

# AbingdonNews



## Farewell

The 2015 leavers started their final day in the Upper Sixth with a service in the school chapel.



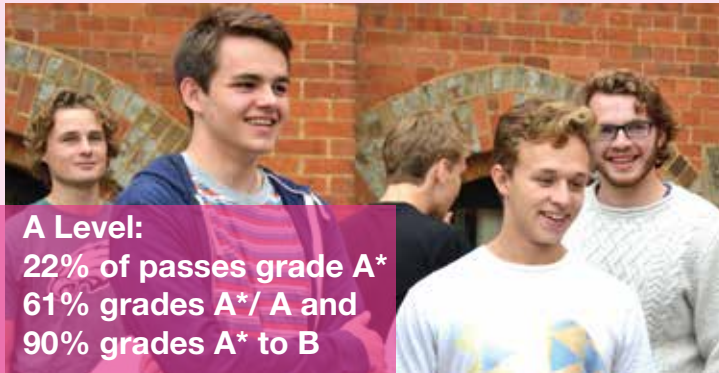
The boys went on to achieve an impressive 61% of passes at A\*/A and 67 boys gained three or more A\*/A grades at A Level.

Felicity Lusk congratulated the boys adding, "These results represent the culmination of much hard work over many years. They are not achieved lightly and the boys fully deserve recognition of their talent, effort and determination. I wish them all the very best for the future."

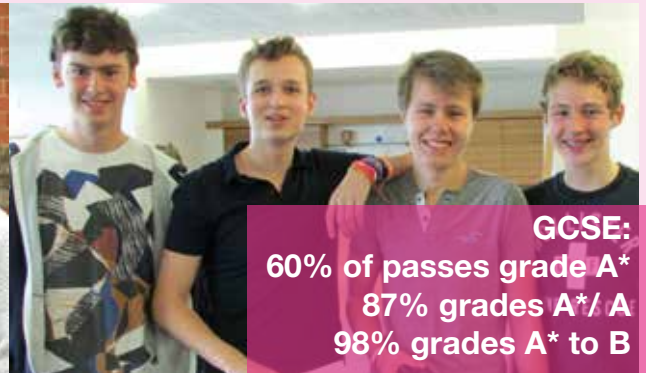


## A Level and GCSE Results

Full results can be found at [www.abingdon.org.uk/academic\\_results](http://www.abingdon.org.uk/academic_results)



**A Level:**  
22% of passes grade A\*  
61% grades A\*/ A and  
90% grades A\* to B



**GCSE:**  
60% of passes grade A\*  
87% grades A\*/ A  
98% grades A\* to B

### A level

The vast majority of boys have secured their first choice for further education including Choral and Organ Scholarships to Oxford and Cambridge, the study of composition at The Royal Academy of Music, places at a wealth of Russell Group universities, prestigious U.S. colleges and other impressive institutions. Boys will go on to study a wide range of

subjects including Medicine, Engineering, the Sciences, MFL, Economics and Law. Exeter, Bristol and Durham remain popular for a variety of courses as are Oxford and Cambridge where boys have won places for PPE, Modern Languages, History, Geography, Economics, Engineering, Classics, Chemistry, Law, Computer Sciences and Music.

### GCSE

The 2015 GCSE results were outstanding, breaking all previous records with the highest percentages of A\* and A\*/A grades ever achieved at Abingdon. 32 boys gained an impressive 10 or more A\* grades and 95 boys, over half the year group, gained all A\* or A grades.

## League Tables – *caveat emptor*

Abingdon School, along with around 40 other independent schools, has not appeared for some years in the annual August league tables. The decision not to participate was not some fit of pique at feeling hard done by in the leagues - far from it in fact - but one taken on the grounds that publicly ranking schools by exam results is an absurdly reductive thing to do. Worse than that - it's something that has been allowed to have far too strong an influence on how people evaluate a school. However, could the fascination with rankings be on the decline? Maybe. Certainly for Abingdon, despite its withdrawal, the interest in places continues to rise with applications at an all time high.

Abingdon's results are published in full on our website each year, subject by subject. We have nothing to hide, even down to the few Cs, Ds, Es and Us that our boys get. However, simple results tell you little about the actual teaching that goes on in a school, and that surely is what people should be most interested in. The academic measure of a school is a terribly hard thing to evaluate – it's value added. Does it push the most able into more stretching activities? Does it encourage

the more modest abilities to achieve their potential? Overall, does it nurture a life-long love of learning?

So how do you measure these things? The answer will never be in a number and there is no substitute for visiting a school and doing your research (its website, its ISI report, its reputation in the area...). A school's ethos will also be evident in the pupils. They will often be very proud of their school but not blind to its weaknesses. Don't expect perfection in a school - anyone who tries to claim that *all* the teachers are perennially outstanding or that there is *absolutely no* bullying of any kind is quite simply not telling the truth. The measure to use here is what the school's approach to these issues has been.

Ascertain also the quality of its pastoral provision - a thing impossible to reduce to a nice neat number but of crucial importance in knowing if your child is likely to be happy there. Will this school be a partner with you on the often bumpy adolescent journey? Will you have honest and easy communication with them? Do you sense they really like and understand children? How far, too, will the school stretch your child beyond the academic world?

What is its extra-curricular provision and policy? Will it be likely both to help already developing interests prosper as well as awaken others hitherto dormant?

So, beware of tables that measure only exam results. They give you one piece of information and that may well be more a measure of a school's selectivity rather than the thing you're really interested in: the quality of education. The figures themselves are not always as truth-telling as you might hope. With the increase in types of qualification available, unsatisfactory attempts have been made to find conversions rates for pre-U, IB and A Level. At GCSE this will only get worse with some schools having letter grades for iGCSEs alongside the new 1-9 GCSE scoring system. Ask yourself too if all grades are being declared or indeed if pupils destined not to bring credit to a school have been 'managed out' of taking certain subjects: it has been known to happen. Overall, strive not to confuse *exams* with *education*. It's the latter that you want a school to have at the heart of its ethos and that's a much bigger and more important thing than just passing exams.

*Graeme May, Deputy Head Academic*

## Abingdon welcomes Michael Windsor



“ I am delighted to have been given the opportunity to be the next Head of the Abingdon Foundation and I am very much looking forward to starting next September. During our seven years at Reading Blue Coat, my family and I have become accustomed to life by the Thames, and we are now looking forward to moving upstream to Abingdon.

I was attracted to the position of Head at Abingdon for a number of reasons. Both the Senior School and Prep School value scholarship and achieve high academic standards while also understanding the importance of music, drama,

debating, sport, CCF and so on in developing pupils' confidence, resourcefulness and independence. When I visited both schools, I was struck by their powerful sense of community and camaraderie and my family and I are looking forward to being part of this. It was apparent that pupils enjoy their time at school and that they commit themselves to making the most of their experiences. The schools have a strong sense of tradition of course but this is evidently allied to excitement about the future and the Foundation is clearly forward-thinking and not afraid to innovate.

When I arrive in September 2016 I aim to get to know the pupils, staff and parents of the Foundation and to achieve a deep understanding of the schools and their ethos by observing lessons, activities and daily school life. I believe that only with this understanding in place will it be possible to build upon the impressive programme of innovation and development that has unfolded in previous years. I am also looking forward to building powerful and effective partnerships with other local schools and the town of Abingdon.

I am sure the coming twelve months will give me a chance to start this process but I will also be focused on ensuring that I leave Blue Coat in the best possible state – in the firm knowledge that the schools in the Foundation will continue to thrive under Felicity Lusk's leadership. ”



## Young Bridge Star

Cameron Butcher, and his partner from the European School, came first in the English Bridge Union's Simultaneous Pairs Competition. They beat 99 other pairs from all over England. Cameron's achievement is particularly impressive as he is only in the First Year.



Anthony Bracey

## Olympiad Champions

Sixth former Anthony Bracey was one of the four students making up the UK's first ever winning team at the International Linguistics Olympiad held in Bulgaria in July. The UK team were up against 43 teams from 29 countries. Anthony also achieved an individual silver medal in the competition, which was the most successful yet for the UK.

Earlier in the year, Anthony and Sebastian Mulford were awarded gold medals in the first round of the UK competition and Anthony went on to the second round and then to be selected for the UK team. Congratulations also to fifth year Robert Harris who was awarded a Gold in the Physics Olympiad GCSE challenge and to sixth formers Jack Bowen and Adam Al-Yousuf who were both awarded Silver in the AS Physics Olympiad.

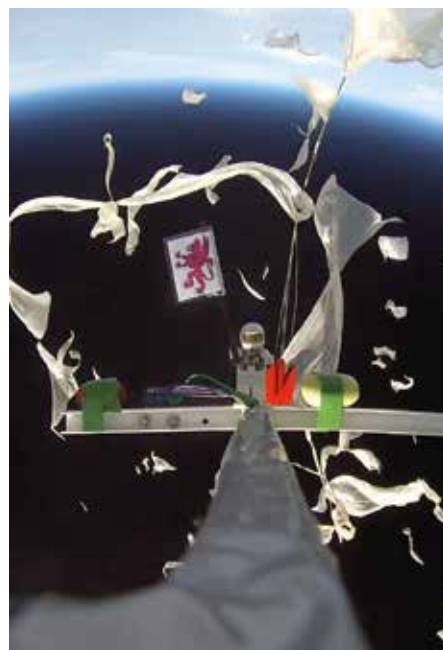


## Talented Writers in Print

This term the School launched a new publication, 'The Abingdon Anthology'; a collection of 37 short stories inspired by the School and the town. The stories are written by pupils and staff with the help of the School's Writer-in-Residence, Jason Hewitt, who also wrote a specially commissioned story for the anthology. The stories are wide-ranging: some humorous, others thrillers, there are detective and ghost stories, historical and dystopian tales plus fantasy. Some are from a child's perspective and others an adult's. It is a lovely legacy for the School; made possible from donations to the Annual Fund.



## The Griffen Soars



Following 12 weeks' work, in which a group of lower sixth physicists explored a wide spectrum of scientific disciplines from Atmospheric through Chemistry and Physics to Engineering, the Griffen balloon took off from the front of school and climbed to the edge of space. The boys tracked its progress, and were ready in a minibus ('the chase vehicle') to collect the payload on landing. The flight took about two hours, reached a maximum height of 29,410m and the temperature at burst was -39.6 degrees C.

The balloon's payload carried a variety of experiments. As well as the GPS module transmitting information on position, there were measurements of temperature, humidity and air pressure. The boys designed experiments to study the change in the sky's colour and UV levels. Video footage of the flight was taken with two GoPros and can be seen on the school website: [www.abingdon.org.uk/the\\_skys\\_the\\_limit\\_apr15](http://www.abingdon.org.uk/the_skys_the_limit_apr15)

This project was funded by donations to the Abingdon School Annual Fund.

## Live below the Line



Mrs Wenham and 12 members of her third year tutor group took part in the Live Below the Line schools challenge to raise money for Unicef. The campaign invites individuals, groups and communities to eat and drink on just £1 a day, the UK equivalent of the extreme poverty line.

By 1.30pm, when the meagre lunch of egg fried rice with a few vegetables was ready (cooked by the boys), it was the first food they had eaten since watery porridge for breakfast, and was eagerly devoured, despite its lack of taste.

## Community service



VE Day at Bridge House, Abingdon

A group of Community Service volunteers visit Bridge House every week to run a very well attended and popular quiz. This term they also joined in with a lively VE Day celebration party.

## Abingdon Fitzharrys Partnership

Over the last year Abingdon has been working in partnership with Fitzharrys School to develop innovative practice and to share and broaden experience in order to improve teaching and learning at both schools. This term staff involved in the project presented their work at a very enjoyable evening. It is hoped that this mutually beneficial partnership can be developed and widened in the future.



## Boarders' Roller Disco



Amongst the many boarding activities this term, the boys showed flair and flamboyance at the Roller Disco with the girls of St Swithun's.

## UK Chess Challenge

Eleven Abingdon players took part in the county stage of the UK Chess Challenge. After six rounds of "rapidplay" (30 minutes on each clock) Abingdon boys had won three sections and four had qualified for the Southern "Gigafinal". Abingdon's "City 4" team concluded its season in the Oxford and District Chess League finishing second in Division 4 and hoping for promotion.



## Fête de La Musique



Following the French tradition, Abingdon held its own Fête de la Musique. Originating in Paris in 1982, the festival is to celebrate music by enabling anyone to perform and listen to all styles of music absolutely free. Three very different groups performed in the open air at lunchtime to an enthusiastic and appreciative crowd.

## Art/Classics Workshop

Lower school boys took part in a joint Art/Classics Workshop. Following an introductory talk on Classical Greek art, they split into groups to undertake one of three tasks. One group produced their own life-size versions of the Olympians from cardboard, another wrote a version of the myth of Perseus and then created masks in the style of those used in the Greek theatre to put on a staged performance of their story. The last group created metopes depicting the labours of Heracles to convert Boarders' Hall into a Greek temple.





## ABINGDON SCIENCE PARTNERSHIP

The Abingdon Science Partnership, ASP, is an organisation based at and supported by the School. The aim of the Partnership is to encourage access to and broaden participation in science for all. This year ASP has been working with a range of organisations, including Science Oxford, local schools and the exam boards, offering various courses and science events for different audiences. These range from family science clubs on a Saturday to running a day course for secondary school science technicians.

ASP continues to provide CREST Star activities for local primary schools, and is looking forward to awarding CREST Star certificates to hundreds of year 1, 2 and 3 pupils from across Abingdon (and beyond!). ASP also works alongside the exam boards running information evenings for Heads of Departments about the new A level and GCSE exams.

In other initiatives, ASP and Science Oxford provide continuing professional development courses for primary science teachers. Recent topics have included 'thinking scientifically' and 'practical programming' which help teachers plan and deliver practical investigations and basic coding in their science lessons.

### Waste Court Renamed



From September 2015, Waste Court will be known as Austin House and the housemaster will be James Golding. The decision to rename Waste Court has been debated over the last ten years and with the change in housemaster it is an opportunity to make the house name permanent in keeping with other houses that contain boarders: School House and Crescent House.

#### Why Austin House ?

Alan Murray Austin was the first Old Abingdonian to lose his life in the First World War when his ship, HMS Hawke, was torpedoed in the North Sea on 15 October 1914. It is therefore fitting in the centenary of the First World War to commemorate Alan Murray Austin. More details about Alan can be found in the School's online archive:

[www.abingdon.org.uk/1ww](http://www.abingdon.org.uk/1ww)

### Back to the 70s

Lower School Art Club has been looking back to the seventies by creating tie dye T-shirts.



### Autumn Open Days

Abingdon School:

Saturday 3 October 9.30am-12.30pm

Abingdon Prep:

Saturday 10 October 10.00am-12.00pm\*

Sixth Form Open Evening:

Tuesday 6 October 4.30pm-7pm

Booking recommended

\*Abingdon Prep is a ten minute drive from the Senior School at Frilford OX13 5NX

## Dates for your diary

### Saturday 3 October

A Celebration of Abingdon Rowing  
Abingdon School Boathouse

This event is open to anyone involved in Abingdon School rowing, past and present. Numbers are limited and reservations can be made online. For further details go to [www.abingdon.org.uk/rowingcelebrationoct15](http://www.abingdon.org.uk/rowingcelebrationoct15) or email: [alison.lester@abingdon.org.uk](mailto:alison.lester@abingdon.org.uk)



### Thursday 15 October

Dedication of the Yang Science Centre

4 pm: All parents and pupils invited.

Please RSVP online by 21/9/15

[www.abingdon.org.uk/dedicationevent](http://www.abingdon.org.uk/dedicationevent)

### Concerts

#### Sunday 29 November

Joint Choral Society Concert

7 pm: Amey Theatre; tickets:

£6, £4(concessions), £16 (family)

#### Friday 4 December

Christmas Concert

7 pm: Sheldonian Theatre, Oxford

£6, £4(concessions), £16 (family)

### Drama Productions

#### Saturday 3 October

Abingdon Film Unit, 12th Annual Screening and presentation of the Grigsby Awards

7pm: Amey Theatre (free admission)

Tues and Weds 24, 25 November  
"Constellations"

Senior drama production

7pm: St Helen's Lecture Theatre

#### Thurs and Fri 26, 27 November

First, Second and Third Year drama productions

7pm: Amey Theatre

#### Thursday 3 December

The Rocky Horror Picture Show

6th form charity screening and "shadowcasting"

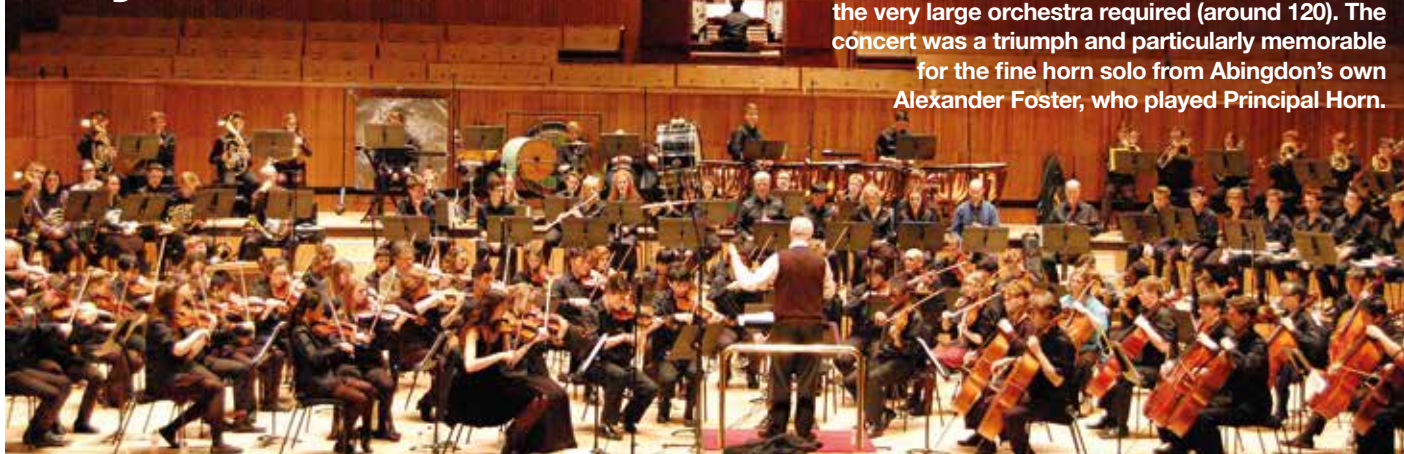
7pm: Amey Theatre

*Please note details may be provisional – please check closer to the event.*



## Musicians triumph at the Royal Festival Hall

Eleven of Abingdon's musicians took part in a hugely memorable inter-school performance of Richard Strauss' Alpine Symphony alongside his Four Last Songs at a concert at London's Royal Festival Hall. The work is rarely performed due to the very large orchestra required (around 120). The concert was a triumph and particularly memorable for the fine horn solo from Abingdon's own Alexander Foster, who played Principal Horn.



## May Day at Magdalen College



Chapel Choir was invited to sing Choral Evening Prayer at Magdalen College on May Day - a rare privilege as the College seldom permits visiting choirs to sing in Chapel. To do so, on the day of the year when Magdalen College is the centre of Oxford's attention as the leader of May Day celebrations, was a great honour. There were superb solo contributions from Hugh Cutting, Mitch Keely, Owen Ravden and Thomas Keogh. The service was expertly accompanied by James Anderson-Besant on the Chamber Organ.



## A Fitting Finale

The Summer Concert was a fitting finale to a very successful year for the Music Department. Highlights included: original compositions from the pen of Mitchell Keely, virtuosic horn playing from Alexander Foster, expressive singing from Hugh Cutting and excellent ensemble playing from our senior bands and orchestras.

The upcoming talent of the Second Orchestra was extremely exciting as it gives us much to look forward to as these younger musicians move up the school and take the place of the extremely talented boys who leave us this year.

## A Midsummer Night's Dream ... sort of ...



Shakespeare's timeless comedy was given a makeover in this abbreviated version by members of the Lower School Drama Club. "It's Shakespeare, Jim, but not as we know it". Fast, furious and full of storytelling fun, this was a roller-coaster performance.



## Lower School Gala Concert

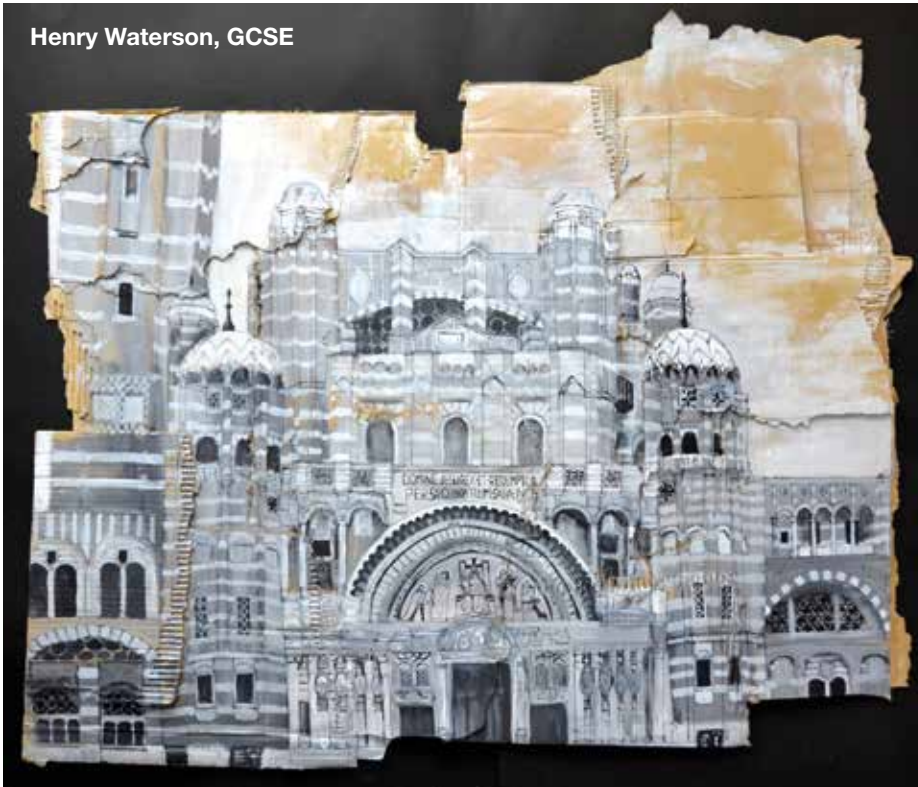
120 boys from the Lower School entertained a captive audience in a programme of wonderful variety.



## Art and Design Technology Exhibitions

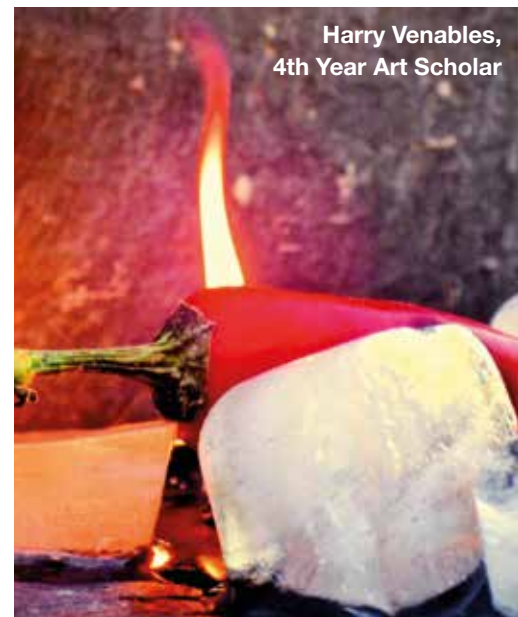
This term it has been a delight to view the extraordinary talent on show in the summer art and design technology exhibitions. Below are just a few of the highlights, many more can be seen on the website.

Henry Waterson, GCSE

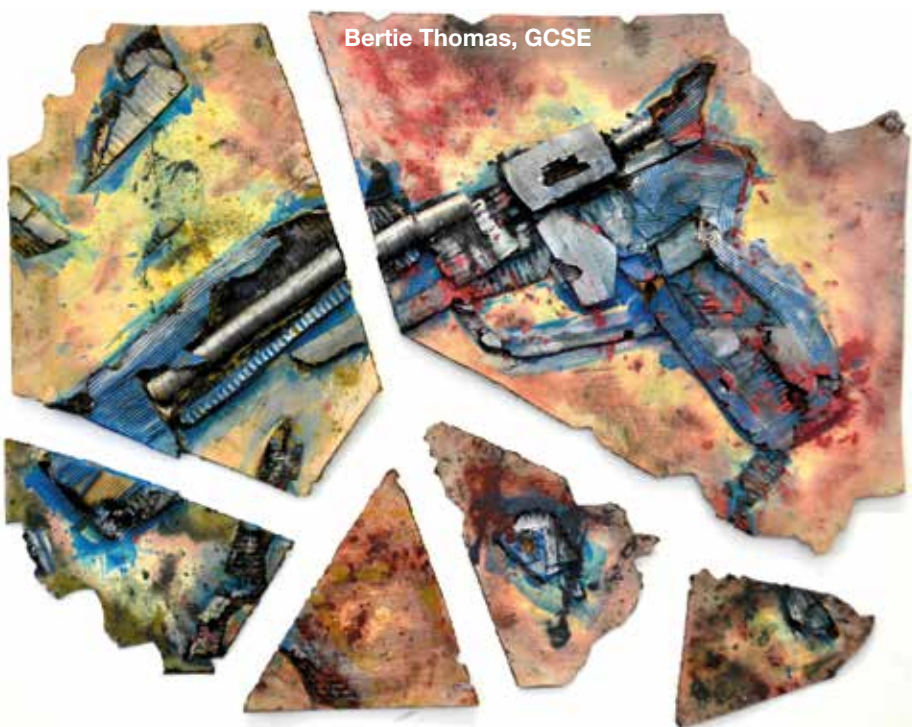


Jack Bradley, A Level

Harry Venables,  
4th Year Art Scholar



Bertie Thomas, GCSE



Arman Garmroudi, AS Level

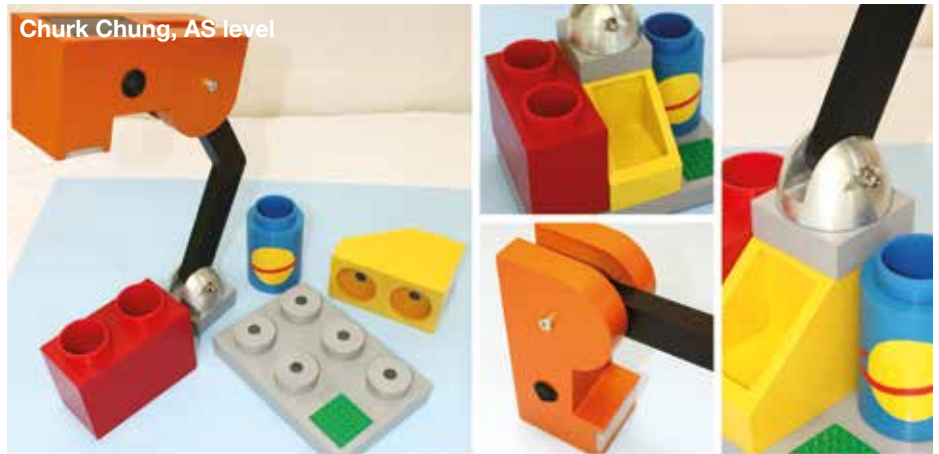




Josh Forman, GCSE



Churk Chung, AS level



Piers Butler, GCSE



Jack Percival, A Level



Jeremy Chan, A level



Daniel Johnson, GCSE





# Abingdonians Out and About



## Battlefields

Third year students spent three days on the Ypres Salient and at the Somme learning about the First World War. The boys tracked down memorials to three OAs in Pozieres cemetery.



## Hadrian's Wall

Third year classicists explored Hadrian's Wall visiting Vindolanda and a more recent Northumberland attraction, the Carlisle cinema, to see the Avengers film!



Boarders enjoyed a wide range of activities this term.

Amongst them was a fiercely contested paintballing battle ...



## Boarders

... and caving, canoeing and rock climbing in Wales.



## CCF

More than 90 cadets and staff were involved in the CCF's annual Easter Camp at Westdown Camp, Salisbury Plain. The cadets all made excellent progress. Congratulations to Cdt William Franklin for the award of Best Recruit and to Cdt Oliver Leafe for Best Advanced Infantry Cadre Cadet.



# Abingdonians Out and About

The return leg of the American exchange to Chaminade College, Missouri, saw 11 boys hosted by their US partners. Third year pupil, Charlie Clarke sums up the trip, "I thought the exchange was a really cool experience packed with new things to try, people to meet. I was with a great family and we got up to some interesting American things that I absolutely loved!"



31 boys took part in the return language exchange to Lycée la Nativité in Aix en Provence. Trips included Marseille, Le Pont du Gard, a spectacular Roman aqueduct, Nîmes with its Roman amphitheatre and the mediaeval castle of Les Baux de Provence.



Second year pupils took to kayaks and canoes and caved, climbed and walked, sometimes in challenging hail and 70mph winds, during their stay at Plas Pencelli near Brecon.

Five lower sixth pupils completed their Gold DofE practice expedition with a return sailing trip from Plymouth to Salcombe and Dartmouth. Fifth formers Dan Neild, Giles Oldershaw and Arthur Bruce also completed the intensive, week-long Day Skipper Sailing Course. This is a fantastic achievement for the three boys, especially at the minimum age of 16.



The First Year enjoyed a week at the PGL Liddington Centre on their annual Adventure Trip. They made the most of the glorious sunshine taking part in a range of activities on, above and below ground including abseiling, quadbiking, raft building and zip wire.



# Abingdon Sport

## An outstanding year for Abingdon Sportsmen

During the last year, an impressive number of boys enjoyed an unprecedented level of success in the sporting arena. 16 boys represented their country, including England U18 hockey and rugby captains, and a further nine won titles at a national level. And these achievements were not limited to a handful of sports but covered a wide range including rugby, hockey, rowing, athletics, fencing, shooting, karate, cycling, orienteering and cricket. This is due, in part, to the wide range of opportunities on offer to pupils and the encouragement to excel in their particular field, as well as, of course, the boys' own outstanding dedication and determination.



Golf had another fine season with good performances in the Oxfordshire Schools' Competition and the HMC Foursomes, being topped off by second place in the ISGA National Plate Finals.

## Tennis



There were convincing wins against Shiplake, Oratory, Moulsoford, Radley and Warwick School and draws against tough competition, including Bradfield, MCS and Cothill. The highlight of the season was the U15A IV coming third out of 16 top independent schools in the country in the Eton Pairs Independent Schools Tennis Association Competition.



Ethan Moody is the national windsurfing champion in the U15 5.8m class. He picked up a clean sweep in all four races at the Championships.

The Rifle Club had excellent performances at the Oxfordshire Rifle Association Summer Meeting. James Hogge won the County Junior Championship and the A and B teams won the Symonds Bowl and Markland Cup respectively. The Club very much enjoyed their exchange visit with the Rifle Club from Stade, Germany.

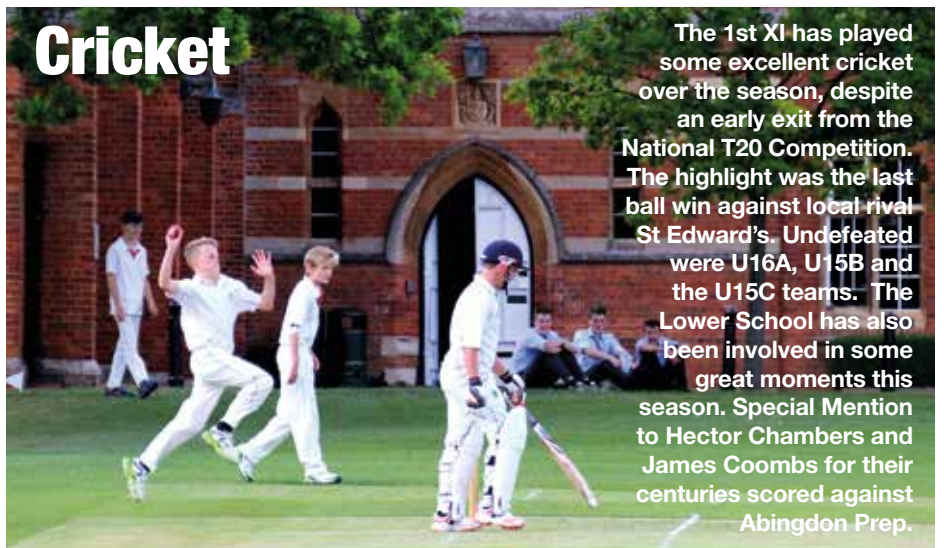






## Athletics

Athletics saw a term of participation by many with success for a few. Unusually for the Athletics Club there were no outright victories but a lot of enjoyment and effort!



## Cricket

The 1st XI has played some excellent cricket over the season, despite an early exit from the National T20 Competition. The highlight was the last ball win against local rival St Edward's. Undeclared were U16A, U15B and the U15C teams. The Lower School has also been involved in some great moments this season. Special Mention to Hector Chambers and James Coombs for their centuries scored against Abingdon Prep.



## Boat Club

The 1st VIII enjoyed wins at Nottingham City, Metropolitan and Reading Amateur Regatta. Highlights at National Schools included Silver for Tom Digby and Adam Teece in Championship Pairs and a first medal for Max Thompson in the Junior 15 Single Sculls. The J16 A crew picked up their first regatta pot at Bedford. At Henley the 1st VIII were drawn early against a strong St Paul's crew who went on to win the event. Five Abingdon boys attended the GB Junior Final Selection trials. Tom Digby and Guy Screation were selected for the Junior World Championships in Rio, Max Townley was selected for the Coupe de La Jeunesse and Adam Teece was selected to represent England at the Home Countries Regatta.



## Minibeasts Come Alive!



Pre-prep has been fascinated by their minibeasts topic and were very excited about getting outside to see the real thing on a visit to Wittenham Clumps. The boys used nets to catch the bugs in the meadows, woods and pond and were amazed by what they saw.

## Grandparents Come to Tea



Proud grandsons from Years 3-6 took their visitors on tours showing off a wide range of work from art and design pieces to history projects and creative stories. Grandparents enjoyed an afternoon tea in the hall entertained by instrumental soloists from Year 6, poetry from Year 5 and a medley of songs from Years 3 and 4. All generations had a lovely afternoon.

## It's Not Just Cricket on Tour



The Under 11 A XI played very well on tour in Devon, winning both their matches against Plymouth College and Yelverton Bohemians and embracing the challenge of learning to surf at Polzeath in Cornwall.

## Oxford's History



8S thoroughly enjoyed their tour of Oxford, taking in a selection of the City's exceptional historical sites including the Botanic Gardens, Pitt Rivers, Magdalen College, Christchurch and Radcliffe Square. Each boy was designated a site at which they told the rest of the group interesting facts about its history and significance.

One of the highlights was the ascent of the clock tower of St. Mary the Virgin Church, at which point the clouds providentially opened... to reveal glorious sunshine and views. The rather wonderful ice creams at George and Danver's proved a fitting finale to a lovely day.



## Latin and History Experience



Year 6 visited Chedworth Roman Villa in a cross-curricular trip which formed part of their studies into the Roman Conquest and settlement of Britain in History, as well as giving them the opportunity to witness Latin in an authentic context. For several pupils lunch consisted of some 'genuine' Roman delicacies, including an adaptation of roasted vole in one boy's lunch box!



## Outstanding CE, Scholarships and Awards

It has been a wonderfully successful year for our Year 8 boys. They complete their time at Abingdon Prep having achieved a record breaking 19 awards which includes 13 scholarships and 6 exhibitions. Making up this remarkable total, there were no fewer than 9 academic awards including the top Academic Scholarship to Abingdon School for the fourth year in succession, as well as scholarships and exhibitions across the curriculum in Art, Drama, Music and Sport. In the 13+ Common Entrance exams, all boys gained their places in senior schools with an excellent set of grades achieved across the curriculum - indeed five boys gained 7 or more A grades. Overall it has been a tremendous all-round performance and the boys' outstanding success is richly deserved.

## Thriving Art Department



The Art Department has had an extremely busy term with exhibitions



for parents at school, 18 pieces of art on display in the Young Art Oxford Exhibition at the Ashmolean and a free standing sculpture workshop.

## Debating success

Three pupils took part in the 'Let's Debate' competition, run annually by Oratory School. After morning workshops on voice projection and how to structure an argument, the motion they were asked to propose was: "This House believes that the government should have access to our e-mails and phones." The boys performed very well, earning fourth place and a medal for the most outstanding individual performance on the day.

## Wind in the Willows



There was a very enthusiastic audience for a memorable and immensely enjoyable performance from Years 3 and 4 of Kenneth Grahame's classic. The adventures of Toad, Ratty, Badger and Mole, plus the Stoats and the Weasels were all woven together in an entertaining narrative, interspersed with lively choruses and songs. Much fun was had by all!



# Connecting Parents, Supporting School Life

## The Social Network for Parents

### Things you might not have known...

You may have danced or dined at a school event, stocked up at the Second-hand Uniform Shop, quizzed against other parents, used the car share scheme, or perhaps you're about to meet up with fellow parents and your year group reps for the first time. Whichever it may be, as an Abingdon School parent, you're automatically members of ASPA (at no extra charge). With your support, we're pleased to be able to support the parent community and to help towards school life. Here are five things you might not have known...

1. Over 3000 parents have come to ASPA organised events over the last five years, and many more before that!
2. Over £28,000 has been donated to the Annual Fund (which supports school

life) since 2011 and this is largely thanks to the number of events supported by parents.

3. Each year, a group of boys are recipients of the OA and ASPA Travel Awards, helping towards the cost of overseas experiences, usually involving research or charity work. This year there are six recipients to whom ASPA and the OA team have donated £1,000 each.
4. The Second-hand Uniform Shop has raised £17,000 in the last four years, which includes the donation of the Yamaha Grand Piano now living in the foyer of the Amey Theatre.
5. Many parents and boys have used the car share scheme, helping to save fuel costs, and the environment.

#### Want to know more?

Find us on the school website or come along to one of our meetings – anyone is welcome and help at events is always appreciated.



### Yee-haw!

#### A great night was had by all at the Summer Barn Dance

In June, we held the ASPA annual whole school event – a Barn Dance and Buffet with 180 guests kitted out in checked shirts and jeans! The Ipsden Barn was transformed into a magical scene decorated with fairy lights, bunting, hay bales and flowers and the evening kicked off with a glass of fizz, followed by plenty of energetic dancing! A delicious hog and lamb roast and 'Eton Mess' and chocolate profiteroles followed by cheese, biscuits and coffee finished off a hugely successful night which we hope to continue to host biennially.

We would like to thank again all our parent helpers as well as Ali Grimstone-Jones and Karen Bourdon for donating straw and hay bales. We'd also like to thank Nick and Kate Miller who own Ipsden Barn.



### Save the date: 2015/2016 events

10 October 2015  
3rd Year Italian Night

7 Novemebr 2015  
Lower School Supper

27 February 2016  
Quiz Night

21 May 2016  
End of Year Event:  
Dinner, Disco & Auction

For full details of all events go to ASPA website:

[www.abingdon.org.uk/aspa](http://www.abingdon.org.uk/aspa)



## 2014-15 Annual Fund supports a range of projects and activities for boys

Abingdon's 2014-15 Annual Fund has raised £63,000 to fund a wide array of academic, extra-curricular and pastoral care projects, activities and purchases, all of which enhance school life for Abingdon boys.



The School would like to thank the Abingdon School Parents' Association (ASPA) and the Second-hand Uniform Shop (SUS) as well as parents and alumni whose donations funded the following:

- Piano for Amey Theatre Foyer
- 3D Printer
- Student History Magazine
- Online Language Lab
- Hockey Training Goals and Pitch Dividers
- 7-a-side Football Goals
- High Altitude Balloon Project
- Fencing Scoring Boxes and Masks
- Health Centre Bench
- Human Eye Model
- Writer in Residence Programme
- Guest Speakers for Modern Languages
- Cricket Net Bays
- BBQ for Boarding Houses
- Lenten Life Christian Faith Exploration Week
- Product Handling Library for Design & Technology
- Photos to decorate Waste Court Boarding House
- Travel Bursary for Classics Trip



If you would like to make a donation to projects in Abingdon's 2015-16 Annual Fund, please visit [www.abingdon.org.uk/annual\\_fund](http://www.abingdon.org.uk/annual_fund) for more information



## Abingdon Old Abingdonians

# Old Abingdonians making their name on stage and screen

Noël Coward famously advised against a career on stage, but it seems no amount of sensible advice can deter Abingdonians from entering the arts. Long known as the alma mater of *Radiohead*, *Toby Jones* (1985), *Tom Hollander* (1985) and *David Mitchell* (1992), Abingdon now has a new generation of actors, writers, directors, filmmakers, comedians and musicians making their names.

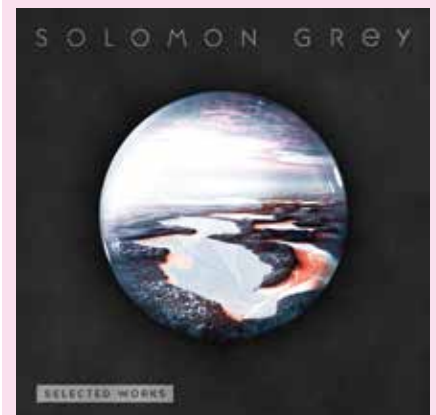
A growing number of Abingdon alumni are working in film and television. *Sam Johnson's* (2006) latest film *Billy the Kid* features John Bell, star of *The Hobbit*. *Will McDowell's* (2011) first feature (*Never Better*) premiered in London recently. *Matt Copson* (2010) is producing his next film in Japan while *Tian Ji* (2010) has just won a BAFTA scholarship to study creative film production in Hong Kong.

Perhaps, Mr Coward, the stage is not such a bad place after all?



*Mike Bartlett* (1999) has established a reputation as one of Britain's most exciting playwrights. He recently won an Olivier Award for his 2014 play *King Charles III*.

In New York, *Jonny Donahoe* (2001) wowed off-Broadway audiences with his solo performances of *Every Brilliant Thing*, a play co-written with Duncan Macmillan and described by the *Guardian* as "one of the funniest plays you'll ever see."



*Joe Wilson's* (2000) band *Solomon Grey* recently signed to the Decca label and produced music for the BBC's adaptation of J.K. Rowling's *A Casual Vacancy*. *Simon Evans* (2002) is a director whose recent London production of *Almost Maine* won high praise from *The Times*, *Independent* and *Daily Mail*.

Some Abingdonians are making names in comedy. *Paddy Gervers* (2008) is one half of the comedy blues band *Jonny and the Baptists*, now tearing up the tarmac on the UK tour circuit. *Fin Taylor* (2008) is building a successful career as a stand-up. *Ed Rowett's* (2005) first sitcom series for Radio 4, *Reluctant Persuaders* airs this summer.



## OA Club Events Michaelmas Term

**Saturday 5 September**

### OA Rugby Match and Sportmen's Luncheon

10.30 am – Match on Waste Court Field  
12.30 pm – Lunch in the Sports Centre Hospitality Suite.

OAs are invited to play in an Under 23s v Over 23s 15-a-side OA rugby match followed by lunch. Opportunity to watch Abingdon's 1st XV rugby team play against St Edward's from 2.30 pm.

**Monday 21 September**

### Hong Kong Reception

6.30 pm – 8.30 pm, Excelsior Hotel, Hong Kong

A reception for OAs, current and former parents and friends of the School.

**Saturday 3 October**

### School Open Day

An informal opportunity to visit Abingdon. OAs are welcome from 11.30 am.

**Saturday 3 October**

### A Celebration of Abingdon Rowing

Event at the School Boathouse  
See page 6. Advance booking essential.

**Saturday 10 October**

### OA Club AGM

12.30 pm – 1.00 pm, Lacies Court  
Open to all OAs. If you would like to stay for lunch, please email:

[alison.lester@abingdon.org.uk](mailto:alison.lester@abingdon.org.uk)

Spectators welcome for Abingdon's 1st XV v Radley College rugby match on Waste Court Field from 2.30 pm.



Full details of all events and booking:

[www.abingdon.org.uk/oa/events](http://www.abingdon.org.uk/oa/events)

Any questions, please call:

01235 849074



**Saturday 7 November**

### OA Badminton Event

1.00 pm to 4.30 pm, Sports Hall

**Monday 9 November**

### Battle of Britain 75th Anniversary Lecture by Tony Edwards (OA 1962)

5.30 pm, Amey Theatre – open to the public, no charge.



**Wednesday 11 November**

### OA Club London Drinks Reception

6.00 pm – 8.30 pm, Charterhouse, EC1M 6AN. Open to all OAs.

**Friday 20 November**

### Sixth Form Careers Evening

6.00 pm – 9.30 pm, Abingdon School  
An event jointly hosted by the School's Careers Department and the OA Club for sixth formers. Small group discussions followed by networking buffet supper. Early- and mid-career stage OAs interested in participating, please email [alumni@abingdon.org.uk](mailto:alumni@abingdon.org.uk)



## 2015 Year Group Reunions

6 June 2015

The School bell tolled to mark the start of this year's reunions held for 1945, 1955, 1965, 1975, 1985, 1995, 2005 and 2013 leavers. A Chapel service was followed by a drinks reception in the Jekyll Garden. The 130 guests then divided for year group photographs and tours of the School and later gathered for a buffet dinner in the Dining Hall.

"It was so interesting for me to have a tour of the School and to see how it has changed (and not changed!) since I was there. It was also fascinating to spend time with old classmates and teachers, some of whom I hadn't seen for over thirty years." Simon Tonks (1985)



## Tennis: School v OAs

19 June 2015

The standard of tennis was very high throughout the fixture. Both Abingdonians and Old Abingdonians enjoyed themselves in this competitive yet informal event. After 8 sets of doubles, the score was tied at a nail-biting 4 sets all. Overall, the Old Abingdonians managed to secure a 5 set to 4 set victory, with a convincing deciding set from Peter Druett (1981) and Ben Williams (1991). The most impressive performance has to go to Joel Morris (2012) and Peter Honey (2013) who only dropped one game in their two sets.



# Abingdon Out of the Past



## Cum Voco Venite

Having been silent for a few months the school bell is now back in working order. Cast by Mears and Stainbank of Whitechapel in 1880, both bell and mechanism were in need of attention. White's of Appleton carried out the work, the same company that originally installed it 135 years ago.

The bell is inscribed with the name of the makers, of the Headmaster who commissioned it, Edgar Summers, and with the instruction: Cum voco venite – Come when I call.



## Palmyra

**James Dawkins and Robert Wood discovering the Ruins of Palmyra.**  
(Dawkins is wearing the yellow boots.)

Gavin Hamilton 1758,  
Scottish National Gallery

There has been much about Palmyra in the news recently but few people know of the connection it has with Abingdon School. In May 1750, OA James Dawkins, with the classical scholar Robert Wood and Giovanni Borra an architectural draughtsman, made a serious journey of archaeological exploration to sites of classical antiquity in Asia Minor. These included Palmyra. In 1753 Wood published *The Ruins of Palmyra* containing numerous detailed and accurate drawings of the site. It is believed that Dawkins funded both the expedition and the book and that the cost was somewhere in the region of £50,000. Dawkins owed his wealth to the family's sugar plantations in Jamaica.

## Blue Plaque for Arthur Preston OA

L to R : Cllr Paul Harrison (Vice-Chair SODC), Jackie Smith, Felicity Lusk, Cllr Helen Pighills (Mayor of Abingdon), Professor Robert Evans (Chair Oxfordshire Blue Plaques)



At a small ceremony on 12 June, Jackie Smith, Honorary Archivist of both the Borough and Christ's Hospital of Abingdon, unveiled a Blue Plaque on Whitefield, the School Medical Centre. The plaque records the fact that Arthur Preston, 1852-1942, lived here from 1896 until his death. Preston was a pupil at the School in the 1850s. He trained as a Chartered Accountant and was a founder member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants. After his retirement in 1909 he gave his time to the town of Abingdon and to Abingdon School, serving as Mayor, Master of Christ's Hospital, Governor of Abingdon School and as historian of all three. The School owes him a particular debt for the part he played in securing the Waste Court estate in 1928.



## Mystery Motto

To the right of Arthur Preston's Blue Plaque there is another plaque, which people have tried in vain to decipher. However, one of the guests at the unveiling, Stephanie Jenkins, had no problem reading it. Starting at the bottom left: VIRTUTE (by virtue) ACQUIRITUR (is acquired) HONOS (honour) – honour is acquired by virtue. It turns out that this is the Richardson family motto and that Charles Richardson, whose monogram can just be made out, built Whitefield in 1871.