swam exceptionally to beat their counterparts 64 points to 62 with the result coming

down to the final race of the evening! Having had an outstanding season, the U14s finished the term with another highly impressive display winning all seven of their races.

Upon reflection, this has been a highly successful season for all involved; however special mention must go to the U14 squad. The U14 squad included Josh Roche, Daniel McNamara, Nicholas Skelton, Luca Frauenfeld and Scott Yap who broke 11 of the 12 U14 age group school records this academic year - without doubt a group to keep an eye on.

Tom Donnelly



Cosmonaut Training

When it was advertised to us last academic year that there was the opportunity to travel to Russia to train like cosmonauts for a week with an accomplished British-American astronaut, it sounded unreal and far too good to be true. However, when we reached Moscow airport, it started to feel like it wasn't all a dream. A man down already, we soldiered on to our hotel, getting our first snatch of the cold of Russian February. At this point we knew who our fellow trainees were going to be: 11 Abingdon boys, 16 girls from St Helen and St Katharine, as well as five others (who I was glad to find out weren't in fact following us for some malicious reason in Heathrow).

The next morning, under the watchful gaze of a bronze statue of a soldier stepping forth, we boarded the metro to central Moscow for our whistle-stop tour. Seeing Red Square and St Basil's, I was struck by the lack of the scale conveyed in photos. Memorable, certainly, was our visit to Lenin's mausoleum. Having been told not to stop, and with soldiers at every turn, it was truly an extraordinary experience. We proceeded on to the

Kremlin, snow falling, where we were guided past government buildings, a Soviet meeting building made into a music venue, and past the world's biggest bell (with what seemed like the world's biggest crack) and the world's biggest cannon. Past these we went on to be surrounded by the seven churches of the Kremlin, their gold cupolas bright against the literal whitewash.

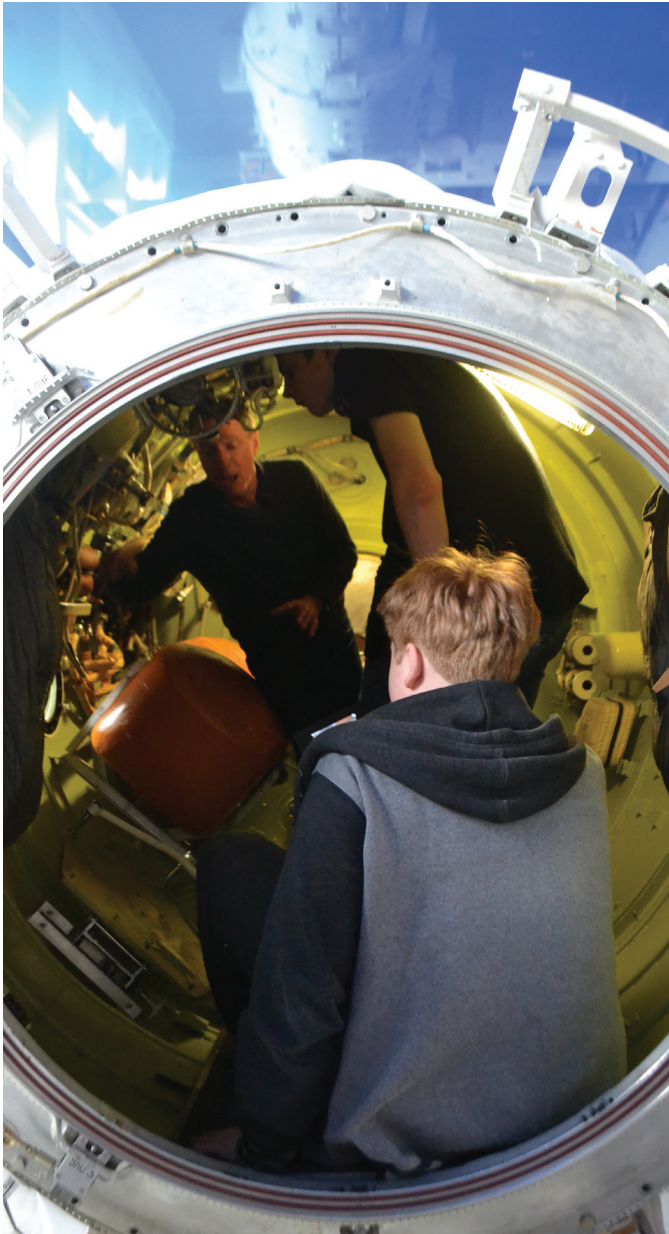
Following lunch and a brief shopping excursion, we hopped on a bus bound for Star City (previously "Closed military townlet number 1"), now the home of the Yuri Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Centre. Here it was that one of the greatest attractions to the trip was realised, as we gathered around a rather tired Mike Foale. And despite his fatigue, as he gave his introductory presentation about himself and his career, the confidence and presence that we all expect of an astronaut were unmistakable.

The next day saw the true beginning of the programme. With a tour of the training centre, we were shown the Russia segment of the International Space Station before being introduced to the Mir, a strong focus of the trip and the first modular space station. Furthermore, we were introduced to the wilderness survival training by the lead trainer and spoken to about Dr Foale's

career and experience of the US and Russian space agencies, something I found particularly interesting having read little on the more recent eras of space history (being myself interested in early explorations). We ended the day by visiting Yuri Gagarin museum, including a recreation of Gagarin's office complete with notebook with sentiments written by every astronaut before their missions. The day was finished by a visit to the famous Gagarin statue.

The following day we had a detailed tour of the Mir in the mock up used to train crews for missions aboard Mir during the station's 14 years of operation. This was followed by a two hour first aid course by a very enthusiastic conductor. However, the thing that everyone had waited for was the chance to try the Soyuz docking simulator, which, quite entertainingly, NASA still can't get its hands on. The realistic simulator was a fantastic opportunity to try something new that required a lot of coordination. I am proud to say that I, unlike some of my peers, did not crash.

The surprise of the day came when we went to look at the Sokol (IVA) suit. Not only did we get hushed as not to disrupt Cosmonaut training in the Soyuz trainers, but we were shown the suits by Yuri Gagarin's flight trainer, still working at the



centre into his nineties. It was quite a unique experience (as were most on the trip) to be able to try on the gloves worn in the Soyuz craft, and to get an idea of the difficulty of mobility even within the craft. But that was flexible compared to the bulky Orlan space suit used for EVAs (Extra vehicular activity). Seeing these made clear the comparisons of the suit with personal spacecraft, as it was clear the term “wearing” is a loose term with these suits.

And while we were able to enjoy the warmth of the training centre, that didn't continue. The winter survival training let us get a taste of one of several survival training scenarios the training cosmonauts are put through in case

there is an issue during take-off or re-entry. But we had it easy: we were given tea and only had a morning of it. Indisputably, everyone's favourite activity was cutting up a tree with a machete like the one carried in the Soyuz capsule for use in these extreme situations. While a sharp blade swinging between your legs would definitely never be allowed here, it was certainly the most entertaining part of the morning. The afternoon offered an opportunity to warm up searching for clues in the Mir mockup, which was a fantastic opportunity to use what little Russian I had learned in preparation for the trip “Где радио”, something I never thought I would need.

On our last day in Russia, we returned

to Moscow to visit the Russian space shuttle “Buran”, though it was, sadly, a prototype which had had its interior stripped, the finished product having been crushed by its own hanger in 2002. We got our dose of history in the cosmonaut museum, which had fantastic artefacts such as Belka and Strelka, the first animals to return alive to Earth, who sat proudly, stuffed, by their capsule. We saw our last of Moscow on a boat tour along the Moskva.

The trip was, as expected, an unmissable opportunity and I will, for many years to come, speak of the time I had breakfast with an astronaut!

Rory Buchanan, 6JEF



Cross Country

Cross-country continues to go from strength to strength at both the senior and junior ends of the club. Impressive team performances have resulted in victories at Marlborough and the Vale Championships as well as podium positions at the Radley, Wellington and St Edward's relays. The dedication boys and staff show to training (whatever the weather!) is deeply engrained into the ethos of the club and is highlighted

by the club's success when racing on both the school circuit and in open road races.

Knole Run

On Saturday 14 January the Cross-Country team travelled to a snow covered Sevenoaks to compete in the Knole run, the most competitive race in the school calendar. With a young team it was always going to be a baptism of fire but the boys ran valiantly coming a respectable fifteenth out of 41 teams competing.

Good performances came from Ivo Brown, Calum Steer and Josh Crichton who finished seventeenth, twenty-first and eighty-fourth respectively. Special mention must go to fourth years Alexander Pennington, Kiran Gathani, and Tarik Kurkcu who have three more years to compete at this prestigious race.

Vale of the White Horse Championships

Held at Radley each year, with hills, woodland, mud, water and fast cut playing field sections this event is cross-country at its purest. On a bitterly cold and blustery Thursday afternoon in February the Abingdon squad made the short journey up to Radley to try and retain the trophy. The juniors set off first; Geordie Anderson set a punishing pace at the start of the race. Although taking a number of tumbles on the muddy course the Abingdon pupils rallied and finished with all seven athletes finishing in the top 20 runners. Second to test themselves over the 4.4km course were the intermediate boys. Special mention must go to Freddie Cunningham who finished second and Josh Broadbent who finished eighth, despite still being a second year pupil. The U17





athletes raced over 5.3km with all five Abingdon athletes in the lead pack as they rounded the lake and started up the slippery muddy climb. Henry Insley (first) led from the front with Alexander Pennington (second) in hot pursuit. Nobody could keep with Henry's pace as he finished with a commanding lead. Abingdon once again had four runners inside the top ten. The senior runners set off last chasing down the rest of the field. The title was fiercely contested between Ivo Brown (first) and Calum Steer (second) who entered the finishing straight neck and neck. The determination and will to win was etched on both of their faces, and a dip on the line was all that separated them at the finish line. Special mention must go to all five runners who finished in the top six. All Abingdon boys ran superbly to claim the Vale Trophy with a clean sweep of team victories in the U13, U15, U17 and U19 races as well as a number of individual medals.

Reading Half Marathon 2017

On Sunday 19 March a group of Abingdon pupils and staff members lined up to take on the 13.1 miles of the Reading Half Marathon in aid of Blue Skye thinking, the Charity set up by former Director of Sport Andrew Hall. It was a fantastic event with supporters lining the streets of Reading and Madejski Stadium. The first Abingdon

representative across the line was Mr Simon James, running a time of 1hr 23 seconds. In total the pupils raised a total of £330 for Blue Skye Thinking.

South East Schools Championship

On Sunday 26 February Abingdon travelled to Harrow to compete in the South East Schools Cross-country Championships. Harrow's notoriously hilly course was made even tougher with a fierce headwind and driving rain. The wet weather made the technical sections of the course particularly boggy but the Abingdon boys finished in respectable positions. Special mention must go to Ivo Brown, Henry Insley and Freddie Cunningham for finishing inside the top ten in their respective age groups.

Marlborough College

On a glorious spring afternoon the cross-country squad travelled to Marlborough to compete in the penultimate race of the season. The conditions were perfect with the sun and wind having dried out the course from the rain that had fallen. The Abingdon pupils tackled the spectacular and undulating course with strong team performances, winning the senior and junior races, and finishing second in the intermediate event. Special mention must go to senior's Ivo Brown and Calum Steer who finished in first and

second place respectively, as well as intermediate athlete Henry Insley who finished second.

St Edward's Relays

The last race of the season saw Abingdon take two teams to the St Edward's Relays. A perfectly still day, with freshly mown grass and little undulation made for a quick course around the St Edward's playing fields. The senior team made up of Ivo Brown, Calum Steer, Josh Crichton and Daniel Lawson ran well to hold off a strong John Fisher squad and finished third on the podium. The intermediate team, made up of David Bunn (fifth year), Henry Insley (fourth year), Alexander Pennington (fourth year) and Freddie Cunningham (third year), ran a superb race, finishing eighth, ahead of many senior athletes, and are a team to watch in the future.

Representative Honours

The following athletes represented Oxfordshire at the English Schools Cross-country Championships: Ivo Brown, David Bunn, Josh Crichton, Henry Insley, Daniel Lawson, and Calum Steer.

Congratulations to all those who competed and represented Abingdon at cross-country this year.

Elliot Birkbeck



Film Unit at Sobell House

Towards the end of 2016, Charlie Landells, Scott Thomson and I were approached by the AFU's director, Mr Taylor with the idea of working on a short film in support of Sobell House Hospice in Oxford. The concept arose from the school's previous connection with Dominique Cadiou who had worked for the Pegasus Theatre in Oxford before taking on her present post as Head of Fundraising at Sobell. She explained to us that the hospice was seeking to raise money for a new wing that would offer desperately needed accommodation for patients requiring end-of-life care. When we heard the proposal, Charlie, Scott and I volunteered immediately, conscious of how important, as well as heart-warming and touching a film of this sort could be. Preliminary discussions with Dominique gave us an important insight into the nature of the work, and the sensitivities of filming in a place like Sobell.

We spent a day at the hospice getting to know some of the people who work

there and meeting patients, before visiting on three further days to make the film. We began by capturing footage of the hospice using the AFU's Canon C100 camera and a recently acquired "slider" which allows the camera to glide smoothly along a track, adding interest to tripod shots. With this kit, we were able to collect some good images of the location and other 'cutaway' material we would use to add variety to the interviews we filmed. We recorded sound with a RØDE radio mic which we clipped to staff and patients to achieve sharp audio. Not only did this provide excellent sound but it was also very unobtrusive and could be used handheld, as well.

For another element of the film, we came up with the idea of encouraging people to raise money for Sobell by using the device of a cyclist collecting support for a sponsored cycle ride. Luckily, we were able to call on the services of Abingdon's resident cycling enthusiast Charles Quarterman, and spent a day shooting him on his bike, in and around school. Risk assessments were hastily revised as we hung out of car windows to film him as he cycled round Park Crescent one cold December afternoon. In this part of

the operation, we benefitted hugely from the slow motion capabilities of the C100 which allowed us to achieve a cinematic look we hoped would help to inspire our audience to take up similar fundraising challenges. When we came to edit the film, we combined interviews with Tim Harrison, Sobell's Clinical Lead Doctor, and with Dominique, then interspersed them with our shots of the cyclist to make a clear link between the effort required to raise money for Sobell and the work such money would enable the hospice to do.

The music we used in the film played an important role. It helped to define the rhythm we wanted the film to have, but also created much of the atmosphere we were seeking to generate. Indeed, when we watched the film without music it seemed barren and dry which was the polar opposite of the feeling we'd experienced at Sobell, and the one we were trying to convey. Some of the music was sourced from royalty free websites, while another piece was recorded live, performed by Sobell's resident music therapist. We found the two pieces linked together well and helped to lend the film a positive and even uplifting tone.

After our three days filming at Sobell, we



Freddie Marshall

all felt we had experienced a lot, and that it was unlike any shoot we had been on before. Each day brought encounters with new and inspiring people. One of the great surprises for me of being in a place where so many people were approaching the last days of life was how much laughter there was. Indeed, this was one of the main things we wanted to portray: the sense of humour that characterises Sobell. It really was an inspiring and eye-opening experience, and we hope our film did Sobell House justice. It was a privilege to be able to premiere the film before an audience of staff and patients at the hospice in March 2017, for which we were joined by the Headmaster, AFU tutor Duncan Pickstock and Mr Taylor. It was encouraging to see the film immediately generating useful publicity: the Oxford Mail wrote a piece about the making of the film before Charles and I were interviewed about it on BBC Radio Oxford. All three of us were invited to film an interview with OA and Radiohead drummer Phil Selway who visited the school to offer his own endorsement of the work of Sobell and our film.

Freddie Marshall, 3AJM





Football

A tough and busy pre-season training camp set the tone for what was to be another very enjoyable and successful season for the Football Club. With a handful of new fixtures on what is an ever more challenging fixture card, the energy, enthusiasm and commitment shown by all staff and players involved was terrific, and with the development of Tilsley Park at the foundation, the 2017 season had the potential to be a very promising one. There were a number of stand out performances, with the U16 As beating Bedford Modern and Radley, the 1st XI beating St John's Leatherhead away from home, and the U14 As beating Bedford Modern. However more importantly, participation levels were again at their highest, and with the development of Old Abingdonian involvement, the 2017 season was another positive step in the right direction for the Football Club.

After an enjoyable Champions League tournament throughout the Michaelmas Term, and off the back of pre-season, the U12 A and B teams scored 12 goals collectively in their respective wins against Reading Grammar before then going on to beat Caldicott and Dragon

to name only two. The U13s performed admirably on what is an ever more demanding list of fixtures, and were justly rewarded with 4-2 and 2-0 wins over St Hugh's for the U13 A and B teams respectively.

There was great excitement and anticipation around the U14s, and the A's got their season up and running with a 3-1 win over Aylesbury Grammar before going on to beat Bedford Modern and Reading. Oliver Deans showed that even a centre half can score goals for fun, whilst the Bs followed the philosophy of the As, moving the ball with style and opening teams up as they put nine past Bedford Modern as well as beating schools including Oratory and Cokethorpe. Despite a number of cancellations, the U14 Cs maintained their enthusiasm throughout the season, with highlights including a 1-1 draw against Radley and 3-2 win over Hampton School.

After a stuttering start to the season the U15 As got their season up and running with a 7-2 victory over Wellingborough before getting the better of Cokethorpe, Oratory and putting nine past Bedford Modern. The U15 Bs will feel that on other occasions they could have got a lot more out of

the 2017 season, however a 3-1 win over Wellingborough and 1-1 draw with Radley were thoroughly deserved. After a slow start to the season, the U15 Cs finished the season in style with a well earned 5-1 victory over Radley College as well as victories over Shiplake and Berkhamsted.

The U16s could not be faulted for their efforts this year, and having based themselves on the 1st XI philosophy, the U16 As were justly rewarded for their hard work and efforts with three terrific wins over Bedford Modern, Radley College and Berkhamsted to finish the season. The U16 Bs were aided by Adewale Adebute's goals as they overcame opposition including Oratory, Bedford Modern and Reading Grammar, Adewale scoring a hat-trick in all three fixtures. A 3-0 win over Berkhamsted was a fantastic way for the U16 Cs to finish their season.

Despite their best efforts and tireless training on Upper Field, the 5th XI came off second best in all three fixtures played this year. However their effort cannot be questioned. A tough pre-season schedule and strong backroom staff for the 4th XI put them in a strong position ahead of the season and they didn't disappoint going on to win seven



of their ten games played, amassing an impressive 50 goals over the course of the season. The 3rd XI started with a convincing 6-1 win over St Edward's Oxford, whilst also beating Cokethorpe, Oratory and Bedford Modern School.

The 2nd XI had yet another successful season, losing only three of their 12 fixtures played. A 2-1 victory away at St John's Leatherhead and a 2-1 win over Forest demonstrated the quality of this group, whilst securing a 1-1 draw away at Hampton was also a superb achievement. A 2-0 win away at Berkhamsted was a just way for this group of players to finish the season, and having played some very good football throughout, they perhaps deserved more than their second place in the Thames Valley League.

Despite suffering defeat in the inaugural returning captains' football fixture on the final evening of pre-season, the 1st XI squad bounced back superbly going unbeaten at and winning the Rugby College Pre-Season Football Festival. This was a great platform for the first fixture of the season, and despite playing the last 10 minutes with 10 men, a 2-1 away win against a well drilled St John's Leatherhead side was a terrific way to start the year. Further wins over

St Edward's, Forest Wellingborough, Shiplake and Oratory gave the team great confidence, before a 3-0 home win against Radley provided the Abingdon side local bragging rights for another year. A 1-0 win at the inaugural Friday night-lights over MCS was a superb result, which again saw the 1st XI finish agonisingly close in second place in the Thames Valley League.

Whilst seeing current pupils take to the field at Tilsley Park this year, it was also a pleasure to be part of the inaugural OA football fixture which saw 16 Old Abingdonians take to the field ahead of

the Radley block fixture. I am sure this will be something that will grow in the future. Furthermore, it was a pleasure to welcome back Old Abingdonian and current Scottish Premier League Footballer Alex Fisher as the guest of honour to the Football Club Dinner this year. This was a fitting way to draw to a close another highly enjoyable season of participation, progress, and success for all involved.

Tom Donnelly





Lower School History Club

If you thought that Lower School History Club was all about dusty books and boring essays, then you are very wrong indeed. Every Thursday at 4pm, a small group of first and second years visit the

History Department in order to construct amazing Airfix models, watch historical movies, recreate scenes from multiple historical films, and altogether, have a lot of fun.

This year, the members of the club made a model of the Battle of the Somme, which was the longest and bloodiest battle in the First World War. These young history enthusiasts thoroughly enjoyed

finding out more about this topic. We also spent some time producing our own version of the film *Braveheart*. The film was surprisingly not that cringey, and the members of the club enjoyed making it.

On the whole, the Lower School History Club has been a huge success with the members of Lower School.

Mark Taylor, 1SCVM

Badminton

The 2016-17 season saw continued success for the Badminton Club, led this year by our captain, Christopher Yip. Abingdon finished the season with 15 wins to 1 loss – an excellent record – and for the second time won a silver medal at the regional finals of the National Badminton Competition.

This year also saw the departure of our coach James Barclay, who has been with us for six years. As our first full-time professional coach, James transformed the provision we were able to give to our team, with proper coaching technique and gameplay, which has shown both in the quality of our top teams in recent years and in the depth of the squad we now have. His role also enabled us to offer badminton as a core sport, which has given more opportunities for the game to be played than ever before, with more than 200 boys currently on the books. His warmth, humour, and professionalism will be missed, and we wish him well in his new role as head of performance sport at Anglia Ruskin University in Cambridge.

Perhaps the highlight of the season was the excellent run made by our U16s at the National Schools Competition. The team of James Moreton-Smith, Perry



Tsai, Jate Jaturanpinyo and Anthony Xie won the local and county rounds, becoming Oxfordshire champions in the process, and travelled to Guildford for the southern regional round. Some magnificent games in the group stages saw Abingdon come out top of their group, defeating Sevenoaks in the process, whose captain is the current U17 European champion. The final gold medal match was a tense and thrilling encounter, which Abingdon narrowly lost to Reading School. The fact that Reading went on to become the

national champions later in the year is testament to the quality within the team, which bodes well for next year's season.

This year also sees the departure of a number of players who have shown great commitment to the club over a number of years – Harry Lei, Chun Lung Chen, Samuel Martin, JJ Smith and Christopher Yip. We wish them well in the years ahead and look forward to seeing them again at an OA badminton event in the future.

James Hallinan





Community Service

As part of the Community Service programme Abingdon students have had the opportunity to visit many local hospitals and a sensory garden, residential homes for the elderly, primary schools, charity shops and even an exercise group for older people. These are some of the opinions of those involved:

It has been a pleasant experience to visit the elderly. The residents were very enjoyable to talk to and were very interesting seeing that their competitive spirit to win was still burning as strong as ever in their old age. Even though we beat them in some aspects such as science and maths they nearly trumped us in every other aspect, from TV shows to music from the 1980s. This really gave me an insight into their lives as it clearly rejuvenates their memory. I hope they enjoyed our company as much as we enjoyed theirs. The tea party was also a great opportunity for us to interact with the elderly, and for them to interact between themselves. Overall this was a fantastic experience and I look forward to returning next year.

Anderson Lai, 3AJM

Having been helping out at Old Station House these past four years I've started to feel a little bit like part of the furniture - I have watched cohorts of third years come and go once a term, and been able to see how different boys get on with the residents. It must be said, some are better than others but it is a marvellous thing when one of the boys really hits it off with one of them. I had that with Tony, and have enjoyed my weekly games of crib with him - even though I'm convinced he cheats. I will really miss the termly tea parties when I leave, as they have always been such lovely events. I can only hope that a few decades down the line, I'll get wheeled in for a slice of cake and a cup of tea. At any rate, I have got so much out of my involvement in Abingdon community service over the years, and hope that in the future I will be able to find the time to do some volunteer work.

Archie Williams, VIMAS

I have volunteered at Bridge House and Abingdon Community Hospital. I think Community Service this year has been very fun and interesting. Talking to new patients every week has really helped me develop my communication skills, and I have also learnt a lot from listening to the elderly talk about their life experiences.

Anthony Yang, 6BW

Much of my time at former primary school was spent at after school club, where I would while away the afternoons reading *Star Wars* annuals, playing football, and doing plenty of other things. One of the highlights of my time here, and the people I would always look forward to seeing were Abingdon sixth formers Rob and Steve, who would come in on a Wednesday and play football, and occasionally rounders on the field with us. When they went, I was devastated. This year, I wanted to return to my after school club, and have (hopefully!) benefitted others with my own energy and enthusiasm. It has been an enormously enjoyable, and rewarding experience, which I would highly recommend for anyone. I have developed amazing bonds and friendships with the people that go there; being able to entertain someone whether through a game of football or ice hockey, a discussion about *Pokemon* or *Go fish*, or anything else, has all been great fun. One boy even gave me a friendship bracelet which I still treasure. I feel like a valued role model for the boys, and I hope one day that one of them will return. It has been a fantastic experience, and I hope anyone reading this considers it; I have enjoyed it so much and I intend to return next year.

Ben French, 6RP



Hockey

The 2017 hockey season proved to be one of the best ever for Abingdon Hockey Club, with 18 teams competing regularly against prestigious opposition such as Eton, Marlborough, Bradfield and Cheltenham in the Independent Schools' Hockey League (ISHL).

In total, the club played 137 fixtures, with a win percentage of 57%. We have over 200 pupils involved in either training or fixtures each week ranging from those that have never played before to U18 internationals. The club has scored 331 goals, and has 26 boys representing either county, regional or national teams.

The season started with a pre-season tour for the 1st and 2nd XI down to Exeter. With an abundance of talent, the team were lucky enough to train on world-class facilities at Exeter University. We played matches against Queens Taunton and Taunton School. The pupils were put through their paces, but came out with a fantastic 5-1 win against Taunton School.

With momentum in their step the 1st XI started their ISHL campaign the following week against St Edwards with a solid 4-1 win. And the season continued as it started, as the boys

played scintillating hockey. They pressed as a unit and continued to score for fun. The best results of the season came against Magdalen College School where the 1st XI ran out a 5-3 win and Marlborough (who have been our bogey team for the last three years) where the boys won 4-1. This led to the team being unbeaten (the first Abingdon School team to do this for a decade), scoring 34 goals in 11 matches, with a win percentage of 83%, a really quite incredible statistic. I would like to thank those involved (named below) for all their hard work and fantastic attitude throughout the season:

Aravind Prabhakaran, Aran Johal, Charlie Stoker, James Hall, Oscar Bond, Ray Prince, Oliver Lovibond, Max Carter Keall, John Corran, Archie Andrews, Jonathan Hurrell, Harry Venables, James Smith, David Mackney, Matthew Saunders-Davies and Thomas Dingwall.

There are many other moments that could be mentioned throughout the season, but there are a special few that stand out.

The U14 As had a fantastic season, storming their ISHL league, scoring 25 goals and only conceding five. This squad of players is very exciting indeed, and it will be brilliant to watch how they develop over the next few years.

The U15 As also went unbeaten in the league, and were unlucky not to win the

league on goal difference.

The U15 Bs had the most incredible season, winning their last match 7-1 to clinch the ISHL title in the last match of the season. These boys were a great squad and really showed what passion and energy can do to a team.

The U16 As also had a wonderful season, coming second in their league after a tough match against their rivals Radley.

I would like to thank all of those involved for their time and effort over the past season. The coaching is of a high quality and this has shown in the overall results and passion that the boys display, week in, week out.

There are a couple of special mentions; Max Carter-Keall has been selected for the England U18 squad a year young for their European competition. Will Carter-Keall (OA), continues his England adventure, playing for the England U21s and captaining Exeter University 1st XI.

Overall, it has been another fantastic season, full of success, fun and hard work. I look forward to welcoming everyone in 2018 up at the fortress Tilsley Park to get the next season underway.

Olly Deasy



French Exchange

The week in Aix-en-Provence was a great experience. Everything we did was enjoyable from visiting the Pont du Gard to skiing and I could not have had a better exchange partner.

Friday morning at 6am we all met up in St Pancras Station, London, resulting in all of us having to wake up well before 3am. A much too early start for a typical teenager! We got on the train to

Marseille at 7.20am, and then spent the next seven hours on the train, arriving at about 3.15 pm. We were finally in France! We hopped on the coach and headed to La Nativité. When we arrived, we were given delicious pastries (bugnes and chouquettes) and a t-shirt. We then split into two groups and had a tour around the school. Afterwards, we got reunited with our exchange partners and spent the weekend in families.

My exchange partner lived in a beautiful house in the countryside, with a huge pool and garden. We took a quick dip in the pool and then had dinner. French

cheese is great! The following day, we met up with other English and French exchange partners for a game of bowling. The next day, walking around town, we saw many elections posters. I liked the fact that in the French election system a wide range of political parties is represented. I had a sensational weekend with my exchange partner despite the rainy weather. I found myself becoming increasingly at ease with French culture. I introduced a few of the French lads to some rugby and could not help but use my experience to mug them off here and there.

The highlight for me was going skiing for the weekend and playing a football game (English partners vs French partners), especially as we won.

On Monday, after an early start, the group travelled to Manosque, a pretty medieval city, where we walked through its narrow streets and open squares. We then visited L'Occitane en Provence, the international retailer of beauty products. We took a tour of the factory and learnt about its rich history. In the afternoon, we travelled to the Confiserie du Roy René, maker of the famous "Calissons".

On Tuesday we visited a city entirely built on the top of a large mountain, Les Baux de Provence. Because of its





strategic positioning, the castle had been subject to numerous attacks and sieges. I love history and so I found it really interesting to hear about the political infighting that went on there. It gave me an insight into how difficult life in medieval France must have been – so dangerous that people literally had to have walls as thick as mountains to stay safe. Afterwards, we took a short walk down the hill towards an old stone quarry called Carrière de lumières. Entering the site was disorientating but it immediately plunged us into a new world of music and imagery. The painters exhibited were Bosch, Brueghel and Arcimboldo.

Wednesday morning was again sunny and it was a wise choice to wear

shorts and trainers for our guided tour of Aix-en-Provence. The city was founded by the Romans because of its water springs and one can find up to 100 fountains in the city, including the famous Fontaine de la Rotonde. After the tour, we met our French exchange partners and spent the rest of the day with them.

On Thursday, we visited the Pond du Gard, a Roman aqueduct, a very scenic and enjoyable tour. In the afternoon, we spent time in the Nîmes arena. We were all given an audio guide and could enjoy the visit at our own pace. It was very high at the top and also very windy (as Mr Crisp discovered). If you ever go to Nîmes, don't wear a lightweight hat...

Friday morning was spent at La Nativité and we attended a few lessons. We also watched a film that our exchange partners had done when they came to Abingdon. It was very funny! After lunch, we said goodbye to our exchange partners. We were all very sad to be leaving, but many of us have arranged to meet up again in the summer. After a short bus ride, we arrived at Marseille railway station and got on the Eurostar at 3pm. We all had a lovely week and we certainly have made good friends for the future.

Oran Forrestal, 4MP, Fergal Marsh, 4JAM, Henry Pickess, 4JTT, Louis Renouf, 4MRG, Jimmy Strange, 4AJPE and Lancelot Wilson, 4AJPE



History Trip to Berlin

Last Easter the fourth years were treated to a very special trip to Berlin, Germany in an effort to reinforce our knowledge of the rise of National Socialism in Germany and to prepare us for our upcoming topic of the Cold War.

We started our three-day trip with a short flight from London Heathrow to Berlin Tegel Airport in the north of Berlin. We delved into the trip straight away with a visit to the residence of the German Chancellor and then with a stroll through the famous

Berlin Tiergarten, whilst gazing upon notable monuments such as the Victory Column and the statue of Otto Von Bismarck. After lunch, in Berlin's newly built railway station, we walked through the heart of Berlin past the Reichstag and Bundestag onto the Brandenburg Gate. We finished the day with a sombre walk through the Holocaust Memorial and then a short stop at the Fuhrer Bunker. We stayed the night in a great little youth hostel in the Berlin suburb of Birkenwerder.

The second day began with a short trip to the town of Oranienburg and Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp near the town. We made our way around the complex which was harrowing but very interesting. After

this, our group progressed onto the palace at Potsdam which was the home of the Prussian Monarchy. We walked through the grounds in the glorious sunshine and ended our walk with a visit to the great Sanssouci Palace. The day was ended with a walk through the Wannsee House on the shores of Lake Wannsee in the south of Berlin.

The final day began with our departure from the youth hostel and a drive over to the Berlin Wall and the Stasi Prison in the Soviet sector of Berlin which was featured in the film *Bridge Of Spies*. We were toured around the prison by a very nice guide and went down into the underground cells of the prison. We took a lunch break by the river in Berlin which gave us an opportunity to get some food and some souvenirs for the journey home. Our trip ended with the visit to the Reichstag Dome which had some fantastic views of the Berlin skyline. After a short delay at the airport we were then on our way home to Great Britain.

It was a magnificent experience for all of us on the trip and gave us an inside look into what we will be studying and what we have already studied. Thanks go to the teachers who accompanied us and Mr Hallinan for organising it.

Tristan Tonks, 4GJC





First Year Adventure Trip

In the Easter holidays, the first years went to PGL Liddington for a week of great fun! It was run by two very kind hosts, Dan and Becky. However, there were also many other coaches who helped us with all of the amazing activities we did there.

For the giant swing, we were harnessed into a huge wooden platform and then pulled up into the air by the group of other first years we were with. As we shot down, it felt like doing a loop-the-loop. The most nerve-racking bit was actually pulling the string to make us go down since there would be a pause before we plummeted.

Jacob's Ladder and crate stacking were two challenges that were mostly based on skill and teamwork. In the Jacob's ladder there would be three on a team and they would each help their teammates to get to the top. But it had a twist; as you got higher, the rungs would be spaced out further and further

apart. In crate stacking we would again be in teams of three and three other helpers would pass us the crates as we got higher. The aim was to see how high we could get in three minutes without knocking the tower over.

Abseiling was challenging for many as we had to lean backwards over a ledge to get to the wall. When we got going down the wall, everything was fine; however, going down made us all think of one question: "What if I fall?". But it was all fine and everything was completely safe. As we got to the wall, we would calmly lower ourselves down.

Climbing was another exciting activity because in this we could push ourselves to our limits to get as high as we could. Firstly, we would get our harnesses and our helmets on to make sure we were safe in case we fell. We would then get into groups of three: one to climb, one to belay (which is to make sure there is no slack in the rope) and one to back-up the belayer making sure that all the rope was held tightly. On the climbing wall, there were different colours of holds which had different difficulties; the aim was to get to the top using just one colour, this made

it harder but a bigger accomplishment when it was completed.

Trapeze was a challenge based activity on pushing your mental ability to see how far you could get. We had to climb up a pole to get to a wooden ledge that we would then jump off and try to catch hold of a metal bar. The aim was to see how far we could jump. When we were about to jump it almost seemed impossible, but as we jumped we realised what we could actually do if we pushed ourselves.

For Vertical Challenge we had to see how quickly we could get to the top of the climbing frame. It was just like an obstacle course going into the sky; it started off with a rope ladder, then we got to a stack of tyres, after that a climbing wall and finally finishing off with a rope net. The best time was 19 seconds by Benedict Schillizzi which was a pretty amazing time.

These were only a few of the wonderful things that we did on our PGL trip. If you would like to see some more pictures they are on the school website. Thank you for reading.

Louis Trotter, 1SCVM



Second Year Adventure Trip

Plas Pencelli is an outdoor adventure centre located on the edge of the Brecon Beacons in south Wales. The second year went there over the Easter holiday. We didn't know it, but we were in for the toughest and most exciting week of our lives.

After a relatively long drive in the bus we arrived at Pencelli and had a quick tour of the house. After that we had some free time so we could unpack and get used to our rooms. Then we had dinner; it was delicious! We also had a bit of time after that before our evening activities started; there was a night walk to get used to our surroundings and it was really beautiful. Then we arrived back at the house. We had a few challenging tasks to face but we got through. Then Mr Jenkins and the other teachers had an even bigger task, trying to get us to sleep!

Day 1:

After getting ready the green group's first activity was climbing. For me that was the best climbing session in my life, the mountains that we climbed were beautiful and at lunch we also had some

brilliant hot chocolate. Our instructors, John and David, were great at helping us to get used to climbing. Everyone was really supportive of each other and those who couldn't reach the top were encouraged by the people at the bottom who had already climbed it.

In the evening we did orienteering. We had three maps that gave us the positions of the stamps and you had to run around with your partner and collect the correct stamps. It was great fun and congratulations go to Marcus Bainbridge and Josh Broadbent who won the competition.

Day 2 :

In the morning, we did our duties and then the green group went off with six canoes and paddles. We practised paddling and then started the journey down the River Wye, and those who weren't doing it properly just zig-zagged across the river meaning many were stuck at the back patiently trailing behind them. Then about halfway through the zig-zaggers lost control and turned into our path. We tried all we could to move beyond them but we were going to hit them so at the last moment our instructor at the back of our boat said "right paddle" and we T-boned right into them turning their boat around and

almost making them capsize. His excuse afterwards was 'we were going to hit them anyway so we might as well hit them hard'. It was incredibly entertaining! Then near to the end, we stopped with the other group at a small rapid. We decided to go down the rapids on our back and although it caused us all to get soaking wet, it was definitely worth it.

In the evening we were told that we were going to do the Dingle descent. Most of us had no clue what was going to happen. But what we had to do was have a long piece of rope connected to us so that we were all tied in a line. We thought that it would be very easy but it had a catch; we had to walk down a stream blindfolded! The only thing we could use to know our surrounding was our touch and teammates warning us what was coming such as if it was slippery, if we had to go under logs, if there was a tree ahead, and if our teammates told us if they had fallen into the water. Three quarters in and we were allowed to take off our blindfolds, mainly because it was getting a lot more dangerous and slippery. A lot of people fell in the water numerous times. It was nothing like what we expected but it was amazing.

Day 3 :

That morning we went to get waterproof



jackets, helmets and wellies and then it was off to the caves. Our instructor was Martin and Mr Deasy also came along with us. The first cave was small at the start but had a massive chamber at the end. It was the most amazing place I have ever seen in my life. The second cave was very tight, but everyone got through it. People were scared of it but they loved it by the end, and we were treated with a beautiful view. The third cave was called the white lady, named after the outline of a white lady in the cave. The water went up to our necks so we were all soaking wet. It was definitely my favourite activity and I'm sure others will agree.

In the afternoon we went swimming. It was good to know that our legs still worked after the last few days! The pool was also very deep, making it a challenge to see who could touch the bottom first.

Day 4:

At the start of the day we were tired but we had to get ready for a nine mile walk, including climbing up three mountains. The first mountain was Crybyn which is 795m tall and the second mountain we walked up to was Pen Y Fan. We all stood at the top of the 886m mountain, posed for a picture and then went off to the third mountain which was called Corn Du. It is 873m meaning it's the second highest peak in South Wales after Pen Y Fan. Luckily after the tough walk, a seat on the minibus rested our legs.

In the evening we got into four random

groups and we got ready for our last evening activity, problem solving. Each group had to go round completing all of the required tasks. Probably my favorite challenge was when there were 25 plates across the floor with each one having a different number on it. We had to remember the number on each plate. The hard part was to remember the sequence of the numbers. We worked really well as a team with each person remembering three different plates. We got it first time and completed it in the fastest time with Mr McDonnell. We were improving as a team but we had more tasks ahead so we went to Mr Jenkins.

There was a vertical tube with holes in and a ping pong ball at the bottom so we had to pour water into the tube to get the ping ball out whilst also covering the holes. In the end after all the other tasks we got the results and my team were the winners.

Day 5:

On the last day, we knew that we were going on the gorge walk. The first part of the gorge walk was walking down a pitch black tunnel with no lights and just using sticks against the wall and a hand on the person in front of us. Then we walked down to the bottom of a waterfall where we could sit on the bottom and slide down. It was a short waterslide but still very exciting. We also got on our hands and knees to crawl underneath a waterfall and climb out onto the rocks. We were then allowed to fall backwards and flop into the water. It was very funny as most of us back flopped, making a huge splash upon impact. At the end of the walk, most of us were colder than we had ever been.

After a brilliant week we got our bags ready and thanked all the teachers and instructors for letting us have this opportunity. A special thanks goes to Mr Jenkins, who organised the trip and the best week of our lives.

Matthew Jarvis, 2SW and Daniel Keeble, 2SW



Summer 2016



Athletics

I must start by saying what a privilege it has been to be in charge of the athletics programme this year. Without the pupil and staff commitment, such a programme would not be able to be delivered, and for that I am extremely grateful. The acquisition of Tilsley Park has greatly improved our training facilities, and the aim is to host our own meets there as of next year.

Athletes from first year to sixth form have tasted lots of success this summer. Tilsley park played host to the inaugural Lower School multi event. Athletes from four different schools competed in a combination of sprinting, middle distance running, throwing and jumping. Abingdon U13s came away with the gold medal, with impressive performances from Josh Broadbent, George Owen and Joshua Mensah.

Third and fourth year athletes won the team gold medal when paired with St Helen's and St Katharine's at the Nitro Athletics meet in Headington. Senior

athletes have competed at Harrow, Bedford, Marlborough and Radley, as well as the prestigious Achilles Relays held at the Sir Roger Bannister track on Iffley Road.

ESAA Track and Field Cup

Abingdon continued their tradition of competing in the English Schools' Track and Field Cup. On Friday 19 May, a group of junior and intermediate athletes travelled to Horspath Athletic Stadium to compete in round 1. It was the first real test for the junior athletes at a big competition, with numerous other schools in attendance. There were some valiant efforts but unfortunately the junior squad failed to qualify for the regional round. The intermediate boys however performed superbly, with impressive performances from Archie Turnbull (High Jump), Liam O'Hickey (100m) and Will Sishton (Shot Put). A special mention must go to Henry Insley and Freddie Cunningham who blew the competition away and had their own head to head battle in the 1500m, running shoulder to shoulder until the final 200m where Henry was able to kick away and take first place.

So it was off to the regional final, held at the Norman Green Athletics Track in Solihull. After last year's event being cancelled due to torrential rain, thunder and lightning, the athletes were keen and eager to perform well and take the regional title. The weather could not have been better, the sun was shining and there was not a breath of wind to be felt. Congratulations must be extended to Liam O'Hickey (100m), Archie Turnbull (200m) and Will Sishton (Shot Put) who each scored over 20 points in their respective events. Overall it was a superb team performance with every athlete contributing to Abingdon's total score of 390 points. The school narrowly missed out on first place to Waddesdon Church of England School by 8 points, but the effort shown by the boys was very commendable.

Stand-out performances at senior level included winning the overall competition at Radley and Marlborough (remaining unbeaten on the track at the Marlborough Invitational meet), as well as a sensational win in the 4 x 400m at Harrow. After a full programme of events, the meet culminated with the senior boys 4 x



400m. Oliver Moody lead the school out before handing over to Calum Steer, both putting Abingdon in a commanding position. Tom Butcher ran a superb third leg extending the lead to roughly 30m. Harrow saved their best runner until last: the infamous George Grassly, their cross country champion, who had run a 3min 58s in the 1500m earlier that day. He closed the gap to within 5m of Alex Moss (Abingdon) at the end of the back straight. As Abingdon and Harrow rounded the final bend it was neck and neck, Alex Moss dug deep, summoning all of his 100m prowess and re-established a 2m lead with 50m to go. He crossed the line to take the win in a time of 3 minutes 40s.

Bedford Super Eights

For the last meet of the season the senior and intermediate athletics squad travelled to the Bedford International Stadium to compete in the condensed Super Eight format. A team of eight competed in the hurdles, 1500m, 300m, 100m, 4x100m, long jump, high jump, javelin, shot put and medley relay and were awarded points for their positions. The seniors



continued their run of good form with a number of athletes running PBs and securing third place against other high calibre schools and athletes. Schools in attendance were: Harrow, Whitgift, Bedford, Oakham, Stamford, MCS Oxford and Coopers Coborn.

Representative honours

Oxfordshire County Championship representatives: Calum Steer, Alex Moss,

Tom Butcher, Harry Venables, Josh Ponting, Henry Insley, Vincent Chen, Freddie Cunningham, Liam O'Hickey, George Owen and Josh Mensah.

English Schools' Championship qualifiers: Matthew Johnson and Tom Butcher.

Well done to all of those this year who represented the School and wore the Abingdon athletics' vest with pride.

Elliot Birkbeck



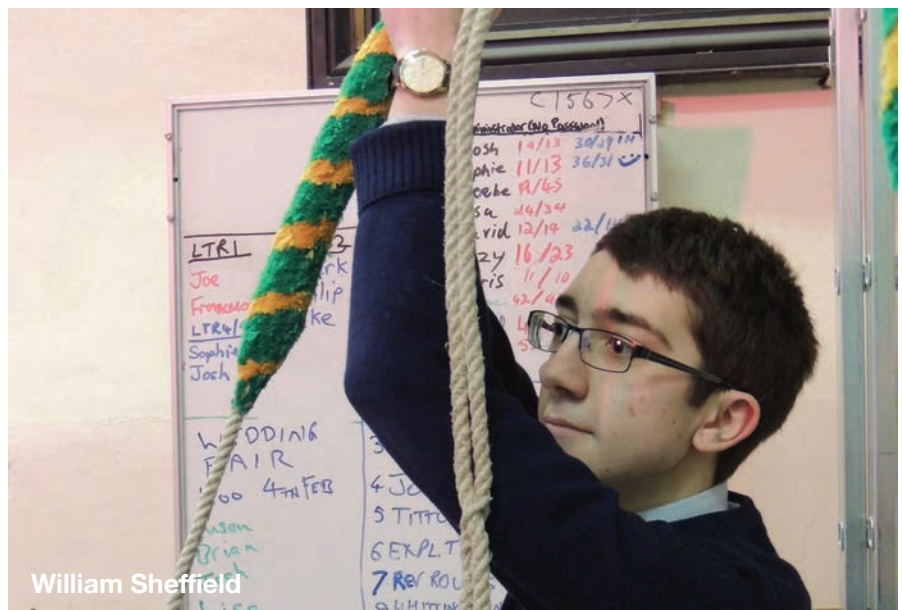
Bell Ringing

The bellringing initiative has been an active club at Abingdon since it was commissioned by Mr Jenkins in 2011 and it has been especially active in the last year.

The club is certainly by no means the largest at the School, with often only three or four boys in attendance together with both Mr Jenkins and Mr Lomax; nevertheless, we are all keen and committed ringers. Once we are at the church, the ringing is organised by two local ringers, Susan and Brian Read, who run the practice and provide first-rate teaching and assistance whenever necessary – it is indeed generous of them to give up their time for us.

Each Friday afternoon, from four till five, the members of the club proceed to St. Helen's Church in Abingdon town where we hold our ringing practices. St Helen's Church is connected to the School in more ways than one. Not only is our greatest benefactor John Roysse (d.1571), who re-founded the School in 1563, buried within, but the church is used on a regular basis by the staff and pupils for the major church services at the start and end of each school term.

The ringing of church bells as we do in this country is a peculiarly English phenomenon. We ring in a style called 'full-circle ringing'.



This involves swinging the bell high so that it revolves around its axis from a mouth-up to mouth-up position. This allows us to have greater control over the timing of the bell so we can ring 'methods', or set patterns or orders in which to ring the bells, which must be memorised by every ringer taking part.

Ringing bells English-style is not only interesting, mentally stimulating and very enjoyable, it is also a uniquely English art which dates back centuries and is rooted in tradition and culture. However, this is not to say more modern teaching methods are not being introduced! Whilst the learning process may not be as fast as that of other pastimes, the rewards are greater, as is the sense of achievement

and accomplishment – there is always something new to learn! There is also the fact that church-bell ringing is said to be one of those dying arts - more and more bells are falling silent across the country, and so more and more young learners are desperately needed to keep the bells ringing out across the land.

The Bellringing Club is an extremely welcoming club for all years, regardless of ability. Those who are curious about ringing are more than welcome to come along and see how it's done, but there is also ample opportunity for the more experienced ringer too.

William Sheffield, VIOTL



Bridge Club

The Bridge Club is booming and has been filled to capacity this year. We regularly have eight or nine tables on a Wednesday afternoon. In the beginners' room, we have had a steady stream of people wanting to learn this complex game. It has been especially pleasing to see how many first years have tried their hand. A regular first year four: Oliver Smith, Dheeraj Kollanthothathil, Alfie Luo and Nick Chorbadzhev have proven that age is no barrier to successful play.

None of them, though, had the unbelievable luck of getting a Grand Slam on their very first hand! This honour was reserved for Gennady Krasnoperov: this must be a sign that a great bridge-laying future awaits him.

In the intermediate room, the players

spent a lot of time putting the world to rights and occasionally remembering they are mid game! Mrs Coull has been keeping an eye on the bidding, encouraging more thoughtful bidding.

Mr Shephard has coached the more advanced players. It will be strange without the old guard next year. Lewis Wu, Nicholas Burnell, Daniel Johnson and James Kennedy have been stalwart members of the club for many years.

In the Summer Term, we bid a sad farewell to Ethan Lo and Connor Chippendale. Both have been excellent coaches and patient teachers. They have selflessly sacrificed opportunities to play themselves in order to teach others. It was in their honour that we held a Bridge Tea in the café. It was a very civilised affair and they were presented with packs of 'solid' gold playing cards. We wish them well as

they move on to their next stage.

Katy Lee

Bridge is a great use of mind and strategy, but also includes an element of luck. It is an interesting game and can be a great way to socialise.

Oliver Smith, 1SCVM

When I first joined bridge I wasn't expecting it to be fun but it turns out it is very good! Everyone in bridge is nice and you get to learn a lot.

Alfie Luo, 1SJC

Bridge is fun and I would definitely recommend it to anyone.

Dheeraj Kollanthothathil, 1SCVM

Fencing

This season, the Abingdon School Fencing Club has continued to represent the School, region and nation with remarkable success. The Club epitomises the Abingdon ethos of the Other Half, with almost every member only holding a sword for the first time here at Abingdon. Its welcoming nature has made so many boys feel at home and it has uncovered hidden talents within boys enabling them to achieve great things in this sport. The introduction of the Lower School Cup in December represented the Fencing Club's commitment and success in raising young Abingdonians from complete novices to competitive athletes, with Jacob Drew emerging from a large field to win the maiden trophy. The Club maintains its domination of the inter-school circuit, displaying fine skill, camaraderie and grit as the athletes fought their way to a flawless season, extending Abingdon's unbeaten run to four years. Having agreed to re-establish a fixture with Abingdon, a confident Harrow found themselves red-faces after we achieved a flawless 4-0 victory over this historic rival. Other whitewash victories were achieved over Wellington, Radley, Dauntsey's, and St Benedict's, while decisive 3-1 victories were achieved over Charterhouse and RGS High Wycombe. However, the Abingdon fencers had to dig deep against arch-rivals Winchester, with our young team battling as a tight unit against much stronger (and hairier) opposition. A nail-biting 5-4 triumph was clinched by Captain Robert MacLennan in the final bout of the fixture, making the overall result a three matches to one victory for Abingdon.

The Club's extraordinary strength throughout its ranks was demonstrated at the Public Schools' Fencing Championship at the Crystal Palace Sports Centre in March, as Abingdon won the the Hilary Hammond Trophy for the third year in four, plucking the magnificent prize from Eton (last year's victors). This trophy is awarded to the school gaining the highest number of points in the competition with 24 weapon entries or less, which the Club deservedly



won after the Abingdon School fencers achieved consistently high results in both Epée and Foil. Fuelled on a potent combination of adrenaline and Scotch eggs, Robert MacLennan fought his way to his fourth consecutive Public School's Epée final to finish second in the Senior competition after a narrow defeat to Singaporean prodigy Justin Lim. Tom Preston, Patrick Johnson and Jonathan Law also achieved notable performances in the Senior event, all reaching the last 32. James MacLennan, Harry Baston-Hall, Noë Larousse, Jake de Jongh and Gabriel Tribe all stamped their mark on the Junior category with two last 16 performances and four other top 40 finishes between them despite all but one having another year in the same category. However, the sheer determination and gallant spirit of the

Club's young fencers in the Mount-Haes category can not be overlooked as, despite averaging less than two years of holding a sword, Ben Kiraikou, Mike MacLennan, James Gibson, Jacob Drew and Dan Keeble all performed valiantly against more experienced opposition to achieve a strong set of performances, with Mike weaving and ducking his way to a top 25 finish in both Epée and Foil.

As well as developing a strong and dynamic team, the Club has nurtured its fencers into being remarkably strong individuals. This independence was highlighted at the Southern Regional Championships in March where Abingdonians walked away with an impressive haul of six medals. In the U18 Epée, both the calmness and dexterity of Patrick Johnson compared



to the more aggressive style of Robert MacLennan, competing with a knee injury, proved there were different routes to bronze medals. Jonathan Law's lightning footwork secured him a silver medal in the U18 Sabre, while Nöe Larousse's superb parries and timing earned him a bronze medal in the U16 Epée, complimented by a cheeky silver medal in the U16 Foil category. Yet Harry Baston-Hall was to go one step further, dominating the U16 Epée final to win the gold medal.

Through the Regionals, these individuals, as well as Mike MacLennan and Jake de Jongh, progressed to the British Youth Championships held in Sheffield. Overall the Abingdon fencers performed well amongst the country's best, with both Nöe and Harry reaching the last 16. Robert MacLennan, having overcome his injury, fenced out of his skin to reach the final of the U18 Epée after five knockout rounds, where he defeated his opponent 15-12 to claim the gold medal and the title of U18 National Champion.

Furthermore, the independence and proactiveness of the Club's fencers has been demonstrated through striving for individual success further afield, with many of the Club's athletes competing regularly on the national circuit. Some of the Club's younger fencers in particular have shone in their endeavours, earning

respect from some of Britain's finest fencers and coaches for both themselves as individuals and the Abingdon School Fencing Club. Last July, our left-handed dark horse - 14 year-old Harry Baston Hall - swooped into the U17 Nationals, snatching a phenomenal bronze medal. Other successes include a gold medal on the Elite Epée Junior Series and a last 16 at the Chichester Open, where Harry fought stronger and more experienced adults in scenes reminiscent of David and Goliath. 15 year old Nöe Larousse has come on leaps and bounds in both his native Foil and more recent exploits in Epée, displaying remarkable skill and cunning in the U15 English Youth Championships to win the Bronze medal in Epée after finishing sixth in foil the day before. Alongside his gold medal at the U18 Nationals, Robert MacLennan has achieved consistently high results on the U20 and senior circuit, including a silver medal at the Senior Welsh Open, and as a result has risen up the U20 rankings this season to 7th.

The Fencing Club has also achieved great success internationally, with two boys being given the honour to represent both Great Britain and Abingdon School abroad at U17 and U20 level. Following achievements last season such as reaching the last 16 out of nearly 300 at an U17 European

Competition in Copenhagen and qualifying for the World Championships, Robert MacLennan achieved his dream of representing Great Britain at U20 level, qualifying for his first U20 World Cups in Latvia, Switzerland and Finland at the age of 16. Furthermore, at U17 level Harry Baston-Hall in fourth year was selected to represent Great Britain at internationals in Austria, France, Poland and Luxembourg. Both performed admirably against some of the world's finest Epéeists, and look forward to another two years in their respective age categories.

Without a doubt, the Club is a family whose every member is indebted to our two coaches, Herman du Preez and Alan Knowles. You have been superb, not only as coaches, but also as friends and role models. Both of you have shown unwavering support and kindness to all who pass through the fencing studio doors and give each member of this Club confidence and integrity as individuals, both in and outside of this sport. From the perspective of someone who didn't even know fencing existed until I arrived at Abingdon at the age of 11, I can honestly say that the achievements and opportunities I have received during my sporting career would simply not have materialised without your coaching and support through thick and thin. I am, and the whole Club is, immensely grateful. We were sorry to see Mr Fieldhouse, our Master in Charge, leave last year after his diligence in building up the Club, but this year we are thankful to Mr Jackson, who has smoothly taken the helm of this ship and is steering it to exciting new places such as fixtures with Eton and St Paul's. This year's leavers (Vice-Captain Patrick Johnson and James MacLennan) are sad to say goodbye, and will look back with nostalgia on their time at Abingdon and as part of the Fencing Club, which has contributed so much to the exemplary individuals they have come to be. As I approach my final year at Abingdon, I am both excited for what's in store and sad that so much of my time as part of this great Fencing Club has already passed. Boys: keep fighting; keep shouting; keep winning.

En Garde!

Robert MacLennan, 6SAE



Charity

The Abingdon School Charities Committee has had a very successful year raising tens of thousands of pounds for several good causes.

On 30 of September, all of the staff and students turned out in the beautiful weather to support our charities for the term (MIA, Helen-Douglas House and Abingdon Bridge) by walking over 13 miles from Benson (or Little Wittenham for the Lower School) back to School. Whether the half marathon was walked, run, rowed, canoed or done in fancy dress, everyone taking part brought in plenty of sponsorship. We raised a grand total of £28,781, an impressive feat of which all of the staff and students are proud.

On 15 December, Abingdon staff performed in *An Abingdon Cinderella*. Directed and written by Archie Williams and his team, the play brought tears of laughter to both boys and staff throughout the show. The perfect satire also helped cement the position of our new headmaster; he donned a crown and even busted a few moves. The whole affair was a complete success, raising £1,095 for the Alzheimer's Society.

On 16 March a group of students generously gave up their evening to spend it sleeping rough. This was an event designed to help the students empathise with the homeless as well as raise awareness for the often overlooked issue of homelessness in Oxford. It was an incredibly eye opening experience. Overall, we raised around £1,000 for Oxford Homeless Pathways as well as raising awareness of this issue.

These are just a few of the events the Charities Committee were involved in over the last year. From football tournaments to a sponging in the stocks, every student at Abingdon played a vital part in raising thousands of pounds for a wide variety of charities.

Here is further information about our charities for the year:

Medic Assist International is a charity aiming to ensure access to healthcare for people most in need as well as transforming communities suffering oppression or discrimination. They work with local partners on their projects to ensure sustainability and long term effectiveness.

Smith-Magenis is a small UK registered charity that supports families along with children of all ages suffering from Smith Magenis Syndrome (causing mild to

moderate intellectual disability, delayed speech and language skills, distinctive facial features, sleep disturbances, and behavioural problems).

Medicines Sans Frontières is an independent fast response charity helping those most in need around the world. They help millions of people every year through fundraising and increasing awareness of crises across the globe.

Headway is a UK-wide charity that works to improve life after brain injury. Through its network of more than 125 groups and branches across the UK, it provides support, services and information to brain injury survivors, their families and carers, as well as to professionals in the health and legal fields. Children are always an important focus of our charitable effort here at Abingdon.

Chidobe Primary School is a school for disadvantaged kids in rural Africa. Here at Abingdon, it is easy to see school as a burden, but imagine if you had no school, and there was never going to be a school for miles around. The programmes we support are the only chance that youngsters have to break out of the poverty cycle. If you don't get educated in Zimbabwe, you really have very few options. Another thing often taken for granted in the UK, certainly by myself, is



safety; a return of tribal violence has led to the postponing of the school of which we funded a very significant proportion. Rest assured the school will still open, but this problem highlights just how difficult life in Zimbabwe can be.

Helen & Douglas House is more of a local charity working around Oxfordshire, actively supporting around 60 terminally ill young people and their families at any one time. They provide palliative care to young people with life-shortening conditions to live out the rest of their lives in the most enjoyable and dignified way.

Reading through the many positive quotes from people who know they are going to die young is really quite a humbling experience. Their mission is summed up best by a quote from Dylan, "I might have a short life, but I can still have a fun life." Your aid makes all the difference during times of pain and mourning when money really should not be the main concern.

The Abingdon Bridge really is closer to home for most of us; young adults in Abingdon who just need that one bit of advice on issues that could threaten any of us; a bad relationship, drugs or even

something that seems so simple like stress. Mental health is one of the great issues of modern society, and it can affect any of us.

Children Heard and Seen supports another group who get less charitable attention than they desperately need, the children of prisoners. We must remember that all of us start off life in the same way, and it is only our upbringing, or lack thereof, that shape us as people. Facts speak louder than opinions so I will leave you with this; some choice statistics from the Children Heard and Seen website.

- 65% of boys with a convicted parent go on to offend themselves. 60% of women in prison have children.

- A prison sentence separates 17,000 children a year from their mothers.

- 25% of children with a parent in prison are at risk of mental health problems including depression, anxiety, eating and sleeping disorders.

- It is estimated that every £1 invested in supporting prisoners' families could save the taxpayer £11.

The Charities Committee 2016-17



Tennis

This year was an outstanding season for the Abingdon Tennis Club, with three very significant highlights: reaching the Tennis National Championships Final 2017; getting through to the Quarter Finals of the Independent Schools' Tennis Association (ISTA) Championships 2017 and winning the Phillips Plate at ISTA.

Our top five tennis players, Tom Buckle, Sam Christie, Max Hall, Lafite Lo and William Pearson, managed to beat Radley, MCS, Warwick School and Wolverhampton Grammar School in the National Championships 2017. This meant that the School got through to the National Finals as one of the top 16 tennis schools in the country.

Sam Christie, Max Hall, Lafite Lo and William Pearson reached the quarter-finals of the ISTA Championships 2017 (Youll Cup - U19 Boys), a prestigious event, being in the same company as many tennis academies and fine schools that attract talent from around the world: Millfield, Reed's, Culford, Eton, Repton, New Hall and Ewell Castle. We were very close to making it to the semi-finals, losing narrowly to New Hall. In the end, we were placed

sixth in the championships, which is very respectable.

Jimmy Strainge and Ethan McLellan won the Phillips Plate, having beaten UCS, Culford, Whitgift and Haberdashers' Aske's Boys' School. This is the first time this plate has been won by Abingdon. Credit to both of the boys as they both played incredibly well throughout the championships.

These results would not have been achievable were it not for the players and their commitment to training throughout the year as well as the parents' continuous support. Many thanks also to 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 Camps

The juniors trained between Monday 10 April and Wednesday 12 April during the Easter holidays in preparation for the season. This was 12 hours in total and the boys showed determination and grit to push beyond their respective comfort zones.

The 1st team camp took place on Saturday 22 April. The boys all worked hard to improve in preparation for the

forthcoming season with Martin. There was a healthy balance between work on the technical, tactical and mental details of the game with plenty of match practice to test all of these elements.

Independent Schools' League

The 1st VIII managed to win their group, comprehensively, beating Wellington, Marlborough and Epsom.

'Radlingdon' Open

The top 16 pairs from Abingdon and Radley battled it out at the second 'Radlingdon' Open Tennis Tournament hosted by Radley. This competition saw boys from all years playing against each other.

There were some excellent contests, such as Will Taylor and Felix Breach, who were in the third year, very nearly beating an Upper Sixth Radley pairing in a thoroughly entertaining match that went to a tiebreak. William Pearson and Lafite Lo reached the semi-final of the main draw. Sam Christie and Max Hall reached the final. However, it was a very hot day and William Pearson bravely stepped in to play in the final. Unfortunately, Radley proved to be too strong on this occasion.

Huge congratulations must go to Charlie Atkinson and Huba Varady, who





won the plate competition with ease (6-1 in the final!).

Eton Pairs Tournament

Our U15 IV of Ethan McLellan, Jimmy Strainge, Felix Breach and Will Taylor finished 6th out of 16 ahead of Wellington, Charterhouse, Hampton, Tonbridge, New Hall and Sevenoaks, amongst others. A good result in a tough competition.

St George's Pairs

Our U19 IV of Sam Christie, Ethan McLellan, William Pearson and Lafite Lo came 7th out of 16 schools, beating Radley's first pair 6-0 in the process! The opposition was tough e.g. Eton, Reed's and New Hall. Not a bad result at all given we had lost one of our top players to work experience.

Inter Schools Matches

Seniors

The seniors enjoyed many convincing wins over MCS, Winchester, Oratory, St Edward's, and finally Warwick. Many thanks to the departing Upper Sixth tennis players for their contribution to the Tennis Club over many years and in particular: Tom Buckle, George Jeffreys and George Strainge.

U16s

It was a very short season due to examinations, with victory over MCS,



Stowe and a draw with Winchester. However, many boys continued playing and representing higher, more senior, teams. This commitment shows excellent time management and dedication to Abingdon tennis. Particular thanks to Sam Christie, Max Hall, Aron Lavis, Louis Brosnan and Angus Blomfield.

U15s

There were wins against Winchester and Warwick, and many draws! The boys came runners up in the OXIST and in the U15 MCS Tennis Festival Jimmy Strainge came 6th/12 and Ethan McLellan 7th/12, competing against U15 boys from KES Birmingham, MCS, Perse, Rugby and Warwick.



U14s

They were a particularly talented year group, with victories over Radley, Warwick, MCS and overall winners of the OXIST. Two boys were selected to play for the year above (and beyond that) on a number occasions: Felix Breach and Will Taylor.

U13s and U12s

There is a lot of interest in this age group, which bodes well for the future. There was a good result against Moultsford. Seb Muller and Max Struthers did well at ISTA reaching the Semi-finals of the John Barrett Shield (U13 boys).

Ben Ponniah



CCF

The Abingdon Combined Cadet Force (CCF) have broken with tradition this year: firstly by not capping the amount of recruits they take on board in the Michaelmas term (54 up to a staggering 73); secondly by parading the new recruits on the annual Remembrance Day parade - something that hasn't been achieved in over a decade; thirdly by organising some memorable visits to HMS Bristol as well as RNAS Sandhurst, and fourthly by introducing a live firing range day at Winchester.

There was also the annual Easter Camp, where over 100 willing cadets travelled to Longmoor Training Centre and put themselves through a week of intensive soldiering tasks, which culminated in one of "the most explosive village attacks" ever seen by the Urban Training Centre staff who showered plaudits upon the young men who participated.

As mentioned earlier, we have broken with tradition this year and we have for the very first time promoted our Senior Cadet - Alex Reynolds - to 'Regimental Sergeant Major' (RSM), a feat that hasn't

ever been achieved in the history of the CCF here at Abingdon. Alex has been inspirational, he has led from the front and has put huge amounts of his personal time into the contingent. He is to be commended for his sterling efforts, but alas, not his brew making skills. The contingent - headed up by Squadron Leader, Rebecca Cottam and assisted by the SSI, Capt Lee Edwards - would like to thank all of the staff volunteers: Chris Fletcher-Campbell, Richard Jackson, Mark Johnson, Kate Ley and Eleanor Kaye for their sterling efforts. As well as the school staff, a huge thanks must go to the Cadet Training Team - sergeants Mogridge and Simmons in particular. Without their input life would not be half as exciting.

Another exhilarating aspect of this year's CCF was the chance for 17 cadets to visit the Lake District and challenge themselves to a week's worth of arduous adventure training pursuits. These included: vertical caving, climbing & abseiling, hill walking and ghyll scrambling. It was cold, it was wet, but most of all it was fantastic fun. The boys who attended all said they wanted to sign up for next year's event even

before leaving the beautiful surroundings they had just walked, climbed and then descended.

When they weren't outdoors, the boys enjoyed a cultural visit to the Lancashire Regiment's museum, Extreme Trampolining in Preston and the chance to "kick back and relax" in the Cineplex, taking in one of the latest blockbusters.

Over 70% of the enthusiastic bunch who signed up in the third year - despite not knowing what to expect when joining up - have re-joined again this year. The staff at Abingdon CCF have promised "bigger and better" this time around for those new fourth year cadets, and so have their work cut out to deliver a programme that is both more challenging and also more entertaining than ever.

Already plans are in place to visit the fastest, longest zip wire in Europe, HMS Belfast in London, Snowdonia, Brecon Beacons, St Mawgan in Newquay, The National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire as well as the annual training camps in Bramley, Piddington and Longmoor. It appears to be yet another "full-on" year ahead for the members of the contingent, but chatter amongst the



boys suggests that they cannot wait to return in September and get “stuck in”.

Although we have enjoyed our successes and ‘good times’, there are also points within the contingent when the mood becomes a little sadder. Squadron Leader, Rebecca Cottam found that out when she delivered her final farewell speeches to the Upper Sixth leavers at their formal regimental dinner, held at Edward Brooks Barracks. She barely held it together when bidding 14 of our senior cadets a fond goodbye. There was plenty of ‘Andrex’ at the ready, and with good reason, as there were a few tears shed. We wish all of them the very best in the future and hope that they will take up the invitation to revisit us in the future

as Officer Cadets on one of our planned exercises/trips

We have mentioned “bigger & better” this time around and have already added software upgrades to the Part Task Trainer (PTT). The RAF section is able to fly sorties against one another and these can be completed in the skies above Abingdon and in the surrounding areas of Oxfordshire. Corporals John Dickson and Jack Johnson are putting new students to the test each week. Having had a say in the upgrades to the PTT, they commented that the Flight Simulator was the most realistic they have used as of yet, as they have both flown in the skies of Oxfordshire for real when recently on an Air Experience Flight at RAF Benson.

An additional donation from an OA, Mr Tony Edwards, has enabled the RAF section to add to the realism of flight by adding some ruggedized laptops to the scenario, allowing them to transport the PTT into the field when on exercise and flying covertly when under pressure from real life situations. They are also in possession of a new MTa kit that will allow them to pit their skills against other Combined Cadet Forces when entering regional and national competitions. So, as another sun sets on this year’s CCF activities, we look forward to the next chapter and what the new breed of cadet and new staff members will bring to the table.

Capt. Lee Edwards (SSI)

Chess Club

Abingdon was strong enough this season to qualify for the National Schools' Championship without pushing a single pawn. For this we can thank Ray Ren (158), Joseph Truran (149), Jeff Abraham (117), James Beckinsale (116), Jerry Yang (113) and Richard Oh (100), whose July grades totalled more than the required 750 points, equivalent to a team average of above 125. Nevertheless, with a view to sharpening up before the inevitable struggles ahead, we did enter a team in the first qualifying event of the season.

On Sunday 18 September, eight Abingdon boys competed at the Eton Rapidplay, a five round Swiss tournament in which each player has 20 minutes for all his moves plus a five second increment every move. Ray Ren (3/5), Joseph Truran (2.5/5), Jeff Abraham (3/5) and Jerry Yang (2/5) played all five rounds, on Boards 1 to 4 respectively. James Beckinsale (1/3) and Sebastian Watkins (3/3) alternated with Dashiell Hathaway (1/2) and Fran Trotter (1/2) on Boards 5 and 6. Match losses in the first two rounds against City of London School (1.5-4.5) and Nonsuch School (2.5-3.5) were followed by three straight match wins against King's School Canterbury (4-2), St Paul's Girls' School (4-2) and Heathside Preparatory School (4.5-1.5). Abingdon finished on a total of 16.5/30 game points, placing it in the top third of the 50 competing schools. It was a particularly impressive debut by new third year Sebastian Watkins, who has played his chess previously at the Dragon School and at Witney Chess Club.

Between the Eton event and Abingdon's first National Schools' Championship match there was a long wait – time, of course, in which to prepare assiduously for the first encounter. Games played and recorded in the Oxford and District Chess League, in particular, provided Ray Ren, Jerry Yang, Thitipat Ditrungroj, Jonathan C. H. Lee, and others, with essential material for detailed game analysis on Wednesday afternoons with Grandmaster Peter Wells – a vital stimulus to rapid chess development.

Having enjoyed a bye in the first round, Abingdon's first contest in the National Schools' Championship was a zone semi-final against Horris Hill, played away on Tuesday 28 February. The English Chess Federation's database showed Horris Hill to have some strong young players, but we knew they had dropped two and a half points to Radley in the first round, so we were not expecting quite the grades we saw upon exchanging match sheets. Chatting to their coach Grandmaster Nicholas Pert, once the match had got underway, it soon became clear that our top three boards would really have their work cut out that afternoon. Horris Hill's best player Dmitry Minko, was the younger brother of Vladimir Minko (260), who had comfortably beaten Ray Ren at the Eton Repêchage last year and was now an International Master. Dmitry, I was told, enjoyed regular additional chess coaching direct from Moscow by Skype. These are the two teams, listed with their January grades.

1. Ray Ren (165) v Dmitry Minko (152)
2. Joseph Truran (149) v Dimash Sarzhanov (127)
3. Jeff Abraham (107) v Theo Bell (ungraded)
4. Jerry Yang (110) v Ivan Sharov (118)
5. Thitipat Ditrungroj (111) v Vinson Pang (96)
6. Richard Oh (101) v Sasha Popov (43)

It proved to be a nerve-shredding encounter, not least for the adult spectators. The first result, on Board 5, was a convincing win for Thitipat

Ditrungroj, one of Abingdon's most improved players. But by that stage Jerry Yang, on Board 4, was clearly in trouble against his higher graded opponent, and Richard Oh, on Board 6, was also losing. There was some relief when Jeff Abraham, on Board 3, dispatched his opponent with an elegant winning tactic, and afterwards when Richard, showing his usual fighting spirit, came up with a draw by repetition. But Jerry's eventual loss meant Abingdon's top two boards still needed more than half a point between them to guarantee the win. The tension reached its climax right at the end of the two and a half hours, when Joseph Truran, misreading Ray's clock, offered his opponent a draw. The offer was accepted and Ray had then to avoid losing his game with only seconds left on his clock, otherwise the match would be lost 3-3 on board count ($3 + 5 > 1 + 4$). Ray carried on playing in his impressively imperturbable manner, his face remaining impassive as his hands moved ever more swiftly between clock and board. Horris Hill's player, sensing victory, attempted to run Ray's clock down by moving more quickly himself – a classic mistake – and had soon given up the last of his men. So, when Ray's flag dropped it was only a draw, there being insufficient material for mate. Abingdon had won 3.5-2.5. Astonishing! Poor Dmitry was left sitting at the board, head in hands, plenty of time left on his clock, repeating, "I forgot, I forgot." Chess can be a tough game.

Abingdon's reward was another match against Reading, the current British champions. Reading had annihilated



Aylesbury Grammar School 6-0 in the other semi-final and, as the ECF database showed, still had available to them almost all the strong players they had fielded last year. This would be our third match against them in three years – an excellent continuing challenge for our best players. Last year Rafi'i Al-Akiti had won on Board 3, playing Peter Isaksen, and Jeff Abraham had drawn on Board 5, playing Ryan Wong. Could we do better this year? The huge gap in grades had certainly closed a little over recent years.

The Reading team that turned up on Tuesday 21 March, though formidably strong, did not include all their star players, which gave us an outside chance of causing an upset. The closeness of grades on Board 2, in particular, was quite unexpected, Anthony Zhang (218) for Reading being absent. These are the two teams.

1. Ray Ren (165) v Matthew Wadsworth (220)
2. Joseph Truran (149) v Peter Isaksen (157)
3. Jeff Abraham (107) v Ryan Wong (148)
4. Jerry Yang (110) v Alex Vanlint (143)
5. Thitipat Ditrungroj (111) v Shaan Mohan (125)
6. Sebastian Watkins (88) v Akshay Velraj (111)

Our opponents arrived an hour late, forcing us to limit the match to 90 minutes, 45 on each clock. Abingdon won the toss and chose “white on odds.” The match did not have quite the same drama as the semi-final, the result never really being in doubt, but the climax was equally thrilling.

After 30 minutes of play, Jerry was down a piece, on Board 4, but Seb was clearly winning, on Board 6, and the top three boards seemed remarkably level. After a whole hour had elapsed, everyone was still playing and Jeff had also established a winning advantage. The first result was a loss for Jerry, who had done well to fight on after disaster in the opening. Thitipat then resigned in a hopeless position, after briefly attempting desperado



tactics. But Seb soon got one back for Abingdon, despite his opponent pleading “the two-minute rule,” causing puzzled looks all round. Jeff’s game, on Board 3, had taken a turn for the worse, but his opponent, who had only 4 seconds left on his clock at the end, was clearly relieved when Jeff accepted a draw offer. Not long afterwards, Joe had resigned too and the match was lost. Ray was again the last Abingdon player still at the board, and again he was down on time and defending brilliantly. Despite standing worse, he had managed to construct a defensive position in which he could see more quickly how to defend than his opponent could see how to attack. Soon it was Matthew whose time was being quickly eaten up and who was visibly the more concerned about possible defeat, so when Ray offered a draw with just a few seconds left on his clock, Matthew accepted, unwilling to take the risk. So, England junior Matthew Wadsworth, soon to earn his first International Master norm in the 4NCL, had been held to a draw by Abingdon’s own Ray Ren. This was by far the best individual performance by

an Abingdon pupil in the last decade. Here are the moves up until Ray stopped recording, with five minutes left on his clock: 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 e6 4 Nc3 exd5 5 cxd5 d6 6 Nf3 g6 7 Qa4+ Nbd7 8 Bf4 a6 9 e4 Rb8 10 Be2 b5 11 Qc2 Qe7 12 Nd2 Bg7 13 0-0 0-0 14 a4 b4 15 Nd1 Ne5 16 Bxe5 Qxe5 17 Ne3 Qe7 18 Bf3 Nd7 19 Nec4 Ne5 20 Nxe5 Bxe5 21 Nc4 f5 22 Rfe1 f4 23 Rad1 Bd7 ... Draw agreed.

A team did begin preparations for the Eton Repêchage, and it was pleasing that with public examinations in the offing boys were still prepared to make a final attempt at qualification for the national finals. But with none of the boarders available, due to the awkwardness of the date, and then a last-minute case of mumps, we were left with very little choice but to scratch. Abingdon’s excellent brief run in the National Schools’ Championship – once again representing Oxfordshire in the zone final – was, anyway, a perfectly fitting finale for leavers Ray, Joe, Jeff and Jerry, a truly golden generation of Abingdon chess players. They will be sorely missed in the years to come.

How long Abingdon's top team remains weakened will largely depend on the determination and desire of the young talent currently emerging at Chess Club. It will very soon be time for some boys to step forward and show their mettle in major tournaments. (Ideally, our top six would be like the Persian "immortals" of old, instantly back to strength when any number is lost.)

On Monday 10 October, four Lower School boys played a friendly match against the Dragon School, whose pupils are coached by Banbury chess player and chess journalist Carl Portman. Abingdon's team was 1. Fran Trotter, 2. Will Riddell, 3. Louis Trotter, 4. Matthew Fowler. Abingdon lost 4-0 in the closely fought rapidplay games but afterwards reversed this result in the blitz games. Matthew Fowler was probably Abingdon's best performer.

This enjoyable foray into North Oxford was a suitable warm up for the Junior Team Chess Challenge, held at MCS on Friday 4 November. The same four boys were in action but in a revised team order, Matthew moving up to Board 2. After four rounds of rapidplay, 12.5 minutes on each clock, Abingdon finished sixth, ahead of MCS C and Cherwell B. The other schools present were Horris Hill, the joint winners, and Christ Church. Abingdon's individual results were Fran Trotter 2/4, Matthew Fowler 1/4, Will Riddell 2.5/4 and Louis Trotter 1/4. The highlight was Will's win in the match against MCS B.

Middle School boys were in action at Radley on Wednesday 23 November for the open Team Chess Challenge.

Abingdon entered two development teams of roughly equal strength. Team A was 1. Thitipat Ditrungroj, 2. Sebastian Watkins, 3. Alister Jamieson, 4. Dashiell Hathaway/Lawrence Putt. Team B was 1. Richard Oh, 2. Jonathan C. H. Lee, 3. Tong Tong Sukamongkol, 4. Luke Ffrench/Ashwin Tennant. After three rounds of rapidplay, 15 minutes on each clock, Abingdon A finished third, behind the two teams from MCS, who had fielded their top players. Abingdon B finished fifth, behind Cherwell, and ahead of the three Radley teams. Abingdon's individual results were Thitipat Ditrungroj 1/3, Richard Oh 1/3, Jonathan C. H. Lee 2/3, Alister Jamieson 1/2, Tong Tong Sukamongkol 1/2, Sebastian Watkins 2/3, Luke Ffrench 1/2, Dashiell Hathaway 0.5/2, Lawrence Putt 1/2 and Ashwin Tennant 0/2.

On 30 November, Abingdon's coach Grandmaster Peter Wells (231) took on 18 boys and 2 members of staff in the annual simultaneous display. After two and a half hours of play, the final result was a win for Mr Wells by 20-0. The games were written down and subsequently analysed by Dr Burnand, and later by Mr Wells. Abingdon's top performers were Upper Sixth players Ray Ren, Joseph Truran and Daniel Savage. Ray was the last boy left playing, but it was Joseph who won the £5 best game prize. And last of all to lose was Mr Poon. Abingdon's full team was 1. Ray Ren, 2. Joseph Truran, 3. Nicolas Markham (substituting for Jeff Abraham), 4. Louis Brosnan (substituting for Jerry Yang), 5. Daniel Savage, 6. Thitipat Ditrungroj, 7. Richard

Oh, 8. Jonathan C. H. Lee, 9. Tong Tong Sukamongkol, 10. Alister Jamieson, 11. Saxon Supple, 12. Lawrence Putt (substituting for James Beckinsale), 13. Sebastian Watkins, 14. Dashiell Hathaway, 15. Luke Ffrench, 16. Louis Trotter (substituting for Matthew Fowler), 17. Fran Trotter, 18. William Riddell, 19. Dr Jeffreys, 20. Mr Poon.

On Wednesday 14 December, the popular inter-house chess competition took place alongside the other inter-house competitions. After four rounds of Swiss rapidplay, the winners were Crescent (4/4), led by Jerry Yang, who defeated School (2/4) in the last round to wrest the trophy from holders James'. These are the full results: 1. Crescent 4/4, 2. Franklin's 3/4, 3. James' 2/4, 4. Austin 2/4, 5. School 2/4, 6. Southwell Sander's 1.5/4, 7. Morgan's 1.5/4, 8. Border's 1.5/4, 9. O'Doherty's 0.5/4. (Teams tied on match points were separated first by game point difference, then by head-to-head results, and finally by points scored on Board 1.) Crescent's 2-1 win over the favourites Franklin's in Round 2 was really the decisive result. Over the course of the afternoon, Ray Ren's impressive 4/4 on Board 1 for Franklin's was effectively neutralised by substitute John Ong's 4/4 on Board 3 for Crescent. Thanks to arbiters Dr Burnand and Dr Jeffreys and to scorer Mr Poon for ensuring the smooth running of the competition.

The individual knockout tournaments, though begun in the Michaelmas term, were not finally concluded until Wednesday 1 March, when all three finals were played on the same afternoon. In the Sixth Form tournament, Ray Ren defeated Joseph Truran to retain the Harding Cup. In the Middle School tournament, Sebastian Watkins defeated Jonathan C. H. Lee to win the Pearce Cup. And in the Lower School tournament, Fran Trotter defeated his brother Louis to win the Nightall-Jakubovics Cup. Winners received book prizes. Just getting to the final was a significant achievement. There were 20, 72 and 30 entrants respectively in the Sixth Form, Middle School and Lower School tournaments.

The main event of the Lent term was the school stage of the UK Chess Challenge, comprising seven weekly



rounds of rapidplay. From 30 Abingdon entrants, there were 18 who earned sufficient points to qualify for the county "Megafinal." Ray Ren was School Champion, scoring 19 of the 21 available points. Second was Joseph Truran on 18 points. And joint third were Jeff Abraham, Richard Oh and Alister Jamieson on 17 points. Qualifying on 16 points were Thitipat Ditrungroj, Jonathan C. H. Lee and Saxon Supple. Qualifying on 15 points were Jerry Yang, Sebastian Watkins, Lawrence Putt, Peter Wan and Louis Brosnan. Finally, qualifying as best in their age category were lower sixth former John Ong, second year Matthew Fowler and first years Fran Trotter, William Riddell and Alfred Luo.

On Saturday 18 February, eight of Abingdon's younger players travelled to St Joseph's Catholic College, Swindon to play in the Wiltshire Junior Chess Congress. In the Intermediates' section, Dashiell Hathaway was Abingdon's best performer, finishing joint fourth on 4/6. In the Beginners' section, Abingdon's three entrants Matty Ball, Shreyanshu Mohanty and Mark Taylor all tied for third place on 4/6, winning medals. The other participants in the Intermediates' section were Sebastian Watkins (3/6), Fran Trotter (3/6), Alister Jamieson (2.5/6) and Louis Trotter (1/6). There were no trophies this year but plenty of high quality chess training.

On Monday 1 May, fourteen Abingdon players travelled to The Downs School, Compton, for the county stage of the UK Chess Challenge. The tournament had recently been taken over from Mike Basman, who favoured the old county boundaries, by former British Ladies Champion Sarah Hegarty, who did not. And the new rules did not make it entirely clear which "Megafinal" Abingdon should attend. In the end, we were given the choice and opted to carry on playing at the Berkshire event. And a good decision it was too. After six rounds of rapidplay, five Abingdon players had qualified for the Southern "Gigafinal" in July, either by winning their age category or by scoring more than 3 points. Fran Trotter (4/6) and Alfie Luo (3.5/6) qualified from the combined U12 to U13 section, Sebastian Watkins (3.5) qualified from the particularly tough



U14 section, and in the combined U15 to U18 section, Abingdon players won two trophies. Jerry Yang (3/6) was the best U18 and Richard Oh (5/6) was the best U16, playing far above his current rapidplay grade. The other Abingdon contenders were Alister Jamieson (3/6), Jonathan C. H. Lee (3/6), John Ong (3/6), Will Riddell (2.5/6), Saxon Supple (2.5/6), Louis Brosnan (2/6), Matthew Fowler (2/6), Lawrence Putt (1.5/6) and Peter Wan (1.5/6). Given that some of Abingdon's best players were either absent recovering from illness or preparing for public examinations, this was a particularly fine showing. The last match in the Oxford and District Chess League occurred unusually late in the year, on 16 May. With our top players busy revising, Mr English had to stand in on Board 1 and was duly smashed by Banbury's Carl Portman, who incidentally played this year for Britain's NATO team in Budapest. The other "City 4" players fared no better in what was our third 6-0 defeat. It is just as well that next season we will be playing in the division below, and can look forward to building up our chess in a wholehearted effort to win that division. It has been satisfying, along the way, to beat MCS's team on aggregate, and very pleasing that Ray Ren, for the second year in succession, won the Lester Millin Memorial Trophy for the junior with the best game points percentage in any division of the League. Fourteen players were fielded in total. Six turned out for more than half the matches. Ray Ren (6.5/8), on Board 1, Jerry Yang (4.5/11), mostly on Boards 1 and 2, Mr

English (2.5/13), mostly on Boards 1 to 3, Thitipat Ditrungroj (4/9), mostly on Boards 3 and 4, Jonathan C. H. Lee (2.5/10), mostly on Boards 4 and 5, and Seb Watkins (3/8), mostly on Boards 4 to 6. The other contributors were Alister Jamieson (0.5/5), John Ong (0/5), Tong Tong Sukamongkol (0/5), Dr Jeffreys (1/2), Richard Oh (0/2), Luke Ffrench (0/2), Peter Wan (0.5/1) and Alexander Pennington (0/1). Next season our affiliation with Oxford City Chess Club will be brought to an amicable end and we will play independently as "Abingdon." Ray Ren has been a credit to Chess Club ever since he first started playing in the First Year – without a grade! He leaves to study mechanical engineering at the University of Bath with a grade of 165 and rising, and is a most deserving recipient of the King Trophy. I am very grateful for his exemplary contribution over the years, and also for the splendid contribution of Abingdon's other star leavers Joseph Truran, Jeff Abraham and Jerry Yang. Daniel Savage deserves a special mention too. If it had not been for his continuing health problems, he would surely have played again for the first team in the National Schools' Championship. We have missed him at Chess Club and wish him well.

Finally, thanks to our superb coaching team of Grandmaster Peter Wells, Mr Poon, Dr Burnand and Dr Jeffreys.

Andrew English



Shooting

This past year has been very successful for the Rifle Club thanks to the tireless work of our coach Alan Smith and the excellent shooting of all the Club members. Beginning with the Michaelmas term, our previous A and B teams had secured positions in division 1 and division 2 in the inter-school leagues. However, pressure was on our teams to maintain their positions in the top divisions. Things started off very well with the A team coming second in their division and the B and C team winning their respective divisions.

During the leagues, the Autumn meet at Beckley range took place. Club members competed against fellow shooters of all ages from across Oxfordshire. Despite the age handicap, our team did extremely well with Henry Waterson and James Magé winning the C and D classes respectively.

Following this, 10 Abingdon shooters participated in the annual Winter Shooting competition at the Lord Roberts Centre in Bisley. This is the largest school shooting competition in England with around 200 of the best young shooters in the country taking part. Overall, the competition was

a success for our team with all our shooters placed in the top 100, and a few making the top ten. Unfortunately, we were not able to defend our victory from the previous year, but it was a valuable experience shooting outdoors for all those who took part.

Moving onwards to the Lent Term school leagues, after the success in the Michaelmas Term, we were looking to progress in our divisions.

A whole term and many targets later, the A, B and C teams had all achieved first place in their respective divisions.

The annual shooting competition between Abingdon School and Stade took place during the Easter holiday. At this event, we welcomed shooters from Stade, Germany and participated in a friendly competition, as has been the tradition for the past years. During their stay, we showed them around Oxford and London before taking them to Bisley where the competition was to be held. We had hoped to beat our guests and level the playing field but after a close-fought competition, we walked away with a marginal loss. Next year the Club members will be travelling to Stade to take them on again on their home turf.

Finally the Summer Term. As this term was the last time our current captain, Henry Waterson, would be with us, we wanted to do our best possible in each division. The A team came second in division 1 by a slight margin. However, the B and D teams won divisions 2 and 3 respectively and the C team performed admirably in division 2 despite the tough opposition.

Starting at the end of this year, there will be several staffing changes in the Shooting Club. Mr Aitken, the master in charge, for the past few years will be leaving and, on behalf of the entire Club, we would like to say thank you for all the hard work he has put in. In his place Mr Johnson of the CCF will be stepping in. Lastly, with our club captain Henry Waterson leaving at the end of the year, Anthony Yang and James Hogge will be taking over captaincy of the Club with Benjamin MacLennan as the Lower School captain.

Looking back, 2017 has been another successful year for the Club and it continues to look promising next year. All that is left to say is congratulations to all the shooters and we look forward to seeing you at the start of next term.

Anthony Yang, 6BW

Young Enterprise

What is Young Enterprise?

Young Enterprise is a fun other-half activity that happens on Thursday and Friday afternoons. At the beginning you are split up into groups of about 12 students. Mentoring the students are two Business Advisors. The group then works together to elect the important roles like Managing Director, Finance, Sales etc. allowing them to decide and run everything about their company. The Business Advisors don't act as teachers but help guide the group.

The 2016-17 Young Enterprise teams were involved in a number of ventures during the year including selling VR-headsets, plaques, phone accessories and many other products. They all made huge progress throughout the year not only selling the products for large profit but also learning key skills.

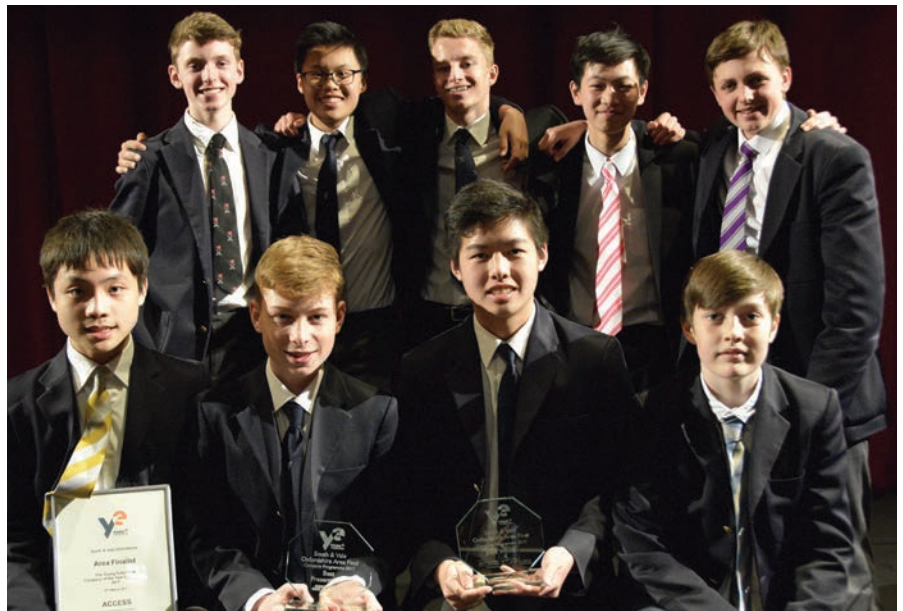
Why would you choose Young Enterprise?

I would recommend Young Enterprise for anyone who has thought about having their own business. I myself learnt many skills from being a managing director. Some of these were simple, for example how to plan and run an effective meeting, how to control a group of friends from going off track, and how to organise them. My company Unika encountered many problems and challenges during the startup phase that had to be solved. Other important skills learnt were how to design and produce a product that would sell to our target market.

My experience in Young Enterprise

Last year I was the Managing Director of Unika, we had a brilliant year. Our company attended five trade fairs and our team was extremely successful, receiving four awards.

Unika decided to make customised plaques to sell, we spent many hours in the Design Technology Department designing our product and testing it on the laser printers. After many meetings we had a product ready to be sold but that was just the beginning. We created



a website, where you could order our product and social media accounts. Everyone in the group had a role and was interested and engaged. Of course we wanted to make as much money as possible to have a successful company and this acted as a driving force. When we set up our stall at SHSK, we were so excited. We talked to customers that had interest in our product and gave out our details in return. After so much work it had finally paid off. Our website and email also allowed us to create customers' own designs and send them out. This though is only half the story. If you are thinking about doing Young Enterprise, you won't be successful straight away. Unika had many challenges and problems, probably more than any other Abingdon Young Enterprise group. For example the Design Technology Department said we

could not print out plaques using their machines as students needed them for the A-Level and GCSE coursework. This meant that we had to find another place to print them. During this long, frustrating process, the morale dropped in the group. This was one of our lowest points. Luckily we did finally find a company that would print our plaques for us.

I really enjoyed the year and everyone else in my group did as well. We all got some money and had a brilliant experience. We attended five trade fairs and our company was extremely successful receiving four awards. I would recommend this to anyone who is interested in business as you will learn so many skills.

David Harding 4MP, Henry Insley 4CB and Henry Pickess 4JT

Cricket

Sri Lanka was the destination for the second year running for two Abingdon squads who spent 13 days training, playing cricket and taking in the cultural wonders of this magnificent country. The U15 and U18 squads faced some challenging opposition at some wonderful venues and learnt a lot about their games in the unique cricketing environment that the sub-continent provides. The grounds and opposition we played were fantastic, but the opportunity for all of the boys to play at two international venues, in Dambulla and the iconic Galle Cricket Ground, is something that they will cherish in their memories for a long time to come. Of course, it is not all about the cricket - the opportunity to feed orphaned elephants and watch them bath and play in the river, releasing baby turtles into the ocean, visiting the sacred Temple of the Tooth in Kandy, climbing Sigiriya Rock and the special time spent socialising and playing with the children at the SOS Children's Orphanage in Galle contributed to some truly unforgettable and humbling memories. After two successful tours to Sri Lanka, next year will see the squads travel to Barbados to sample cricket in the Caribbean, another wonderful, cricket-loving environment.

The season of 2017 started very positively with a new block fixture against Reading Blue Coat School, in which there were runs aplenty in unseasonably warm and dry conditions. Unfortunately, the senior side's form with the bat could not be



maintained throughout the season. Lack of runs in the 1st XI cost them dear as they were unable to apply consistent pressure with the ball in the confidence of a good score on the board. Despite this, there were glimpses of real fluency with the bat from Jamie Lawson, Samuel Warren and Max Mortimer who carried the attack with the new ball, and Harvey Jupp and Hector Chambers who provided some exciting wrist spin bowling in the middle overs. However, the inconsistency of availability across the season meant that we were unable to put the same side out consecutively, which was a drawback.

The 2nd XI, very ably led by captain Alexander Sayeed and senior players Hamish Garland, Bertie Thomas, Rory Finch and Jonathan Hurrell had another strong season. A good number of younger players forced themselves into the 1st XI through their weight of runs and wickets. This included Oli Honeyman,

Fergus Fishburn, Charles Goulder, William Webb, Benjamin Ling, Daniel Bacon and Andrew Russell, who all made valuable contributions at 1st XI level. The previous year's U15A and B sides made up the majority of the 3rd XI and U16A sides this year, and with the experience of a number of boys in the year above, the 3rd XI in particular proved a formidable force when at full-strength. Josh Washington and Joshua Valentine proved their abilities with both bat and ball, dominating a number of games early in the season before rightfully claiming their places in the 2nd XI.

The U15 and U14 squads provided some of the highlights of the season, with both the U15A and U14A teams being crowned as County Champions in their respective competitions this year. The U15s went on to beat Stowe in the regional semi-final before losing to a very strong Wellington side in the final. The U14s enjoyed a comprehensive ten





wicket victory over MCS in their final and now progress into the national rounds of the competition next season. Both the U14A and U14C sides lost only one fixture each this season in an impressive run of results.

Our Lower School teams show great promise for the future. Both age groups struggled a little to inject tempo into their innings when batting, but have showed great technical ability, which I am sure will provide excellent foundations for success in the years to come.

The final fixtures of the season were played at the three-day 1st XI festival held this year at Brentwood, providing a great opportunity to field a younger side, looking towards next summer. The Abingdon side beat Brentwood comprehensively on the first day, before losing to eventual winners, Ipswich School on day two. The last fixture against St John's School Leatherhead was a close affair, but the Abingdon bowlers held their nerves at the end of the game to complete a 19 run victory. There were a number of notable performances over the course of the three days. William Webb took 7 for 24 on debut versus Brentwood, Fergus Mitchell bowled tirelessly on some very unreceptive pitches, and Andrew Russell, also on debut, produced a fine 50 to set up a competitive total after the side were 56 for 6 versus the hosts, Brentwood.



Maiden 1st XI 50s were scored by third year Freddie Smith and fourth year James Coombs whilst the festival captain, Oscar Fountain, found some late season form with a stylish 63 in the second game against Ipswich.

The end of the season saw us say goodbye to Chad Keegan, who is to pursue other opportunities outside of cricket. He has been with us as a coach for the last two seasons and has been an incredibly popular member of staff, also assisting with the coaching of football and rugby. In 2018, we welcome Rupert Evans to the Cricket Club, who brings a wealth of cricket playing and coaching

experience with him. I am sure our boys will benefit greatly from his advice and tutorage.

Overall, the Cricket Club ended the 2017 season with a win percentage marginally in excess of 50%. Full colours were awarded to captain Max Mortimer, Alex Ling, Alexander Sayeed and Toby Collins, whilst half colours went to Hamish Garland, Rory Finch, Jonathan Hurrell, Oscar Fountain and Samuel Warren. Lower School full colours were awarded to Matthew Fowler and George Owen and half colours to Theo Mara, Caspar Mannix, Max Siriwardene and Alastair Gray.

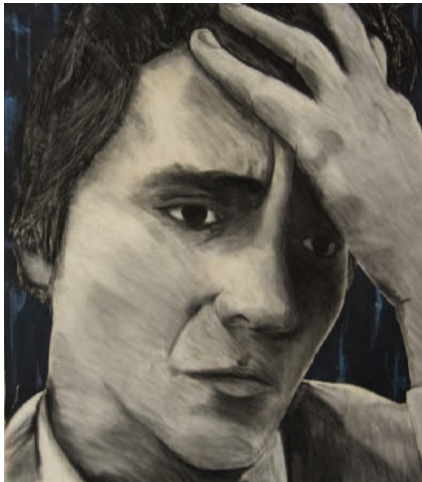
James Golding

Art Gallery

1	Harry Wallis-Smith	(A2)
2	Harry Wallis-Smith	(A2)
3	Sam Wright	(GCSE)
4	Freddie Bermingham	(A2)
5	Jate Jaturanpinyo	(GCSE)
6	Jate Jaturanpinyo	(GCSE)



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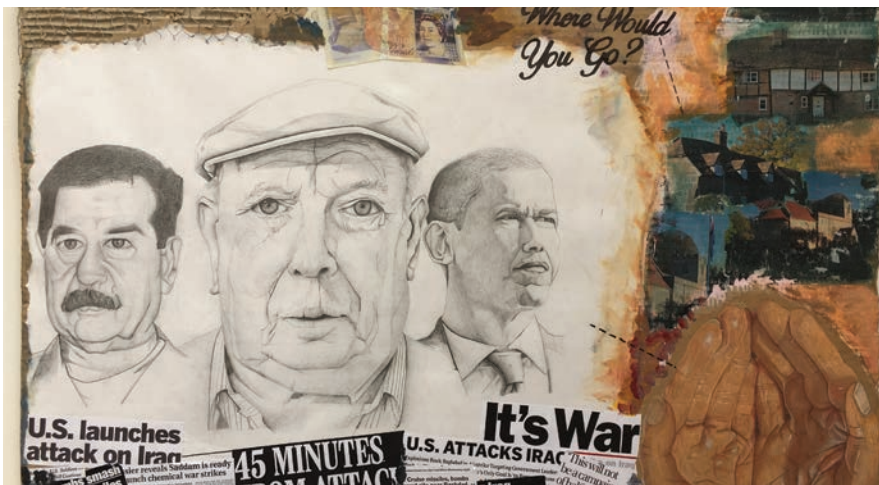
7	Harry Powell	(GCSE)
8	George Simmons	(A2)
9	Zach Griggs	(GCSE)
10	Colm Lambert	(GCSE)
11	James MacLennan	(A2)
12	Tristan Tsoi	(GCSE)



7



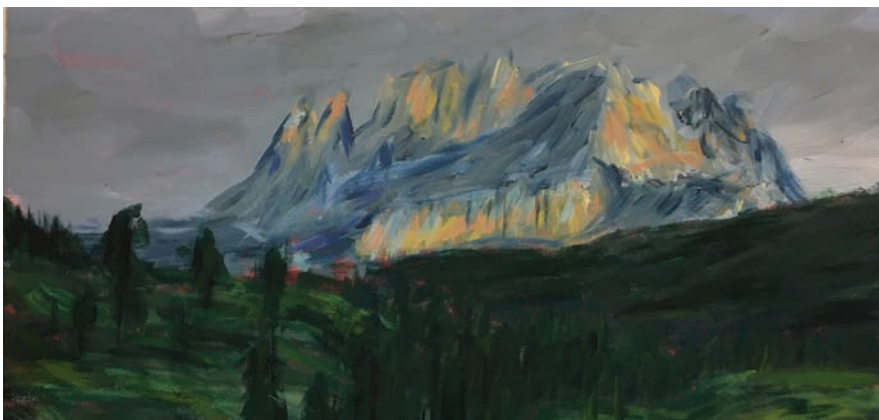
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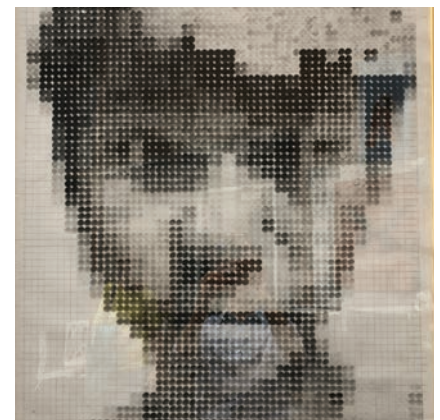
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Rowing

The grand timber structure of the Abingdon Boathouse is a magnificent feat of engineering, but can seem daunting to many boys who have not yet experienced what it stands for. The Boathouse is not just somewhere boys go to sit in a big yellow boat and lift heavy weights (or not so heavy weights in many of our cases), the Boathouse acts as a haven for the boys to escape the pressures of their academic lives, and it allows them an hour or two to focus on nothing but the boat and synchronising with their teammates. I found this was key to me retaining focus and perspective during my fifth year when I was in the midst of my GCSEs last year. It was intriguing staring up to the ceiling and looking at the wooden planks each named after someone who has represented the Boat Club over the years.

Rowing is a sport that demands pain and hours of attention, although it is all in the name of success. A clear trait of all Abingdon boys is the unfathomable drive for success, although on many occasions it has led to our crew spending up to four hours together in dead silence, the only ice breaker being our cox telling us to stop trying to snap our blades in half - and that's before we get on the water!

Every boy has a clear idea of what success they want, whether that be moving from the D crew to the C crew or emulating previous Abingdon crews



in winning Henley Royal Regatta. Success has no specific goal or time measure, and every boy's ambition is supported by the coaches which is what, in my opinion, makes the Boat Club so special and diverse from other schoolboy Boat Clubs around the country – although I would be biased, wouldn't I?

I would say the previous season could be outlined by one word – improvement. I cannot name a crew that didn't step on hugely throughout the season. From the J14s making the A final of National Schools' regatta, to the first eight ripping it down the Henley course in a brave Thursday race. Every crew did the Boat Club proud.

The J14s had a very promising first season in the Boat Club, producing some of the best results seen by our youngest year group for a few years. The As finished sixth at National Schools' Regatta, making the A final, on top of wins at Reading Town and

Bedford in Quads. The Bs also made the A final at the National regatta, coming fourth and missing a medal by less than two seconds. However, our victories were enhanced even more by strong performances at Bedford and Reading.

The J15s had a successful season, doing their shiny new boat justice and making huge improvements in the Bordeaux training camp. The A team finished ninth at Schools Head of the River, showing grit in going shoulder to shoulder with more experienced crews than them, and chasing down very good crews. Come summer the A's had a very fast race in the B final of the National regatta and got wins in the quad at Bedford and in fours at Reading Town. The B team gave the As a tough run, with a second place at Schools Head – only 0.1 seconds slower than the As. With great performances from both crews, it shows a bright future for next year's J16s.



The J16s had a season full of improvement and good racing. With some hard, gritty training in the winter, a win at Wycliffe Head and eighth at Schools Head was a nice way to close the winter curtain. Come summer, after a great camp at Bordeaux the J16s got great results with a third place at Basher and wins in the eight at Bedford and Reading. At Nat Schools the eight finished ninth on the Saturday, with the four picking up the first J16 medal at National Schools for Abingdon in a decade, receiving a hard earned Silver Medal on the Sunday. A good season, which promises to lead to an exciting senior squad next year.

The Second VIII had a successful year, constantly biting at the heels of the First Eight and earning good results along the way. Great wins in the winter with the fours winning at Upper Thames and Reading Head. Coming back from a

very strong Easter Camp the Second VIII got great results at Basher and Bedford before making the A final of the National Regatta, their primary objective of the season. A great season was topped off by a chance at Henley Royal Regatta qualifiers, where the boys did the Boat Club proud as they flew down the historic stretch of river.

Finally, with not only a talented but a hugely inspirational set of boys, the First VIII had a brilliant season – a brilliant final season for almost all of them. They won at Henley Head and Wycliffe Head before a solid tenth position at Schools Head. After Bordeaux the boys came into their final term on a mission and won at Bedford before performing strongly in the B final of Schools' Regatta, finishing ninth. Their final races were special, having comfortably qualified for Henley, they put Reading Blue Coat school three lengths down on them on the Wednesday. The

Thursday race was always going to be hard, against eventual semi-finalists, Shiplake. I feel it was testament to the Boat Club to see the hundreds of pink and white blazers shouting, chanting, clapping and chasing the boys down the course - a unique atmosphere within schoolboy rowing.

The future looks bright for the boat house, but it is important to not forget the past that drives the passion and determination in our current boys. Seasons like the last contribute to the future and set the club up for a bright few years ahead.

A big thanks must be given to Mr Earnshaw and all of the coaching staff who put so many hours into the boys last season: the appreciation on behalf of all of the boys is huge.

James Stammers, 5AMB



Lower School Gala Concert

On 21 June, the annual Lower School Gala Concert was held. It was an evening filled with a variety of pieces, whether it was classic or more obnoxious and rowdy rock music.

The concert started with the LS Junior Strings playing an array of exciting and fun pieces, led by first violinist, Jonathan Pannett-Smith. The timeless *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* was played with great gusto and enthusiasm. It was a real trip down memory lane hearing the familiar tune.

This was followed by the complete polar opposite to the delicate and dainty violins. The audience enjoyed a very exciting live music tech performance called 'sunrise' by Harry Watkins. It began with a slow, simple tempo that soon transformed into a riveting piece of tech music, built by layers. It was a really unique and different performance that was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

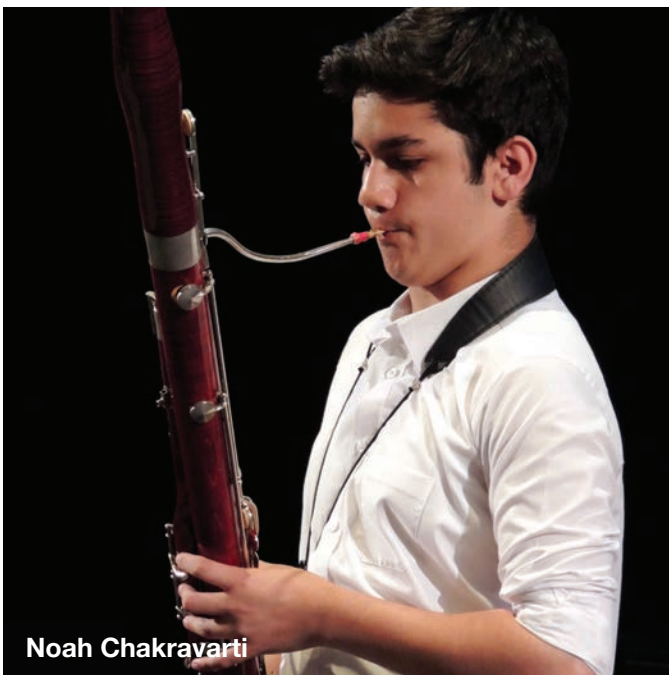


It was incredibly special to have such a large amount of brass performers in the concert this year. It included velvety trumpets, jazzy trombones and even a booming tuba. Max Siriwardene also played *Skye Boat Song* on the trombone, confidently and with a nice flow.

Likewise, there was a vast amount of wind instruments. The three bassoonists (Luc Tucker, Rufus Cox and Noah

Chakravarti) all gave strong, textured performances. Rufus played *Bassoon Street Blues* jazzily with a great tone, followed by Ollie Northwood playing the clarinet with a mellow and rich sound.

However, it is impossible not to note how strong the string section was. We were treated to over five string solos, all to perfection. This included Grade 8 Oliver Glover playing the stunning *Sonata in E*



Minor by Vivaldi on the Cello. He played with a wonderful, deep sound that filled the whole theatre. Much to Mr Jenkins' pleasure, we heard the well known *Star Wars Theme* played by Shreyanshu Mohanty on the viola. And of course, he gave such a big theme tune real justice!

Nearing the end of the concert, Junior Blues played a booming rock medley! The director, Paul Owen, had some real tunes

up his sleeve: this included *Smoke on Water* by Blackmore and *Back in Black* by Young, played lively by the performers. The atmosphere was absolutely electric whilst they were playing.

The concert was ended by the Lower School Choir belting out *Let It Be* and *Hey Jude* by the Beatles. As expected, this was a true hit with all of the parents in the theatre who were happily

mouthed the lyrics, much to their sons' embarrassment.

All in all, it was a really special evening that will be remembered for years to come. The solos were played to a wonderful standard and the bands played in unity perfectly. Thank you Lower School for such a great evening.

Noah Chakravarti, 2RHH



Leavers' Day

Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen.

I think it's safe to say that today marks a significant turning point in our lives. I'm sure we all feel a mixture of nostalgia, relief, maybe even joy - and that goes for teachers as much as students. Never again will we have to register with our tutors after assembly, never again will we live in fear of the librarians, and never again will we have to hold tense negotiations between the Sports and Music department.

Although some of us have only been here for the last two years, some of us five and the elite among us seven, we have all had the pleasure of watching Abingdon change and grow whilst we have been at the school: the building of the new Science centre, of course, the introduction of football, the abandonment of the dreaded Saturday school. But as a community, and especially as a year group, we have only grown closer together and formed bonds that will last for many years to come.

As I speak on behalf of all the Abingdon leavers here today, I'd like to take this

opportunity to express our appreciation for the teachers, and staff members who make Abingdon such a dynamic, challenging, and engaging school. We can all agree that our teachers are truly inspirational. From the help we receive from our tutors about our personal statements, to the revision clinics and replies to emails at ridiculous times in the morning, it is clear how far beyond the call of duty our teachers go.

In particular, as we have progressed through the school I think we have all started to realise how much Mr Dawswell does to co-ordinate our incredibly busy school lives. I wonder if anyone has ever left the school to go home later than Mr Dawswell, and if you have then there may well be a prize for you here today. And I'd also like to thank the Head. Indeed although the Head has only been with us for the last year, from the moment he started dancing on stage in the staff pantomime we all knew that he was the man for the job. And of course we were all so relieved to find out that he too had a dog. Let's see if Bramble makes it into the portrait.

I think it's also fitting to thank our parents, some of whom have done a fantastic job in guiding us and supporting us during

our time at Abingdon. Perhaps most importantly, we should not underestimate the patience our parents have shown, especially when waiting for Dr May at parents' evening.

But most importantly, today is about celebrating the entry of 180 Old Abingdonians into the mysterious "real world". As a year group, despite being larger than most, we have broken the typical boundaries of social groups, and instead built an atmosphere of mutual respect and appreciation. You only have to read *Abingdon News* to get an idea of the breadth of talents that we all bring, obviously once you've flicked past the section about Magnus Gregory that is.

But as well as being a day to reflect, today is also a day to look to the future. For many of us that involves university plans, for some of us gap year plans, and for the drama students: no plans at all. Whether academic, sporting or artistic, Abingdon has placed us all in incredibly strong positions to move on and make the most of whatever is coming our way.

I'd encourage you all to remember the privilege that we have had here and I'd encourage you to find a way to give something back, to contribute, and to



George Jeffreys

play an active role in society. In light of recent events both in the UK, and around the world, I think it's paramount that we realise that it is us who have to take action to engender change, and use what we have learnt here for a need greater than our own.

The theme of today seems to be to give advice. Now I won't impart any of my own valuable wisdom, but rather I take the advice of my housemaster, Mr James, who told his house that if you ever run out of words yourself, to copy somebody else's. So in the spirit of Mr James' sound wisdom, I'd like to point you in the direction of the guidance Sir James Cobban left to Abingdonians in a manual called 'How to do it'. This is object 56 out of the School's 63 objects. I'm sure you have all come across this when you've been browsing through the School's archives, but in the unlikely instance that you haven't already, then I'd suggest you find it and give it a read.

Sir Cobban offers us help on how to make Wedding Day speeches, which according to the Yearbook Polls may only be right around the corner for some of us. I won't name any names. He also imparts crucial wisdom on 'How to get what you want' and there's a

section towards the end called 'advice on drinking' which I'm sure will be very useful indeed for some of us, especially with the Griffen Ball next week.

So with that in mind, I hope you all have a fantastic summer. I wish you all the best of luck in the future and I look forward to seeing which Yearbook predictions turn out to be true. Thank you.

George Jeffreys, VIIM

Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen,
Well, this is the end for us.

The life expectancy in the UK is 80, so I'm afraid gentlemen we've already had a quarter of it. I'll let that sink in. A quarter of our lives spent trying to build up our school tie collection, and registering with tutors.

We tend to think of school as a preparation for life, but I don't think this quite does justice to the last decade and a half we have spent in full-time education.

We mustn't forget that school is a significant part of life in and of itself. Maybe one of the easy times of life, after all. At the end of the day, food is provided for you, and despite what we may

have said on our personal statements, the bell eliminates the need for time-management.

School has protected us from the real world, in short.

In 2012, whilst the armies of the Arab Spring were being raised to fight for democracy, we third years were busy avoiding conscription in to the CCF by learning to touch type or talk to the elderly.

Whilst bankrupt Greece became the unwilling prey of marauding European nations, we were similarly the unwilling prey of ospreys in our GCSE English Language exam.

In 2015, the UK was debating the legality of same-sex marriage, and after our painfully awkward general studies sessions at St Helen's we followed this debate with keen interest, thinking it didn't sound like such a bad thing.

And whilst America made an *interesting* electoral choice, Southwell-Sander's was similarly robbed in an interesting House Singing competition result.

That's not to say we haven't experienced change - there's the Science Centre, and the many incredible teachers we've had



come and sadly go. There have been two Heads who have presided over us, each bringing their own brand of strong and stable leadership.

And it's also not to say that everything's been plain sailing. The past few weeks of exams have been harrowing in many regards, and from the expressions of trepidation my parents exchange with each other when I walk in to a room at the moment, I know that these pains are felt by all involved.

But because Abingdon has served as a second home, we have learned things here that don't simply come through lessons.

The value of camaraderie, and friendship for one. It was genuinely heartwarming to be involved in the yearbook project over the past few months, because you discover so many friendships and shared experiences you never knew existed.

Of course we also discovered many anecdotes which we couldn't understand and other anecdotes we simply couldn't print. But don't worry, I'm sure those more colourful stories will be augmenting my pension fund should any of you become public figures.

But I would like to repeat on this occasion what was said at the front of that book, because I think it rings



especially true today: that you achieve nothing without your friends, and those achievements only matter with friends there to celebrate them with you.

Hand-in-hand with this camaraderie is of course the respect and tolerance we have learned whilst at Abingdon.

Whether your interests lie in the arts, in the laboratory, on the stage, or on the river, we have given each other scope for our passions, realising that everybody's views, idiosyncrasies and hobbies are to be relished and respected.

Of course these virtues don't come about by chance - they are the result of our surroundings, and here I would like to voice our immense gratitude.

Gratitude for our teachers, who have both endured us for the past few years and inspired us, and who have managed to make each day more enjoyable and exciting than the last. We leave with our passions and interests because of you.

Gratitude for our tutors and housemasters who have shown unbounded empathy, patience and



Jonah Walker



generosity when we have stumbled, and who have also celebrated with us in moments of triumph. On a personal note, I would like to say a special thank you here to Mr Southwell-Sander who from the very first day of third year has made Abingdon one of the most welcoming places I know, whether it be through his assemblies, chats in his office, or his interpretive dance during the Staff Panto last term.

And gratitude last but by no means least for our parents, who have given so much

up for us to be here, and supported us at every step. We cannot ever adequately repay this debt.

And as we will rightly be reminded many times, we must not forget the distinct privilege we have had - indeed not just for an Abingdon education, but for an education full stop, considering how many millions around the world don't have even that luxury.

So I started by saying this is an ending, but if it is, it is of course also a beginning.

We don't leave all of the baggage we've picked up at Abingdon behind - we take our friendships, experiences, and teachers' frustrated report comments along with us.

Whilst entering the real world today might seem less like life in the fast lane and more like life in the oncoming traffic, I cannot wait to see how we all fare.

Good luck, and thank you.

Jonah Walker, VIDRM



The Moldova Project

Undeniably, not 'bright eyed and bushy tailed' we arrived at the coach park at 3am on Monday 10 July. Fourteen bleary eyed and shattered Abingdonian sixth formers were ready to spend the next 10 days in one of Europe's poorest countries. Intrigued by the prospect of what lay ahead, we embarked on our journey to Moldova. After a short flight to Vienna, and a delayed flight to Moldova, possibly looking for William Pearson's case that went missing somewhere in transit (much to the amusement of us all), we finally arrived at Chisinau airport and were met by the 'legend' (we'd heard so much about him from previous years) Nicu, Director of Agape, the charity we support.

It didn't take us long to realise this was nothing like England, not because it was around 30 degrees and perfect for topping up our tans, but because of the sheer lack of development – this came as a shock to all of us. Ialoveni, a small town approximately six miles from the capital was our destination for the first few days. After arriving, we were

introduced to our host families and after a ten minute walk, luggage trailing behind us, we arrived at what we thought was our accommodation. A four-storey block of flats stood before us, only a few of the windows had glass in and many of the doors were boarded up. Max Paton and I looked at each other, gulped and thought we were in for a long week staying somewhere like that! Fortunately, it wasn't our accommodation, as we were staying with a lovely family in a nice house around the corner, the only downside was having to share the sofa with Max!

Prior to this trip, we all spent a Saturday morning running, cycling and rowing the length of the Dniester, the longest river in Moldova and raised over £1,500. On our first evening in Ialoveni we could see first-hand how this money was helping the community as some of it had been used to buy a selection of books for the local library which we presented to the Mayor and Head Librarian.

We then decided on an early first night as we knew we had a more demanding schedule than previous years. Mr Jenkins



had kindly expanded the usual itinerary by arranging for us to run a second summer camp at a school in the village of Zimbreni in addition to the usual camp in Ialoveni.

The next three days were a real eye opener to us all as each day over 70 kids poured into the small school, all excited and expectant. We started each day with 'getting to know each other' games which included 'splat' and 'duck duck goose' although someone should have told Joe that we were trying to encourage and entertain the children rather than thrashing them at every opportunity!

After the icebreaker, we undertook more organised activities (a quick flurry of ideas was sometimes required when our pre-planning had failed us) which included sport, English and art, and it was astonishing to see the children's dedication and drive to learn English and participate in all activities. They showed strength and determination and incessant happiness - surprising, given the less than ideal circumstances they lived in. They were inspiring! A highlight at Zimbreni was the annual Moldova vs Abingdon football match – but what started as a friendly game turned sour when Head of School Ben Hall showed his passion to the cause by wiping out a Moldovan from behind!

After three amazing days, the only thing

left to do was say 'goodbye' to Moldova and take a party of 30 children with us on the long nine-hour drive to Romania.

A cabin in the stunning Romanian mountains would be our base for the next week. A quick search to find a signal or WiFi resulted in no luck (could we live without our mobile devices for a week? Who knew!) The long journey had taken its toll on all of us, so we decided on a few name games before the children went to sleep. For the rest of us, it was board games before bed - soon a Connect 4 challenge was in play. To say there were more than a few non-strategic thinkers amongst us is an understatement (Mr O'Doherty included!)

The next three days were comprised of activities, run by us in the mornings, followed by excursions in the afternoon. A real highlight was the picturesque mountain walk which was as steep as it was beautiful, and proved a challenge to us all. Equally stunning was a gorge walk and an afternoon of rowing boats on the Red Lake. An Apprentice styled game where we had 20 lei to buy five items resulted in a dubious win for a rival team, much to the dismay of myself, Ben and Harry Walsh.

The final night was soon upon us and we watched the videos we had scripted,

acted, filmed and attempted to edit the previous day as one of our activities. It highlighted that there was no 'Spielberg' amongst us! But they were great fun to make and the children loved showing off their acting prowess.

Then it was time for the much anticipated Lacu Rosu's Got Talent. What started well, with a never to be forgotten joint dance by Corina and Joe, gradually got worse when I sadly managed to hit all the wrong notes in a less than inspired operatic performance and Mrs O'Doherty collapsed in a fit of giggles during her recorder recital.

Overall, this was an absolutely incredible ten day trip where we not only learned a great deal about the children and the importance of the work Agape provide, but we also learned a lot about ourselves! Some amazing friendships were made and will never be forgotten.

We would all like to thank Mr and Mrs O'Doherty for giving up their time to assist and support us and special thanks to Mr Jenkins without whom this amazing trip would not be possible. I would encourage anyone who is considering going to take the opportunity as it really is an experience never to be forgotten!

Daniel Lawson, 6MFFC





Rugby Tour to Japan

After a long and tiring journey, we arrived in Japan, welcomed by our enthusiastic tour-guide Brett. We got on a bus to Roppongi, which is an area of Tokyo. We dropped our stuff off and headed into the very humid and wet evening to get our first experience of Japanese cuisine and to explore the area we were staying in. We all enjoyed the food, with lots of us having ramen, which was my personal favourite meal on tour. After grabbing a bite to eat we all returned to the hotel before getting some rest for the next day.

Over the course of the next few days we got to explore Tokyo and visit some incredible places. We used the busy underground train as our transport around the city. It was like a British tube, but there were never any delays and the air conditioning certainly was a bonus. We continued to try the food, with sushi being a very popular choice - it was difficult to avoid with the host of sushi bars stretched across the city. Along with peaceful parks and temples, we visited the Shibuya crossing, which is

considered the busiest crossing in the world. An estimated 1 million passers-by use it every day, and we joined the number as we searched around the shops looking for some authentic souvenirs.

After spending time in Tokyo, we travelled by bus to the mountains, to stay in a complex designed for travelling rugby teams. The place we were staying in was called Sugadaira. It was a very rugby orientated town, with as many as 6000 rugby players being situated there at the time. One feature of our hospitality was the traditional Japanese mats that we had to sleep on. A few of the boys were a little uneasy about the prospect but after a night there were certainly no complaints. Over the course of the next few days we played our first two games. The location was unbelievable, with both matches being played on a pitch overlooking some stunning scenery. The performances were a great marker for the beginning of the tour. Both the 1st XV and 2nd XV teams came away with victories, and it was fantastic to experience Japanese rugby. What was particularly striking was the way in which the Japanese conducted themselves, both on and off the field. They were

incredibly polite and kind. The tradition of a post match sing along was different for us, however we belted out Jerusalem with gusto. Whilst spending time in Sugadaira, we got to head into the town where there were strings of rugby shops. Many of us managed to pick up some stash to take home.

We then travelled to Nagano, where we visited the oldest Buddhist temple situated in Japan. We all managed to find eternal fortune after touching a special key situated in an underground tunnel. After this we ventured to Niigata, another Japanese city. We spent a night in a hotel before our match the next day. The matches were both played in a stadium which was full of Japanese spectators, who were excited to see the first English sports team in Nagoya. The 2nd XV was unlucky against a top team in the prefecture, whilst the 1st XV played incredibly to win against the best team in Niigata. After the matches we enjoyed some food before being introduced to our host family, who we were going to spend 2 nights with. This experience was incredibly eye opening. With little English being spoken, it was easy to feel immersed into the life of a Japanese family. I visited an old shrine



in the mountains with the family I stayed with, before spending the afternoon in the town and the hot springs which were especially different to anything experienced in England. Gifts were exchanged and it was amazing to see the delight on the faces of the Japanese families receiving these gifts, many of which were things they had never previously encountered. After saying goodbye we got ready to travel to Nagoya.

We took the bullet train, and it lived up to expectations. It was incredibly fast and it was easy to feel the speed as we passed through incredible scenery. Upon arrival we headed in to the city centre to explore and have some food, which was again delicious. The next day we spent

the morning in an old Samurai castle which had some amazing architecture and history. After this, we headed to an amusement park, which contained a water park and a theme park. We had an awesome time enjoying the rides before getting back to the hotel.

The following day we took the bullet train again, this time to Yokohama, where we would play our final match before heading back to Tokyo. Both matches were very successful, with our two teams winning very comfortably. We enjoyed our final post match sing song before heading back to the hotel. We spent the next day looking around previously unseen parts of Tokyo. We visited the largest technology shop in the world, and the teachers enjoyed a round of golf

at the top. After this we went to watch a premiership rugby match where we had the chance to see some players who had previously only been seen on the TV. We then enjoyed a final traditional Japanese meal. It was awesome to come together to enjoy our last night in Japan, and awards were given out to some deserving tourists.

Overall the tour was an amazing experience and one I will never forget. Over the course of the two weeks I had some of the best experiences of my life and it was incredible to see the Japanese side of rugby and culture. An unforgettable trip.

Jamie Masters, 5KEB

House Reports

Austin House



The year started in very high spirits for Austin House following an excellent showing in the summer exams. With the first house competition, House Singing, quickly upon us in the first half of term, we opted for a slightly more 'left field' song than in previous years and set about the challenge of perfecting the gospel classic *Oh Happy Day* by the Edwin Hawkin Singers. With some initial trepidation, the boys galvanised over the course of an intense week and produced one of the most joyous performances of the afternoon. To everyone's surprise (!), we were not crowned champions, but it was a fantastic week of house camaraderie. Special mention must go once again to Cameron Thomson, who motivated and directed a wonderful week and final performance, whilst Oliver Breach was absolutely fantastic on the piano.

One of the many highlights over the course of the year was the paintballing trip. Mr Edgar proved a very difficult

moving target, whilst Mr Golding proved the exact opposite and Mr McDonnell showed his bravery with some dashing runs into enemy territory, although he did wear a few bruises to show for it! Chun Lung Cheng and Bill Li proved the most stealthy of competitors, managing to hide for three straight games without being found or even firing a paintball. They eventually had to be called out of their hiding places (deep in the stinging nettles) after they had not been spotted for approaching an hour... quite an incredible achievement, although I don't think a career in the Special Forces beckons for either of them!

The 2016/17 inter-house sports competitions saw some wonderful individual and team performances over the course of the year. John Allen kicked us off with a well-deserved victory in the U16 pool competition, which was quickly matched by David Bunn and Toby Rowles, who won the U16 squash. Our U15 basketball team reigned supreme,

as did the U15 ergo and rowing quads in the Lent and Summer terms. To add to this, the U14 football side were victorious, as were David Bunn, John Allen and Oliver Breach on the table tennis tables. However, the highlight



Vil Kiraikou



came in the Michaelmas Term, when, against many people's better judgement, the blue-shirt-wearing men from Austin House completed the most exciting and memorable victory in the U18 rugby. Whilst Oliver Gray's try was clearly a champagne moment of the tournament, this wonderful squad of great young men deserve all the plaudits – Will Sutcliffe, Vil Kiraikou, Edward Adamson, Tom Haynes, Alexander Moss, William Pearson, Harry Fishpool, Oliver Gray and Toby Collins were simply colossal on the day. Austin House continues to thrive on a real spirit of participation and the boys continue to show a wonderful attitude towards representing the house, for which I remain very thankful.

Special mention must also go to Henry Waterson, Oliver Gray and Vil Kiraikou, who took on Head of House roles this year with great passion and expertise. They were excellent role models and wonderful ambassadors for the house. The 'Friday 4 Talks' remain ever popular and my thanks go to Patrick McCubbin for all of the work he put in to making these the success that they were again this year.

The end of the academic year saw a



number of staff changes. Mr Edgar moves to The City of London School and Mr McDonnell moves to School House as a fourth year tutor – I am extremely grateful for all that they contributed this past year. A special mention must go to Mr Aitken, who retires this year. He has been an amazing friend and tutor to both staff and boys in the house, and he will be greatly missed (although I am sure he will return for a morning coffee or two!). However, we are very lucky to welcome new staff members to the House. Mr Pygott becomes Assistant Boarding Housemaster and third year tutor, where he will be joined by the ever-enthusiastic Mr Deasy, whilst Miss Fraile takes over as

a fourth year and boarding tutor.

Next year, we embark upon new challenges and adventures, one of which is the first ever house ski trip to Sexten in Italy, which promises to be an amazing experience for many in the house and will hopefully set a precedent for the years to come...

We wish our leavers of 2017 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



It has been another great year for the boys of Crescent House, and when I look back on all that has happened I am, as ever, amazed by how much time, energy and enthusiasm the boys in the House throw into all their endeavours. There are always too many to give a fully comprehensive list, but I have included below many of the highlights of the year.

Crescent House boys achieved a great deal of success on the sports field throughout the year, and it was great to see so many fantastic team and individual performances in the inter-house sports. In the Michaelmas Term, Crescent dominated the racquet sports, with Perry Tsai winning the U15 badminton singles, and Cameron Yu and Brian Ho winning the U15 doubles; Sam Christie won the U16 squash; and Felipe Jin Li and Jate Jaturanpinyo won the U18 doubles table tennis - their third victory in three years. Crescent also won the U18 swimming event, with a team consisting of Giles Stratton, James Heron, Daniel Petrov, Jonathan Lee, Hysan Woo, Henry Barlow and Kai Miles.

In the Lent Term, Freddie Cunningham,

Kipp Mainstone, Rory Mitchell and Hugo Wade came first in the third year section of the Road Relay, while Andrew Jin and Leo Wu won the U14 badminton doubles. Rory and Kipp, along with Nathan Hudson, Louis Heard, Harry Capon, Dominic Swain and Oliver Botting won the U15 hockey tournament.

The third and fourth years continued their sporting success in the Summer Term, with an U15 team featuring Nathan Hudson, James Calver, Owen Ravden, Rory Mitchell, Kipp Mainstone, Shi Hong Kuang and Fred Tseung winning the inter-house cricket. In the inter-house athletics, Freddie Cunningham won the 800m, Rory Mitchell the 1500m, Hugo Wade the 400m and Naum Berezovskiy the shot in the U14 category with Nathan Hudson winning the U15 400m. Many Crescent boys achieved great things for school teams throughout the year, but Liam Hilditch's unbeaten century for the U14 A cricket team against Reading School, Scott Yap's swimming, in particular his achievements at the ESSA Relays and Warwick 100s, and Jerry Yang's

contributions to the school chess team, were amongst the most notable.

While writing these articles, I am always struck by the range and diversity of achievements that boys in the house manage. Standouts for me include: Peter Wang being part of the winning team 'Interport 20' in the Airport to Airport Challenge, a science and engineering competition to devise a fast transportation network connecting all the London airports; Kenneth Au Yeung, for his outstanding violin concerto soloist in Vivaldi's *Winter* at the Spring Concert, and his beautiful playing of Massenet's *Meditation* on Remembrance Day earlier in the year; Jai Sidpra, for his quick thinking in coming to the aid of a teammate who had fallen into a bog while on a Gold D of E expedition on Dartmoor; Callum Ravden and Benjamin Adams, for their powerful and convincing performances in the production of *London Road*; and Jamie Farrow for his excellent tenor solo with the Chapel Choir at Tewkesbury.

Jamie also directed Crescent's house song for 2016, his third and final year of doing so, which was a rousing and



thoroughly entertaining performance of *Mambo No. 5* by Lou Bega. How the judges overlooked Crescent yet again I will never know!

Crescent House boys achieved some excellent GCSE results over the summer, possibly amongst the best I have seen, Felipe Jin Li achieving 11 A*s, Supasin Kongpun, Jonathan Lee and Ethan Webb 10 A*s, Sam Christie, Edward Hayes and Daniel Ooi 9 A*s and an A, and Jate Jaturanpinyo 8 A*s and an A. At A-Level, Patrick Leggett, Christopher Yip and Yuan Han Li all achieved 4 A*s and an A, Kenneth Au Yeung 2 A*s and 3 As, Oscar Bond 2 A*s and 2 As, Thomas Bishop 2 A*s and an A, and Jake Pennington an A*, A and a D3 in Pre-U French. All the Crescent Upper Sixth can be proud of their achievements though, and 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 Head of House Yuan Han Li, with Josh Ascroft, Oscar Bond, Christian Kirk and Christopher Yip all representing Crescent as School Prefects. I thank them and the other



senior boys for all of their support and hard work.

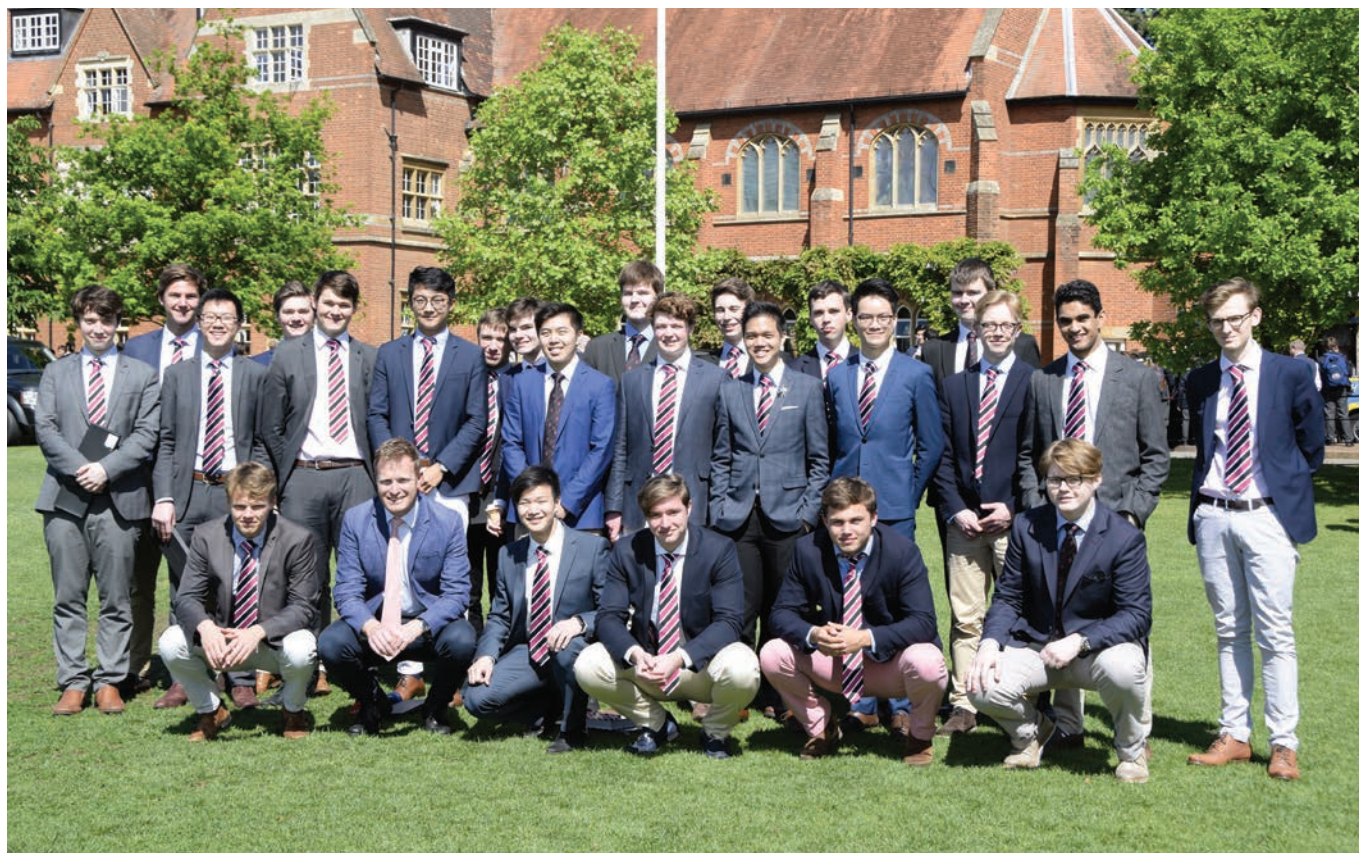
We said goodbye to Mr Pemberton, Mr Deasy and Miss Engel-Hart as tutors. Mr Ball, Mr Chase, Miss McCutcheon and Mr Moody join the house, as well as Miss Briscoe as resident tutor in Cobban. Mr Barnes stepped down as Assistant Housemaster, although will remain a tutor, and I thank him for all he has done in the role. Miss Poole takes

on the role of Assistant Housemaster from September 2017.

The Heads of House for 2017/18 will be Justin Chow and Josh Washington, while Fergus Mitchell, Jai Sidpra and Anthony Yang 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



We returned at the start of the year in School House with a new housemaster, new duty tutors and a lot less furniture. Despite the loss of a certain Rottweiler and also Buster, the house continued, our stag stood tall and doors remained in doorframes. It is a tribute to us that over this last year School House has remained the target of all students' envy, or at least our staircase has. There have been tribulations as Head of House, but no one ever handed me a P45 in the

middle of a speech and I have that to be thankful for.

One key difference from last year is that sadly I cannot report us winning the Inter-house Singing Competition. We took a relentlessly positive approach, despite a limit in music knowledge, and in the end we achieved something: Mr Windsor is unlikely to ever again attend house singing for fear of being harassed in the audience by a fifth year. In terms of musical success, we had less of that. Our too-many-part harmony of *Don't worry, be happy* brought many puns and cheesy references to the title, but limited joy to listeners. For a house that spent 90% of one rehearsal trying to get on stage I thought we produced something decent. However, I turned to the ever-comforting Di after the performance and she reassured me by saying 'it was never going to be as good as last year, even if it had gone well.'

It was not all gloom, though. In preparing for this article, I e-mailed around asking people to select which of their successes from this year they

wanted me to report. They are as follows: we won the U15 inter-house football for the second year in a row.

Despite the plenitude of achievements, we are not all work and no play. We did in fact have a play. Or revue, as it is more accurately described. The post-modernist docudrama that we produced captured the harsh realities and widely felt fears of the post-truth era in the wake of Trump's election and Nutella shrinkflation; in a word, it was art. That is, if art can revolve around itchy beds, smelly shirts and massages.

The great thing about School House is that people here can experience cultures from all over the world. Many dayboys have been introduced by friends in the boarding house to delicacies such as Pot Noodle. Boys from all years will bond playing illegal games of Mah Jong late into the night. Throughout summer the house will gather together in the evenings to hear inspiring messages on the television about bomb disposal in Cambodia, Afghanistan and Mallorca from leading humanitarian





Camilla Thurlow. People will share their languages with each other and teach phrases such as ‘mmmmm ho bae di quang chong niao?’ Parents reading this may be surprised to know that the phrase referenced does not mean anything rude, but in fact ‘would you like some hot chocolate?’ and is said by boys and teachers alike.

Community spirit has further increased through the house sporting competitions. We had our most enthusiastic road relay team yet, through the resurgence of the teachers’ team. More people took a role in the inter-house afternoon through the new option of ‘taking some photos for the board’. We did nevertheless produce some teams and I am sure they had fun taking part.

The success and enjoyment of this year is without doubt because of the team we have had helping us through. Mr Litchfield at the helm took on the great task of housemaster and has done a fantastic job of revitalising the house. The amount of time he has given to us

over this year is remarkable and the tone of the house has certainly changed thanks to that. Miss Moore (Mrs McKend) as deputy has updated the enrichment process and prepared us to enter the scary world of responsibilities. Di has continued as matriarch and matron of the house, providing unending support that I think the Upper Sixth were particularly appreciative of over this stressful year. Mr Jackson, Mr Latham and Mr Chamen have all been great duty tutors and we have enjoyed Mr Jackson’s Jenga and fish finger sandwich combination. Mr Hallinan, Ms Widdern, Mr Johnson, Mrs Yarker and Mr Evans have supported the house very strongly as tutors with great patience. Storm did an excellent job covering the matron role for some of last year and gave a new perspective on the nature of the house. Jane and the rest of the support team have also done remarkably well at dealing with us. Sadly we have some departures this year. Mr Davies has left after being a duty tutor for two and a half years. Also, though he remains a day tutor, we have lost

one of the rocks of the boarding house that is Mr Simmons. As he takes on his new role as Head of Physics, he will be deeply missed.

To conclude, despite all the bantering School House really is a great place. It has been my home for the last few years and developed me and my cohort from being somewhat unbearable to being actual decent people. Whatever may happen when we go crashing down, we come back every time. As my year goes off to start new and exciting challenges, my only hope is that the years below will make the most of how amazing this place is. I would like to thank the other head of house, Daniel Alcock, for his support and doing far more than the day head of house in Crescent, and wish all my support for Weihang and Patrick as they take on the task. It has been a brilliant year and a brilliant few years, and I sincerely care so much for the people I’ve met here. Thanks for it all.

Blake Jones, VIJFH

Border's



The 2016-17 academic year brought with it a comprehensive set of changes to the house: a new name, a new houseroom, a new housemaster and 22 new students. In many ways there was less for the new boys to get their head around than there was for the Upper Sixth, for whom I was their third housemaster in five years, apart from the confusion of one nameless third year who queried why he had been placed in a boarding house. A spelling lesson needed, methinks!

The year started off at a frantic pace, immediately jumping in to third year teambuilding. There were some excellent problem-solving skills on display and some passable attempts at teamwork, but the highlight for me was the young Mr Henriksen waving a mallet about and declaring it to be "Thor's hammer". A sign of groan-inducing jokes to come...

Our first major competition was House Singing. The aim was simple, scientifically measured, and resoundingly achieved: to be the loudest house. Unfortunately this aim didn't quite line up with that of the judge who deemed our rousing rendition of Bon Jovi's *Living on a prayer* to have been enthusiastic but perhaps lacking in musicality. Still, a solid joint fourth (along with five other houses...) seems decent enough and

my thanks must go to Edmund Breen and Chanka Pathinayake for taking the reins here.

Still, as Christmas approached we moved towards somewhat more comfortable ground, and the first inter-house sports competition. This was an afternoon full to bursting with success stories, not least the last minute super-sub Vijay Parandaman managing to swim several lengths of the pool without drowning! In terms of podium places there were solid bronzes for the U16 pool and U15 table tennis, and splendid silvers for the U14 rugby team, U16 squash players and U18 table tennis trio. Leading the way, though, with a dominant performance in the pool, were the U14 swimmers, who obliterated their competition in the relays to take top spot. Not to be outdone, another last minute volunteer, William Bywater from the third year, agreed to have a crack at the U15 pool competition and won it outright. Overall, we scored more points than any other house during the afternoon. A good start to sporting life for Border's!

After the Christmas break the boys returned hungry for more success, and there was indeed more to be found. The debaters had a great go, with both the third year pairing of Jake Ginks and Luca Frauenfeld and the fourth

year team of Edward Jones and Liam Deegan making it to their respective finals but narrowly missing out.

The Lent Term also saw the annual Road Relay and some excellent performances. Highlights were the fifth year A team of Jamie Lawson, William Ginks, Christopher Monnery and Cameron Woodrow sneaking into the top ten and Calum Steer's terrific individual performance to come in as the fastest Lower Sixth and second fastest runner on the day. Sadly, our efforts to take the overall win in the team competition were scuppered when one of our runners was unable to compete, but the team of Calum, Nick Webster, Mathéo Charrier-Chardin and James Smith ran bravely to secure second place amongst the student teams. They will have their eyes set higher in their final year! Most pleasing, however, was the huge number of teams we fielded, with five each from the third and fourth year, and another eight from the upper years. Can we field a full 20 teams next year, forcing me to fulfil my promise of running it myself if we do so?

The Road Relay served as an excellent warm up for the end of term inter-house sports competitions. There were some excellent performance here, not least from the hockey players in trying to explain to me how their sport works.



Daniel Lawson and Callum Steer

It seems, though, that I had experts teaching me, as both the U18 and U15 teams finished with strong second places, which one might think would be enough to secure the overall hockey cup, but apparently that's not how it works! No such problem for Gianluca Cau Tait, who comfortably won his division of the U18 pool competition, or for our footballers who, having won the U18 competition alongside strong finishes in the younger years, brought back the overall house football cup! The real highlight for me, though, was the huge numbers of boys stepping up into competitions where they perhaps did not have the most experience but gave it a go anyway. Charlie Ball celebrating a hard-won point in the fencing, against an international standard opponent, as if he had just secured Olympic gold is a memory that will stay with me for some time.

The jewel in our sporting crown, however, was the inter-house athletics competition. We saw a vast array of individual winners, including Liam O'Hickey in the 100m, shot putters Greg Lister and Ben Ling, Ben "I can't really run" Curtis in the 800m, and a stunning one-two finish in the senior 1500m from Calum Steer and Daniel Lawson. Our strength as a team was further highlighted with our dominance of the

relay events, where we won both the A and B competitions in the third year, and a further win for the seniors. With so much glittering individual success, we were well placed to challenge for overall wins, and after a nervous wait for scores to be tallied, the house was rewarded with emphatic wins for both the U18 and U14 overall competitions, which, combined with a podium finish from the U15s, was good enough to win the competition outright! Well done to all!

Having swept all before us in the previous sets of competitions, I was very proud to see the fine young gentlemen of Border's step aside and allow the other houses a chance to win something in the other summer competitions. Such grace and sportsmanship should be celebrated. Unfortunately, James Munday clearly didn't get the memo, picking up a win in the U15 squash.

With so much success in the sporting arenas, it might be easy to stereotype these fine young men, but it transpires that they have rather large brains too! The summer exam season brought with it some fantastic performances. At GCSE level, seven boys scored straight A* and A grades, with Zach Griggs picking up a full house of ten A* grades. There were also some huge improvements between the mocks and the summer exams, which just goes



Jamie Volak

to show how much of a difference hard work can make. The Upper Sixth refused to be outdone and we saw some stunning results, with highlights being 5 A* grades for Connor Clements and 4 more boys achieving straight A* and A grades. The bar has been set high for future years to follow.

As I bring this review to a close, I would like to thank Head of House Henry Antonian for all his work, along with the team of prefects, and to wish Mr Stuart all the best for the future as he leaves us to lead the Maths Department at Cokethorpe.

David Border

Franklin's



Heads of House this year were Rory Esom and George Straining, who were both fantastically positive leaders. They were ably supported in the house by House Prefects Tom Buckle, Sean Dunnett, Sam Farrar, Abinayan Gunarajah, Darius Oraee and Luke Wilson. Rory, George and Sam were also selected as School Prefects in recognition of their whole-school contribution. All of these guys were friendly and helpful in the house as well as impressive in their work and Other Half contributions, and they created a really good atmosphere all year.

As ever, the first important event of the year was the House Singing Competition. Darius Oraee led us in a memorable version of *Never Forget*, with Didier Delgorge accompanying on piano. We received very favourable comments from the judge, and we were happy to Take That...

In the first inter-house sports competition, we had some really impressive successes, coming first in the U18 table tennis (Tom Buckle, George Tanner, Sean Dunnett) and U15 table tennis (Huba Varady, Kiran

Gathani, Rohan Gathani), second in the U14 swimming (Nicholas Skelton, Matthew Hoult, Alex Oldham, Euan Baldwin, Max Hems, Lawrence Putt) and the chess (Ray Ren, Alister Jamieson, Sebastian Watkins) and third in the U18 Rugby (George Straining, Luke Wilson, Matthew Johnson, Bertie Thomas, Angus Williams, George Newton, Edward Cope) and U15 badminton (Matty Ball, Rahul Ghandinesen, Iain Storrie).

Then came the annual Road Relay, in which we had some excellent runs. The following boys stood out: Giles Oldershaw (9.16; 24th individual in school), Nicholas Skelton (9.17; 25th), Tom Philip (9.25; 32nd), Marcus Williams (9.30; 40th), Oscar Frost (9.33; 46th), Oliver Elly (9.35; 48th), and Edward Cope (9.37; 52nd). Our fifth year team (Oscar Frost, Marcus Williams, Alasdair Czaplewski, and Louis Brosnan) were the ninth fastest team overall, the fourth years (Tom Phillip, Oliver Elly, James Magé, and Kiran Gathani) were 17th and the Upper Sixth (Giles Oldershaw, Alexander Dalgliesh, Tom Buckle, Darius Oraee) 19th. Our house hero of

the event was Jonah Marsh, who ran despite having concussion!

In the next inter-house sports competition, we scored more notable successes, with George Simonson, Samuel Fenton, James Magé and Alex Oldham coming first in shooting, Lachlan Jones, Daniel Woodrow, James Robinson and Matthew Hoult first in the U14 ergo, and Marcus Williams, William Quirke and Didier Delgorge second in the U15 table tennis. House event hero was Giles Oldershaw, who played hockey for us despite suffering a severe facial injury in school hockey training just days before.

Summer brought more great competition. We have superb strength in tennis, and our team of Huba Varady, Jimmy Straining, Kiran Gathani, Rohan Gathani and Conrad Smith competed brilliantly to win third place overall. Lance Wilson also stepped up to achieve third place in the squash. Our cricketers – Oliver Elly, Rahul Ghandinesen, Edward Gill, George Patrikios and Toby Chambers – beat the final winners, Crescent, so that was certainly a moral victory!



We then had some fine performances in the athletics, including the following: William Webb (first in high jump), George Patrikios (first in the discus), Nicholas Skelton (second in 800m), Oliver Elly (second in 1500m), Mark Kogan (second in B team 200m), Edward Cope (second in high jump), Tom Phillip (third in 400m and high jump), Oscar Mascuñan-Margetts (third in shot), Charlie Craig (third in 200m), and Oliver Leafe (third in discus).

We had many outstanding individual successes throughout the year. George Strainge continued playing rugby for Wasps and was a stalwart of the 1st XV. Luke Wilson, Angus Williams and Matthew Johnson were also very valuable players. Tom Buckle was a school tennis star once again, as were George Strainge and Angus Williams. Nicholas Skelton is already a quite brilliant swimmer at regional and now national level, and has an amazing future to look forward to. Didier Delgorge continued to show his extraordinary star quality as a pianist, and Ashwin Tennant joined us as a precocious musical talent on both the piano and violin. Matthew

Hoult is also a very fine musician, who earned an important award for his musicianship and contribution. Sam Farrar was hugely impressive in debating and MUN events for the school. Alasdair Czaplewski and Louis Brosnan are hot on his heels, and made tremendous contributions to school debating. Our inter-house debating champions were Samuel King and Zach Rhodes, who have a great future in this area. Ray Ren was the school number one in chess, with outstanding individual and team performances. Alister Jamieson also scored some fine wins, and Sebastian Watkins was our precocious new chess talent joining the house; he looks set to follow on Ray's heels.

It was a great year for us academically, especially at GCSE. Louis Brosnan, Jamie Chick, James Chung, Alasdair Czaplewski and Oliver Williams all scored a clean sweep of 10 A* grades, which shows outstanding application as well as ability. All of our boys did really well, and we were the top house in the school at GCSE.

We were sorry to say two farewells. Mr Domm joined us a year ago to look after

his sixth form tutor group. He engaged with them from the start, always happy to talk about current affairs and other issues. A good footballer and badminton player, he joined in to a level that impressed and encouraged the boys in his teams. His warmth and concern made him liked and respected by his boys. He goes on to a promotion, for which we wish him well.

Dr Preece was the assistant third year tutor this year. He was popular with the boys for his friendly and caring approach, his patience and his sense of humour. He is stepping down to go part-time next year, having musical interests of his own to pursue. However, he will always be very welcome in Franklin's.

This has been a happy and successful year for Franklin's. I would like to thank all the tutors for their tremendous efforts for the boys, and congratulate the boys themselves for their contribution and friendly co-operation.

David Franklin

James's



This past year has been a whirlwind of achievements in James's House, and whilst the ensuing paragraphs inevitably celebrate these, it's worth remembering the hard work and dedication which went into each and every one of these successes. Winning things is nice, but it's what the boys have become in the process of the last year which is far more important, and makes me most proud of them as their Housemaster. There is a really positive feel about the house at the moment, helped no doubt by the shiny new house room, but testimony too to the dedication of the tutors and indeed senior boys in the house. They are a pleasure to work alongside and I would like to take the opportunity to thank them all sincerely.

September saw a wonderful new batch of third years inducted into the house - as smooth a transition as I have known - and this would be a year group who would continue to impress throughout 2016-17. Ethan Moody saw himself selected for the GB windsurfing squad for the World Championships

after a summer of dedicated practice and hard competition. As term went on, we also heard from a number of sixth formers in house assembly, with Daniel Nield speaking about his trip to Vietnam and then Max Owen and Daniel Rohll telling us more generally about the value of travelling. Freddie Rock and Cameron Asbury were pivotal in raising considerable sums for charity in the Charathon, with several of our boys opting to run the 13.1 miles - their gait somewhat altered for days to come!

Though always viewed with great trepidation by housemasters, House Singing was a very definite highlight of the first half term. Carl Olavesen, helped by the house band of Aravind Prabhakaran, Jack Lewis and George Jeffreys, led our efforts with energy, vision and huge skill. Our performance was comfortably the best for some years. For one glorious moment we dared to believe that we had won. Sadly it wasn't to be, with a lack of choreography counting against us in this singing competition (Ivo Brown's

wearing of his backpack onto stage may also have hurt our chances!). In any event, the house felt like a more cohesive place afterwards and we went off for half term with Bastille's *Good Grief* stuck in all our heads.

The second half of Michaelmas Term went like a blur, with hugely productive work going on - work which would be the foundation of superb exam results in months to come. Daniel Rohll somehow squeezed rehearsals in for *Evita* at Oxford High School, whilst acing his November tests and representing the school at rugby. We still found time too to win the U16s inter-house rugby. I rounded the year off by sharing with the house Louis Edward's short film *Limbo*. Louis scripted, shot, cast and directed this witty, thought-provoking and profound piece. The awe of the rest of the house after the film finished was palpable. A fitting way to end 2016 - internationally perhaps a year to forget, but far from it within the house.

January saw James Hogge winning a



Max Carter-Keall



Ivo Brown

coveted silver medal for the second year in the prestigious National Cypher Challenge run by GCHQ, and pocketing £800 into the bargain. Further intellectual achievements came in the Inter-House Debating Competition, where Archie Williams and George Jeffreys (Head of House and Head of School respectively) gave virtuoso performances in front of a crowded audience of some 400 people to win the thing for the fifth year in a row. What's more is they gave up their time to pass on their knowledge to younger year groups in the house - they would have every reason to be a little arrogant after such a display, but not a bit of it.

The Lent Term was also our most successful one from a sporting point of view. The road relay saw us claim the prizes for fastest Upper Sixth and fifth form team (the senior boys for the fifth year in a row again!), whilst Ivo Brown was the fastest individual completing the course in eight minutes two seconds. With Max Carter-Keall (later to be voted in as Head of House 2017-18)

now a permanent fixture in the U18 England hockey side, and fresh from a tour of Holland, it was no surprise to see us win inter-house hockey in the sixth form, though Max would be the first to celebrate the collective efforts of a team which spanned three year groups. Lastly, the Lent Term saw two unforeseen successes for James's House staff, with Mr Poon and Mr Jones wiping the floor with all opposition in the inaugural House Table Football Competition - the brainchild of Mr Gold's tutor group - whilst Mr James and Mr Fisher accidentally won the sixth form quiz. This is frankly embarrassing, and we feel the boys must try harder in these two areas (he brags modestly!).

The Summer Term saw the study room become the 'revision nest' of certain Upper Sixth formers buried under piles of folders. All of which paid off - by my reckoning, 13 of them secured their 'firm' university offers, with two off to their insurance, two gaining places through clearing and three on planned gap years. All four Oxbridge places

were secured too. They were a fabulous year group, talented and hard-working in equal measure, and selfless too. A shared 'graduation' meal in school only served to underline this. The fifth form must have taken note, because we became the most improved house at GCSE based on the mock exams. Traditionally our strongest term on the sports pitch, the Summer Term also saw our fourth years win inter-house athletics, whilst Samuel Miles won the U14 squash tournament. Jake Blackwell and Tim Armstrong also won inter-house golf for the second year in a row - as you can imagine, as Master in charge of Golf this was the absolute highlight of my year! Joking aside, I ended the academic year feeling very positive about the ethos in the house, and feeling very lucky to be working alongside such impressive young men. I cannot wait to see what 2018 brings.

Simon James

Morgan's



It has been a fruitful year in Morgan's, with plenty going on and some great characters around. Joint Heads of House Rohan Khosla-Stevens and Rhys Humphries led the house with their own brand of shabby chic, lending the house a warm, friendly, welcoming, disorganised air.

This was the year of the house social, for the Upper Sixth in particular liked a party. There was pizza, football, barbecues and, I am glad to say, Pimm's for the parents and tutors. House prefects Billy Hickman, Sachin Kumar, James Knight, Oliver Mead and Terry Kreysza all did their bit and had lots of great ideas, even if enacting them sometimes proved problematic...

Morgan's continued its fine competitive traditions, from almost winning in the major sports to coming second in the house singing and completely dominating on the squash court. With Nikhil Vyas and Ed Pettitt we had a strong side, and with Patrick Cole

fulfilling a life's ambition by conducting the house singing an exciting time was had by all.

I'd like to give a special mention to those boys in the house who give their time to help others: from Ben Hatton spending hours trying to rescue a third year's phone from inside the pool table (don't ask) to the Lower Sixth mentoring younger boys and the many boys involved in community service, I am always impressed by those boys who think of others and not just themselves. May they set an example to the next generation.

We had to say goodbye to some real house stalwarts, and the Upper Sixth will be much missed. Farewell to Magnus Gregory, famous for his international kayaking exploits, phenomenal work ethic, kind manner and being 'shaped like a carrot' as the boys like to say. Farewell also to JJ Smith, who seemed to spend much of his time selling ghastly clothes to people on the internet, and

will doubtless be running the world one day soon, to Daniel Johnson, James Kennedy and Lewis Wu, who were constantly together over the years and never tired of each other, and Miguel Zilveti and Nick Harris, who were nothing alike whatsoever, but haven't had a mention yet. I'd like to thank them for their contribution to the house and the school, and I'm sorry that they never managed that coveted house football title, despite talking of little else for five years.

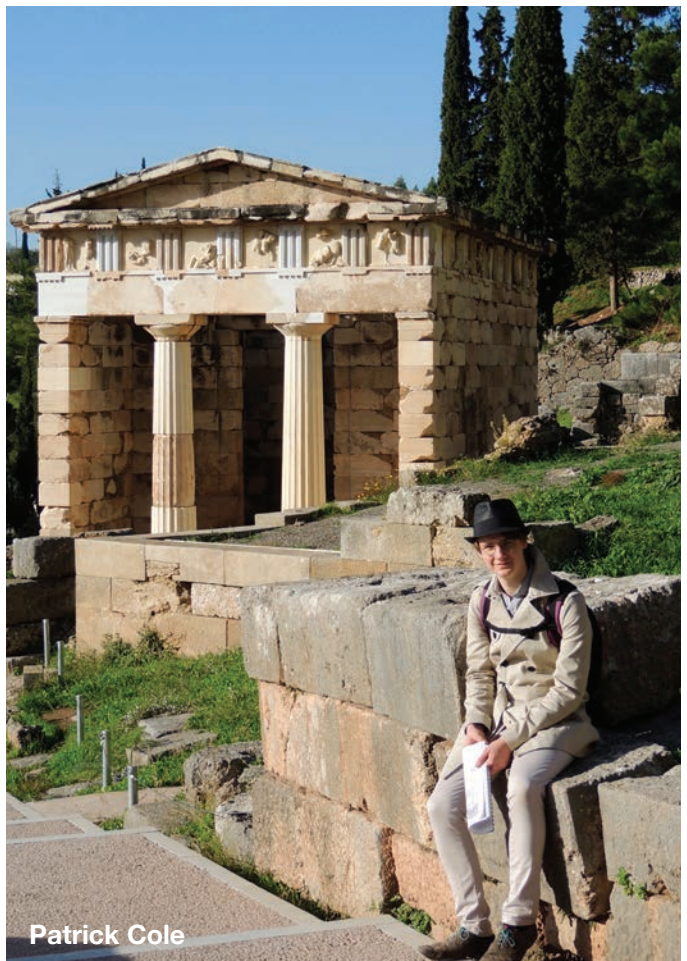
We mustn't forget the younger ones, of course, and I am constantly impressed by the variety of characters, with their different strengths and interests, who come through the house every year. There are some real characters and some great friendships being formed, as it should be in your school days - let's look forward to many more exciting years to come.

Henry Morgan

Magnus Gregory



Rohan Khosla-Stevens



Patrick Cole

O'Doherty's



It has been an extremely busy and enjoyable year in O'Doherty's House and the variety of activities and trips the boys have been involved in during the course of the year and how willing they have been to get stuck into house competitions have never ceased to amaze me. We have had some notable successes in the sports competitions and were overall winners in the tennis, badminton and U18 ergo. In the Road Relay our Lower Sixth team were overall fastest team, our fourth years were the fastest in their year group and Mr Taylor was crowned fastest member of staff. Our debating teams were especially strong, with the fifth year progressing to the final. Their dedication to the research and planning was impressive and they dealt with some pretty harsh questioning by teachers in some of the later rounds. Boys have also been busy with CCF,

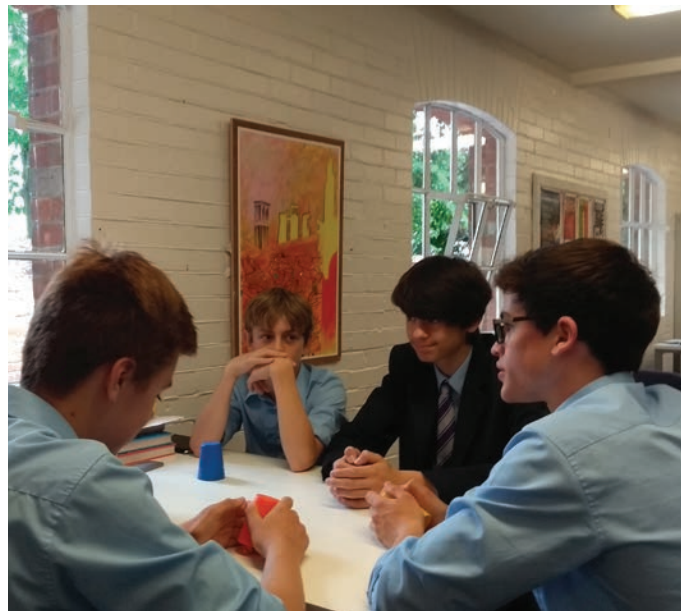
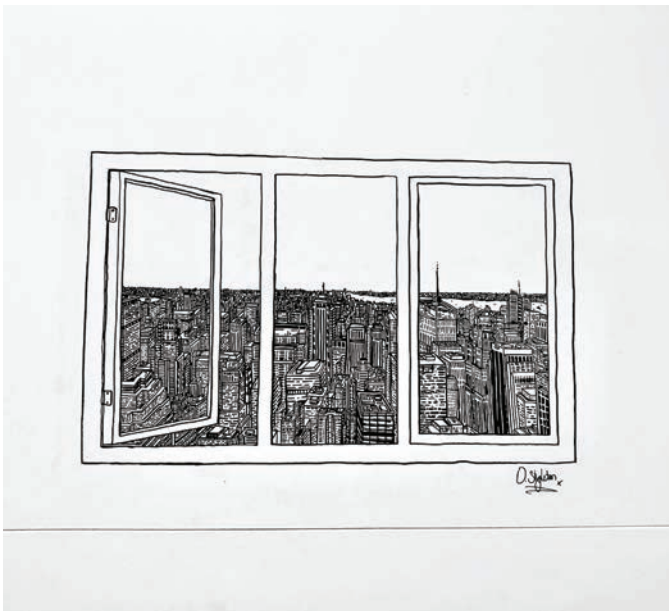
drama, music, filmmaking and many other endeavours, too many to mention here!

The highlight has to be winning the House Singing Competition though, something Charlie Landells sums up perfectly here:

"As a year group, we had been planning our song for years. *Hooked on a feeling* by Blue Swede, chosen after seeing *Guardians of the galaxy*, was sure to be our winning ticket. By some mistake the responsibility fell on my shoulders to stand up in front of 80 boys, at least half of whom couldn't think of anything worse than singing, and convince them that the hours of rehearsals really would be worth it, and it was just another thing we had to get done. But really, we sixth formers had a far larger agenda - win back that trophy again before we left for good.

We pulled out all the stops: flowery shirts, a huge band, and even some minor choreography. The competition was fierce, but we kept it simple and stuck to what we knew. Now you can probably see where this is leading. As first place was announced, I think an air of disbelief and excitement ran over everyone in about half a second. House Singing truly was a pleasure to organise and conduct. The band was superb, made up of extremely talented musicians and directed by Edward Hall on piano. The choir, or "mob" as I referred to them, really got behind it and frankly, I think we actually had some fun in the process. I wish all the best of luck to those sixth formers whom we pass the baton onto for next year, and I hope to see that trophy still happily sitting where it should be in many years' time."

Alongside all the personal successes,



both academic and in the Other Half, we have had some fun O'Doherty's house events. The first was a house quiz, organised and delivered by the Upper Sixth, and, although we still don't know which team actually won, the evening ran smoothly and was enjoyed by all. In the Lent Term we had a joint O'Doherty's and Southwell-Sander's trip to Rush Trampoline, which again was extremely popular and huge amounts of fun. A lot of talent was displayed and even Mr Broadbent

managed to perform acrobatics into the foam pit! The year ended with a summer social, which gave a chance for parents to get together and look back on an action-packed year.

In the houseroom itself we have made some additions, including lots of board games and some new furniture that allows more work and social spaces. Ollie Singleton in the Upper Sixth hand-drew a cityscape mural on the wall and the photography competition resulted

in some beautiful entries, including the winning photo of Blenheim Palace.

It has been sad to say goodbye to the Upper Sixth. We will miss them, but wish them a happy and fulfilling life. The boys have welcomed me and made my first year as a housemaster a truly enjoyable one and for this I am most grateful. I am also very thankful to my superb team of tutors.

Emily O'Doherty

Southwell-Sander's

As worlds of Trump and Brexit appear
Along comes the farewell time of year.
Yet again we bid adieu to Green Army Comrades
They're the epitome of real Good Lads.
There is Jonny Allison, who on the stage
Is like a tiger that has been uncaged!
Uni for George Aylard can't come too soon
He'll be the next Ban-Ki Moon.
We all know that Cookey will go far,
Especially when he's behind the wheel of a sports car!
As Elliot plans his GAP year, avoiding maths along the way
He's hoping to have more luck with the ladies of the day.
When not scoring runs or a hockey goal
TD's killing time in a car park with Joel!
What will the Green Army do without Finch steering the ship
We know Finchmesiter27 will be a YouTube hit.
Whether it's a ball, instrument or script in his hand
As a great linguist is where Hamish will land.
As Rob chooses Oxbridge or Harvard for Uni fun
He's rowing to escape life under the thumb!
As Cambridge will realise to their cost
Jonny is a gem that they have just lost.
With that fetching white suit and epee in hand
The school is sure to collapse without Patch's safe hands.
Scoffing pasta in lycra, dishing out hugs to his bro's
Jorgey's a legend wherever he goes.
Everyone's favourite, Byron leaves behind him
The broken hearts of the ladies that could not have him!
As Max persuades Mrs Mansfield his French is *tres bon*,
He dreams of opening the bowling with Callum or Con.
As Joel heads off with Dingers for some car park fun
With his BoyBand hair, all he needs is a number one.
As CQ seeks fame and fortune as a Cycling King,
Remember the shaving foam to smooth those pins.
As Tony spends another night at the books,
At Uni he'll make the most of those devilish good looks!
Natural Sciences at Cambridge, Jonah deserves nothing less
Next on his to do list – 'sort out the world, it's a mess!'
Sweaty hand Whitfield, he has the world at his feet!
Will he get the girls if he dribbles in his sleep?
Ed's bad jokes at uni are sure to go down a storm
But his morning breath may well do more harm!
The class of 2017 are all laid bare
But as a bunch of lads they are hard to compare.
Through the roller coaster of their school times
There's been parties, break ups and many a good time.
And to their tutors they owe a big 'cheers'
Maybe even a wine or a beer,
For helping them through the teenage maze
To the culmination of their schooldays.
The final word can be left to SS:
Green Army Legends, here's to your success!

The Lower Sixth have enjoyed a really full and eventful year. Some highlights include Adriano Matousek, who is one of only ten from the UK to be nominated as a finalist for the BAFTA Young Game Designer Award. Henry Isherwood was selected for South West U18 rugby, while Josh Braithwaite rowed at Henley for the 1st VIII. I am also pleased to announce the selection of Ben Goriely-Macdonald, Arthur Musson, Henry Isherwood and Ivor Langley as school prefects, while Adriano Matousek and Tom Woods were selected to be Heads of House, supported by Ben Saunders and Tom Clokey as deputies. A huge thank you has to go to Mr McGill, Miss Spurling-Holt and Dr Jeffreys for their unwavering support as tutors.

As the fifth year wait nervously for their exam results, well done to Connor Brown, who got into the J16 GB sculling trials. Tom Harvey-Jamieson and Henry Muller have been selected for the school council. In addition, Tom won the award for services to charity. Toby Pratt has represented the county at hockey, and Joshua Franklin, Will Diver, Angus Blomfield and Tom Harvey-Jamieson have been selected to be Lower School Assistants. We sadly have to say goodbye to three lads, Saul Rea who has been a real hous: stalwart and who moves to Abingdon and Witney college on a business course; Zack Rudaz, who moves to Cherwell School following the exciting upcoming Japan Rugby Tour; and Francesco Cipriani, who has been one of the highest performing academics in the year group and moves to MCS. Again thanks to Mrs Middleton and Mr Bignell for their support this year.

In the fourth year, Arthur Boulton continues to train hard and perform well with his road cycling while Henry Insley and Lloyd Langley performed brilliantly in the inter-house debate, beating Border's in the final. Henry Insley has also had a superb year all round, and more recently represented the school at the 1500m in several high profile athletics meets. Well done to Rafe Fleming, who is U16 Oxfordshire table tennis champion, as well as



receiving an Excellence Award in the 2017 National Chinese Calligraphy Competition. Behind the scenes there has been some cracking work from Matthew Buhler, who volunteers at Helen and Douglas House, while Joe McConnell rowing in J15As boat and for Abingdon Town Club, who qualified for the national championships. Well done to James Tuffill for the academic prize, and thanks to Dr Burnand and Mr Taylor for all they have done to help their tutor groups.

The third year have settled in very well to the ebb and flow of life at Abingdon. Francesco Bartolini and Joe Nicholas achieved bellingring qualification Level 1, while Henry Wooding wrote three chapters with professional author guidance in *Birth of a book*. Will Taylor is already putting Mr Franklin through

his paces on the squash court and is one of the top four players in the school. Thomas Owen, who only took up the sport a year ago, has been selected to play county golf, while Benjamin Broadbent won the school computing cup and multiple sailing accolades. Perhaps what has summed up the tutor group best this year was being able to field five teams in the road relay, while Aiden Petersen and Tom Owen swam all legs of the individual medley during house swimming. This fraternal atmosphere has really developed over the year, and they can be delighted with all they have achieved. We have to sadly say goodbye to Aiden Petersen, whose family are moving back to the US. He has just won the third year academic prize and we wish him every success. A

final thanks to Mrs Wenham and to Mrs Whitworth and Mrs Vickers who have been incredibly supportive to the tutor group throughout the year.

So there is a flavour of what has gone on within the Green Army this year. Add to this the well supported Christmas carol service, trampolining house social, fortnightly house mentor meetings with donuts, growth mindset assemblies, house values business cards, house hero posters, tutor group assemblies, inter house activities, third place in house singing and so much more. All of this would not be possible without the fantastic group of tutors as well as the great support given by the parent body. Thanks to everyone for another great year for @southwellsander.

Robin Southwell-Sander

Lower School



"Be the best that you can be" has been the mantra adopted by Lower School for several years now and it was clear from the confident and enthusiastic start that the 66 new first years made this year that they were definitely in tune with that idea. To quote one of them at the end of his first week: "I have got on really well and I do not want to go home. School has made my brain work and has given me lots of friends." The second year meanwhile took their new role as mentors to the younger boys seriously and also responded well to the more demanding material now on offer to them in the classroom. To encourage all the boys in their endeavours we were very pleased to welcome Talan Skeels-Piggins as the guest speaker at our Be the Best Launch – the story of how he overcame a motor accident that left him paralysed from the waist down to compete as a skier in the Winter Olympics and win a World Championship in motorcycle racing was very strong testament to the importance of determination and resilience in the face of adversity.

A great number of the boys have been heavily involved in the artistic life of the school this year, with over 40 taking part in December's production of *Treasure*

Island – Mr McDonnell, directing his very first Abingdon production, could be considered very brave to give out swords and other assorted weapons to the boys so early in his teaching career, but the result was spectacular, with the boys clearly inspired by the stunning set design and the choric staging which gave them all the chance to share the limelight. A donation by SUS to the Annual Fund allowed all the boys to try their hand at filmmaking in the summer when we were visited by the One Day Film School. After a session on fight choreography that saw them legitimately punching each other on Upper Field, they were given the challenge of producing a 10-shot silent film to a strict deadline – the results were creative and imaginative (and predictably violent!) with the Oscar going to heist movie *Cash Grab*. Musical standards have also been high this year with stirring choral performances by the first years at the Christmas Concert (*Torches* and *Jingle Bells* conducted by one of their own, Oliver Smith) and the second years at the New Year Concert (*I Wanna Be Like You* and *The Bare Necessities* from *The Jungle Book*) and the two main ensembles of Junior Strings and Lower School Band also being in fine form. The introduction of termly Lower School Lunchtime

Concerts to supplement the Summer Gala Concert has provided the boys with more opportunities to perform solos on their instruments to their peers and, here, there are two first years who deserve special mention: Oliver Glover, who has been the lead oboe in First Orchestra this year, including on their tour to Bielefeld, and Ollie Northwood, whose moving performance of Mendelssohn's *Romance No. 3* led to him winning the Junior Solo Competition in June.

Sport too always features heavily in the lives of Lower School boys, and this year was no exception, with a great number of them getting involved in the various teams on offer or trying out a sport they had never had the chance to do before – pilates was a new and popular addition to the menu this year under the expert guidance of Mrs McRae. Although our fixture list has got more and more competitive in recent years, we still achieved a fair share of success in all the major sports at both U12 and U13 level, with the U12 rugby 7s team looking particularly impressive. Several boys also received significant sporting plaudits outside the school, with Theo Mara, Seb Muller and Benjamin MacLennan performing to a very high level in football,



tennis and swimming respectively.

The regular inter-tutor group competitions are always entered into with a healthy sense of rivalry, and no one tutor group had it all their own way this year. In the first year, 1P and 1S tended to battle it out for supremacy in the sporting events, with 1M preferring to excel in the more cerebral activities of public speaking and reading (until the very last day of term when they showed their muscle by winning the tug of war in convincing fashion), while in the second year 2H won half of the year's events, meaning they joined 1P as the overall year group winners. When all the points were totalled up however, the overall Lower School Cup went to 1S and 2W, who beat 1P and 2C by a mere two points. The House Singing Competition gives the Lower School boys their one chance of the year to take on the older boys in inter-house competition, and this year they rose to the challenge with a fine rendition of Justin Timberlake's *I got this feeling*. Andy Liu (piano) and Toby Hammond (drums) did a great job of providing the accompaniment while Oli Liddell was in commanding form as conductor, even encouraging the entire audience to join in with the final chorus. First place eluded us once again, but it can only be a matter of time...

There were plenty of opportunities for

Lower School pupils to explore outside the school, with the two Adventure Trips in the Easter holiday being greatly enjoyed and the Modern Languages trip to Normandy including visits to Mont St. Michel and the beaches of the D-Day landings around Arromanches. Day trips out saw the first years visit Fishbourne Roman Palace, learn more about the history of the school on a tour of Abingdon town, and hear the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra performing live in concert, while the second years travelled to the Roman baths of Aquae Sulis, Hampton Court, and saw a performance of *Romeo and Juliet* at Shakespeare's Globe in London.

The boys, joined by their parents, heard from Talan Skeels-Piggins again in the last week of the academic year at the Be the Best Celebration event. Since his last visit, he had come second in the Le Mans World Cup, broken the British land speed record on his motorbike, and taken up long bow archery, certainly living up to his promise to be the best he can be! The end of year prizes were then presented, with the Academic Prizes going to Tom Walters (1M), Philip Grotjahn (1P), Rory Kind (1S), Alexandre Peuch (2C), Ethan Walker (2H) and Isaac Mortiboy (2W) and Baker Awards going to Eoin Chippendale, Matthew Jarvis, Harry Watkins and Finn Wilson. Max Siriwardene was awarded the

Broadbent Cup for Sporting Excellence and Alexander Bryant the Cooper Cup for Excellence in Reading. Harry Watkins, a real stalwart of the Charities Committee throughout his time in Lower School was also awarded the Dillon Cup for Service, while the Woodgett Cup went to Ben Lisemore.

There is not much that the second year boys have not been able to achieve when they have supported each other and worked together, and when they have seen their mistakes as opportunities to learn – that they have got more and more capable of doing so over the last two years is in no small part down to the great work done with them by their tutors, Miss McCutcheon, Dr Howe (and before her Mr Edgar) and Mrs Wigmore. My thanks go to them and to Mrs Coull, Mrs McRae and Mr Price for helping the first years get off to such a great start. We say a temporary goodbye to Dr Howe as she goes on maternity leave and a farewell from Lower School to Miss McCutcheon as she moves to become a boarding tutor. I wish the second years all the best as they move on to face the greater challenges that lie ahead for them in Middle School and trust that they will remember the lessons that they have learned during their time in Lower School.

Adam Jenkins

Inter-House Sport Results

	U18	U16	U15	U14
Badminton	Morgan's	School	Crescent	O'Doherty's
Basketball			Austin	
Chess	Crescent			
Cricket			Crescent	
Fencing	School			
Hockey	James's		Crescent	
Pool	Morgan's	Austin	Border's	
Rowing Ergos	O'Doherty's		Austin	Franklin's
Rugby 7s	Austin	James's		Morgan's
Shooting	Franklin's			
Squash	Morgan's	Austin	Border's	James's
Swimming	Crescent		School	Border's
Table Tennis	Franklin's	Austin	Franklin's	
Tennis Doubles			O'Doherty's	O'Doherty's
Volleyball			Morgan's	
Water Polo		Austin		

Lower School Inter-Tutor Group Competitions

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

Staff Farewells



Language Assistants

Déborah di Nino joined the Modern Languages Department from the University of Reims as a French Assistant. She had just successfully completed a degree in English language, literature and civilization and was keen to make the most of the opportunity to spend a year in this country. Déborah fitted into the department very well. She was most efficient in her preparation and planning of lessons and soon built up a good working relationship with her students. She has been unfailingly cheerful and conscientious and her work has been much appreciated by boys and staff alike. Déborah has enjoyed her time here so much she plans to remain in the UK and hopes to find a job in London. We wish her well.

Jane Mansfield

Kimberley Poppmacher joined us in September 2016 as the German Assistant. She was in the process of finishing her Master of Education Degree at Bielefeld University when she joined the school. She also holds a Master's Degree in German as a Foreign Language from the University of Alabama, where she studied for three semesters before returning to Bielefeld. In her time at Abingdon she assisted the fourth and fifth year students in their preparation for their GCSE oral exams to ensure that the boys would get the best possible results. She did the same for the Lower and Upper Sixth Pre-U students, with particular focus on the latter as their exam drew nearer. She also assisted the German Department by preparing and creating new material for class, as well as creating displays to promote German language and culture. In her free time she immersed herself in British culture by playing Rugby for a local team when she was not travelling around the UK at weekends to explore

the country or visit friends and family.

Alexandra von Widdern

Xiaoling Hu graduated from Guangzhou University in 2016. She then worked as a volunteer Chinese teacher for three universities in Mexico from January 2015 to December 2015. She joined Abingdon as a Chinese Assistant through the Chinese Hanban and British Council programme. Xiaoling has been prompt, reliable, trustworthy and always willing to help with whatever was required by the Chinese Department and her other colleagues. She helped to create Chinese teaching resources, as well as providing oral lessons to our Chinese class pupils. Xiaoling enjoyed working at Abingdon and found this to be a very positive teaching experience for her. She is now applying to be an overseas sponsored Chinese teacher of Confucius Institutes and Hanban in China. We wish her all the best in the future.

Gao Zhang

David Domm

Sadly after just one year, we say farewell to David Domm, Economics & Business teacher, sixth form tutor and football coach. David settled quickly, establishing a role for himself within the department and beyond as goalie coach within the Other Half, whilst heading up the U15 football A team. He has been busy in another successful year with Young Enterprise in the fourth year and regularly helped out with geography trips to Oxford. His tutor group has thrived under his leadership. He is moving on to head up a busy department at Kennet School in Thatcham in September and we wish him all the very best in his new role.

Nicola King

Charlie Griffen

Charlie joined Abingdon in September 2016. As a very enthusiastic English teacher, he brought energy and passion to his lessons and to the English Department. He successfully completed his NQT year and thoroughly enjoyed engaging in the range of literature he was teaching with the boys. Charlie also made vast contributions to the Other Half, supporting CCF and sailing as well as rugby on a regular basis. He was also a committed boarding tutor who worked

hard to get to know his fourth year tutor group and build excellent relationships in the house. We wish him the very best of luck as he continues his teaching career in London.

Joanna Bridgeworth

Nathan Jones

Nathan Jones came to Abingdon in September 2016. He has completed his NQT year in the Mathematics Department teaching several classes and getting involved with sport in school. He is a keen runner and completed the Oxford Half Marathon in an impressive time. He has also been helping with the Cross Country, Squash and Athletics Clubs. Nathan has been a very good tutor and has worked hard to get to know his tutees. We wish him well as he embarks upon a career in the financial sector.

Samantha Coull

John Davies

John Davies arrived in January 2015 as Abingdon's first Director of Teaching and Learning and, as such, had the advantage and responsibility of defining properly what that role should be. By the time he left in August 2017, we all had a very powerful sense of what the position could

do for us. One of his defining qualities when at Abingdon was an evangelistic promotion of teacher improvement as an essential priority for all schools - it does not matter how long a teacher has been teaching, they always have something to improve on. In pursuing this, his own research was very evident - he was a very wide reader of up-to-date educational theory and, crucially, highly astute in divining what of it was actually useful and applicable to Abingdon's context. His gentle approach to improvement following the coaching model proved very successful in making teachers not feel threatened by his approach but very strongly supported and appropriately challenged and was also central to his success. He created some systems where they were needed, but was sure to create those as a collaborative effort with groups of leaders, so that the final products already had a wide endorsement and he led on the substantial change to teacher appraisal that is now in its first year of implementation.

Beyond his restless and roaming role prodding and poking teachers into self-reflection and improvement, John was also in the English classroom as a teacher himself and, of course, set the highest standards there too. On the pastoral side, he was a visiting boarding tutor in School House and contributed to sports coaching, from Rugby to Ultimate Frisbee, as well as impressing on the dance floor in Teachers Come Dancing! He is a man who likes to make himself busy. As a colleague, he was highly convivial - humorous, fun-loving and supportive - and as a friend I already miss him greatly. He left us for a Deputy Head Academic role at Kingswood School, Bath, and it will not be long, I suspect, before we see him moving into headship. I do hope that when he gets there, he will take some time to smell the flowers (and the baking bread) a little more.

Graeme May

James Green

James started in the Art Department in September 2015 and quickly settled into life at Abingdon. He was both respected and liked by boys and teachers alike and he built up a particularly brilliant rapport



John Davies



James Green

with his GCSE boys. James' artistic skills are outstanding and he would regularly set up his easel out in the art garden and would produce beautiful landscape paintings in his free periods. His knowledge of materials also extended into printmaking and ceramics and he was always willing to share ideas and techniques with others. James helped run numerous art clubs over the years, including Saturday workshops and these were all well attended and provided the boys a chance to improve and develop their skills. He was a calm and valued member of the department and we shall miss him hugely but wish him all the best at Bradfield School.

Emily O'Doherty

Oliver Pemberton

Oliver Pemberton joined the Maths Department in 2015. He has completed his PGCE and NQT years with us and has developed into a confident teacher of Mathematics. He has an enthusiasm for problem solving and has enjoyed challenging his classes. He has been involved with CCF, attending field days and camps. Oliver is also a keen rower and was often to be found at the boathouse. He has also been a reliable boarding tutor, working with the boys in

Crescent House. Oliver will be missed next year, as will his perfectly trained dog, Bagsie, who has been a hit with his classes and in the boarding house. He leaves us to take up an engineering post abroad for a year before attending Agricultural College.

Samantha Coull

Alex Stuart

Alex Stuart joined the Maths Department in 2015. Although only at Abingdon for two years, he has made positive impacts across a wide area of school life. He has taught Mathematics in Middle and Upper School, organised the pupil of the fortnight initiative in the department, has the best decorated classroom and successfully ran the various team competitions, selecting teams and taking them to regional rounds, reaching the finals with the senior team last year. He has coached Lower School hockey teams but his real outdoor passion is working with all the D of E groups. He has been on every walking expedition at all levels, driving the minibus and collecting and dropping off staff members across the countryside. He leaves us now to return to Cokethorpe as their Head of Mathematics and we wish him well for the future.

Samantha Coull

Matthew Edgar

Matthew Edgar joined the History Department in September 2013 straight from his PGCE course. Although a newcomer to the profession he quickly established himself as an effective classroom teacher. His no-nonsense approach ensured he had few problems settling in and it was quickly apparent that students enjoyed his classes. I always felt his Geordie accent helped him project more of a 'hardman' image than was possible with the normal BBC accents prevalent in the school and he was always happy to play up to this as the situation required.



Matthew Edgar

As a Lower School tutor the fact that (as Adam Jenkins noted) he was 'both pedantic and a pedant' certainly helped him manage what can sometimes be a chaotic year group with authority. This was always helpful on school trips where I could deploy Matt as the 'enforcer' if the antics of the boys seemed to be spiralling out of control. He helped out with D of E and his nickname of 'firestarter' in no way implied anything other than he was good at starting fires.

Outside of school Matt was a keen guitarist and could rock a mean Led Zeppelin roadie look when he let his beard grow. He also was a massive fantasy/sci-fi

fan and I would often see him buried in the *Chronicles of Castle Grayskull* or some such epic saga on school trips when long coach voyages dragged on. He also did some epic impressions - Yoda and the Churchill dog being my favourite. He was always good-humoured in his relations with colleagues in the department and Tudor-based banter flowed easily.

In the end the lure of London proved too strong. Matt's fiancé's decision to abandon academia and get a well-paid job in finance, although understandable, deprived us of a great teacher and so City of London Boys will now greet the ex-Byker Grove star and teacher to its common room. We shall miss him!

David McGill

Steve Newton

Steve joined us in 2012 following time in New Zealand teaching outdoor pursuits and a short return to teaching Design and Technology at Oakham. His contribution to school life crossed many areas; as a keen kayaker he contributed to the Kayaking Club and ran many water-based expeditions across the country. His subject knowledge was comprehensive and he pioneered the use of 3d printing within the department, developing the CAD skills of the boys in order to really exploit this developing manufacturing process. He taught across all of the



Steve Newton



Douglas Aitken

year groups in his time here, but the A-level students in particular benefitted from his wealth of industrial experience and creative ideas. He leaves us to lead his own department at the Stamford Endowed Schools in Lincolnshire.

Dan Hughes

Douglas Aitken

Douglas came to Abingdon to run the Modern Languages Department in 1998. During his 19 years here his skill and vitality have been evident in the many areas he has been involved in. A talented linguist who taught German and Italian throughout his time, he studied Spanish and French, too, which he later taught. Colleagues describe him as supportive even when busy, as open-minded and willing to try things out, but forthright in saying something was nonsense once he had tried to make it work. He rarely got annoyed, and was always engaging, and was prepared to prick any pomposity in himself or others. By 2003 he was a day housemaster, when, in his appraisal, I commented that "Douglas' lessons showed all the skill one would expect in an experienced and capable teacher who

has led a department... Douglas has an easy, charming manner with the pupils both inside the lesson, and outside. He respects them, and they respect him, and despite the other time pressures on him, with considerable Other Half involvement, boys report that they feel able to go to him if they have a problem." Having been a visiting tutor in School House on his arrival, Douglas later took over as Housemaster and ran the house successfully for seven years with his wife Yvonne and children Cameron and Eloise close at hand. Latterly he was also Head of Boarding. An enthusiastic hockey coach in the tundra of Tilsley, Douglas showed his commitment to helping out wherever the need when he became master i/c shooting. As a linguist Douglas has been an enthusiastic participant in exchanges and on other tours, clearly enjoying the experience of other cultures. Douglas had had to cope with ill health in recent years, but the respect between student and teacher, described in his 2003 appraisal, has helped carried him through, where others might have found difficulties. With retirement to Bostock Road we all hope to keep in contact with Douglas.

David Dawswell





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