



Exploring the Arctic Wilderness

Twenty Abingdon students returned from Finland’s Arctic wilderness talking passionately about conservation issues and the need to protect both the environment and the ancient culture of this beautiful part of the world.

The boys explored this stunning environment over the Christmas holiday, learning wilderness skills including navigating through the boreal forest in the midwinter’s darkness. They enjoyed ice-climbing, snowshoeing and sledging, saw golden eagles and

experienced the thrill of a husky ride at sunrise in the boreal forest. Seeing the majestic northern lights and living in the Arctic wilderness over midwinter’s day were highlights of a unique experience that will stay with the boys for a very long time.

From the Headmaster



Welcome to the latest edition of Abingdon News. No fake news here - just a colourful and full account of our pupils' exploits over the past term.

A particular personal highlight was the day I spent shadowing a third year pupil. It was a packed and varied day, starting with a discussion of the Trump phenomenon in tutor group and finishing with a French lesson spent describing Impressionist paintings. Along the way, I had the chance to complete an experiment in Chemistry, join

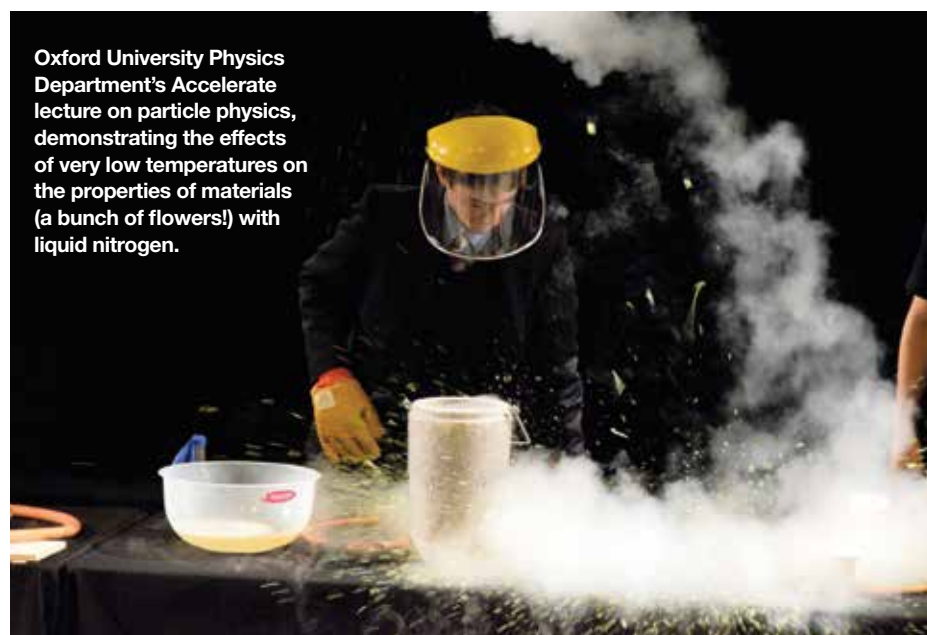
in with a Drama class, discuss the nature of warfare in the Great War and talk about Shakespeare's use of wordplay in *Twelfth Night*.

My guide for the day and his friends were excellent company, happy to share their views of the school and to show me their daily routines. I was impressed by the way they engaged with their studies throughout a very varied day. It was also exciting to see them being challenged and stretched in every lesson; a particular high-spot was

when a pupil exclaimed 'that's so cool!' on learning a new fact in Computing - a moment for a teacher to treasure.

My day with the Third Year was also a reminder that our pupils live busy and fruitful lives, rising daily to academic challenges alongside their commitment to the Other Half. I hope they - and their families - had a restful and refreshing break over Easter.

Michael Windsor, Headmaster



Oxford University Physics Department's Accelerate lecture on particle physics, demonstrating the effects of very low temperatures on the properties of materials (a bunch of flowers!) with liquid nitrogen.



Community Service Tea Party

The sun came out and our guests really felt that spring had begun at the Community Service Tea Party. Many thanks to upper sixth former, Archie Williams, who compered his last tea party, after four years of dedicated volunteering.



Exploring Latin



Bellringers pass the test

Third years Francesco Bartolini and Joe Nicholas passed Level 1 of the ART Learning the Ropes bellringing course. Having started from scratch in September, they have both made excellent progress and are now able to ring confidently as part of a group.



Congratulations to Jamie Farrow in the Upper Sixth, who has won a place as a tenor in the prestigious National Youth Choir of Great Britain.

The second years travelled to Bath to visit the remains of Aquae Sulis, setting for many of the stories they are currently studying in the Cambridge Latin Course. They explored the baths and the temple complex, as well as reading some of the Latin inscriptions on tombstones and defixiones (curse tablets). The trip ended with the opportunity to taste the water of the sacred spring - an experience which was not universally enjoyed!



Chess

In the prestigious National Schools Chess Championship, Abingdon narrowly defeated a strong Horris Hill team, coached by Grandmaster Nicholas Pert, to reach the regional final, where they will face last year's national runners up Reading Grammar School. Abingdon's team was Ray Ren, Joseph Truran, Jeff Abraham, Jerry Yang, Thitipat Ditrungroj and Richard Oh. Ray, Jerry and Thitipat have also been battling for Abingdon in the Oxford and District Chess League, improving with every encounter against tough local opposition.

Under Starter's Orders

The 2017 Road Relay gets underway with nearly 600 boys, staff and OAs competing.



CERN@School

Abingdon Science Partnership, ASP, has become an official partner with the Institute for Research in Schools, giving access to particle detectors and data sets from CERN and other large research organisations. That's Oxfordshire TV reporter Katie Chambers visited the ASP Lab to meet pupils involved in the CERN@School project, which is one of the activities on offer at the new Science Factor research club.

Students from Abingdon, St Helen's and Fitzharrys School have been invited to work alongside Particle Physicists from CERN in Geneva and the Universities of Oxford and Birmingham to develop a Minecraft replica of CERN's ATLAS detector, where the famous Higgs boson was discovered.



Shortbread Valentines

Third year boarders, supervised by Peter Wang, made shortbread hearts for Community Service. They were given as Valentine's gifts to the ladies at the Older and Bolder exercise club.



Young Enterprise teams pick up prizes

The four YE teams have enjoyed successful trade fairs in Cowley, Banbury and Abingdon and, after presenting at the area final, Access and arôme have gone through to the county final in May.

The School welcomed back 25 OAs who have gone on to study classical subjects at university. The OAs and former members of the Classics department joined 36 current Abingdonians for the annual Classics Dinner.



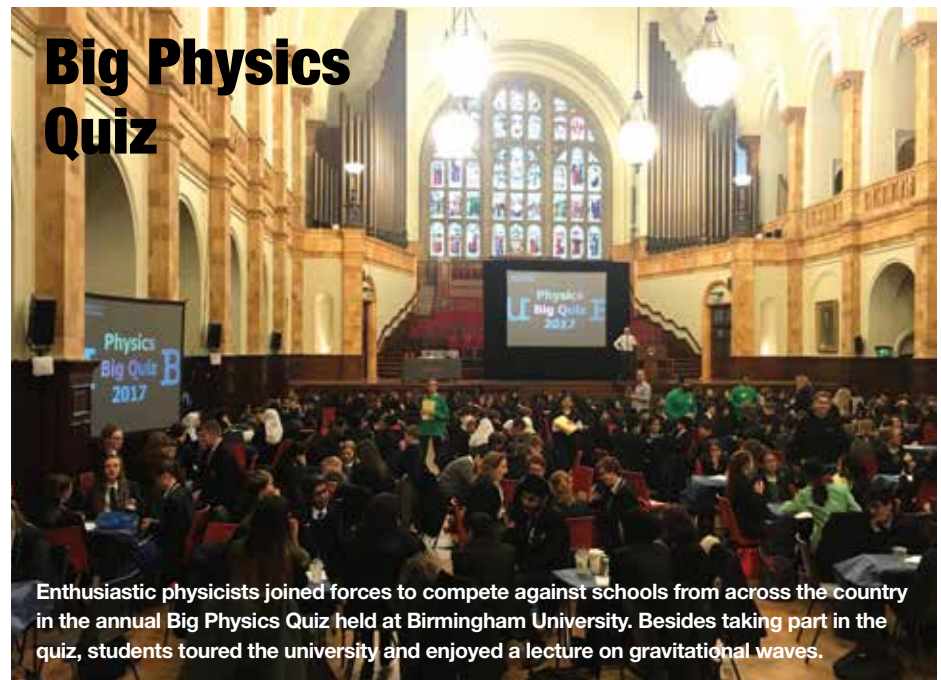
Surprise success in Air Squadron Trophy Competition

At the end of a day of tough competition, the CCF cadets were surprised and elated to hear that they had won the Air Squadron Trophy Competition regional stage, progressing through to the national competition. Junior Corporal Breach picked up an individual prize and the team was awarded the RAF Knowledge Trophy. The cadets thoroughly deserved their victory, with superb teamwork and tremendous individual efforts.



Fourth Year Maths Feast

Eden Lam, Garfield Zhang, Jason Ng and Brian Ho put in an excellent performance in the Maths Feast competition, taking joint first place in the 'Main Course' - comprehension round, and being the standout winners of the 'Petits-Fours' Relay Round.



Big Physics Quiz

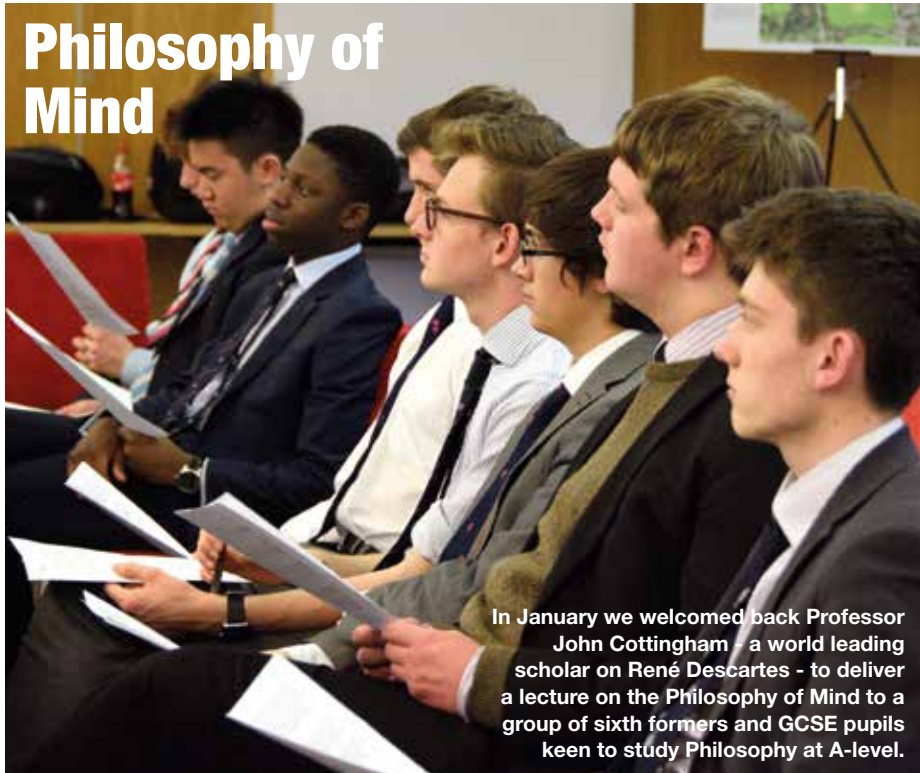
Enthusiastic physicists joined forces to compete against schools from across the country in the annual Big Physics Quiz held at Birmingham University. Besides taking part in the quiz, students toured the university and enjoyed a lecture on gravitational waves.



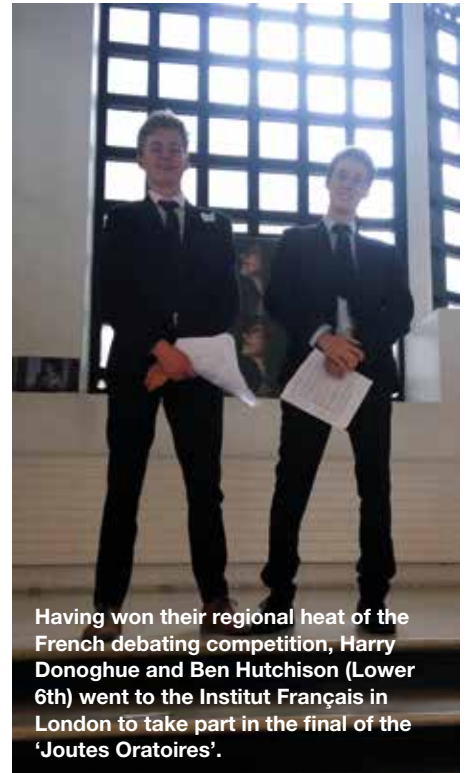
Stop the Spread

A team of second year Science Ambassadors has developed a model hand-washing station as part of the Practical Action charity's Stop the Spread challenge. Jack Tilley, Alex Long, Luka Shanidze, Josh Giles-Friend and Matthew Fowler demonstrated their model at the Association for Science Education (ASE) 2017 conference. The British Science Association has awarded all the boys a CREST Discovery Award.

Philosophy of Mind



In January we welcomed back Professor John Cottingham - a world leading scholar on René Descartes - to deliver a lecture on the Philosophy of Mind to a group of sixth formers and GCSE pupils keen to study Philosophy at A-level.



Having won their regional heat of the French debating competition, Harry Donoghue and Ben Hutchison (Lower 6th) went to the Institut Français in London to take part in the final of the 'Joutes Oratoires'.

Abingdon Sleeps Rough



Thirty three students and four staff braved rain and cold to sleep rough on the school campus, raising awareness of the challenges of homelessness, as well as money for Oxford Homeless Pathways. No tents, no comforts, just cardboard and a sleeping bag. The boys slept outside the music school, many outside the café and some in the bag racks round the back of Big School. Although not a pleasant experience, with rain and temperatures of 4 degrees, it was certainly a memorable one, with one student commenting, "It was a real eye opener into the lives of the homeless and made me appreciate how lucky we are to have a roof over our heads and a warm bed."

The event raised over £1000 for Oxford Homeless Pathways.

Lego Challenge



Six third year students took on tough competition in the First Lego League Animal Allies Challenge, improving throughout the competition and returning with lots of new ideas. During the Michaelmas term, the boys built lego models including the Mindstorms Lego robot which they learnt how to program.

Breaking the Code

Sixth former James Hogge continued his impressive record in the National Cipher Challenge, run by the University of Southampton Mathematics Department. James picked up the second prize and £800 for the second successive year.



Independent Learning



Exciting New Library will Support Independent Learning

Preparations are well underway for the new library, which will occupy the first floor of the new Beech Court development opening in autumn 2018. The library will replace the existing library in Big School and will be a focus for independent learning. With more than twice the floor area of the present library it will be centred around a dedicated reading area and a flexible, open-plan space supporting different modes of study. It will also include a sound-proofed zone for private study, project rooms and a careers office.

The dedicated reading area will provide a welcoming, comfortable space where students can drop in and simply read.

Zoning and careful sound baffling will enable the library to accommodate a diverse range of teaching and learning activities simultaneously. The facilities will encourage students to recognise and fully utilise the value of both established and emerging information platforms. Digital resources and mobile technology, both integral to reading and research, will be readily accessible with wi-fi and charging points throughout. At the same time, the library will house more than 15,000 books, journals and magazines.

The library will bring together the best of what our existing library offers with the best of new technologies, in a comfortable and flexible space tailored to the diverse needs of students growing up in a rapidly evolving information environment.

A promotional poster for the RSC's 'Rome' series. The top banner is red with 'RSC ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY' on the left and 'LIVE FROM STRATFORD-UPON-AVON' on the right. Below this, a gold banner reads 'ROME MMXVII'. The main text says 'BROADCAST LIVE TO CINEMAS 26 APRIL 2017' and 'WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE JULIUS CAESAR'. On the right is a golden statue of a seated figure. At the bottom left, it says 'Did you Know...'. At the bottom right, it says 'ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND'.

You can now watch National Theatre Live and RSC Live broadcasts at the Amey Theatre. Following a substantial upgrade of the sound and audio visual facilities, which includes a 8m x 5m cinema screen and 7.1 surround sound, the Theatre opened its doors to the public for the live screening of *The Tempest* from the RSC. This was followed by NT Live's *Saint Joan*, *Hedda Gabler* and *Twelfth Night*.

An impressive list of screenings are lined up for the rest of the year, including the RSC's *Rome* series (*Julius Caesar*, *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Titus Andronicus*) and the National Theatre's production of the award winning *Angels in America* (Part I and Part II). We are also in the process of organising screenings with the English National Opera and Royal Opera House. The full line up of events at the Amey Theatre includes the Horizon lecture series, which are public talks from world renowned adventurers, about their remarkable stories of exploration and discovery. Adventurer Alastair Humphreys entertained an audience of nearly 400 people and other speakers included internationally acclaimed mountaineer Stephen Venables, leading polar explorer Pen Hadow and local adventurer Sarah Outen.

For more information about upcoming live screenings and other events hosted at the Amey Theatre, please visit the Box Office at www.abingdon.org.uk/future_events where you can also buy tickets.

Golden Jubilee Tour to Bielefeld



The 50 year partnership with the Ratsgymnasium in Bielefeld was celebrated with a symphony orchestra tour involving 45 boys from all years of the school, and, accompanied by four members of staff. The Heads of both schools were joined by the Headmistress of St Helen's to hear the orchestra play the first concert of the tour to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of the partnership established by Sir James Cobban in 1967. It was a very moving and enjoyable occasion to mark this very special partnership.

The tour party went on to play two further equally successful concerts at Lemgo and Detmold. Together with Mendelssohn and Vaughan Williams, the repertoire included Nimrod from Elgar's Enigma Variations, Schubert's Unfinished Symphony, a Burt Bacharach Medley and a film score, Moross' 1950s music for *The Big Country*. The tour party also had time to visit the local sites including Sparrenburg Castle and Dr Oetker World, and thoroughly enjoyed letting off steam with a game of football.



Singers' Platform

Amongst the talented performers it was exciting to hear three of our upper sixth music students; the evening was an ideal dry-run for their upcoming A2 recitals. The programme ranged from Bach and Purcell, through Schubert, up to Britten, and included Jazz and a song from the musical *Oliver!*



The Fitzroy Quartet

The music department welcomed the Fitzroy Quartet who coached a number of Abingdon's chamber groups before giving a short performance.



The Intermediate Solo Instrumental Competition showcased the talents of 16 of the School's musicians from the Third Year to Lower Sixth and featured four families of instruments, woodwind, brass, strings and piano, with music performed from the 18th to the 20th centuries. Difficult though it was to separate the fine performances, the adjudicator, Robert Secret gave the winner's cup to pianist Andy Zhang for his lovely playing of Faure, second place to violinist, Alex Glover, and third to pianist, Andreas Lo.

Pro Corda national semi finalists



Following the quarter-final heats the 3rd Year String Quartet won a place in the national semi-final round of the Pro Corda Chamber Music Festival.

Evensong at Coventry Cathedral

Coventry Cathedral was this term's venue for the Chapel Choir to sing Evensong.



Musicians in all seven year groups of the school.



The annual Choral Concert gave a large audience of parents and friends a chance to hear the senior choirs from Abingdon plus singers from St Helen's in what was a fantastic evening.

Ben Schoeman Masterclass



Seven of the School's top pianists welcomed the opportunity to learn from the leading concert pianist, Ben Schoeman.

New Year Charity Concert

The School's musicians took to the stage early in the term for the New Year Charity concert featuring boys from all year groups. The music was impressive, ranging from Vivaldi's Concerto for Two Cellos (soloists: Alex Reynolds and Carl Olavesen) to variations on the James Bond theme from the Lower School and Brass Bands. The First Orchestra ended the concert with the first movement of Schubert's Unfinished Symphony, a work that featured in their tour over half term to Germany.

The benefiting charity was The Project Trust.



Out and About

Over half term, students from Abingdon and St Helen's travelled to Russia's Star City to take part in the Cosmonaut Space and Leadership Experience. They were only the second British school group to have lived and worked at the Russian Space Agency's Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Centre near Moscow. The students spent four nights living in the Kosmonaut Hostel within the secure Star City complex. Here they were under the constant guidance and instruction of a true expert in the field of space exploration, ex-NASA Astronaut Dr Mike Foale CBE.

Jeremy Thomas, who accompanied the visit and who teaches Physics at Abingdon said, "This was a truly unique experience for all the pupils. Having Mike Foale for the whole trip was a fantastic opportunity that has inspired most of them to consider future careers in space exploration."

The students thoroughly enjoyed the training, including Soyuz docking simulators and hands-on emergency evacuation and first aid procedures. The most popular activity was the survival training in the forest surrounding the complex, where top, military experts taught the students how to build shelters and signal fires to survive sub-zero temperatures until rescuers arrive.

The students also had time to visit Moscow's iconic sites, including Red Square and the Kremlin. They all thoroughly enjoyed the trip and made a fantastic impression on their hosts who were genuinely impressed by their knowledge and enthusiasm. The best compliment came from Mike Foale, astronaut extraordinaire, who was overheard on the bus to the airport saying, "That was the most fun I have ever had at Star City!"



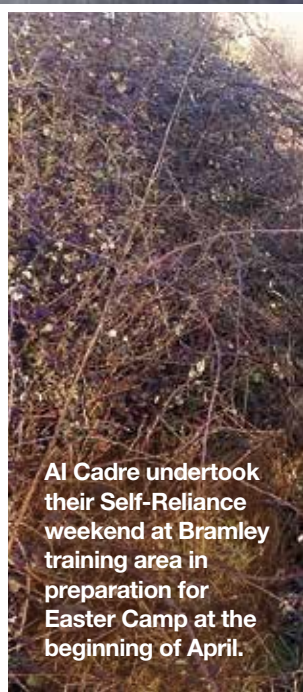
Exploring Space in Star City

Inside the airlock of the Mir training module with astronaut Mike Foale



Joseph O'Shea (left) and Tom Preston (right) with a Russian Orlan space walking suit

Third and fourth year students, their parents and staff spent a memorable evening watching "Cultura of China, Festival of Spring" performed by the professional artists from Jiangsu Province Department of Culture. Acts included opera, acrobatics, folk songs, traditional instruments and dance.



Al Cadre undertook their Self-Reliance weekend at Bramley training area in preparation for Easter Camp at the beginning of April.



Third year students from Abingdon and St Helen's enjoyed a pre-Christmas weekend in Strasbourg, sampling the festivities, seeing the sites and practising their French.



Fourth year students from Abingdon and St Helen's spent eight days in Bielefeld improving their German language.

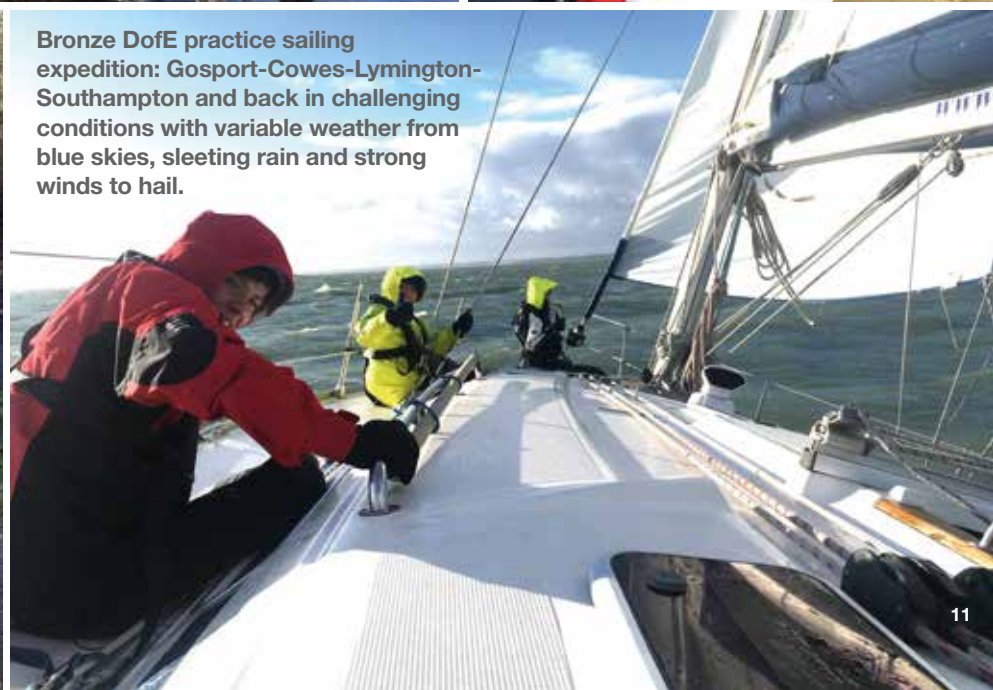
The trip, planned to coincide with the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the exchange partnership, saw students spending time in school, sightseeing and taking part in an Anglo-German theatre project.



Good snow conditions and glorious sunny weather helped to make a very enjoyable week for the half term ski trip for 37 students and five staff in Saint Gervais in the French Alps.



Third year academic scholars visited Bletchley Park to learn about its codebreaking history. They tried their hand with an original enigma machine and the very one used in the film The Imitation Game.



Bronze DofE practice sailing expedition: Gosport-Cowes-Lymington-Southampton and back in challenging conditions with variable weather from blue skies, sleet rain and strong winds to hail.

Much Ado launches a dramatic week

Talented teenagers from Abingdon and St Helen's launched the drama departments' flagship week in the school calendar with two productions from the senior students. A contemporary performance of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* was followed by Alecky Blythe and Adam Cork's modern classic *London Road*. Both productions played to packed houses and received huge acclaim.



London Road is centred around the events in Ipswich in 2006 when the bodies of five women were discovered. The show is a highly unusual and immensely challenging piece based on recordings of interviews Alecky Blythe conducted with the real residents of London Road. The interviews were transcribed and set to music by composer Adam Cork.

Audiences at the production in the Amey Theatre were transfixed by the performances of the 28-strong joint cast and 14-strong band, as well as the superb lighting and staging. Just some of the comments the production received:

“ *What a phenomenal, boundary-pushing, fresh-air-breathing ride that was!...proper, exciting, heart-wrenching theatre.*

It was the most interesting, creative piece I've seen in a long time.

I arrived feeling a bit jaded and wondering if 2½ hours would be too long. Well, I needn't have worried, I was spell bound.

I thought the production was truly exceptional.

*I don't think I've seen anything as surprising and thought provoking as tonight's performance of *London Road* for a long time. ”*



Alecky Blythe texted with her own message, she said, “*It looks fantastic! I'm delighted to hear they climbed the mountain and reached the summit! Congratulations to you all.*”

Much Ado About Nothing

This refreshingly modern take on Shakespeare's comedy, featured everything from contemporary dance and live music to motorised grannies. Roles, relationships and rationales for unreasonable actions were never more clearly defined and excellent acting from the stellar cast of 21 students and a masterful stage-management team, made for an outstanding production.



Playing to sell out audiences over three nights Director Jo Watt's strikingly relevant interpretation of the text garnered huge applause and raucous laughter from even self-professed Shakespeare-phobes, some declaring that they had fully understood one of the Bard's plays for the very first time. High praise indeed.

Filming at Sobell House

A team of students from the Abingdon Film Unit (AFU) has made a short film at Sobell House to raise awareness of the hospice's work whilst developing their skills as young filmmakers. The film crew of Charlie Landells, Freddie Marshall and Scott Thomson started work in October 2016 under the watchful eye of London-based artist, professional filmmaker and AFU tutor Duncan Pickstock.

Sixth former Charlie Landells said, "Working on the Sobell House shoot has been one of the most eye-opening and rewarding shoots I've been involved in, and I sincerely hope it helps to raise money for what is a very worthwhile and necessary cause."

The film can be seen at www.sobellhouse.org/film



Limbo by Louis Edward



Fade Away by David Bicarregui

Passing the "Screentest"

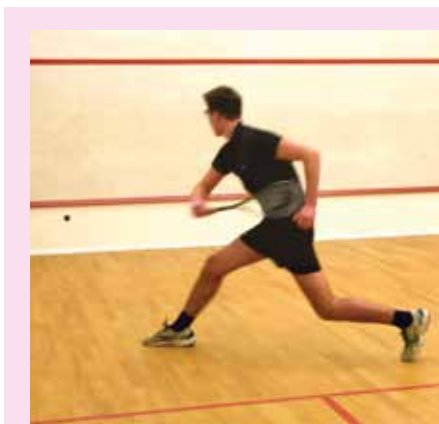
Congratulations to David Bicarregui and Louis Edward from the AFU who both had their films accepted for the "Screentest" National Student Film Festival in London in March. Both films had already earned their directors a Michael Grigsby Young Filmmaker Award. At Screentest, 'Fade Away' was not only nominated for 'Best Experimental Film' but also won the 'Best Young Filmmaker Award'.

Abingdon Sport



Rugby sevens is increasingly popular at Abingdon with every age group taking part. There were some excellent results across the years. The U15s won the Plate in the John Fisher School Founder's Day 7s against a very strong field and the U16s reached the quarter finals of the Cup at the Queen Elizabeth's School, Barnet – a great achievement with a field of 32 schools. The 1st VII won the Plate at the Shiplake 7s and were runners up at the Colston's School 7s.

Having won the pre-season Football Festival at Rugby School the 1st XI went on to win the majority of their fixtures including victories over local rivals Radley, MCS, Wellingborough and St John's Leatherhead. Both the U16 As and U15s got the better of Bedford Modern, the latter 9-0. The 2nd, 3rd and 4th XI are all still in contention in their Thames Valley Leagues.



An excellent term with convincing wins over Warwick and Harrow, and the U14 squad finishing 11th nationally in the ESSA Team Relays and fighting off tough opposition to win the Warwick 100s. A youthful U18 relays squad was placed in the top 15 schools at the Bath and Otter Cup. Both squads also put in tremendous performances at the Bromsgrove Relays.

The outstanding squash squad play with spirit and skill and this term beat Bradfield, John Hampden, Stowe and St Edward's. A great run in the National Trophy saw the Club reach the last eight before losing a hard match to Wellington. With a very young squad, it's an exciting time ahead.



A good term for the crews as they begin their preparation and training for the summer regattas. Highlights included wins for the senior Vllls at Wycliffe Head and Henley Head, wins and 2nd place for the J16s at Wycliffe and Henley, 2nd place at Wycliffe for the J15s, 3rd for both the 1st VIII and J16s at Hammersmith Head, success for the J14s in matches against St Edward's and Radley.





Fifth year Harvey Jupp was the Wilts and Gloucestershire Standard's Young Cricketer of the Year for 2016. Harvey impressed greatly as a young spin bowler for Lechlade Cricket Club and represented the School 1st XI as a fourth year.



Senior and Junior cross-country continues to go from strength to strength. Impressive team performances resulted in victories at Marlborough and the Vale Championships as well as podium positions at the Radley, Wellington and St Edward's relays. Congratulations to Ivo Brown, Calum Steer, Josh Crichton, Daniel Lawson and Henry Insley who were selected to run for Oxfordshire in the English Schools Cross-Country Championships.



Abingdon Hockey Club had a fantastic season with the 1st XI and U14As unbeaten. Highlights included: the U14s succeeding to the regional outdoor finals, the U18s and U16s to the regional indoor finals, 28 pupils representing county and regional teams and Max Carter Keall selected for England U18. Plus a great many fantastic performances throughout the Club in the ISHL including topping the tables for the 1st XI, U15Bs and U14As.

The Fencing Club has maintained an unbroken string of victories in a busy term with wins against Radley, Harrow, Wellington, Dautsey's, St Benedict's and Winchester. The Club also won the Hilary Hammond Trophy. At the prestigious Public Schools Fencing Championship, Rob MacLennan won the Senior Épée Silver Medal and there were excellent performances from Jonothan Law, Harry Baston-Hall and Noé Larousse. Both Rob and Harry also represented GB at international competitions this term.



After winning the county championship earlier in the term Abingdon's U16 badminton team of James Moreton-Smith, Perry Tsai, Jate Jaturanpinyo and Anthony Xie went on to win a silver medal at the National Schools Championship Regional Finals. There were many great performances on the day, but the highlight was beating Sevenoaks, whose captain is the current U17 European Champion. This victory meant Abingdon went through to the gold medal match where they narrowly lost out to Reading School.



The Canoe Polo Team competed in the third round of the British Canoeing Southwest Regional Canoe Polo Tournament at Cheltenham.



Outstanding Scholarship Results

Fifteen scholarships and awards were won across the curriculum by our Year 8 pupils – a tremendous achievement. There were seven academic scholarships including the prestigious Mercers' Company Award, the top academic scholarship to Abingdon School. This is the sixth consecutive year that the Mercers' Company Award has gone to a pupil from Abingdon Prep. In addition to the academic scholarships there were a total of eight scholarships and awards for music (4), art (2), drama (1) and sport (1).



Pre-Prep boys enthusiastically embraced the construction of a living willow den. The den has become a feature of the playground, providing shade and a living natural resource for the boys to enjoy.



Year 3 has been spotted around school using the digital cameras ready to print photo montages for their wooden photo frames in CDT.



For the third time in four years, the Prep's debating team picked up first prize at the Oratory School's 'Let's Debate' Competition. The boys were tasked with opposing the motion 'This House would rather live in America'. Many congratulations!



Boys and staff let their imagination run wild on World Book Day bringing all their favourite characters to school.



Two sets of hat tricks secured a 10-3 win for the U9A footballers against Cokethorpe. This was just one of the highlights of a good football season.



The cross-country teams enjoyed an outstanding season culminating in the under 11s winning the team title in the National Preparatory Schools' Cross-Country Championships. Over 1,000 pupils from more than 80 schools took part. The U13 team also ran extremely well, finishing third in the team competition.

Following a very successful performance of the Peace Child by the Junior Section the senior boys took to the stage with an impressive production of Joseph at the Amey Theatre.



Year 4 brought their topic on Tudor history to life with a visit to Sulgrave Manor. After donning doublet and hose, they had an exciting time exploring the manor house learning about life in the 16th century.

Boys have learnt a tremendous amount this term ...

... from visiting authors, artists and actors



Matt Dickinson, author and intrepid explorer, led a creative writing workshop and talked about his time in extreme environments, describing the satisfaction of achieving his goals, including summiting Everest.



Pre-Prep enjoyed a drama workshop based around traditional tales.



Year 4 got to grips with Chinese dancing



Year 8 art scholars broadened their skills during a clay workshop led by sculptor, Beatrice Hoffman.



Ceramic artist Samantha Silverton worked with Year 7 students and Year 8 art scholars to create some vibrant patterned clay tiles.

A Lunch in Glasgow

What might happen if you sent out a lunch invitation to a group of people who had never met each other before and had only one thing in common – *that they had been educated at Abingdon School?*

When the seven acceptances arrived the leaving years ranged from 1951 to 1999 and Alison Lester, OA Club Officer, was wondering how on earth it was going to work. In the event it was a very congenial lunch from the outset – conversations provoked memories, memories provoked jokes and in no time a group of people who must have been slightly wondering what they had let themselves in for found, reluctantly, that it was time to go home.

As diverse as their leaving years, were the attendees' careers:

Alex McTier (OA 1999) is a university-based applied researcher who predominantly carries out consultancy research contracts for public and third sector organisations.

“ Abingdon gave me a strong, core foundation which has contributed to my work ethic and respect for others. ”

Robert Jones (OA 1987), Professor of Clinical Cancer Research, Honorary Consultant in Medical Oncology, University of Glasgow, works as a consultant looking after patients with prostate, bladder and kidney cancer and heads a team of 70 people running clinical trials throughout the UK and the rest of the world.

“ Looking back, what I gained from Abingdon was a great sense of breadth. I was allowed to pursue my own ideas and encouraged to try those of others. ”

Paul Aston (OA 1977) began work in a shipping department moving into export sales and marketing. In his mid 30s, he broke free from a 'corporate' life and set up a business in the production and sale of spirits.

“ I was challenged at Abingdon School academically and in other fields, winning and losing, which built resilience and doggedness. ”



Front to back (left of table):
Alex McTier, Robert Acklam, Paul Spencer, Paul Aston

Front to back (right of table):
Robert Jones, Alison Lester, Richard Speight

Robert Acklam (OA 1951), retired, spent eight years in the Navy then worked for Post Office Telephones where he was “up poles and down holes”. Some ten years later he became self employed running a taxi business in Edinburgh.

Paul Spencer (OA 1982) ran his own company which he sold and is now Head of Engineering and Technical Recruitment at MHR in Glasgow.

“ An Abingdon education gave me a hinterland. The arts, sports and other activities offered at the School have enabled me to enjoy so much in life other than work. ”

Richard Speight (OA 1968) gained qualifications as a Master Mariner, an MSc in Naval Architecture and a PG Diploma in Teaching for Further Education. He became Depute Principal of one of the major maritime training colleges in the UK.

“ Abingdon gave me standards and values which have stood me in good stead throughout my career. ”

Forthcoming Events

OA Golf Day Tuesday 9 May

A full day of golf at Frilford Health. Old Abingdonians of all ages and abilities are invited. Please email David Blomley (1976) – d.blomley@btinternet.com – for details.

1950s / 1960s OA Reunion Dinner Friday 12 May

Richard Watts (1960) is coordinating the next 1950s / 1960s event. Drinks reception followed by dinner at The Crown & Thistle, Abingdon.

An Afternoon of Croquet Saturday 20 May

OAs are invited to an afternoon of croquet at Abingdon School (mixed School and OA teams).

Year Group Reunions, Abingdon School

Saturday 17 June

Reunions for 1947, 1957, 1967, 1977, 1987, 1997 and 2007 (and 2015) leavers.

From 5.15 pm – Chapel service, tours of the School and a drinks reception will be followed by a buffet dinner. Partners are very welcome.

OA Tennis Friday 23 June

This year's fixture will be held at School – teams of OAs and pupils.

Gerald Smithson Memorial Cricket Event

Sunday 25 June

Cricket on War Memorial Field in memory of Gerald Smithson, Abingdon's first professional coach and groundsman.

Henley Royal Regatta

Friday 30 June

OAs, current and former parents, staff and governors are invited for strawberries and Pimm's during the afternoon tea break at the FASBC tent in Henley Cricket Club Car Park.



OA Club Summer Picnic Sunday 16 July

A picnic for all OAs and their families from 1.00 pm in South Park, East Oxford.

OA Rugby Match and Lunch Saturday 2 Sept

OA match on Waste Court Field, Abingdon School.

Hong Kong Reception Monday 25 Sept

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

Abingdon School Open Day Saturday 30 Sept

An informal opportunity for OAs to visit Abingdon on School Open Day.



OA Football Match

On Saturday 18 March the first OA Football fixture took place at Tilsley Park. The build up to the event received great support from the OA community, and a keen seven-a-side match took place featuring OAs from the last decade of leavers, as well as current staff donning shirts. For many of our OAs it was their first time using the Tilsley Park facilities and following the game, a buffet lunch and well-earned catch up was enjoyed by all in the hospitality area. We hope to welcome everyone, and more, back next year to build on the success of this inaugural fixture.



Three OAs in Oxford Boat

World championship rowing gold medallist and OA 2008, Ollie Cook, joined his brother Jamie (OA 2010) and Vassilis Ragoussis (OA 2011) in the victorious Oxford crew for the 2017 Boat Race.

The three oarsmen returned to Abingdon School for the 26th Annual Boat Club Dinner at the end of March. Ollie, who was the guest speaker, was joined by fellow members of his 2008 1st VIII crew Max Gander, Simon Jeffreys, Michael Nagi, Fearghus Raftery and Matt Rossiter.

Abingdon Out of the Past

The Bright Panel

After many years hiding its light under layers of smoke, dirt and varnish, one of the School's oldest treasures has been recalled to life. Ironically, according to the restorer Georgie Dennis, the layers had been acting as protection, preserving the panel's paint and gold leaf in their original glory. Cleaning has revealed the excellent, three-dimensional quality of the artwork, which indicates that the panel was the work of a master herald-painter. The panel originally hung behind the Headmaster's desk in the old schoolroom, it has now been hung above the fireplace in the newly refurbished Boarders' Hall.

Given to the School in 1763 by Henry Bright, headmaster 1758-1774, the panel commemorates the bi-centenary of John Roysse's endowment of Abingdon School. Contrary to the wording on it, John Roysse did not 'found' Abingdon School in 1563, but he did establish it under a new foundation in the same way that it was established under a new foundation in 1878, and in 1998 when it merged with what is now Abingdon Prep.

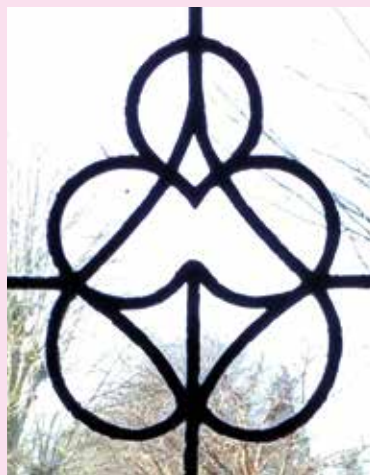


Abingdon-Bielefeld 1967-2017

The Ratsgymnasium, Bielefeld marked the 50th anniversary of the Abingdon-Bielefeld language exchange with a gala concert and reception on 11 February. Among the speakers were the Heads of Abingdon, St Helen's and the Ratsgymnasium, the Mayor of Bielefeld and the Head of the Local Education Authority. The exchange began after James Cobban, Headmaster 1947-70, picked up two German hitch-hikers, one of whom, Michael Hissbach, was a pupil at the Ratsgymnasium. He and Hilary Cobban, the Headmaster's daughter, were interviewed on stage about their memories, as were Martin Sutton and Karsten Meise exchange partners in 1982-3 who have remained friends ever since.



Karsten Meise and Martin Sutton who were exchange partners in 1982-3



A Curious Window

One hundred years ago the boys composed a spoof guide to Abingdon School for American tourists. Among the objects it featured was a small window "which suggests promiscuous gambling on the part of its inhabitants. The pane represents the four suits of a pack of cards – diamonds, hearts, clubs and spades are shown one upon the other – really a remarkable curiosity of its kind".

Members of the School regularly pass this window – where is it?



To mark the 50th anniversary of the Abingdon-Bielefeld exchange, Abingdon presented the Ratsgymnasium with a framed collection of school ties