



AbingdonNews

Griffen Storms Ahead



The Sailing Club has had a very successful six months with two teams reaching the semi-finals of the National Schools' Sailing Match Racing championships where the A boat went on to take first place. In the SB20 National Championships we were the first placed U18 crew. Over the summer, 16 boys explored the Aegean Islands in Greece and 12 boys gained their day skipper qualification. The Club would like to thank ASPA for their new sails which look fantastic!

From the Headmaster

It is hard to believe that I am reaching the end of my first term here at Abingdon. The time has simply flown by and I am very grateful to everyone who has made me and my family feel so welcome at this great school.

It has been fascinating to sample what goes on here and to begin to understand the people and structures that make up our organisation. I've hugely enjoyed the opportunity to dip into many events this term. I have been struck by the sheer diversity of what is on offer and by the enjoyment that our pupils derive from the activities that make up the Other Half, as well as the excellent standards that many of them achieve.

My personal highlights this term have been events which have brought the whole school together. There was great anticipation leading up to House Singing, and some trepidation too to be completely honest, but it was fantastic to see every single pupil contributing enthusiastically to his House, imaginative arrangements of familiar songs and energetic and charismatic leadership from the various conductors.

Another particular highlight earlier in the term was the Charathon. The whole school embraced this challenge and it was a great way to spend the day, talking to pupils and staff as we enjoyed the beautiful landscape, in the process raising money for three excellent causes. There was a real spirit of bonhomie and camaraderie as we walked along the Thames, which underlined to me the strong sense of community that underpins life at Abingdon.

All in all, it's been a really exciting few months, and I look forward to many more highlights to come.

Michael Windsor
Headmaster



New Headmaster for Abingdon Prep



Mr Craig Williams has been appointed Headmaster of Abingdon Prep from September 2017 when Crispin Hyde-Dunn moves on to the headship of The Dragon School, Oxford. Since 2013 Craig has been the Senior Deputy Head at Thorngrove School. Craig is an accomplished sportsman, who represented Oxford University at 2nd XI level at both cricket and football, and he continues to enjoy playing cricket. Other interests include golf, historical novels and Manchester United.

Speaking about the appointment, Mike Windsor, said, 'We attracted a very strong field of applicants for this post, and in Craig we have found a candidate who has a superb understanding of prep school education and who will lead our Prep School with skill and verve.'

A warm welcome in Hong Kong

The School hosted its annual reception at the Excelsior Hotel in Causeway Bay, Hong Kong, for current, previous and prospective parents as well as alumni and other friends of the School. The Headmaster flew out for a very brief visit to interview boys and to address the evening reception. He gave some insights into his first impressions of Abingdon before leaping back onto a plane to return to School in time to open the new Multi Use Sports Area. A whistle-stop tour indeed!



First Years' First Week



The 66 new first years enjoyed their first week at Abingdon finding their way around the campus, trying out lots of Other Half activities, and getting to know their new classmates and teachers. This is just a taste of what they had to say:

“ 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.

“ I’ve had one the best weeks of my life.

“ I’ve made lots of friends so I had a lot of fun playing pool and the lunch was delicious. Most of us got lost once or twice though!

“ My week has been AMAZING! I have really enjoyed it and I can’t wait to get back to school on Monday!

“ This week has been tiring, fun, but most of all, amazing! I am so proud and excited to be going to this fantastic, huge school!

Welcome to the Third Year



Third year boys rounded off their first week with a bbq followed by team building games and activities. The boys thoroughly enjoyed command tasks run by the CCF, rock climbing, shooting, football and making parachutes that would safely land an egg!



Boarders also enjoyed making new friends and settling into their new surroundings.

University Destinations

The list of university destinations is correct as of October 2016: that is, it refers to university places secured by those who applied in the 2015-16 UCAS application cycle. Where known, we have also included places won outside the UCAS system. We hope the list demonstrates the range of universities and courses for which Abingdon pupils are accepted. The number in brackets refers to the number of boys taking that course if more than one.

London remains a popular target with Imperial featuring particularly strongly. The “big civics” are consistently favoured: Manchester has been increasingly prominent over recent years. Newcastle, Nottingham, Leeds, Southampton and Cardiff figure frequently amongst boys’ choices. Beyond the Russell Group, Bath continues to sit as a top choice.



Aston
Computing for Business

Bath
Business Administration
Economics 2017
Mechanical Engineering
Physics 2017
Politics with Economics

Birmingham
Business Management
Drama & English
Geography (2)

Birmingham City
Business & Management 2017

Bristol
Aerospace Engineering
Civil Engineering
Geology & Biology
Law

Cambridge
Geography (2)
Music 2017
Natural Sciences (2)

Cardiff
Biochemistry
Biomedical Sciences
Chemistry
Geography
Spanish

Coventry
Business Information Technology

De Montfort
Business & Marketing

Durham
Ancient, Medieval and Modern
History
Earth Sciences
Geology
History

Edinburgh
Chemistry
Geography & Economics
History

Exeter
Economics
History & Modern Languages 2017
Physics with Astrophysics

Imperial College London
Aerospace Materials
Biomedical Sciences
Computing
Mathematics
Mechanical Engineering (4)
Medicine
Physics

Kent
History

King's College London
Ancient History
History

Leeds
Economics & Management
Management with Marketing
Medicine
Politics 2017

Leeds Beckett University
English Literature

Liverpool
Business Economics 2017

London School of Economics and Politics
Law
Politics & Philosophy

Loughborough
Industrial Design & Technology 2017
Politics

Manchester
Aerospace Engineering 2017
Chemistry (2)
Chemistry with Industrial Experience 2017
Economics (2)
Materials Science & Engineering
Mechanical Engineering
Medicine

Newcastle
Ancient History and Archaeology 2017
Business Management 2017
Chemistry
Economics & Finance
Geography 2017
Politics & Economics

Nottingham
Ancient History
Chemistry
Classics 2017
French & History

Oxford
Biochemistry
Classics
Engineering
Materials Science
Mathematics
Philosophy, Politics & Economics
Philosophy & Theology

Plymouth University Peninsula School of Medicine
Medicine & Surgery

Queen's Belfast
Archeology & History 2017
Biological Sciences

Queen Mary's London
Business Management
Computer Science with Business
Management
French with Business Management
Geography with Business
Management

Reading
Management & Business 2017
Real Estate

Sheffield
Electronic Engineering

SOAS
Chinese (Modern and Classical)

Southampton
Biomedical Sciences
Chemistry 2017
History (3)
Mechanical Engineering

St Andrews
Ancient History & Greek
English
Geography
History

Sussex
Biosciences
Business & Management Studies

Swansea
Ancient History
Business Management
Geography
Human Geography

University College London
Ancient History
Biochemistry
Geography
History 2017
Management Sciences
Medicine
Modern Languages

University of the West of England
Biological Sciences 2017
Property Development & Planning

Warwick
History & Politics
Physics

Wolverhampton
Motorsport Engineering

York
English
History
History & Politics
Human Geography & Environment

Overseas
Johns Hopkins, USA
Northeastern University, USA
Princeton, USA
Yale, USA



Back to School

The Lower School Housemaster and classics teacher, Adam Jenkins, experienced a day in the life of a first year when he shadowed a member of 1P for the day. After a journey into school on the Goring bus, he watched the boys working on their keyring designs in DT, practising their map skills in geography, and brushing up on how to deal with fractions in maths. Following a Latin lesson in the afternoon he watched the boys in fine form on the rugby pitch in their victory over Shiplake.

National Children's Orchestra

First year Oliver Glover, a talented oboist, has gained a place again this year in the National Children's Orchestra. Oliver plays Principal Oboe in the School's First Orchestra, an unusual achievement for a first year pupil.



Christmas Celebrations

Local residents enjoyed the annual Christmas Party hosted by the community service volunteers. School bands and choirs provided the entertainment and everyone enjoyed the festivities.



Meet the Team

The two years in the Sixth Form are an important time for every student with some big decisions to make. At Abingdon we provide a team of specialists who are on hand to advise the boys, giving guidance on university and further education applications, careers and also academic support including private study and the EPQ.

From left to right:

Andrew Swarbrick and Nicky King

– Andrew and Nicky advise on all aspects of university entrance including applications and references.

Ben Whitworth

– medical, veterinary & dentistry applications.

James Hallinan – Oxbridge entrance and the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ).

Michael Triff

– careers guidance, alumni relations and USA and other overseas applications.

Nick O'Doherty

– Upper Master (Head of Sixth Form)

Dean Evans

– private study and academic monitoring.

Reaching the Summit



Over the summer Tom Clokey climbed Mount Kilimanjaro to raise money for the Nasio Trust, an HIV orphan charity where he volunteered whilst in Tanzania. Abingdon School's Human Resources Manager, Sarah Carter, also completed the climb in August, raising money for the charity Blue Skye Thinking.



Henry Waterson has won an Army Sixth Form Scholarship following a gruelling assessment process. The scholarship guarantees a place on the commissioning course at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and funding for a degree beforehand.

Architecture Award

Jonathan Hall won the top project prize at The Bartlett School of Architecture (University College London) at their summer school.

Chinese Calligraphy

Six students received awards in the 2016 National Chinese Calligraphy Competition, run annually by the UK Association for the Promotion of Chinese Education and the Chinese Embassy.



Ivan Leung achieved the highest mark in the country in Edexcel IGCSE Geography this summer. Ivan has been nominated for an award for excellence from the Royal Geographic Society.

The Second Year – up for a fight

Second year students enthusiastically embraced the art of stage conflicts when Kev McCurdy, fight director for the National Theatre, the RSC and the Globe held a workshop; he found the boys were very attentive learners when it came to controlled fight manoeuvres.



Tackling Vector Mechanics

Dr Catherine Heyer of the Department of Physics at Oxford University led a very informative and challenging problem-solving workshop for sixth formers. The boys welcomed Dr Heyer's advice for Oxbridge applicants and enjoyed the tough vector mechanics problems, designed by the Isaac Physics project team at Cambridge University.



Be the best you can be!

The Lower School was inspired by the presentation from paralympian and motorcycling world champion Talan Skeels-Piggins who launched this year's 'Be the Best you can be' programme.

Moldovan visitors

This year's Moldova Project trip was a reversal of the usual visit with a group of 16 students, 4 teachers, and the director of the charity, Agape, coming to Abingdon for a week-long trip. The visitors spent time touring the school and enjoyed a range of activities including cricket, a biology lesson on digestion and a drama workshop, which culminated in performances of Romeo and Juliet. The visitors also enjoyed trips to London and Oxford.

Patrick McCubbin with former NASA astronaut Michael Foale



Mission Discovery

Sixth formers Patrick McCubbin and Matthew Gill spent a week with astronauts and space scientists at the International Space School Education Trust's 'Mission Discovery', at King's College, London. The sixth formers joined students from across the UK and the rest of the world and were tasked with designing and presenting ideas for bio-medical experiments capable of being launched onto the International Space Station. The boys met inspirational people such as Michael Foale CBE and Sarah Murray, current Assistant Chief of EVA, Robotics and Crew Systems at NASA. Both Patrick and Matthew are now looking forward to participating in the joint Abingdon and St.Helen's trip to the Cosmonaut Training Centre at Star City in Russia next February.



An Act of Remembrance

The School took time to pause and reflect collectively on Friday 11 November, when we remembered the sacrifice made by our former pupils and teachers in conflict. 2016 marks of course the centenary of the Battle of the Somme, a battle which, in many ways encapsulates the suffering and loss in the Great War. In his address on Remembrance Day, the Chaplain reflected on our former pupils who died on the Somme. The CCF impressed with their turnout and drill and then represented us with distinction in the Abingdon Town parade on Remembrance Sunday.



Abingdon and St Helen's celebrate

The 15th European Day of Languages was marked by the MFL department with a talk for middle school pupils and a joint MFL Society dinner for sixth formers from Abingdon and St Helen's. On both occasions, pupils enjoyed a presentation from Dr Helen Abbott, Professor of Modern Languages at Birmingham University and a specialist in nineteenth-century French poetry and music.



Senior Mathematicians Success

Our senior mathematicians came a very credible third out of 18 teams at the annual regional final of the Senior Team Maths Challenge held at Wheatley Park at the beginning of November.

In the Princeton University Maths Competition the Abingdon team did exceptionally well, coming 6th out of all postal entries, and produced an intriguing and very professional set of solutions. Amongst the top ten were schools from Romania, USA, Croatia, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia and Australia.



Airport to Airport Challenge

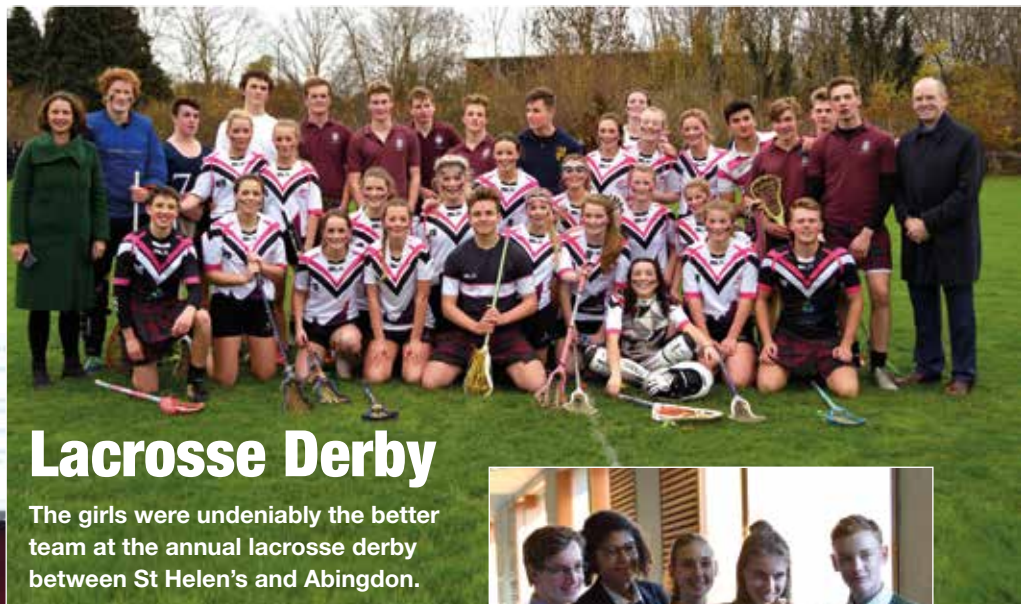
Two sixth form teams are taking part in the BlottMatthews 2016/17 A2A (Airport to Airport) Challenge for Year 12 students, with a prize fund of £5000. Each team consists of students who hope to study engineering or a related discipline at university. The Challenge is to design a transport link between London airports with a maximum transfer time of 20 minutes between any two 'airports', for example Stansted to Heathrow. As well as selecting and explaining the technology to be used, teams must choose routes, address the requirements of the principal civil works necessary and provide basic costs and a development schedule.

Lower sixth pupils Ben Wilson and Thomas Shaw visited the Institution of Civil Engineering in London to conduct research to help with the project. They attended a lecture given by two of the key project managers for the London Crossrail project and saw the largest LEGO bridge in the world! Winners will be announced in April 2017.

The Charathon

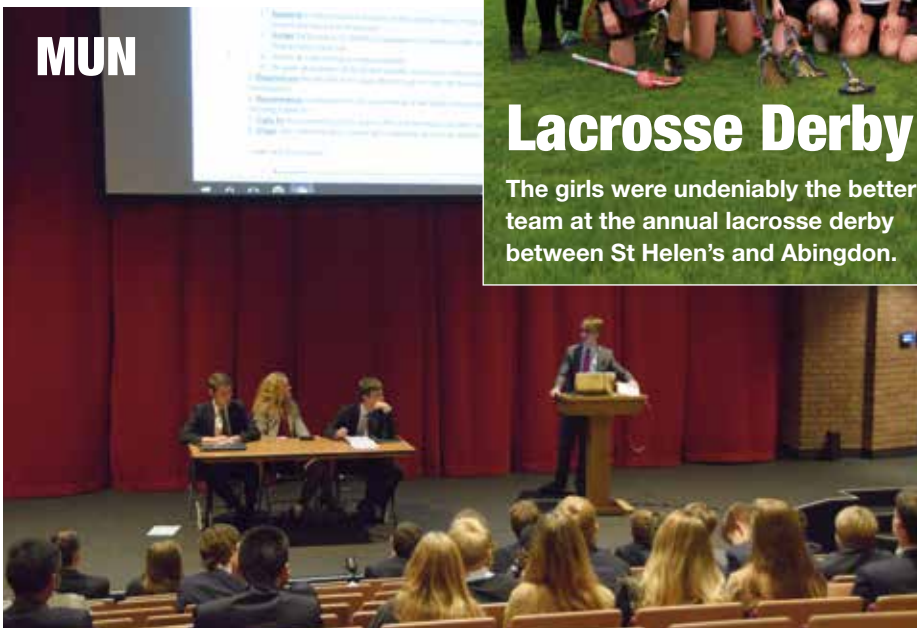
The Abingdon School Charity Half Marathon (or "Charathon") saw boys and staff walking, running, canoeing and rowing the 13 miles back to School from Benson (or Little Wittenham for Lower School).

Boys raised the impressive sum of £29,980 for three charities: Medic Assist International, Helen and Douglas House and The Abingdon Bridge.



Lacrosse Derby

The girls were undeniably the better team at the annual lacrosse derby between St Helen's and Abingdon.



Girls from St Helen's joined 40 Abingdon students at our own Model United Nations conference organised by the boys. Those involved showed an impressive grasp of detail and nuance in debating major global issues. 18 boys then went on to the MUN conference at Malvern St James where they scooped an impressive amount of awards including Best Young Delegate for Alexander Hann and Outstanding Delegate for Hayden Ramm.



Astronomy Club

Abingdon School pupils were joined by students from Larkmead, Fitzharrys and John Mason schools for a new Abingdon Science Partnership, ASP, initiative to study astronomy and to work towards gaining a GCSE. Pupils from across Abingdon also enjoyed a day of space physics activities when the ASP hosted a National Space Academy masterclass.

Fit for the Future



MUSA and Yang Science Centre



Tilsley Park



Greening Court



Beech Court development



Looking forward, we are very excited about our new Sixth Form Centre, the Centre for Independent Learning and the new facilities for the Art department that were announced last term with the plans for Beech Court. We hope to open this new development in 2018.

In addition to major projects, there have been many smaller improvements such as the refurbishment of Boarders' Hall, Avernus and to bedrooms and kitchens in the boarding houses.

The Amey Theatre had new seating and air handling installed in 2015 followed by lighting and audio visual equipment. Over the summer equipment was installed to enable the theatre to be used as a cinema to screen, for example, National Theatre productions.



Amey Theatre

Over the last 12 months the School has seen impressive improvements to its range of facilities across academic, sport and recreational spaces. The stunning Yang Science Centre has transformed the science facilities and made way for the old science block to become Greening Court and a much improved 'home' for Classics, Geography and History. A new multi use sports area, MUSA, has been added to the main campus and extensive improvements to the facilities at Tilsley Park include a new 4G pitch and throws area plus a refurbished cafe.

Out and About



DofE activities this term included boys improving their canoe skills on the River Thames and walkers climbing Kinder Scout at 636m in the Peak District.

Below:

Boys enjoyed perfecting their dancing as well as their language skills in Spain when 51 students from Abingdon and St Helen's visited Galicia.



The CCF threw themselves enthusiastically into a very tough adventure camp in Yorkshire and the Lake District. 20 RAF and army cadets took part in caving, climbing, canyoning, hiking and extreme ghyll scrambling.

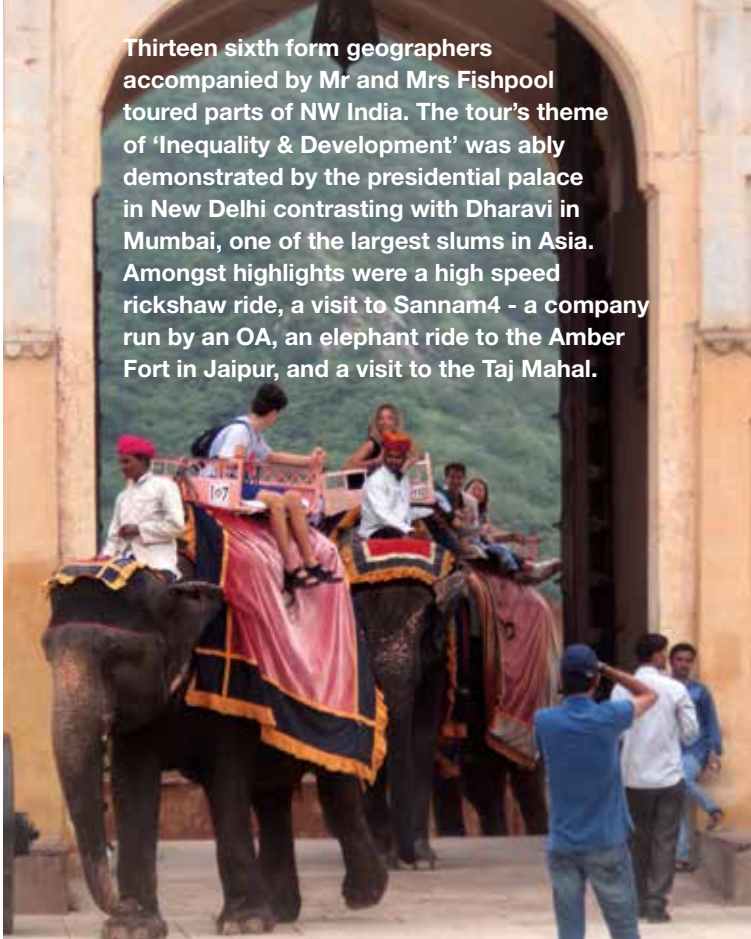


The U14 rugby squad played some good matches during their tour of Sussex while the U15s enjoyed taking part in the Langley Festival in Norfolk.

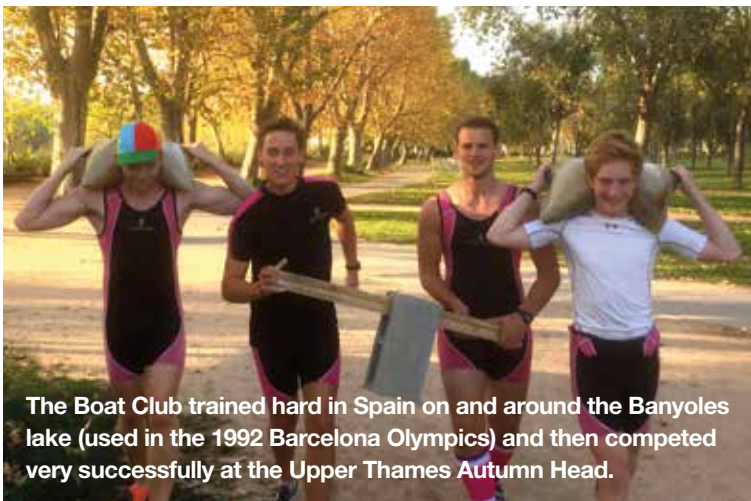
After almost two years of planning, fundraising and research, 42 fifth year and lower sixth adventurers explored the northern part of Vietnam. Activities included trekking and project work in the community and sight-seeing in Hanoi, Hue and Hoi An, a UNESCO World heritage centre.



Thirteen sixth form geographers accompanied by Mr and Mrs Fishpool toured parts of NW India. The tour's theme of 'Inequality & Development' was ably demonstrated by the presidential palace in New Delhi contrasting with Dharavi in Mumbai, one of the largest slums in Asia. Amongst highlights were a high speed rickshaw ride, a visit to Sannam4 - a company run by an OA, an elephant ride to the Amber Fort in Jaipur, and a visit to the Taj Mahal.



Sailors completed DofE silver and gold practice expeditions on the south coast.



The Boat Club trained hard in Spain on and around the Banyoles lake (used in the 1992 Barcelona Olympics) and then competed very successfully at the Upper Thames Autumn Head.



Classicists fully appreciated the history and sites of ancient and modern Greece over half term.

Abingdon Music and Drama

Abingdon Film Unit's 13th annual screening



David Bicarregui (left) and Joe Bradley (right) with actor David Bailey and the Michael Grigsby Young Filmmaker of the Year Award

An enthusiastic audience was treated to ten new films by current members of the Unit and one further film from AFU alumnus and BAFTA scholarship winner Tian Ji, currently based in Hong Kong. Among those present were Marie Holmes and David J Bailey who, along with Alex Mugnaioni (OA and former AFU filmmaker) were the first professional actors to appear in AFU films. In another first, Larry Bush presented his film *Lights*, a product of the new Abingdon Film Academy, an offshoot of the Unit that enables young people from outside Abingdon to work with the AFU's tutors and create their own films. At the end of the evening, the Michael Grigsby Awards - created in 2014 to honour the memory of one of Britain's greatest documentary filmmakers and the AFU's co-founder - were presented for the third time. The Spirit of Grigsby Award was shared by Joe Bradley (for his documentary *The Brass Violin*) and Louis Edward (for his fiction film *Limbo*) while The Michael Grigsby Young Filmmaker of the Year Award was presented to David Bicarregui for his film *Fade Away*.

Treasure Island



The choric storytelling was bold and energetic, with crystal-clear delivery from an excellent cast of 41 first and second year students. The ship's set, atmospheric lighting and evocative soundscapes added considerably to the impact of the piece, combining with the acting to create a hugely dynamic and engaging production.

And Then There Weren't Any Left



OA Ed Rowett's marvellous, spoof murder-mystery play commissioned and directed by Ben Phillips was an inspired choice for the Third Year's production. The thirteen-strong cast was in impressive form as they took on the difficult art of making comedy look easy. Collapsing sets, doors that refused to open, actors and sound effects that never arrived on cue, unwelcome intrusions by the emergency services - every conceivable theatrical disaster was visited upon the play's hapless crew, only to be surmounted and swatted aside with time-honoured British virtues of grit, pluck and improvisation.

Joint Choral Society Concert



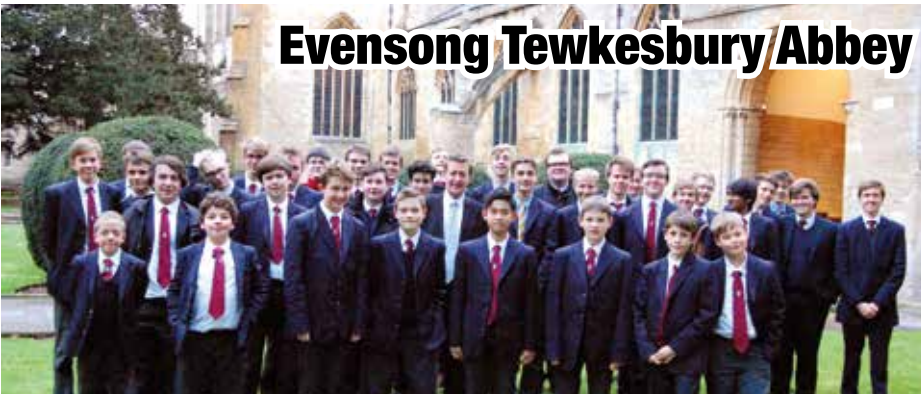
This year's concert included excellent solos and impressive orchestral accompaniment for Vivaldi's well-loved *Gloria* and Vaughan Williams's *Five Mystical Songs*.

O'Doherty's steal the show!



O'Doherty's picked up first prize at this year's House Singing Competition with Blue Swede's "Hooked on a Feeling", recreating an authentic 1960's feel with an impressive instrumental backing. Third place went to Southwell-Sander's with an excellent rendition of "Let it Go" from *Frozen* - the boys were complimented for being "supremely on top of the song's demands". Morgan's picked up second place with "I'll Make a Man out of You", from the musical, *Mulan*.

Evensong Tewkesbury Abbey



Chapel Choir sang Evensong at Tewkesbury Abbey to a very appreciative congregation and many thanks to James Anderson-Besant (OA 2016) for accompanying them on the organ.

Opera Workshop



Richard Burkhard's masterclass was a phenomenal occasion for the School's singers. Richard has worked as a solo bass-baritone at some of the most famous opera houses in the world – Opera North, New Zealand, ENO, Scottish Opera, ROH and the Bolshoi. He was fascinating and enjoyable to watch and his warmth and generosity with the boys allowed their performances to grow in confidence and to improve exponentially.

Senior Solo Competition



Following last year's inaugural success, the Senior Solo Competition saw 11 very talented musicians perform to an exceptional standard on piano, violin, cello and flute. Dr Benjamin Skipp, oboist, pianist, ABRSM examiner and Lecturer and Director of Studies in Music at Hertford and Somerville Colleges, had the unenviable task of adjudication. The standard was extremely high and many congratulations to fifth former, Didier Delgorge who won the competition.



Christmas Concert

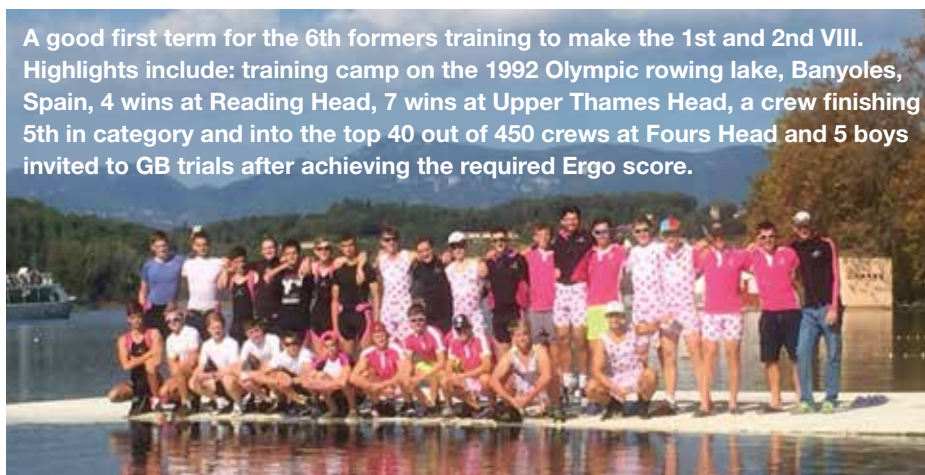
The Christmas concerts were an opportunity for all the School's senior bands and orchestras, ably supported by the younger years, to show their work this term. The First Orchestra welcomed the chance to practise some of the pieces they will take on tour to Bielefeld in February.



The Rugby Club had an excellent term playing close to 200 matches, with almost 400 boys representing the School. Highlights were impressive results against Eton, Sherborne, Rugby, Radley and Warwick and successful mini tours to Sussex and Norwich for the U14 and U15 squads.



Louis Heard has been selected for a British junior polo development course and earlier this year received the Most Promising Player award at the schools and universities national polo championships.



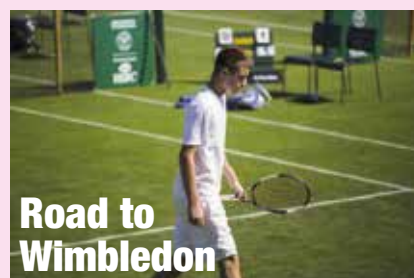
A good first term for the 6th formers training to make the 1st and 2nd VIII. Highlights include: training camp on the 1992 Olympic rowing lake, Banyoles, Spain, 4 wins at Reading Head, 7 wins at Upper Thames Head, a crew finishing 5th in category and into the top 40 out of 450 crews at Fours Head and 5 boys invited to GB trials after achieving the required Ergo score.



This term saw highly competitive galas against Harrow School and the Lower School's inaugural competitions against Moultsford and Warwick. The U15 relay squad swam exceptionally well against tough opposition at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Pool, eventually finishing 11th in the country.



Early success this cross-country season with both the intermediate and senior teams coming third at the Harrow meet. Also impressive performances at the Eynsham 10km from Ivo Brown (35.32), Calum Steer (36.31) and Josh Crichton (37.48).



Congratulations to Ethan McLellan who reached the doubles final of this prestigious tennis tournament.



Charlie Quarterman continues his cycling success with third place in the highly competitive Giro di Basilicata in Italy. Charlie joins the Luxembourg based cycling team Leopard Pro next year.



Pupils ranging from the First Year to the U6th recorded some excellent performances in the Abingdon Vale Biathlon Time Trials. Jonathan Panet-Smith finished in 2nd place and qualified for the British Schools' Championships. Robert Smith and Jonathan Hurrell finished 1st and 2nd in their respective age groups.



Magnus Gregory, was selected for the Great Britain kayaking team over the summer and won the Junior Sprint Canoe U18 European Champion title and a Junior Sprint World silver medal at the World Championships. Magnus also flew to Rio as part of the British Olympic Association Ambition Programme to experience the Olympics first hand.

Following an impressive competition to make the final of the Welsh Open Men's Senior Epee competition, Rob MacLennan has been selected to fence for the GBR Junior Epee team in Basel in December and in Espoo in February.



Boys from the Second, Third and Fourth Years played in football's Gothia Cup, gaining tremendous competition experience.





Investigating Forces

Year 6 spent a day with Science Oxford exploring forces. Boys enjoyed very practical science with everything from skateboards to eggs and bridges.



In Coding Club boys have been improving their skills using Python Turtle. They've learnt to manipulate code to change variables such as shape, colour, size and speed.



Music-making

Music activities this term included two concert platforms, the wind, brass and percussion workshop at Radley College and the end of term finale, the Carol Service at St Helen's Church. At the concert platforms boys perform to small audiences, gaining confidence and experience. Pictured are some talented boys from Years 4 to 8 who impressed the audience with violin, guitar, cello, flute, voice and piano.



This year's charity 'Thinking of Oscar' was the theme for our annual coin collection, with the added incentive of an inter-house competition - for the most coins laid and the highest amount raised. The charity looks to improve the experiences of young children and their families in hospital.



Taking Charge

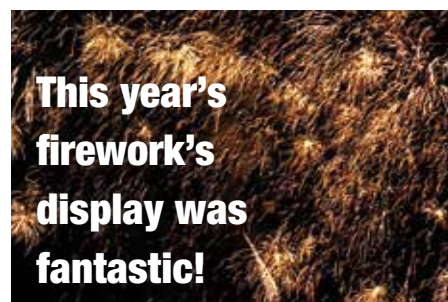
8-year old Oliver relished taking charge of the Prep School for the day, having won the prize to be Headmaster at the School's Christmas bazaar. Oliver met parents, signed merit awards, and conducted a tidiness inspection. He particularly enjoyed hot chocolate and Maltesers with governors in the Headmaster's study.



The younger boys thoroughly enjoyed their visit from Abingdon Fire Station's Blue Watch who came to talk to them about fire safety.



Everyone at Abingdon Prep gathered in the Quad just before 11am on 11 November for a short Remembrance Ceremony.



**This year's
firework's
display was
fantastic!**

Art and Science



Year 8 visited the Natural History Museum in Oxford for a day of art and science. Boys learnt about classification and handled giant hissing cockroaches. They also studied the beautiful building that houses the museum where every pillar has a different carved pedestal featuring plants and animals, and the ceiling echoes the ribs of a dinosaur skeleton.



Year 5 toured the decks of HMS Victory, traveling back in time to join Nelson's sailors learning to signal and tie knots.



Boys in Reception were enthusiastic hosts to visitors who taught them about Diwali and how to look after your teeth.

Nativity



Pre-prep thoroughly enjoyed entertaining a hugely appreciative audience with this year's Nativity Play.

Year 4 embarked on their first 'residential' trip – a 22km walk and overnight stay on the Ridgeway, ending at White Horse Hill.



Year 6 enthusiastically took to 'Bushcraft' at their residential trip to Cornbury Park, building shelters, learning how to make fires and trying their hand at cooking.

Sporting highlights



The rugby term saw some good results and a very successful tour to Jersey in October. The School hosted three excellent tournaments with the U13s winning the sevens on home turf.



Our biathletes have also had a good term with some excellent results in the Abingdon Vale Biathlon.

“Courage. Kindness. Friendship. Character. These are the qualities that define us as human beings, and propel us, on occasion, to greatness.”

R.J. Palacio, *Wonder*

The Importance of Character Education



An ISI inspection report devotes one of its three main sections to the “quality of pupils’ personal development”. As a symbol of what the independent sector values, it’s quite a powerful one, sitting as it does equally emphasised with “pupil achievements” and “school leadership”. This is particularly striking when one looks at an Ofsted report, where there is no similar ‘personal development’ category. It’s true that it may touch on elements of character development, but it does so only very lightly and the whole structure of the report suggests a much lower priority being given to this crucial element of education.

And why do I term it a ‘crucial element of education’? Isn’t it the case that essentially children go to school for pragmatic and utilitarian reasons - to pass exams - and matters of character development aren’t really the business of teachers? And isn’t it the case that independent schools who choose to emphasise their ‘character development’ are those who are a little embarrassed about their academic profile and need to find some justification for the fees they charge?

Andreas Schleicher, the OECD official who runs PISA (the organisation that seeks to compare and evaluate education systems across the world) has been pondering in the press the question of what PISA should be measuring by 2030. Speaking to the TES in May he said that one of the questions that needed to be asked was “whether character education should remain in the

margins or can we frame our instruction systems much more centrally around these qualities?” A typical accusation levelled at the UK’s independent sector is that its pupils tend to get the top jobs in whatever careers they go into thanks to “the advantages of connections and contacts that place [them] in a privileged position” (Kevin Courtney, Deputy General Secretary of the NUT). Andreas Schleicher presents a different view - and one that independent schools would strongly endorse - namely that the relative success of independent school pupils is not the Old Boys’/Girls’ networks giving them an artificial leg up. Rather, their success comes from the emphasis in these schools on things like leadership, emotional intelligence, having a strong moral compass, resilience, stamina and all those much ‘softer’ skills to do with how to get along with - and motivate - people. Of course, I recognise that this concept is built into the best maintained sector schools as well.

Talking about ‘character education’ is not a distraction trick or a defensive response to questions about value for money: it’s actually at the very heart of what an excellent education looks like. Abingdon has very little of its own jargon but we do have one term unique to us I think, in that we refer to our extra-curricular side as “The Other Half”. Like the structure of inspection reports, the names we use can often be statements of what we value. For us the name suggests that we see academic progress as only half of what is important in

a pupil’s journey through the school. The “other half” is what pupils get up to outside of the classroom and a key measure of success for us is how good that provision is, in tandem with our pastoral systems, at nurturing the character qualities that will send them out into the world as future leaders in whatever they choose to do.

Naturally, I recognise too that some of those qualities I name above are fostered within the academic classroom, but the true assessment of a school spreads much wider than that and goes right to the culture of the place. And it’s that middle section of an ISI report where you want to start and most of the evidence for that section comes from what goes on outside of the classroom. It takes in the clubs, the DoE programme, CCF, cultural activities, magazines and newspapers, debating, the sports, the leadership opportunities, the moral and spiritual awareness of pupils, their sense of culture, of the privileges and responsibilities of being a member of society, their care for others, their instinct to give back and support the weak and disadvantaged, their tolerance and their liberality of spirit.

Now, if we can truly place these things at the centre of all our educational provision and cease to confuse ‘education’ with ‘exams’, what a powerful force that could be and what a valuable thing for PISA to be attempting to measure by 2030.

Graeme May
Deputy Head (Academic)



COFFEE BREAK WITH SUS!

10 questions with Marilyn Moore, Second-hand Uniform Shop Manager



The Second-hand Uniform Shop (SUS) has become such a valuable and well supported part of school life and is expertly run by volunteer parents. To get some inside knowledge on what it's all about, we thought we'd squeeze in a quick coffee with SUS manager, Marilyn Moore.

Second-hand Uniform Shop

The shop is open most Saturdays and Wednesdays during term time. All dates and times of opening are available on the school website.

Enquiries to
sus@abingdon.org.uk

How long have you been running SUS?

I have been involved as a volunteer since 2008 but had the responsibility for running SUS for the last 7 years.

Who staffs the shop and are they parents of current Abingdon boys?

I am very lucky to have a wonderful team of volunteer parents, 11 of whom are current parents and 2 whose sons left in 2013. In fact one parent whose son is leaving next summer has already offered to stay on the rota for 2017/18.

How often have you moved location since you have been running SUS?

The Greening Wing is our 4th home and thanks to very good discussions with the school we at last have a proper shop.

Do parents get any money back on items that the shop sells?

Yes, parents get 60% of the sale price of every item they ask SUS to sell on their behalf.

When is the busiest time of year?

The summer term is always busy especially on the 1st year and 3rd year Induction days.

How much does SUS raise for the School?

Last school year we donated £8,000 to support requests for the funding of small items from the 'Masters' wish list'. In 2014/15 we donated £6,000 for the new Yamaha piano which sits in the Amey Theatre as well as the new hockey goals. In the past we have donated money for the 1st XV rugby posts, all the reduced size rugby posts at the front of school, cricket nets, new canoe, new uniforms for CCF, iPods for modern language dept. and many other projects such as Public Speaking workshops and a Go-Kart kit for the science centre.

What item do you wish you had more of to sell?

Track suits and reversible rugby shirts are always in great demand.

What is the biggest misconception about SUS?

That the items for sale will be of poor quality! We pride ourselves on the presentation and good condition of uniform available. All items are washed and inspected before sale. If I wouldn't buy it then it does not go on sale.

How many items were sold last year / in a typical year?

In the academic year 2015/16, 1039 items were sold which was an increase of 10% over the previous year.

OAs in the Diplomatic Service

A handful of OAs are employed in the Diplomatic Service around the world. Here are three glimpses into the life of a diplomat.



Nick Kay
(1976)



Diplomats are different. Some are great marketing managers for the UK, some great negotiators. Others help Brits in trouble overseas. Some have the opportunity to affect the lives of millions of people suffering from conflict and poverty – my recent work in Somalia, Sudan, DRC and Afghanistan gave me that chance.

What does a diplomat need to succeed today? On my list are three things: commitment to making a difference, strong people skills and a love of innovation and challenge.

Abingdon School helped develop all three. I didn't leave wanting to be a diplomat; I worked abroad before joining the FCO aged 35. But Abingdon certainly shaped the diplomat I am today.

Matthew Lodge
(1986)

Having served as a Royal Marine for 9 years, I left the military and joined the Diplomatic Service, in order to travel and use my languages. In the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, nautical references became cricketer ones. Physical prowess became less important than intellectual capability. Real people and intractable problems in a complex world – it's fascinating.

Abingdon prepared me well: an expansive education; academic achievements balanced with life skills; exposure to different perspectives; and an encouragement of intellectual curiosity.

I have issued visas in Yerevan, briefed the media at Thiepval, negotiated in Brussels, responded to crisis in Baghdad. I'm now Ambassador in Kuwait. Life as a diplomat is never dull.



Kim Darroch (1972)

I've been in the Diplomatic Service for 37 years. I joined by chance – the Service offered me a job before anyone else!

Abingdon prepared me well by giving me a broad education, an interest in current affairs, and curiosity about the world. I still think fondly of my time there.

I've had a fascinating Foreign Service career: postings in Tokyo, Rome, Brussels and now Washington. I was Ambassador to the EU, Prime Minister Cameron's National Security Adviser, and now Ambassador to the US. These are also the greatest rewards – testing but wonderful jobs, full of great experiences.

Upcoming Events

University Reunion Dinners 2017

Bristol/Bath (in Bristol): **Friday 20 January**

Newcastle/Durham (in Newcastle): **Friday 3 February**

Nottingham/Leicester/Loughborough (in Nottingham): **Friday 3 March**

Look out for more details online.

Regional Reunion Lunches 2017

Bristol/Bath: **Saturday 21 January**

Scotland: **Saturday 4 February**

South Peak District: **Saturday 4 March**

Look out for more details online – each event will include a scenic walk in the area before settling down for lunch.

ASPA Quiz and Supper Night

Saturday 25 February

OAs are cordially invited to participate as a member of 'Team OA' at the upcoming ASPA Quiz and Supper Night on Saturday 4 February 2017. Please contact Michael Triff at michael.triff@abingdon.org.uk to get involved.

OA Football Day

Saturday 18 March

The first annual OA Football Day will be held at Tilsley Park on Saturday 18 March. Look out for more details online.



School Road Relay

Monday 27 March 2017

Entries from OA teams (four OAs per team) are invited to join the 2017 Abingdon School Road Relay.

If you would like to enter a team, please email the OA Club Office at oa.club@abingdon.org.uk.



London Drinks Reception

Wednesday 23 November 2016 saw over 150 OAs and current and former staff gather at the RAF Club in Piccadilly for the annual London Drinks Reception. It was a fantastic evening, with OAs catching up and reminiscing with each other and their former teachers. Our thanks go to the staff and OAs in attendance that make this event so special, and to David Allison (1993, OA Club Committee President) for making our use of this stunning venue possible.



Careers Evening

On Friday 18 November 2016, 28 OAs and 90 boys gathered in the Yang Science Centre for the Sixth Form Careers Evening, which takes the format of a miniature professional conference. Boys took the opportunity to learn about the art of networking, received insightful advice from two OA panels about approaching the world of work, and discussed in detail career paths they are considering. OAs enjoyed giving advice that they may have benefitted from as sixth formers.



Abingdon Out of the Past

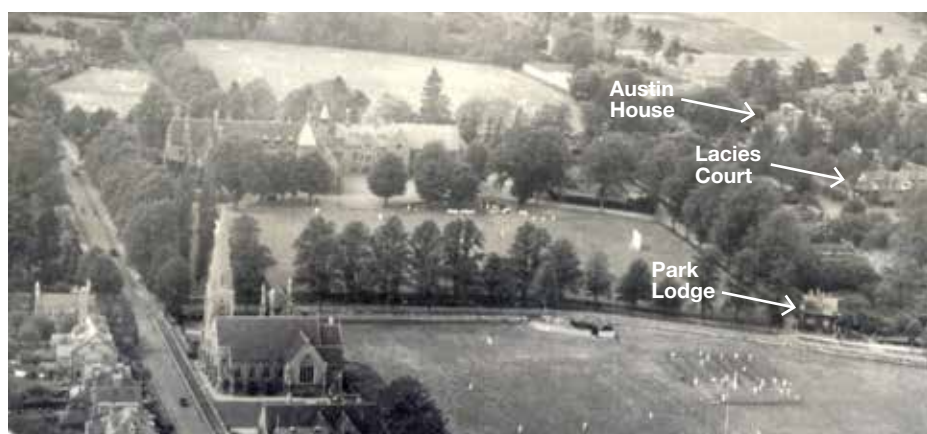
Sir Samuel Forster OA



A photograph of the 1892 school football team shows the unusual presence of an African student in the back row. Curious, David Loong (S7 DE) decided to discover who he was. The name on the photograph didn't help much as it had been misspelt but the match reports revealed him to be the goalkeeper, Sam Forster, "who has the advantages of being big and heavy, and at the same time cool and active. A good player and never loses his head".

Forster (1873-1940), who was born in The Gambia, came to Abingdon for one year to take the Oxford entrance. He studied law at Merton College and then became the first Gambian to qualify as a barrister at the Inner Temple. He returned to The Gambia to practise law, was a member of the Legislative Council for thirty years and in 1933 became the first Gambian to receive a knighthood.

A Bird's Eye View – 80 Years Ago



Compare this photograph with the one inside (page 10) and you can see the huge changes eighty years have made, not just to the School but to the town of Abingdon too. It was taken during the Summer term of 1939 when there were 176 pupils at the School.

The Harvey Window



The poet, F.W. Harvey (1888-1957), whose best-known work references his beloved Forest of Dean, was educated at Rossall, but his three brothers and a cousin all came to Abingdon. One brother was killed in a motorbike accident in 1914, another was killed in action in France in 1918, and the cousin lost his life in the Palestine Campaign in 1916. It was in their memories that the School made a donation towards the cost of this beautiful window by Graham Dowding, which was dedicated in St Peter's Church, Minsterworth, Gloucestershire on 12 November last year.



Felicity Lusk

This striking portrait by Marcus Hodge of Felicity Lusk, currently Vice-President (Education), GEMS Education in Dubai, has joined those of the previous two Heads, Mark Turner and Michael St John Parker, in the entrance to Big School.