



The Yang Science Centre



Securing the Future of Science

On 15 October the School celebrated the opening of the Yang Science Centre by Professor Sir David Weatherall, molecular geneticist and Oxford Regius Professor of Medicine from 1992 to 2000. The Science Centre houses 21 teaching laboratories, study areas, project rooms and preparatory rooms.

Professor Weatherall, who is also a former parent, recommended a novel approach to studying science, advising boys ...



“ ... not to believe a word that they (the teachers) tell you, but to hang everything on its head. ”



Fantastic Facility

Lower sixth former Jonah Walker spoke of a 'buzz' amongst the boys at seeing the new facilities and how they would help to bridge the gap between school and university science.

Speaking about the new building Felicity Lusk said: "The importance of science in education is universally acknowledged and the majority of our boys have a keen interest, which we have a responsibility to nurture. The new science centre is integral to this and will encourage the next generation of scientists to explore and innovate. We are fortunate to live in an area which is recognised by the rest of the world for scientific excellence and we hope by investing in science we can help to inspire the scientists of the future."

Since the Yang Science Centre, YSC, opened it has been a hive of activity. The improvement on the old facilities is incredible; it's not until we moved in that it became clear what a fantastic facility this is. Science staff have been given a new lease of life!

Visitors to the new facility so far include an alligator, a python and giant millipedes and we have welcomed several new arrivals; beetles developed from the mealworm larvae and moths from some of the Wax Worms. We also said goodbye to some of the crickets - devoured by the Preying Mantises who have settled very well in their new surroundings.



The Physics Department hosted an exhibition on the Antikythera Mechanism in partnership with the University of Birmingham and the Institute of Physics. The exhibition culminated with a lecture from Dr Maria Pavlidou in the Outreach Laboratory where she brought along a working Bronze Model of the mechanism. Other events include a robotics workshop, attended by several local schools and the Abingdon Science Partnership held two Science Oxford - Saturday Science Club mornings for very enthusiastic 5 - 9 year olds looking at "Spooky Science" and having "Festive Fun".

Top Marks

Jack Dawson (OA 2015) scored the highest overall mark nationally in A level History with the OCR exam board and has been recommended by OCR to the Royal Historical Society who award a prize to the top scoring candidate in History each year.

New Faces

This term we welcomed two new housemasters, Simon James who teaches Physics and has taken over from Mr Webb and James Golding (Austin House) who teaches Physical Education and has taken over from Mr Davies. To get a small insight into what makes them tick we asked for their choice of music, film, a book and one luxury item for a desert island.

Simon James - James's House

Teaches Physics

Music – Nirvana, *Nevermind*. My first proper album, and enormously evocative. It still stands up as an incredible record, full of emotion - much like my house assemblies!



Film – *Withnail and I* - just superbly hilarious - it would always bring a smile to my face. What's not to love about a film containing the line "don't threaten me with a dead fish"?

Book – *Blindness*, José Saramago - Shatteringly powerful, this has really stuck with me. It would remind me that as well as being fragile, the human spirit can be exhilaratingly strong.

And that little luxury – There'll be a coffee plantation on this Island right? Thought so. So, my AeroPress then. And a kettle I suppose.

James Golding - Austin House

Teaches PE/Sport

Music – *The Best of the Beatles*

Film – *Gladiator* or *Top Gun*. I wouldn't be able to decide.

Book – *The Dangerous Book for Boys*, Conn & Hal Iggulden - would keep me entertained for a while...



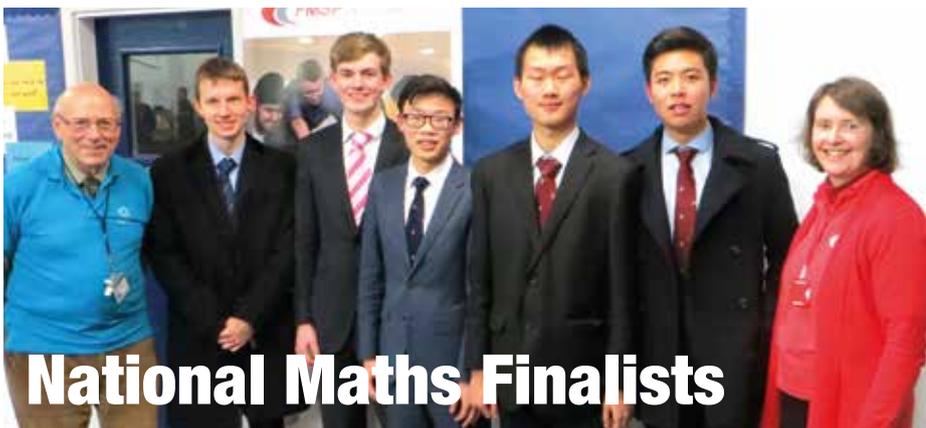
And that little luxury – James Bond's Lotus Esprit from *The Spy who Loved Me*.



Be the Best

Teachers Hold their Nerve

This year's "Be the best you can be" programme was launched to the Lower School in September in spectacular fashion with the visit of Mike Mullen, former World Champion and 2014 UK Champion in BMX halfpipe. Mike encouraged the boys to realise that "the biggest challenges will teach you the best lessons" and that self-reflection and never giving up are crucial if you want to succeed. The lower school staff found themselves more fully involved than they might have expected with Mr Jenkins learning how to do a 'trackstand' on stage and the tutors volunteering themselves to be jumped over in an outdoor demonstration of Mike's BMX skills!



National Maths Finalists

32 teams of the best mathematics students from local schools and colleges tackled a series of demanding mathematical challenges for over three hours in the regional final of the Senior Team Mathematics Challenge, STMC, held at The Cherwell School in November. At the end of three rounds of group problem-solving, team cross-number puzzle and mathematical relay race, the Abingdon team was pronounced winners and go through to the national final in London on 2 February. Many congratulations to Ben Schneider, Angus Shen, Harry Lei and Jerry Yang.

The competition is organised jointly by the Further Mathematics Support Programme and the UK Mathematics Trust and sponsored by Rolls-Royce plc. It is now in its 10th year and attracts over 1000 teams from schools and colleges from around the UK.



Organ Scholarship

James Anderson-Besant in the Upper Sixth has won the prestigious Organ Scholarship to St John's College, Cambridge. James has a deferred place and will spend 2016-17 as the Organ Scholar at Gloucester Cathedral. At Cambridge, James will be joining another Abingdon musician, Hugh Cutting, who went to the same college as a Choral Scholar in October.

Strictly Abingdon Style

Teachers took to the stage to wow an audience of pupils, fellow staff and friends with electrifying dance routines. Competing for the title of "Teachers Come Dancing Champions 2015" were Olly Deasy and Emily O'Doherty, Victoria Pradas and Andrew Hall, Victoria Griffiths and Nick Fieldhouse and Regina Engel-Hart and John Davies.

The judges, including Miss Lusk, awarded scores, Strictly-style, and the cheers from the audience were also taken into account. The winners, with an impressive 49 points and a huge cheer, were Regina Engel-Hart and John Davies.

The evening raised approximately £1000 for *Blue Skye Thinking*.

Competition winners
Regina Engel-Hart
(Modern Languages)
and John Davies (English)



Annual Chess

The Chess Club has had a strong term and are joint 4th in Division 3 of the Oxford and District Chess League following a recent win against MCS Blackbirds. The Club welcomed Matthew Rose, Oxford City Chess Club's best player and the Oxford Times Chess correspondent, to take on 20 of our players at the annual simultaneous display. After 2.5 hours Mr Rose came out on top but many congratulations to Ray Ren who put in a very impressive performance to win his match!

Community Service

The eagerly anticipated Christmas tea party for residents of Abingdon capped a very busy term for the Community Service volunteers. They have been visiting five residential homes, Abingdon Hospital, Older and Bolder and the Oxfam shop. Boarders have been involved in many activities, including creating Christmas cards to send to the places we visit to bring seasonal cheer.



ISI Inspection



The Independent Schools Inspectorate, ISI, inspected Abingdon and Abingdon Prep School during the second week of November. We hope to receive the findings from the inspection early in the New Year. We will of course notify parents as soon as we are able and the report will be put on the website at www.abingdon.org.uk/inspection



Promising Piano Performance

Congratulations to third year Jason Ng who gained a distinction in his professional piano performance diploma, ATCL. This is a remarkable achievement in such a young musician.



Bagpipe Gold

Congratulations also to Bryce Jersing in the 5th Year who won gold in the U15 Quick March category and bronze in the U18 category of the 9th Independent Schools Bagpipe Competition.

The Remembrance Day Parade was a sombre, poignant occasion with the whole school gathered to remember those who died in conflict.



We will Remember Them



Aravind Prabhakaran in the Fifth Year has created and coded his own computer game, CoSine, which has been accepted by the iTunes Apple Store.

CoSine



Award Winning Chemistry

Sebastian Hickman was among 15 lower sixth formers who took part in the extremely rigorous Cambridge Chemistry Challenge organised by Cambridge University. 8481 students took part, the largest number ever, and Seb recorded a fantastic score placing him in the top 1% of candidates, and securing the Roentgenium award level. Seb was invited to Cambridge University for a three-day chemistry course and to an awards ceremony in November at the Wellcome Trust.

Arkwright Scholarship

Congratulations to Magnus Gregory who has been awarded an Arkwright Scholarship. These scholarships are for outstanding individuals who show potential in, and who are looking to follow, a career in design or engineering. We currently have three Arkwright scholars in the Sixth Form.



University Choices

The STEM subjects have always been a popular choice for Abingdon boys to go on to study at university. This year, as in most years, around 40% of all the subjects chosen were science, technology, engineering or maths related. Economics, Business and Management are also favoured. Medicine figures prominently amongst vocational courses; for the rest, there is a wide distribution across the social sciences and humanities.

Consistently popular universities, after Oxford and Cambridge, are Exeter, Bristol and Durham and increasingly preferred are Manchester, Cardiff and King's College London. This year, the media made much of the Russell Group universities chasing applicants but this is very course dependent and it's still the case that the most competitive courses at competitive universities, such as Imperial and the LSE, do not participate in Clearing and remain strict in demanding that offers be fully met.

There are many excellent courses at leading universities outside the Russell Group – Bath University being a prime example. League tables and Russell Group membership should only be considered amongst a whole range of factors when deciding where to study – the course content and delivery being the most important. Over recent years there has been much talk of studying abroad and we have seen an increase in interest and places won, but the actual number of boys who take up the opportunity has not risen significantly. Each year we have boys who study at leading institutions outside the UCAS system including in recent years the Royal Academy of Music and RADA.

Abingdon has been praised in ISI Inspections for the quality of advice and support provided by the School's Careers Department. Andrew Swarbrick is the University Applications Co-ordinator supported by James Hallinan for Oxbridge applications, Ben Whitworth for Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Science and Nicola King for US applications. Further details www.abingdon.org.uk/university_admissions



Bangor

Zoology with Herpetology

Bath

Architecture
Economics and Mathematics
Electrical and Electronic Engineering
Mechanical Engineering
Modern Languages

Birmingham

Business Management
Computer Systems Engineering
Drama and Theatre Arts
Materials Engineering
Medicine
Social Policy

Bristol

Chemistry
English (2)
Medicine
Physics and Philosophy

Brunel

Product design

Cambridge

Computer Science
History (2)
Music

Cardiff

Biomedical Sciences (Neuroscience)
Business Economics
Business Management
Chemistry
Computer Science
Economics and Philosophy
Medical Pharmacology
Physiotherapy

Durham

Earth Sciences
General Engineering
Geography
History
Modern Languages and Cultures
Natural Sciences
Philosophy

Edinburgh

Chemistry with Materials Chemistry
Economics and Economic History
Spanish and History

Exeter

Business Economics
Combined Honours
Economics
English
Geography (3)
History
History and Spanish
Management with Marketing
Mechanical Engineering
Medicine
Modern Languages
PPE

Glasgow

Computing Science
Product Design
Engineering

Goldsmiths London

English and Drama

Heriot-Watt

Mechanical Engineering

Imperial College London

Biology
Biomedical Science
Biomedical Science with Management
Chemistry
Materials Science and Engineering (2)
Mechanical Engineering

Keele

Economics and Politics

Kent

Business and Management

King's College London

Economics and Management
English
Film Studies
Geography (2)
History
International Development
Law
Philosophy

Leeds

Biological Sciences
Chemistry
Cultural and Media Studies
Film Studies and French

Leicester

Geography (2)
Law

Liverpool

Geography
Medical Chemistry and Pharmacology

Loughborough

Drama
Geography
Product Design and Technology

London School of Economics

Economics (2)
Law

Manchester

Aerospace Engineering
Chemical Engineering
Chemistry (2)
Geography
Integrated Science
Management
Materials Science and Engineering (2)
Neuroscience

Newcastle

Accounting and Finance
Computer Science
Economics and Business Management
History
Mechanical Engineering

Northumbria

International Business with Spanish

Nottingham

Contemporary Chinese Studies
Economics
Environmental Biology
Environmental Science
Modern Languages with Business
Neuroscience
Pharmacy

Nottingham Trent

Real Estate

Oxford

Chemistry
Classics (3)
Economics and Management
Engineering
Geography
Law
Modern Languages
PPE

Oxford Brookes

Art Foundation

Portsmouth

Engineering and Technology

Queen Mary's London

Business Management
Computer Science
Medicine - 2017

Reading

Business and Management
English Literature and German

Royal Academy of Music

Composition

Royal Holloway

Economics

Sheffield

Business Management
Civil Engineering
Geography
History
Medicine
Politics

Southampton

Medicine (2)

St Mary's London

Criminology and Sociology

Swansea

Business Management

University College London

Classics
Computer Science
Economics
Mechanical Engineering

Warwick

Economics
Law
Sociology

York

Electronic Engineering
History

Overseas

Charles University, Prague
Princeton, USA
University of British Columbia, Canada
University of Pennsylvania, USA
Williams College, USA

* Numbers in brackets refer to the number of boys studying that course if more than one.



The soundtrack to my youth was Britpop rather than Gershwin or the Beatles, but my experiences growing up were much the same as those of my parents or grandparents. When I look at my teenaged son on Instagram, texting, downloading apps and gaming, I don't think the same can be said for his generation.

Teenage years have always been fraught. It's a time when everyone is self-conscious and this is exacerbated for today's children. As well as the stress of living through adolescence, they are required to virtually record every moment. Teenagers have always wanted to appear "in", so imagine how much greater this pressure is when the snapshots of your daily life have to be constantly uploaded to Snapchat.

Unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately, most of our lives are pretty mundane: going to school, watching TV, having supper, being ordinary - which all looks very dull on Facebook or WhatsApp.

There is pressure on teenagers to sensationalise their lives: it's not enough to have a good time, you have to be seen to be having an amazing time, and the flipside is that if life is dull, then the world has to be abysmal, and the unspoken influence is that the mildly disappointing is transformed into depression.

No wonder mental health issues are on the rise. This is made worse by the increase in the sexualisation of the male body image so that boys are now experiencing what girls have had to face for years. Boys want to look perfect. Academically, the expectation is also perfection: you work hard, get good grades, only for the media to inform you that the success is due to grade inflation, not your efforts. Your future seems to hang in the balance at an early age with perfection being the only goal.

So how do we counter this trend at Abingdon to support and protect our boys?

Central to this is understanding that everyone is different, and success, happiness, wellbeing, can take lots of different forms. It is important that there is not a "type" to which the boys must conform, but instead we celebrate and revel in differences, in terms of backgrounds, ethnicity, interests and skills. This is why our Other Half programme is so important.

School should be a place where you can explore something new and challenging, safe in the knowledge that disappointment

might follow but that there is a support network there to help you. As the story of almost every entrepreneur will show, learning to fail and how to then bounce back is an invaluable life skill.

Pastoral care is paramount. In those crucial adolescent years our tutor to pupil ratio is 1:10 or less. Boys see their tutors every day so they know the boys very well and can quickly pick up on something amiss. PSHCE is timetabled and thorny issues are openly discussed. We have four counsellors in school enabling boys to find support outside of the teaching staff if they want to. Boys know it is OK to find life difficult and to ask for help: they don't have to "man up". Finally there is peer support. Older boys mentor younger boys, prefects are trained how to listen, pupils are encouraged to raise concerns, and everyone is taught that the root to real wellbeing is to reach out to others.

To return to my Britpop past, Blur famously claimed: "There's no other way/All that you can do/Is watch them play." At Abingdon we feel it is crucial to give our pupils the freedom to "play", but we know that "watching" them also includes picking them up when they stumble or fall.



Abingdon Music and Drama

Christmas Concert



The Sheldonian Theatre was a superb venue for a wonderful array of music – choral, wind and jazz band, Gospel Choir and First and Second Orchestras. The audience heard a number of specialist musicians from the music team, each of them exploring and presenting the rich musical talent that we have at Abingdon School.

Voice Skills



Ian Saxon, brother of Chemistry Science Technician, Terry, put some third year drama students through their paces as part of this term's focus on developing voice skills. Ian could not be better qualified, working as a commercial voice-over artist; *The car in front's a Toyota* is one of his best-know pieces and also in theatre, recently performing at the King's Head in London in a one-man show called *A Life with the Beatles*.

Middle School Production



“ We went through all the emotions...
I confess to shedding real tears at the end. ”

“ What a great hour of
theatre! Your talented
cast were wonderful. ”

(audience responses)

A talented cast of ten third year boys created a stir at the end of November with their performances of *Brainstorm*, a new play about the development of the teenage brain. Set amidst the detritus of a teenager's bedroom, the play journeyed into the adolescent brain to reveal what's behind 'typical' teenage behaviour such as mood swings, risk-taking and heightened social awareness. The young actors took us on an emotional roller coaster of a show, by turns hilarious and moving, and at the end, there were more than a few teary eyes in the audience after a silent sequence in which the actors held up handwritten placards showing "all the stuff I really can't say out loud".

Dates for your Diary

Music

Thursday 14 January

Woodwind Masterclass admission free

Thursday 21 January

New Year Concert tickets needed

Wednesday 10 February

Chilingirian String Quartet tickets needed

Wednesday 24 February

Annual Chamber Music Evening

admission free

Wednesday 9 March

Singers' Platform admission free

Tuesday 17 March

Choral Concert admission free

Drama

Wednesday, Thursday, Friday

3-5 February

Joint Senior Production of Anything Goes

tickets needed

Yolande Patterson Hall, St Helen's

Thursday, Friday, Saturday

4-6 February

Joint Senior Production of

Caucasian Chalk Circle tickets needed

Amey Theatre

Monday 14 March

AS Theatre Studies Plays 1, 2 and 3

admission free

Amey Theatre / Drama Studio

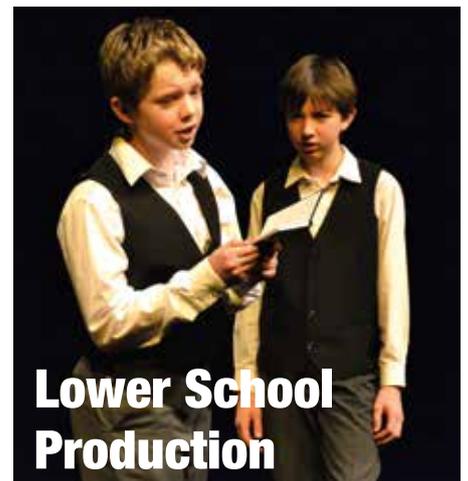
Tuesday 15 March

AS Theatre Studies Plays 4, 5 and 6

Drama Studio, St Helen's admission free

Tickets and event details online at
www.abingdon.org.uk/future_events

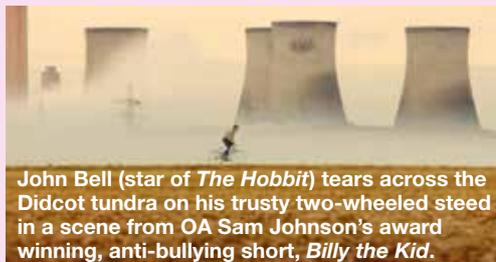
Lower School Production



Lower school boys took part in a comedy sketch show called *Calamities*, which saw them present the work of some of Britain's best loved comedians, as well as many sketches written by OA Edward Rowett, whose BBC Radio 4 sitcom has recently been nominated for an audio drama award. The boys did fantastically well and gave us a spectacular evening of misunderstandings, mishaps and mayhem!

Abingdon Film Unit

It has been an exciting term for the **Abingdon Film Unit**. The annual screening of new films took place at the start of October under the title *Pretty Much Teenagers* - a reference to the fact the AFU was embarking on its thirteenth year. 'Thirteen' may not be a true coming of age, but it does mean some AFU alumni have been out in the world for a while, and this gave us a chance to see what the old boys (and girls) have been up to. Alongside an excellent crop of new films by current AFU students, we were delighted to screen four new films by former students. Highlights included OA Sam Johnson's award-winning short *Billy the Kid*, John Cheung and Aim Wonghirundacha's *The Red Brick*, Ben Oliver's *Sound & Colour* and an award-winning documentary by OAs Tian Ji and Adrian Lo called *A Portrait of Sun Wah Kee*.



John Bell (star of *The Hobbit*) tears across the Didcot tundra on his trusty two-wheeled steed in a scene from OA Sam Johnson's award winning, anti-bullying short, *Billy the Kid*.



John Allen stars as the boy in *House of Cardboard*, the film he co-wrote with fellow third years Louis Edward and Charlie Clarke.

Joint Choral Concert

Abingdon and St Helen's sing Rossini's *Petite Messes Solennelle*



Senior Soloists Impress

The music department held its inaugural Solo Instrumental Competition this term beginning with the Senior Section. The intermediate and junior categories follow in the Lent and Summer terms. The senior competition was over subscribed and had to be restricted to those who have gained grade 8 with a distinction. Helena Rakowski, Director of Music at St Helen's, had the unenviable task of adjudication. Many congratulations to David Chung and Anthony Bracey who were placed joint 3rd, James Anderson-Besant in 2nd and Leon Wu in 1st.

School House takes the Prize



This year's House Singing Competition saw ten excellent performances incorporating countermelodies, harmonies, percussion, whistling and a Zulu narration.

Chilingirian Quartet at Abingdon

Wednesday 10 February, 7pm

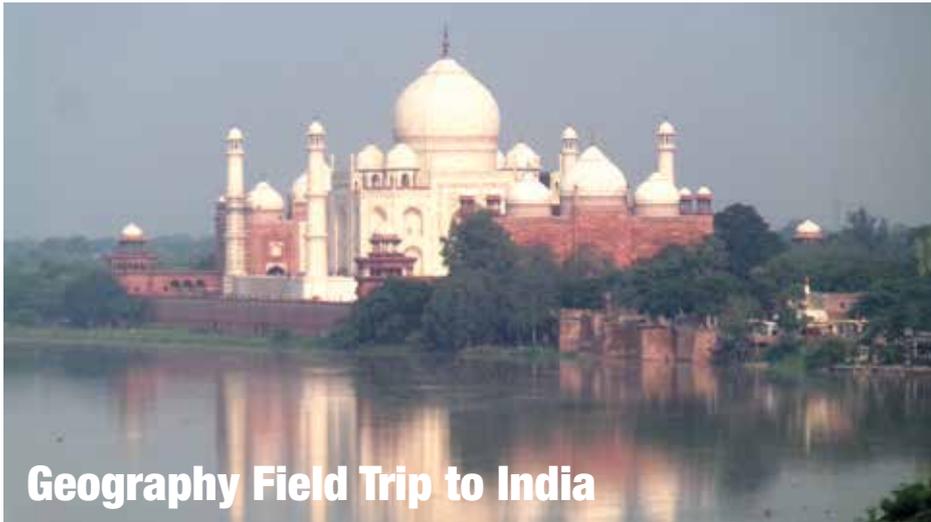
BEETHOVEN Quartet in G major, Op 18 No 3

BARTOK Quartet No 2, Op 17

DVORAK Quartet in G major, Op 106

Further information and book online at www.abingdon.org.uk/future_events

Abingdonians Out and About



Geography Field Trip to India



Classical Sites and Sailing in Greece



Monopoly Challenge

School House boarders from all year groups were split into teams with four hours to visit the locations on the London Monopoly board. At each location they submitted a photo of themselves with the street sign and were awarded points equal to the value of the property on the board.



Art

Lower sixth artists studied perspective and the architecture of some of Oxford's historic buildings and visited Tate Modern.



Amongst the many trips and activities over the summer holiday and Michaelmas term, boys ran summer camps in Moldova, performed at The Fringe, took part in field trips to India and Honduras, sailed, canoed and walked for DofE, visited classical sites and enjoyed CCF camps.

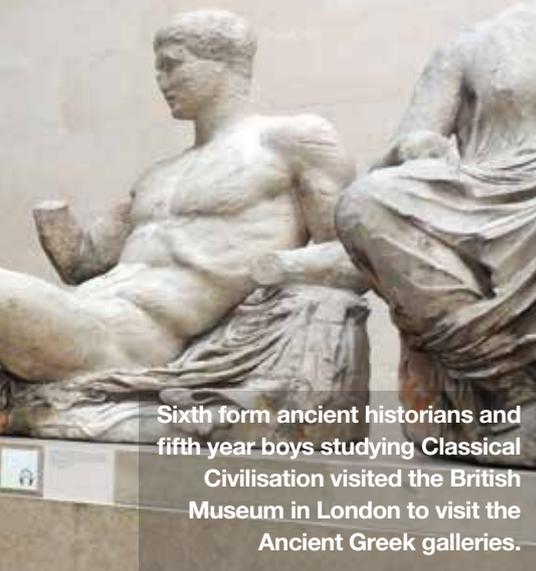


Biology Field Trip to Honduras

Abingdonians Out and About



British Museum Trip



Sixth form ancient historians and fifth year boys studying Classical Civilisation visited the British Museum in London to visit the Ancient Greek galleries.



Summer Camps in Moldova



U6 Geography Trip to Studland Bay



DofE Expeditions

During the term boys trained for Bronze, Silver and Gold DofE practice canoe expeditions. 45 fifth form boys completed their Silver three day practice walking expedition in the Peak District with most climbing Kinder Scout. Boys also took part in Gold and Silver yachting practice expeditions.



CCF Summer Camp

Abingdon Sport



Rugby

The senior rugby squad toured Australia and New Zealand over the summer in a prelude to a very successful season which saw the 1st XV win 10 of their 14 fixtures and reach the 5th round of the National Cup. The second XV had a tremendous unbeaten season. The Third Year saw all four sides in action most weekends and winning close to 80% of their matches.



Kayaking Champ

Magnus Gregory won the U18 Marathon Kayak Junior European Championships for Great Britain and went on to win a bronze medal for the GB squad in the World Championships in Hungary in the K2 event.



Sailing

Sailors competed at Cowes



Football

Footballers, Aaron Mara, William Lebeau and Theo Zamani, were selected for the U13 South Central Independent Schools Development Squad at the Gothia Cup in Sweden where 75 nations competed.

Fencing

The fencing squad has had excellent wins against Winchester, Charterhouse and Dauntsey's, and a closely fought draw against RGS High Wycombe. At the Southern Region Team Competition Abingdon won gold and bronze in the U14 Epee. Congratulations to Benjamin Schneider who won the individual epee for England at the Junior Commonwealth Fencing Championships in Cape Town this summer.

Squash

The Squash Club enjoyed wins against Bradfield, RGS High Wycombe and St Edward's and are through to the National U19 Boys Competition with a good seeding.





Swimming

The Swimming Club saw all three age groups qualifying for the English Schools Swimming Association National Relay Finals at the Olympic Pool and convincing victories over St Edward's and Stowe. Daniel McNamara also put in very impressive performances at the ESSA Inter-Divisional Championships.

The Cross-country Club had a good term with boys taking the first three places at the Sunningwell 10k and finishing second and third at the Longworth 10k. Other highlights were a very respectable second place for both the senior and intermediate teams at the Harrow 10 Schools Race.

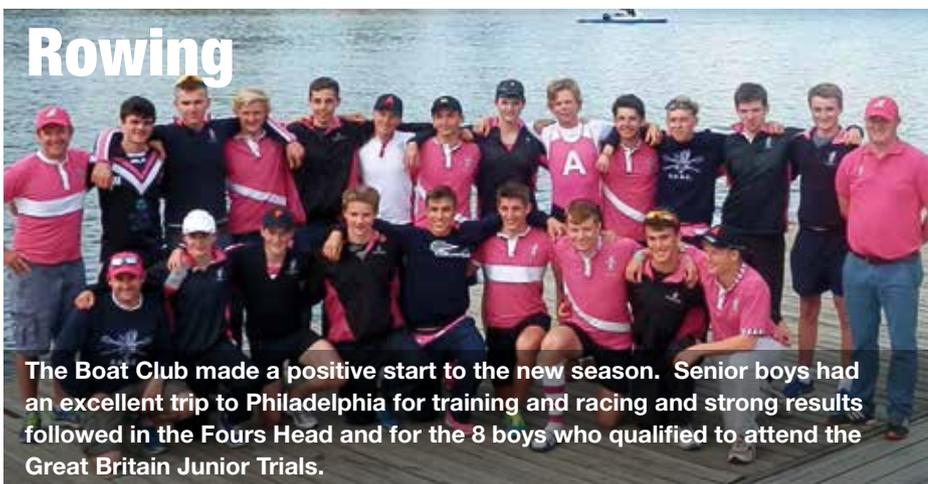


Cross-country



Hockey Successes

15 players competed in England Hockey's single system, where talented individuals are identified to attend development centres across the country. Max Carter Keall is through to the first round of selection for the national U16 hockey squad and Charles Stoker was selected to attend the National Age Group Squad Academies.



Rowing

The Boat Club made a positive start to the new season. Senior boys had an excellent trip to Philadelphia for training and racing and strong results followed in the Fours Head and for the 8 boys who qualified to attend the Great Britain Junior Trials.



Rifle Club

Henry Waterson and Drew Farwell picked up a host of medals and trophies at the National Small-bore Rifle Meeting and both boys were selected for the GB team for an international postal competition. The Club also enjoyed considerable success at the Oxfordshire 50 metre competition.



Basketball

The U18 basketball team won a very exciting match against Radley – it was decided in the last three minutes of play.

Abingdon Preparatory School



Sporting Highlights

Sport this term has seen success in the Abingdon Vale Biathlon with 7 of the 15 boys competing finishing in the top three for their age group. Fencers picked up a good medal haul at the Bucks, Berks and Oxon County Age Group Foil competition and in cross-country there were excellent performances at the St Hugh's relays. The outstanding performance of the term was from one of our Year 8 swimmers whose 50m backstroke personal best time of 31.64 seconds ranks him number 1 for his age in Great Britain. Rugby saw mixed results this term against tough opposition. The boys very much enjoy representing their school and there were some excellent matches.

Having Fun with Science

Year 6 enjoyed a day of science when Science Oxford visited school. The theme was forces and boys had fun being pulled along on a skateboard, making parachutes for eggs and lying on a bed of nails.



Art Workshop



Art is extremely popular at Abingdon Prep and our Saturday workshops give the opportunity to study a particular medium or theme in more detail. This term's etching workshop saw boys learning about copperplate printing and creating their own prints.



Winning the Boat Race

A very productive term for all year groups in CDT culminated in a fierce competition for the Year 8 boat race prize. Using a battery pack, dowel, elastic bands, water bottles and floats, the boys' challenge was to design a boat and then race it across the School's swimming pool. Crispin awarded prizes for the fastest vessel and the sleekest design - much fun was had by all!

Music

This term we welcomed Deborah Rose as our new Head of Music. Music is very much a part of daily life at Abingdon Prep with the majority of boys taking up an instrument by Year 2 and music everywhere whether it's hymns at assembly, choirs, orchestra, drum and beat or Jazz Band. Our regular concert platforms give boys experience of playing to an audience, which comes in very useful for the big occasions such as this term's Carol Service, which marked the start of Christmas in the beautiful setting of St Helen's Church in Abingdon.



Pre-prep Activities

Pre-prep has had a busy term with the newest recruits in Reception settling in very well. The boys loved the visit from Blue Watch at Abingdon Fire Station and they enjoyed dressing up, trying new food and dancing at Diwali. Year 3 entertained the younger years with their shadow puppets and Pre-prep also took part in the annual harvest festival. The culmination of a lovely term was The Nativity, which charmed audiences with tuneful renditions and lively performances.



Impressive Performances

On the academic stage Abingdon Prep has enjoyed much success this term. A Middle Section team won the Magdalen College School Prep Schools Quiz Challenge against tough competition from Oxford High, The Dragon, Summer Fields and Headington to name a few. At the Summer Fields Maths Challenge an APS Year 4 team again came top of their group and at the St Edward's Academic Challenge, Year 6 gave a very impressive performance. Very well done to all.



Charity Fund Raising

This year's charity is Riding for the Disabled and boys have been using every opportunity to raise money. At half term the costumes were excellent for the equestrian-themed home clothes day and the school office transformed rather smoothly into a bookies! Over the last few weeks of term boys have been collecting silver coins to fill a large chalk horse drawn on the tarmac in front of school. The horse looked fantastic and the coins amounted to an impressive £975.25.



APS Explores

We are very keen for boys to explore and we enhance the curriculum whenever possible with trips, visiting speakers and other enrichment activities. This term Year 8 studied art and science at the Natural History Museum. Year 5's history studies came to life with a visit to HMS Victory and Year 6 honed their bushcraft skills at Cornbury Park. Year 4 enjoyed their first experience of a school residential trip when they took to The Ridgeway, staying overnight at Court Hill Hostel.

School Cafe Hosts Inaugural Parents' Supper



That regular event on the ASPA social calendar, the Lower School Curry Supper, took on a new twist recently when fears for the carpet in the newly refurbished Charles Maude Room meant that the venue was switched to the School Cafe! So, it became a perfect venue for 60 First Year parents to experience the cafe that their sons so often talk about using during the day. But on this occasion, First Year Rep, Linda Fathers, and her team hosted a fantastic evening with an Indian theme. The Café looked amazing and with its friendly, informal atmosphere was the perfect way for these parents to get to know one another. Many thanks to Linda and her team, as well as to John and Natalya in catering for their hard work in pulling this together.



Introducing the New 'Must-have' ASPA Event Accessory

As those of you who have attended ASPA events know, it's our committee members and parent helpers that really make sure they are a success and we are so grateful for their support. In fact, anyone helping at an event will now become the proud wearer of that much sought-after fashion accessory, the ASPA apron! See it modelled here at our recent First Year Curry Supper.



A Sparkling Night of Italian Food and Wine

Hot on the heels of our parent survey, where we were asked to up the 'Italian' element of the Third Year Supper, we met with the School's caterers to ask them to come up with a fully-fledged Italian themed menu. Third Year Rep, Carol Vanhinsbergh, and her team of House Reps, created an Italian inspired décor and a fantastic raffle of Italian inspired gifts. With 130 parents attending, the night had a great vibe and delicious food and wine; a real tribute to the hard work put in by the team and Abingdon School catering. Huge thanks to them all!



Second-Hand Uniform Shop

The Second-hand Uniform Shop (SUS) provides a means for parents to buy and sell good condition, second-hand Abingdon School uniform. 60% of the sale price will go to the parent/carer and 40% to the School to purchase extra items for the boys to use. Uniform must have the name removed and be clean and pressed ready for sale. The shop is open most Saturdays and Wednesdays during term time. All dates and times of opening are available on the school website and enquiries to: sus@abingdon.org.uk

Save the Date: 2016 Events

27 February

Annual Quiz & Mexican Supper Night
School dining room

21 May

Pink Tie and Tiara Dinner and Disco
Abingdon School

Volunteers needed! If you would like to be on the committee for this event or the Grand Auction, please email aspa@abingdon.org.uk

For full details of all events go to ASPA website:

www.abingdon.org.uk/aspa

Annual Fund 2015/16: Funding Projects that Enhance School Life

Abingdon School's Annual Fund has been running since 2007, and more than £800,000 has so far been raised from parents and alumni, as well as staff and governors. The Annual Fund supports a variety of projects that enhance academic, extra-curricular and pastoral activities at Abingdon School.

Our Annual Fund for 2015/16 is now underway, and we are working to raise money for a number of projects, including:

- Kayaks for Canoe Polo (£4,500)
- New Keelboat Sails for Sailing Club (£4,000)
- Underwater Swimcam (£3,800)
- Abingdon Entomological Society Start-up Equipment (£2,000)
- Left-Handed Rifle (£1,800)
- Podcasting Club Start-up Equipment (£1,500)
- Polyglot MFL Magazine (£1,000)
- Travel Bursary for Classics Trip (£1,000)
- Guest Speakers for Modern Languages (£1,000)
- Golf Tournament Travel Fund (£750)
- Debating Workshop (£500)
- Lego Clock Workshop and Display (£300)

Details of all these projects can be found online at: www.abingdon.org.uk/annual_fund

If you would like to support one or more of these projects – or give to the School's bursary appeal or another aspect of school life – please donate online at www.abingdon.org.uk/ donation by cheque, credit/debit card, standing order, or bank transfer. If you are a current parent, your donation can be placed on your termly school bill, too.

If you would like to discuss a donation, including tax-effective ways to give, please contact Michael Triff, Director of Philanthropy, on 01235 849129 or email him at philanthropy@abingdon.org.uk.



DONATE NOW

Annual Fund

www.abingdon.org.uk/donation

Don't forget to **Gift Aid** your donation, which makes it worth 25% more at no cost to you.

Abingdon Old Abingdonians

OAs in Charity

Countless OAs have done amazing things for charity. Here are profiles of two of the several OAs who have made charity their careers.

Anthony Leathem (OA 1962)

Anthony had great encouragement at Abingdon to pursue science, being allowed the Biology Lab key at weekends and visits to Oxford labs. He qualified in Medicine and trained as a pathologist specializing in cancer.

Seeing high rates of breast cancer deaths in younger women frustrated Anthony. In 1988 he and his wife Patricia (a breast cancer nurse) started the Breast Cancer Campaign for research into cancer, which developed funding for short-term projects. In 1993 they started Against Breast Cancer, another charity, to fund ambitious long-term programmes. The charity now funds a biochemistry and immunity programme at Oxford University under Dr. Max Crispin.

Anthony has retired from University College London, but continues an active involvement with his home lab. He is keen to encourage young scientists to understand the joys and frustrations of testing new ideas.



Anthony Leathem's home laboratory!



Mathew Iredale (OA 1985)

**Prospect researcher:
identifying and researching
wealthy people for charities.**

Charities approach the wealthy for major gifts (£10,000 - £10 million or more), and prospect research ensures they approach the right people. It requires a mixture of head (estimating wealth) and heart (understanding philanthropic motivation). It is not simply a matter of reading the Sunday Times Rich List; prospect research requires understanding company finances, interrogating databases, connecting disparate sources of information and an attention to detail to spot the needle in a haystack of mundane information.

Mathew currently works for Shelter, the homelessness charity. His career has included working for such major charities as Great Ormond Street Hospital Children's Charity (for their £140m redevelopment appeal), Cancer Research UK, the Stroke Association, and the Alzheimer's Society. He has published a book on prospect research entitled 'Prospecting for Benefactors'.



Gareth Morris (R) and David Allison (L) at London Drinks

London Drinks Reception

On Wednesday 11 November 2015, the fully booked London Drinks event took place, with over 200 OAs enjoying drinks in the Great Chamber at Charterhouse. Lively conversation and laughter filled the hall, as OAs caught up with classmates and former teachers. There were speeches from David Allison (OA Committee President), Charlie Hobson (OA 1976) and Gareth Morris (OA Committee Chairman), who spoke on behalf of Felicity Lusk, the Head, who could not attend. Our thanks go to Charlie Hobson (OA 1976), Master of Charterhouse, for his offer of this historic London venue for the event. Book early next year to avoid disappointment!



Paul Green (OA 1983) at the Sixth Form Careers Evening

Sixth Form Careers Evening

On Friday 20 November, 28 OAs and 130 boys gathered for the Sixth Form Careers Evening, in the format of a professional conference. Boys learnt about the art of networking, received unique insights into preparing for the world of work from the OA panel, and discussed in detail their potential career paths with OAs in that sector. OAs enjoyed the opportunity to give advice they may have benefitted from as sixth formers!

Upcoming Events

University Reunions

Exeter: Friday 5 February

Cambridge: Saturday 5 March

Durham: Saturday 21 May

Regional Reunions

Exeter: Saturday 6 February

Cambridge: Saturday 5 March

Durham: Saturday 21 May

Monday 21 March

School Road Relay

Entries from OA teams (four OAs per team) are invited to join the 2016 Abingdon School Road Relay. If you are interested, please email the OA Club Office at oa.club@abingdon.org.uk.



The 2015 ASPA Quiz and Curry Night OA team

Saturday 27 February

ASPA Quiz and Mexican Supper Night

The Abingdon School Parents Association (ASPA) invites OAs to form a team for their annual Quiz and Mexican Supper Night. £20 per ticket. To register, email Michael Triff at michael.triff@abingdon.org.uk

Sunday 17 April

Gerald Smithson Memorial Cricket Event

A day of cricket on War Memorial Field to remember Abingdon's first professional coach and groundsman. Look out for details online.

www.abingdon.org.uk/oa/events Any questions, please call: 01235 849074

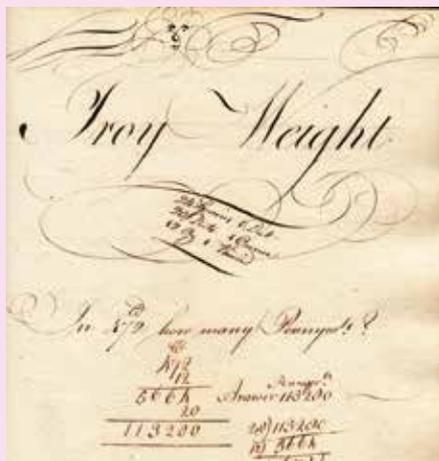


Abingdon School Road Relay 2015

Abingdon Out of the Past

Boys will be Boys

Last summer the school archives had a visit from an Israeli PhD student who was interested in looking at the School's seventeenth and eighteenth-century textbooks for evidence of how pupils used to study. His eagle eye spotted the following scribbled comment written in 1788 on the front cover of a copy of Moses and Aaron (1655): "a jaber (sic) of nonsense written by a man who knows no thing about his subject" – the author of the book being a one time headmaster of Abingdon, Thomas Godwyn. Ten years earlier another boy had been busy embellishing his maths copybook with a face in a calligraphic flourish. Nearly 200 years later a boy studying Caesar's Gallic War Book VI clearly had his mind on another war. The year was 1941 and the margins of the book are liberally scattered with his doodles of battleships and aeroplanes.



The School bought the Waste Court estate, house, outbuildings and nine acres of land, in 1928 as a memorial to the seventy-three members of the Abingdon community who died during the First World War. In 2015 it was decided to acknowledge the purpose of the purchase by changing the name of the boarding house from Waste Court to Austin House. The name commemorates Alan Murray Austin, the first Abingdonian to be killed when his ship, HMS Hawke, was torpedoed in the North Sea on 15 October 1914.

Hugh Leach was one of Abingdon's most distinguished post-war pupils. Soldier, diplomat, Arabist, author, explorer and circus owner, he spoke fluent Arabic as well as Aramaic and during the 1980s made a particular study of modern trends in Islam. Leach served with the Royal Tank Regiment during the 1950s, most notably during the Suez Crisis in 1956 when his was the first tank ashore at Port Said. Whilst in the army he took on intelligence gathering duties in the Oman, living with the Bedouin, a period he described as one of the best in his life. On retirement from the army he joined the Foreign Office and served in the Middle East until 1989. A prominent member of the Royal Society for Asian Affairs and co-author of its centennial history; in 1998 he was awarded the Society's Lawrence of Arabia Memorial Medal.



The name Austin also stands as a reminder of the tragic impact of war on so many families during the 20th Century: Alan's brother, Private Walter Murray



Austin, died of enteric fever in South Africa during the Boer War; a nephew, Lieutenant William Percy Harragin died in Dar-es-Salam on 1 November 1918 and another nephew, Lieutenant Ambrose Theodore Wentworth Austin, was killed in action on D-Day, 6 June 1944.

Mistaken Identity

We would like to apologise to Cllr Mike Badcock who we mistakenly identified as Cllr Paul Harrison in the September edition of *Abingdon News*.