



Art and Design

It has been an extremely exciting year for Art and Design at Abingdon. In November 2018 BBC Arts Editor, Will Gompertz, opened our new facilities in Beech Court. In his keynote speech he enthused about the importance of creativity in today's job market.

Our students have worked extremely hard improving their skills in drawing, developing ideas and final outcomes. The work that they have presented for our Celebration of the Arts Festival and for their exams has been excellent.

*Featured Artwork: Reflection
Sam Penrose - GCSE*

The Headmaster

When Will Gompertz formally opened Beech Court, he challenged us all to 'think like an artist'. Art is about turning ideas into something tangible, into reality, and as such its lessons resound far beyond the subject of Art per se.

One of the great benefits of Beech Court has been the expanded facilities for the Art department on the top floor. Art departments always have their own particular feel and style that is quite different from other disciplines, and our new facilities really benefit from the high ceilings and the gentle north-facing

light that ensures our artists have the best conditions in which to work.

I've been excited to see the work of the department developing over the course of the year and it was highlighted at the Celebration of the Arts in June, which also included poetry, film, drama and music. It was fascinating to look at pieces from younger year groups and to see them working on the techniques that will allow them to express their ideas later on while their love and appreciation of art grows.

There was some fantastic work on display from our GCSE and A Level artists, some of which is featured in

this issue of Abingdon News. It ranged from detailed architectural studies to abstract pieces, from portraiture to more conceptual work. As much as I enjoy seeing the boys' final pieces, I always find it more interesting to dip into their sketchbooks to learn how they have taken inspiration from other artists, how they have responded to feedback and how they have developed and refined their ideas. These skills of review and reflection are critical to all areas of the curriculum and they are given a particularly satisfying outlet in Art.

Michael Windsor, Headmaster



Pond Dipping with the Abingdon Science Partnership

The Science Centre's outdoor learning spaces were put to excellent use in the Primary Schools' Science Club with our student Science Ambassadors leading a session of pond dipping in the rill at the front of the building.



Exploring the Antarctic

Lower school boys were treated to a thought-provoking and inspiring talk from Al Sylvester who served in the Royal Air Force's Mountain Rescue Service for over 20 years and undertook expeditions to some of the most extreme environments on the planet. His talk focused on the challenges he faced when leading the RAF's first unsupported attempt on the Geographic South Pole and he encouraged all the boys to follow their dreams and never to think that they can't do something.

Raising awareness of Mental Health

The School took delivery of a black dog, kindly provided by the charity SANE, which stood outside the cafe to act as a talking point for boys and staff during mental health awareness week. It was wonderful to see the boys talking about the black dog (some even hugging it!) as they passed by. We hope that by providing an opportunity for the school community to talk more about mental health it will help to reduce the stigma which can exist in society around people accessing the help they need. Also, dogs, like mental health conditions can be tamed; there is hope.



2019 A level and GCSE Results

A levels

Grade	A level passes
A*	29.8%
A* and A	68.6%
A* to B	90.2%
A* to C	96.5%
A* to E	99.6%

NB: A Level grade equivalencies have been used for Pre-U grades in the statistics. Abingdon uses the Pre-U for French, German and Spanish. The percentages include the results of girls from St Helen's in subjects which are either taught jointly (Drama) or solely by Abingdon teachers (Economics and DT).

73 boys gained 3 or more A level passes at grade A* or A

The 2019 results show students have achieved particularly well in:

Economics with 76% A*/A and 94% A*/B (50 candidates)

History 72% A*/A and 100% A*/B (50 candidates)

Geography 68% A*/A and 92% A*/B (37 candidates)

Chemistry with 60% A*/A and 87% A*/B (55 candidates)

Mathematics with 73% A*/A and 86% A*/B (84 candidates)

Amongst subjects that have smaller numbers of candidates and performed very strongly, we have:

Biology with 80% A*/A and 88% A*/B (25 candidates)

English with 60% A*/A and 100% A*/B (20 candidates)

Drama with 62% A*/A and 92% A*/B (13 candidates).

Our MFL students did exceptionally well once again in the Pre-U examinations with half of 26 candidates being awarded D1 and D2 grades (A* and above A* equivalent).

Students also did very well in the popular and demanding EPQ. This year, over 50% of the 30 students achieved the top (A*) grade and 80% achieved A*/A.

A full breakdown of A level and GCSE results is available on the website

The Headmaster said:

“ I congratulate all our leavers on this very strong set of results. As a year group, they've made a terrific contribution to all aspects of school life and I am delighted that they have been rewarded for their hard work and commitment. They have benefited from strong support from their teachers, who have worked with dedication, determination and expertise to ensure that they have been able to fulfil their potential. I wish all our leavers well as they set out on the next chapter of their lives. ”



GCSE Results

Speaking about the 2019 GCSE results, the Headmaster said:

“ The results are outstanding. 103 boys, over half of the year group, were awarded all their grades at 7-9 and A*/A and almost a quarter of the year group, 44 boys, were awarded all their grades at 8-9 and A*. The results are the product of the students' sustained commitment and endeavour.

I'd like to congratulate the boys on their deserved success which will provide a strong platform as they move into the Sixth Form. This is a year group that makes the most of the wide range of opportunities at Abingdon and I have no doubt that they will continue to thrive as they take on the challenge of A Levels. My thanks go to our staff and to our students' parents who have given the boys such dedicated and effective support. ”





International Physics Olympiad

Congratulations to upper sixth former Ollie Breach who was selected to represent the UK at the International Physics Olympiad in Tel Aviv in July. Ollie was selected from over 2000 candidates across the UK and he was awarded a silver medal at the event. The 5 person UK team enjoyed a very successful final with around 80 countries taking part.



Marksmanship Crowns

Ten third year cadets took part in the CTT Range Weekend at Longmoor and all achieved the Marksmanship Badge with Cdt Keighley and Cdt Sutton receiving Marksmanship Crowns. The cadets competed against nine other schools and academies and won the competition.

Thinking Supper with St Helen's

The final Joint Thinking Supper of the year saw first and second years from Abingdon and St Helen's discuss the idea of protest, looking at various groups including Extinction Rebellion, the Suffragettes and the gilets jaunes.



First and second years joined forces with more than 80 students from six other local schools at the annual Abingdon Schools Joint Carnegie Forum to decide the best children's book of the year. Judges from the local literary community awarded a range of prizes, presented by the Mayor of Abingdon. Sam Siriwardene received an award for best individual contributor to a group, and Harry Vinal (pictured) was highly commended for his review of *A Skinful of Shadows* by Francis Hardinge.



A warm welcome for UK Universities

Beech Court opened its doors for the School's inaugural Futures Fair when 30 of the UK's leading universities, as well as UCAS and some degree apprenticeship schemes, exhibited at the School.

The fair gave lower sixth boys and parents, plus students from other schools in Abingdon, an opportunity to discover the wide range of degree courses on offer and to learn about universities, the application process, student life and related topics including accommodation and finance.

Lower School Assistants organised a range of outdoor activities for the lower school boys during their Tuesday lunchbreaks. As well as the more conventional sports of softball, tennis and volleyball, the boys tried out spikeball, bat and trap, and even kubb, which was allegedly invented by the Vikings!





Young Filmmakers

The first years put their creativity to the test under the expert tuition of Ed Boase of the Young Film Academy. The boys made silent films that told a classic story. The final films were screened in the Amey Theatre and Deputy Head Mr May had the difficult job of deciding the winner. The Oscar went to Shhhhh!, created by Frederick Arnold, Luke Ball, Max Cranstoun, Arlo Hyman, Jonny Noctor, and James Wakefield, which told the story of a librarian very determined to punish pupils who cause disruption in his library.



Wittgenstein - Edmund Society Lecture

The Edmund Society (Philosophy and Religion) enjoyed a lecture from Stephen Mulhall, Fellow of New College Oxford and an expert on the philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein.

Wittgenstein, an Austrian physicist, turned philosopher is considered by some to be a genius of modern philosophy, bridging the gap between the formality of the 19th century with contemporary modern philosophy.

Abingdon sixth formers got the chance to see firsthand an infrared spectrometer in action as part of their A-Level chemistry studies. The once state of the art spectrometer was donated to the school several years ago and is invaluable in showing boys exciting applications of the theory they learn in lessons.



IR Spectrometry



Lunch with the Lords

Fourth year physicists discussed the future of the aerospace industry with the All Party Parliamentary Engineering Group at the House of Lords. Students enjoyed lunch and sat alongside lords, MPs, engineers from industry and fellow students to discuss topics including safety systems on aircraft, the environmental impact of air travel, and enticing young people into studying engineering.

Physics Research with Imperial College

Members of the Physics Factor Research Club visited the Physics Department at Imperial College for the latest review of one of their research projects with Professor Steven Rose of Imperial College and Dr Peter Hatfield of Oxford University. The Matter from Light project has been an exciting collaboration in which the Physics Factor team was given access to data from a novel experiment to find evidence for the Breit-Wheeler effect, first predicted theoretically in 1934 but never yet observed.

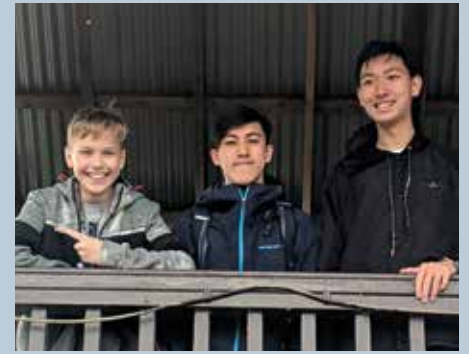


Spaghetti, meatballs and frittatas were on the menu at the Saturday Cookery Club.



3rd and 4th year boarders relished the chance to visit the home of football - Wembley Stadium and to pose with a replica of the FA Cup in the Royal Box.

The boys enjoyed a 90-minute tour and saw the pitch at close hand. Following retail therapy they returned to Austin House for a BBQ.



Thorpe Park satisfied the thrill-seekers with many boarders completing the Big Five challenge - Nemesis Inferno, Colossus, The Swarm, Saw, and Stealth.

Boarders



Boarders ventured across to Newbury for a joint bowling social with the girls from Downe House School.

Boarders explored Legoland having a great day out although a few regretted a late trip down the log flume and having to sit in wet clothes all the way home!



Scholars' art appreciation

The fourth year academic scholars enjoyed a cultural trip to London, where they took part in a workshop on 'Deciphering Art' at the Wallace Collection, and then explored 'The History of the World in 100 Objects' at the British Museum.



German Exchange with a difference

Students in the Third Year took part in a year-long 'exchange' in the form of boxes and letters with the German school IGS Trier. The Germans received British chocolates and biscuits, English tea and postcards from Abingdon all of which were appreciated except the salt and vinegar crisps.

Students also created profiles (Steckbriefe) and sent letters in English and German to practise their language. The project was very well received.

"I liked reading the letters and trying German food. It gave insight into German culture and what they do in their free time."

"I loved talking to the German boys through letters. We talked about football and Berlin. It was great fun seeing England from their perspective."



Getting Started – the First Year at Abingdon

As their first year at Abingdon drew to a close we asked Ethan, Henry and Lucas for advice they would give to boys starting this September.



How were you feeling this time last year when you were about to start at Abingdon?

Very nervous! I was the only person coming from my primary school and I was worried that I wouldn't know anyone. I really wanted to go to the same school as my friends. Not having friends was my major concern.

But there was no need to worry – we started getting to know everyone even before term started as we had two days at school, making friends and finding our way around, before the other boys came back.

We were also paired up with the second year boys and they showed us the school and we soon made friends.

Did you have any concerns about starting at Abingdon?

Yes – it's bigger than my primary school and with so many facilities. I did used to get lost at first but if I was late for a lesson because I couldn't find a room then no one minded, teachers were very kind and understanding when you are new. That doesn't happen if I'm late now though!

Also the school day was longer than I was used to but what I didn't realise is that it's

because of the Other Half that we do at the end of the day, and that's great. There's so much to choose from. I did get tired on the first few days but you soon get used to it.

I was worried that people would be really posh but no one is posh, that's just a stereotype.

How did you find the work?

I was nervous about the homework as I hadn't had any before but it was fine. It was a very gentle introduction and it wasn't nearly as hard as I thought it was going to be!

I was worried I would have to work really hard. When I started I had barely heard of Latin but it was explained to us so well. We also didn't do science very much at my old school so learning the separate sciences was different. The teachers are very good at explaining things though and it's not hard.

I think one of the biggest changes from my primary school was moving around for different lessons in different rooms. At primary school we stayed in the same place and there wasn't really a timetable but after a few days at Abingdon you pick it up really quickly.

What do you like about the Lower School?

The new houseroom. It's separate from the rest of school and just for lower school boys so you get to know each other and it's really friendly. You can chat, play games or if you want to be quiet there's a 'quiet room' where you can go and read.

What Other Half activities do you do?

Loads – I like trying out new sports mainly squash and tennis.

I really like drama and I'm in the lower school production so that's been good. I've also really enjoyed ceramics.

So far this year I have done Lego architecture, art, rugby and football.

The facilities are fantastic; there's a climbing wall, a DT room and a library. When we came on open day I couldn't believe it. And there is so much to do. The Other Half is amazing.

What would be your one tip for boys starting at Abingdon this year?

Just don't worry! There are lots of us and no matter who you are you will fit in.



Summer Tea Party

The Gospel Choir entertained Abingdon residents as they enjoyed strawberries, scones and sandwiches while completing a summer themed quiz.



Abingdon's History

School Archivist, Sarah Wearne gave the first years a fascinating insight into their local town and the School's part in its history. The boys walked into town to visit the Abingdon Museum, St Nicolas' Church, St Helen's Church and the site of the old schoolroom. They saw the tomb of John Roysse, who re-endowed the School in 1563, learned about the somewhat bizarre Abingdon tradition of bun throwing, and found out that a fragment of Abingdon Abbey is now part of the wall above the fireplace in the Headmaster's house!



Celebration of the Arts

All forms of Abingdon's artistic talent were on display at the inaugural Celebration of the Arts evening where, alongside the boys' art, visitors were treated to poetry, film, drama and music.



On parade

Second years tried their hand as Roman soldiers undertaking a military drill, complete with commands in Latin!



Lowland Search and Rescue

Form 2C organised a charity cake sale raising £123 for Oxfordshire Lowland Search and Rescue. Harry Gee, whose father volunteers with the group, presented a cheque to David Woodgate, the Chairman of Oxfordshire Lowland Search and Rescue.



Electronics at Southampton University

The whole of the Second Year visited the Electronics and Computer Science department at Southampton University to build on the skills they have been learning in their engineering lessons. The students took part in a competition to program a robot to follow a maze and a Dragon's Den style challenge showing how a BBC microbit could be used to solve everyday problems.

Teaching – how hard can that be?



Fourth years Grant Rogan and Tom Long admitted to 'feeling really quite nervous, when shown into a primary school classroom of 28 Year 5 and 6 boys and girls at Buckland Primary School. Grant and Tom had been taking part in the Language Leader programme as part of their Other Half activities. The boys had planned and resourced a Spanish lesson on sport. Speaking about the experience, Grant said, "Luckily, the children were very kind and welcoming and very calm and well behaved. It was an enjoyable experience!"



Exploring Mechatronics

Jack Swanborough OA(2012) gave boys an engaging insight into Mechatronics Engineering discussing career opportunities, ongoing research and its application to solve real world problems.

A Fond Farewell

We said farewell to the Upper Sixth on Leavers' Day and at Prize Giving. We wish everyone all the very best for the future.



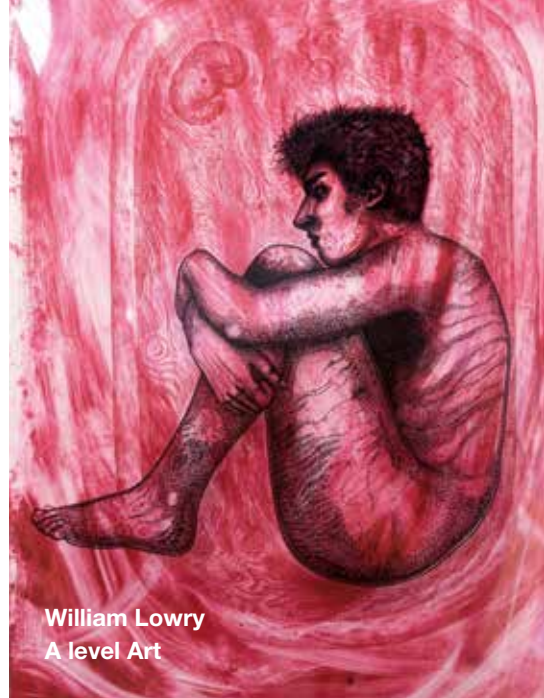
Abingdon Art, Design and Technology



Gabriel Dobson
A level Art



Thomas Owen, GCSE Art



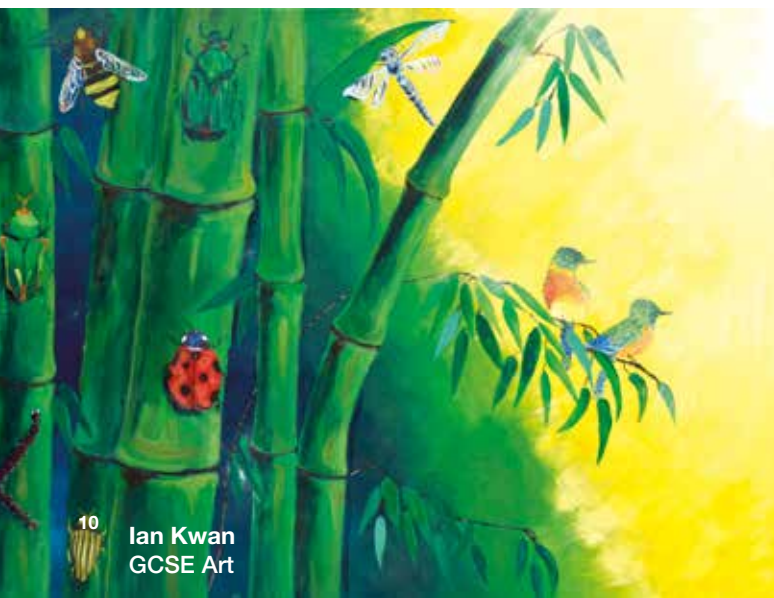
William Lowry
A level Art



Lorimer Kay
GCSE Art



Charlie Bromage
A level Art



10
Ian Kwan
GCSE Art



Freddie Marshall
GCSE Art

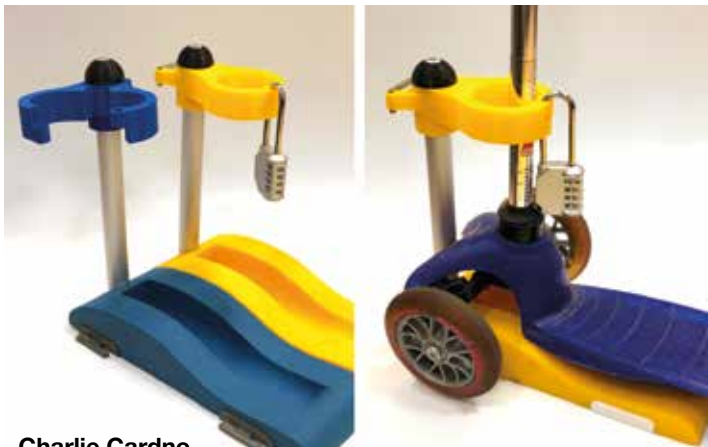
Design and Technology Product Design



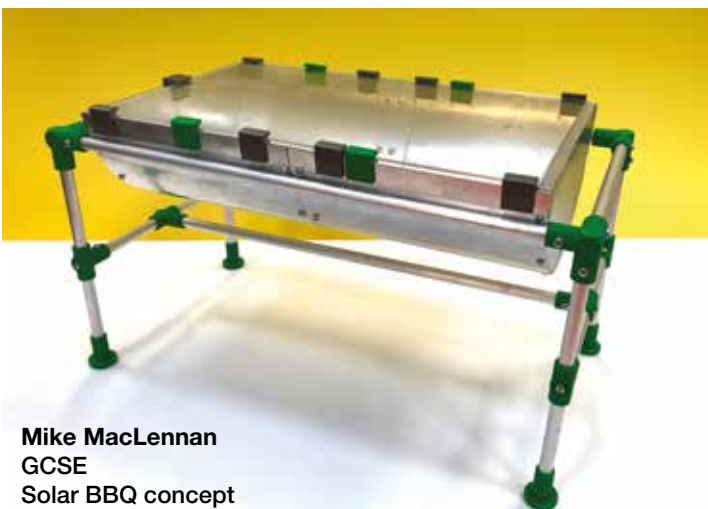
Josh Buckingham
A level
Surfboard storage unit



Freddie Nicholson
GCSE
Self-watering kitchen herb planter



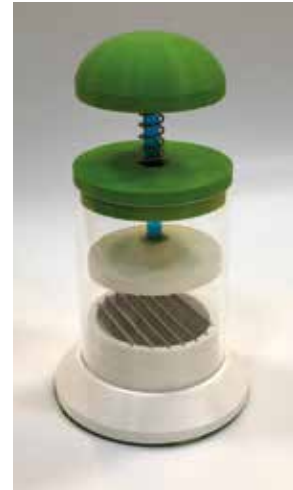
Charlie Cardno
A level
Primary school scooter security and storage



Mike MacLennan
GCSE
Solar BBQ concept



Dmitry Drugakov
GCSE
Portable Solar Lantern



Shi Hong Kuang
GCSE
Aid to assist the less able



Will Franklin
A level
Modern collapsible furniture



Danyaal Cooper
GCSE
A device to measure hydration goals



William Shorrocks
GCSE
Vaccine transportation concept



Out and About

WW1 Battlefields

Third years visited the WW1 battlefields of Belgium and France marking the poignant Last Post Ceremony at the Menin Gate.



Outdoor Adventure

Second years canoed, caved and climbed during their trip to the Plas Pencelli Centre in the Brecon Beacons.



Freiburg and Strasbourg

1st and 2nd years spent two exciting days on the French-German border exploring the region and discovering its history.



PGL Liddington

Amongst a myriad of activities, 52 first years tried abseiling, canoeing, raft building and the zip wire. They developed teamwork and problem solving skills and thoroughly enjoyed the challenge.



Boys travelled to the Vimy Ridge, the Sunken Road and the Newfoundland Park Memorial and Lijssenthoek and Tyne Cot CWGC cemeteries as well as the Thiepval Memorial to the Missing.



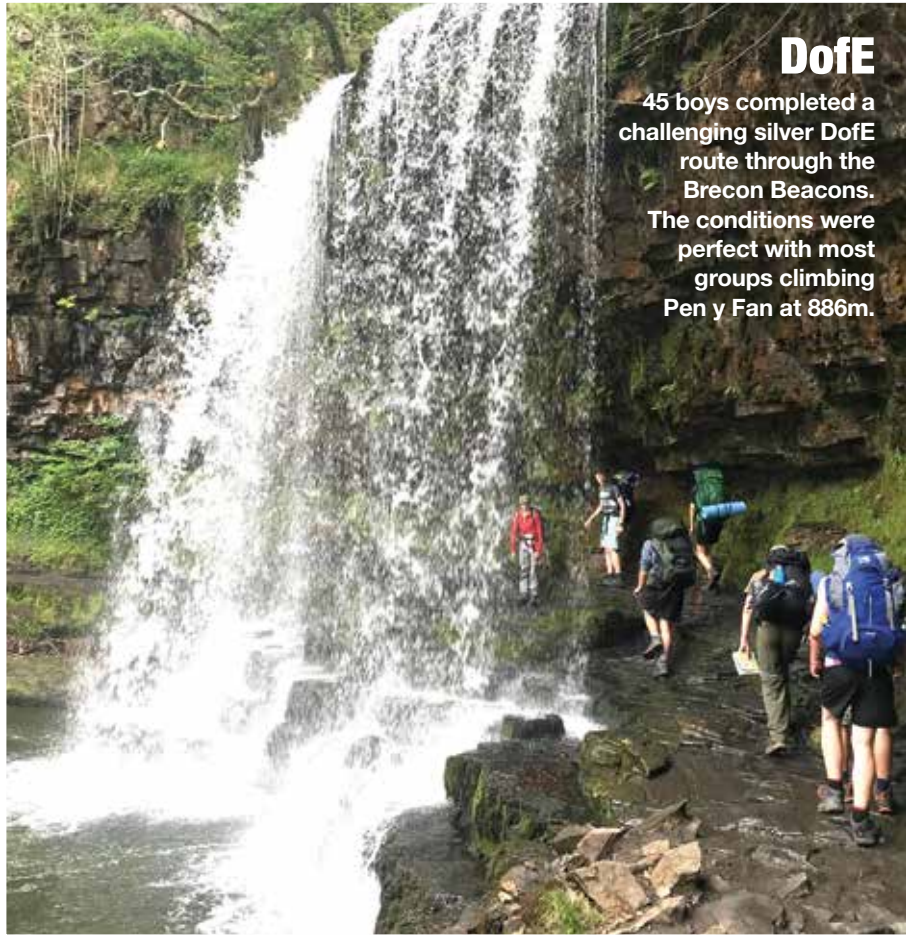
Fishbourne Roman Palace

First years learnt about palace life by examining archaeological finds and discovering the recreated ornamental gardens and mosaics.



CCF Easter Camp

100 cadets from the School's CCF Contingent spent a week at Longmoor Camp in Hampshire. The cadets faced the challenges with much enthusiasm, even the early mornings!



DofE

45 boys completed a challenging silver DofE route through the Brecon Beacons. The conditions were perfect with most groups climbing Pen y Fan at 886m.

Crossing the Channel

Gold DofE sailors completed their expedition crossing the English Channel to Guernsey. They sailed through the night with calm seas however the return journey brought much windier weather and rougher seas with the sails needing to be heavily reefed for the 16 hour journey back to the south coast.



Provence



The fourth-year French exchange enjoyed a week in Provence with partners from Le Lycée de La Nativité and students from St Helen's. Highlights included exploring Roman Provence, notably the imposing arena at Nîmes, medieval ruins, the modern history of Marseille and an impressive lightshow in the Carrière des Lumières.

Rowing



The Boat Club had a very successful term, following a productive training camp. After strong races at BASHER and Bedford, the crews had encouraging results at the National Schools Regatta. At Henley the 1st VIII unfortunately came up against eventual semi-finalists Shrewsbury School in the first round. Sadly, they were not able to turn them over, but had a very driven race and finished the season with a strong performance.



Cricket

Despite the weather there were a number of outstanding results and individual performances. To name a few, Harvey Jupp and Freddie Smith both scored hundreds for the 1st XI. Casper Mannix made a century for the U15As against Warwick and Hector Chambers' leg spin returned a fantastic 5 wicket haul against the MCC, in a fixture that the 1st XI won for the first time in a while. The Lower School continue to show a great deal of promise and it's good to see some U15 cricketers given opportunities in the 1st XI.

Tennis

2019 has been smashing! We were victorious at the annual Radlingdon competition, taking both the cup and the plate, and our U18 boys progressed through 4 rounds of the Glanville cup, beating St Edward's, Magdalen College, King George VI and Rugby School in the process. Both our seniors and juniors competed strongly in other national competitions with the U18 team placing 6th in the ISL league.

Abingdon Sport



2018/19

11

International sportsmen

80

County sportsmen

35

Regional sportsmen

Boys representing the school on a typical weekend

630



Sports available to try

31



Lower school boys competed in the annual inter-tutor group athletics event at Tilsley Park with every boy enjoying one track and one field event.



Athletics

The Athletics Club had a fantastic season. The Junior 4x800m team won the prestigious Achilles Relays and a number of age groups picked up medals at the Radley Relays. There were strong team performances at Stowe and Harrow and individual successes with 10 athletes representing the Vale at the Oxfordshire District Championships, and 2 junior pupils selected to run at the English Schools Event.



Swimming

Congratulations to second year Can Tugcet in for his second in 200m breaststroke and third in 100m breaststroke at the South East Regional Swimming Championships. Can was invited to Sheffield for the English National Championships and to Glasgow for the British National Championships.



Tumbling Success

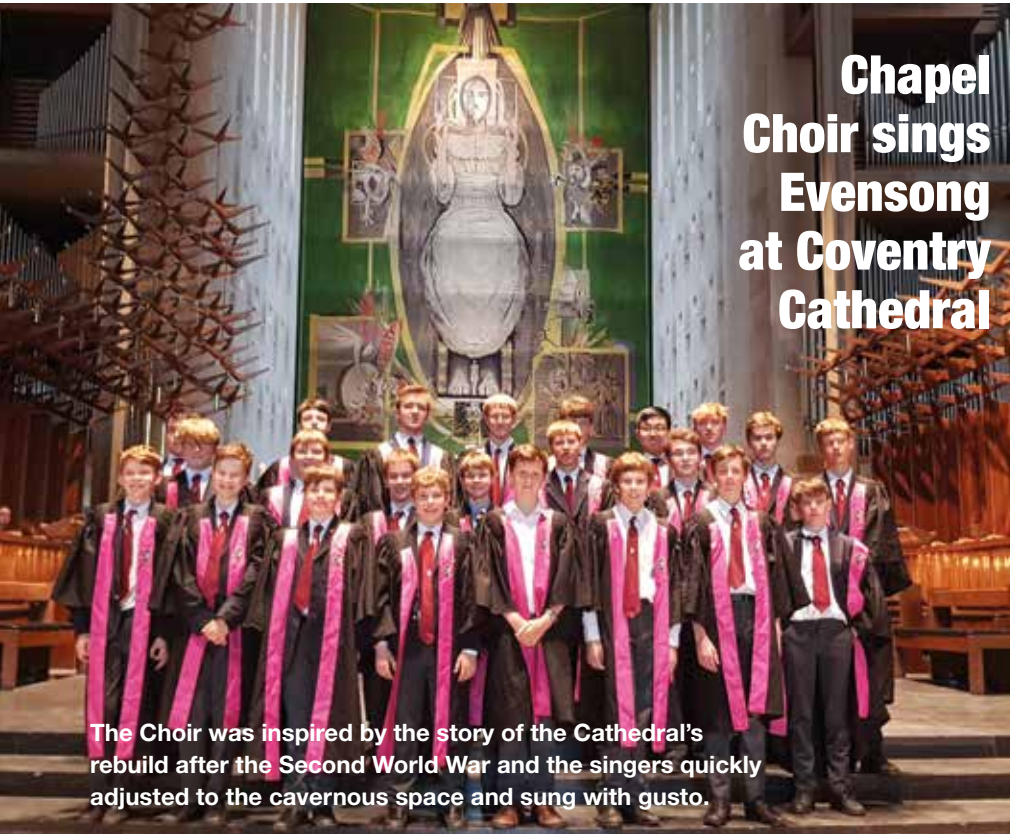
Congratulations to first year Harry Winsey who represented the South Region in the British Tumbling Team Finals at Birmingham Arena. Harry performed excellently, achieving a new personal best score, individual second place and the silver medal.



Croquet

The croquet season saw over 50 boys across all age groups playing, improving and taking part in matches and tournaments. Fixtures with Radley College, Winchester College, Portsmouth Grammar and the OAs, saw wins against Radley and Portsmouth, with a tie against Winchester.

Abingdon Music and Drama



Chapel Choir sings Evensong at Coventry Cathedral

The Choir was inspired by the story of the Cathedral's rebuild after the Second World War and the singers quickly adjusted to the cavernous space and sung with gusto.



Junior Solo Competition

The third and final phase of this year's solo competitions, the junior category, saw five performances adjudicated by William Morris, Director of Music at the Dragon School. There were some really impressive performances from first to fourth year students on woodwind, brass, strings and piano. Congratulations to Robin Collins who picked up first prize.

Summer Concert

Chamber Orchestra opened the concert playing two pieces from Benjamin Britten's *Simple Symphony* – *Playful Pizzicato* and *Frolicsome Finale*. The Second Orchestra followed with first year pupil, Arthur Robertson at the helm in his conducting debut and First Orchestra concluded the first half. The Bands followed the interval with Jazz Band and Brass Band in fine form. The finale belonged to Big Band with two pieces Yoko Kanno's *Tank* and Herbie Hancock's *Watermelon Man*.



Japan and Hong Kong pre-tour Concert

A pre-tour concert, some 36 hours before setting off for Tokyo, gave the First Orchestra and Big Band an opportunity of a play-through of their tour repertoire in front of a large audience of families and supporters. The concert was preceded by a garden party in Lacies Court hosted by the Headmaster with around 250 guests – parents, OAs, staff and governors. The lovely sunny evening gave us a perfect opportunity to thank the many people who have made such an ambitious tour a possibility.



Seven of the School's bassoonists enjoyed an introduction to the contra (or double) bassoon - a fabulously sonorous instrument that sounds an octave below a standard bassoon. Erica Tugwell has been using a contra bassoon in some ensemble music and, following the enthusiasm of several of our bassoonists, invited fellow contra bassoonists to a workshop and play-along with these fine instruments – we had three contras and seven standard bassoons together!



425

Boys play musical instruments



45

Post-grade 8 and diploma standard musicians



3

Choral and organ scholarships to Oxbridge in the last 3 years



31

Chamber ensemble groups

The Real Inspector Hound

Eight students from the Lower Sixth at Abingdon and St Helen's staged the one-act play *The Real Inspector Hound* in one of Abingdon's studio spaces. They performed Stoppard's brilliant script with clockwork-perfect timing and a real sense of the fun of the piece.



Futures

28 lower school pupils devised and performed *Futures*, a play which posed its adult audiences a question: "Do you remember what it's like to be us? Half-way between an adult and a baby?" In a mix of episodic scenes, original film clips and projections, the large cast attempted to remind the audience what it's like to be young.



Sporting Success



We had a successful term of sport, despite the weather. The U11 cricketers learnt to surf as well as putting in some fine performances during their tour of the South West. In the IAPS National Swimming Finals the four person team from Year 7 exceeded all expectations with personal bests and photo finishes. The U11 tennis pair won the Plate at the IAPS doubles competition and seven boys took part in the national IAPS Table Tennis Tournament where one U13 won the tournament for the third consecutive year. Sports Day took place at the superb facilities at Tilsley Park with a wide range of track and field events for all to enjoy.



845 Squadron drop in

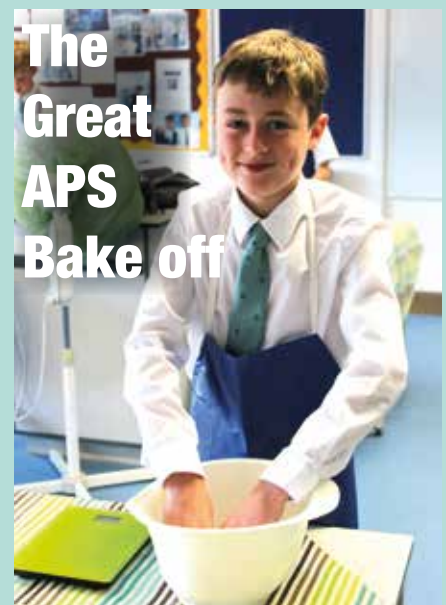
The boys and staff alike were very excited to welcome a Merlin helicopter from 845 Naval Air Commando Squadron. It circled the school before landing and then all the boys, from Reception up to Year 8 took a look inside. They relished trying on the helmets, and some even got to sit in the cockpit.



Year 5 Entertainment

Boys from Year 5 performed music, poetry and a selection of songs from *Oliver!* at their Year 5 Soirée. Parents had a very enjoyable evening, tucking into picnics whilst being entertained by their sons.

The musical finale to the year was the Summer Concert which took place in the Amey Theatre at the Senior School with a wide range of excellent performances from Year 3 to Year 8.



The Great APS Bake off

This year we had over 80 cakes and biscuits entered into the Great APS Bake Off competition. In the final the boys had to cook independently from a given recipe. They demonstrated impressive skills and produced some great results under time pressure.

Adventures at PGL Liddington



Year 5 embraced a full programme of activities at PGL Liddington on their annual residential trip.



Artists of all abilities enjoyed showcasing their work when the Prep School opened its doors for Oxfordshire Artweeks.



Saturday Art workshop

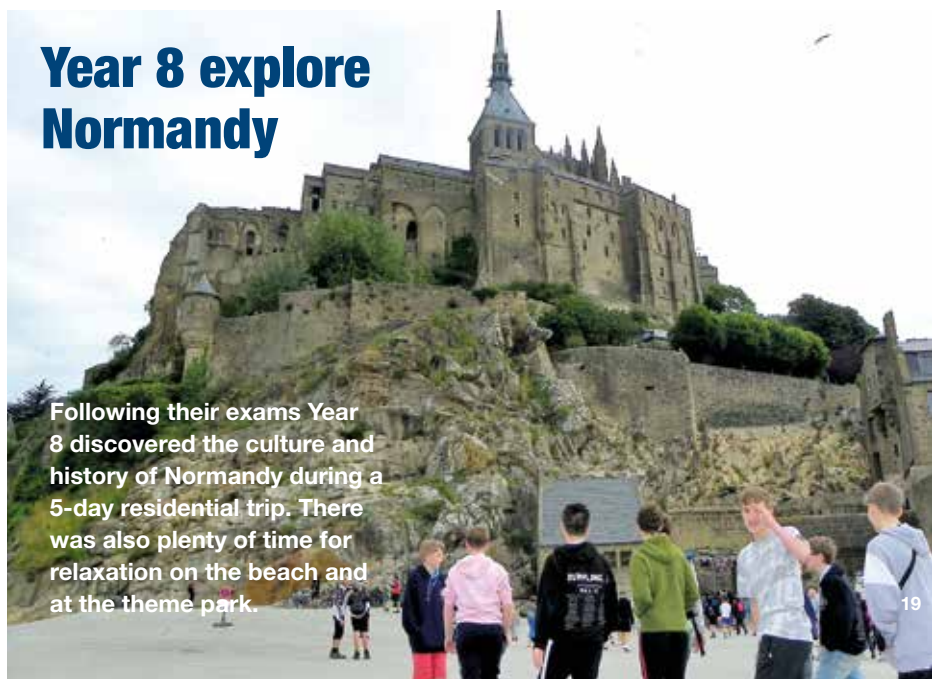
A group of Year 7 and 8 artists took part in a clay workshop exploring the work of Modigliani and contemporary artist Chris Keeny.



Elephant's Toothpaste

The Science Clubs have been busy this term with boys exploring science outside the curriculum as part of their Other Half activities. Years 3 and 4, in their Up and Atom Club, had fun making 'elephant's toothpaste' from hydrogen peroxide, washing up liquid, food colouring and yeast. It made masses and masses of foam which looks just like toothpaste coming out of the tube! (n.b. This experiment needs adult supervision and safety glasses.)

Year 8 explore Normandy



Following their exams Year 8 discovered the culture and history of Normandy during a 5-day residential trip. There was also plenty of time for relaxation on the beach and at the theme park.

Taking a look at ... Physics at Abingdon



Ben Simmons has been at Abingdon for seven years and begins his third year as Head of Physics and Electronics this September. The Department has 10 full time and 2 part time teachers and 2 technicians.

Why study Physics?

Students enjoy the practical and investigative nature of Physics and the problem solving. It's interesting, stimulating and can be challenging! It's also a very well regarded subject by universities and a prerequisite for studying many engineering and computer science related degrees. The career prospects and earning potential of physicists are also very good. In 2019, 26 Abingdon leavers went on to study Physics related subjects.

What makes a good physicist?

The ability to apply what you've learnt to new situations. That's often why it's looked on favourably by employers; it's the ability to solve problems using the knowledge you've learnt.

Can everyone be good at Physics?

Everyone at Abingdon has the ability to do Physics. It can be challenging but that's what's good about it. You need to apply yourself and be prepared to work at it – you won't understand everything immediately but with staying power and effort you'll be fine. A good understanding of maths and strong analytical skills help. You can take Physics at A-level as a stand-alone subject but we strongly recommend doing Maths alongside it.

What are the results like?

Results are excellent. In 2019 students gained 79% of all Physics A-level passes at A*-B grades and at GCSE, 75% of passes were awarded a grade 8/9 and in Electronics GCSE 96% of passes were grade 8/9. Academically the department is very strong with extension classes teaching undergraduate standard Physics to some of our sixth form students. Our equipment and facilities are also excellent, again university standard in places with for example tensile testing rigs for teaching materials science topics.

How popular is Physics at Abingdon?

Very popular. We have over 100 students in the Lower Sixth taking the A-level and for the first time this year we are offering a Computer Science A-level too, with 24 boys taking it up. Physics is compulsory through either Triple or Double Award Science at GCSE and boys can also opt to take Computer Science or Electronics GCSEs which are increasingly popular. The numbers of boys choosing to study Physics related subjects is continuing to grow. We are lucky to have fantastic teachers and technicians that make this possible.

What about Physics outside the classroom?

Besides Physics, Computer Science and Electronics you can also take GCSE Astronomy as part of your Other Half or join the Electronics Club. In a typical year we have around 14 trips ranging from exploring the Physics hub of Geneva to discussing topical issues with the All Parliamentary Engineering Group at the House of Lords.

And to sum up – what does Physics mean to you?

Physics is challenging, frustrating and inspiring all at the same time. I like the fact that you can never get to a point where you know the answer to everything and you can always ask why. New developments in Physics are constantly on the horizon and it is great to keep up with these; last summer I really enjoyed spending two weeks on the International Teacher Development program at CERN updating my knowledge along with teachers from around the world.



What phones can't yet do...

Mark Hindley, Deputy Head (Pastoral)

Is there anything a phone can't do?

It can track your fitness, find your friends, enable you to shop with an app that links to a camera in your fridge; we bank from our phones, airdrop photos, and now phones even recognise our faces. Without doubt, modern phones are beyond smart.

For all that, at Abingdon we believe phones cannot replace real, face to face relationships. Yes, you can facetime the other side of the world but it isn't the same as sitting in a room with someone, reacting and responding to their emotions, feelings, likes and dislikes.

That is why we have decided to try to help our students to reboot their relationships with their phones. We want them to embrace the myriad of opportunities that technology offers, and hopefully to spot the areas where technology could do more to improve lives. However, at the same time, we want our boys to remember

that humans are social beings and that living in the moment, and sharing real experiences in real time, is at the core of living a fulfilled, happy life.

For this reason, we have said to pupils in the Fifth Year and below - those crucial developmental teenage years where the frontal cortex is battling to overthrow the dominance of the amygdala - that phones should not be seen or heard during school. Bring them to school for practical reasons, but during the day put them away, out of sight and out of mind. Enjoy spending time with your mates; seize all the opportunities available - there is no other time of life which offers so much.

Rather than always looking down at a screen, living life vicariously through Snapchat and Instagram, we want our pupils to look up, look out and do the things that a phone can't do: make friends and make memories.

Abingdon Parents' Association



Mexico comes to Abingdon

On Saturday 18th May ASPA held a Mexican-themed event for third year parents in the dining hall, with a welcome margarita and a wide variety of Central American delights served by the Abingdon Catering Team. The evening was a great opportunity for parents to mix across the whole year group in a warm and friendly atmosphere - with plenty of ponchos and sombreros for good measure!



Date for the diary

Continuing the successful theme, there will be a Mexican-style event for this year's third year parents too on Saturday 5th October in the Dining Hall at Abingdon School from 7.30pm. Tickets on sale from the start of September.

aspa@abingdon.org.uk

www.abingdon.org.uk/aspa



Abingdon at HSBC Hong Kong

On Monday 8 July our Hong Kong community of OAs, parents and friends came together to celebrate with our Symphony Orchestra and Big Band tour group, before their finale concert in St. John's Cathedral. The Headmaster would like to express his sincere thanks to parents James and Vanessa Emmett for organising the venue - HSBC Hong Kong.

Thanks from the Headmaster

It was wonderful to welcome those who have lent time and effort to support various aspects of school life to the Headmaster's Annual *Thank You Garden Party* held in Lacies Court on 28 June.



The 1563 Society

Abingdon's new legacy society, The 1563 Society, exists to recognise and thank those who have decided to leave a legacy to Abingdon and to encourage further pledges. The 1563 Society committee held their inaugural meeting at Mercers' Hall before the Mercers' Lunch, a fitting setting as OA and Mercer, John Roysse, was a founding legator. The Headmaster will be delighted to welcome all Society members and their guests to the first annual Society lunch on **Saturday 14 September**.

If you have not already let us know of your legacy pledge, please email: alexa.broad@abingdon.org.uk

The inaugural legacy publication can be found at:

www.abingdon.org.uk/philanthropy_at_abingdon

or tel: 01235 849117



Mercers' Lunch

On 15 May, OAs, Governors, parents and friends of the School gathered at Mercers' Company in London for our annual Mercers' Hall Lunch. The Headmaster shared his vision for widening access to Abingdon through our growing partnerships work and the provision of bursaries. The Mercers' Company is today a philanthropic corporation devoted to education. Our association stretches back to 1563, when OA and Mercer John Roysse re-endowed the School with a gift of fifty pounds.

Abingdon OA Club – Summer 2019



OA 50s 60s Dinner Salisbury Cathedral

10 May - hosted by The Revd Canon Moll (1960)



OA Golf

13 May



Leavers' Day

17 May



Year Group Reunions

15 June

(1949, 1959, 1969, 1979, 1989, 1999, 2009, 2017)



OA Croquet

15 June



OA Cricket

21 June



With thanks to all the OAs who came to encourage and inspire the next generation of university applicants.

360 Degrees

21 June



OA Tennis

22 June



Henley Royal Regatta

5, 6 July



Hong Kong Drinks

7 July

It was wonderful to see so many OAs gather for the first Hong Kong Drinks. A special thanks to OA Philip Wong (2004) for organising the venue - The American Club.

Forthcoming OA Events:

OA Club Career Networking Event
2 October

London Drinks: Cavalry and Guards Club
27 November

Abingdon Out of the Past

Then and Now



Mowing the cricket pitch in 1891, the year the School bought its first 'mowing machine'. Before this the grass was kept down by scything and by sheep.



Mowing the cricket pitch in 2019



Mafeking siege note

A Stuffed Alligator and Other Objects

In 1909 Professor Gustav Mann donated a stuffed alligator and an armadillo skin to the school museum. These splendid items joined such disparate objects as a pistol carried by an OA in the Peninsular War, a large spider from Costa Rica, the skin of a rattlesnake, banknotes from the siege of Mafeking and a coin from the reign of Philip III of Macedon found in 1915 by an OA serving in Gallipoli. Established in 1906, the last gift to the museum is recorded in the May 1927 *Abingdonian*. The magazine thanks Mr Wiblin 'for the nose of a German shell, which exploded in the ground within twelve yards of him'. The Mafeking siege note seems to be the sole survivor of this magnificent collection.

The Spy Who Lived at Lacies Court



K. E. J. Fuchs

Klaus Fuchs, once described as the most dangerous spy 'in the history of nations', lived at Lacies Court whilst passing top secret information about Britain's atomic and nuclear research to his Soviet Russian contacts. A refugee from Hitler's Germany, Fuchs was a theoretical physicist who played a significant role in the development of the atomic bomb. After the war, as Head of the Theoretical Physics Division at Harwell, Fuchs worked on Britain's nuclear programme – all the time keeping the Soviets abreast of every development.

Frank Close, Emeritus Professor of Physics at the University of Oxford, who was himself once Head of the Theoretical Physics Division at Harwell, has written a biography of Fuchs, *Trinity – The Treachery and Pursuit of the Most Dangerous Spy in History*, published by Allan Lane on 1 August. It is likely to be the most detailed biography of the spy for years to come. After he consulted them in the National Archives a number of the Fuchs' files have since been withdrawn.



Lacies Court, although owned by the School, was a lodging house for Harwell scientists in the late 1940s.

Fuchs – the Treachery and Pursuit of the Most Dangerous Spy in History

Professor Frank Close

Amey Theatre

Wednesday 20 November 7.30 pm

Open to all Admission free



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